# JONAH BARRINGTON

## PERSONAL SKETCHES OF HIS OWN TIMES, VOL. 1 (OF 3)

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## MY FAMILY CONNEXIONS

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I was born at Knapton, near Abbeyleix, in the Queen's County, – at that time the seat of my father, but now of Sir George Pigott. I am the third son and fourth child of John Barrington, who had himself neither brother nor sister; and at the period of my birth, my immediate connexions were thus circumstanced.

My family, by ancient patents, by marriages, and by inheritance from their ancestors, possessed very extensive

landed estates in Queen's County, and had almost unlimited influence over its population, returning two members to the Irish Parliament for Ballynakill, counties of Kilkenny and Galway.

Cullenaghmore, the mansion where my ancestors had resided from the reign of James the First, was then occupied by my grandfather, Colonel Jonah Barrington. He had adopted me as soon as I was born, brought me to Cullenaghmore, and with him I resided until his death.

That old mansion (the Great House as it was called) exhibited altogether an uncouth mass, warring with every rule of symmetry in architecture. The original castle had been demolished, and its materials converted to a much worse purpose: the edifice which succeeded it was particularly ungraceful; a Saracen's head (our crest) in coloured brick-work being its only ornament. Some of the rooms inside were wainscoted with brown oak, others with red deal, and some not at all. The walls of the large hall were decked (as was customary) with fishing-rods, fire-arms, stags' horns, foxes' brushes, powder-flasks, shot-pouches, nets, and dog-collars; here and there relieved by the extended skin of a kite or a king-fisher, nailed up in the vanity of their destroyers: that of a monstrous eagle, (which impressed itself indelibly on my mind,) surmounted the chimney-piece, accompanied by a card announcing the name of its assassin – "Alexander Barrington;" – who, not being a *rich* relation, was subsequently entertained in the Great House two years, as a compliment for his present. A large parlour on each side of the hall, the only embellishments

of which were some old portraits, and a multiplicity of hunting, shooting, and racing prints, with red tape nailed round them by way of frames, completed the reception-rooms; and as I was the only child in the house, and a most inquisitive brat, every different print was explained to me.

I remained here till I was near nine years old; I had no playfellows to take off my attention from whatever I observed or was taught; and so strongly do those early impressions remain engraven on my memory, (naturally most retentive,) that even at this long distance of time I fancy I can see the entire place as it stood then, with its old inhabitants moving before me: – their faces I most clearly recollect.

The library was a gloomy closet, and rather scantily furnished with every thing but dust and cobwebs: there were neither chairs nor tables; but I cannot avoid recollecting many of the principal books, because I read such of them as I could comprehend, or as were amusing; and looked over all the prints in them a hundred times. While trying to copy these prints, they made an indelible impression upon me; and hence I feel confident of the utility of embellishments in any book intended for the instruction of children. I possessed many of the books long after my grandfather's death, and have some of them still. I had an insatiable passion for general reading from my earliest days, and it has occupied the greater proportion of my later life. Gulliver's Travels, Robinson Crusoe, Fairy Tales, and The History of the Bible, all with numerous plates, were my favourite authors and

constant amusement: I believed every word of them except the fairies, and was not entirely sceptical as to those "good people" neither.

I fancy there was then but little variety in the libraries of most country gentlemen; and I mention as a curiosity, the following volumes, several of which, as already stated, I retained many years after my grandfather and grandmother died: – The Journals of the House of Commons; Clarendon's History; The Spectator and Guardian; Killing no Murder; The Patriot King; Bailey's Dictionary; some of Swift's Works; George Falkner's Newspapers; Quintus Curtius in English; Bishop Burnet; A Treatise on Tar-water, by some other bishop; Robinson Crusoe; Hudibras; History of the Bible, in folio; Nelson's Fasts and Feasts; Fairy Tales; The History of Peter Wilkins; Glums and Gouries; somebody's Justice of Peace; and a multiplicity of Farriery, Sporting, and Gardening Books, &c. which I lost piecemeal, when making room for law-books – probably not half so good, but at least much more experimental.

Very few mirrors in those days adorned the houses of the country gentlemen: – a couple or three shaving-glasses for the gentlemen, and a couple of pretty large dressing-glasses, in black frames, for the ladies' use, composed, I believe, nearly the entire stock of reflectors at my grandfather's, except tubs of spring water, which answered for the maid-servants.

A very large and productive, but not dressed-up garden, adjoined the house. The white-washed stone images; the broad

flights of steps up and down; the terraces, with the round fish-pond, – rivetted my attention, and gave an impressive variety to this garden, which I shall ever remember, as well as many curious incidents which I witnessed therein.

At the Great House, where the Courts Leet and Baron were duly held, all disputes among the tenants were then settled, – quarrels reconciled, – old debts arbitrated: a kind Irish landlord then reigned despotic in the ardent affections of the tenantry, their pride and pleasure being to obey and to support him.

But there existed a happy reciprocity of interests. The landlord of *that* period protected the tenant by his influence – any wanton injury to a tenant being considered as an insult to the lord; and if the landlord's sons were grown up, no time was lost by them in demanding satisfaction from any gentleman for maltreating even their father's blacksmith.

No gentleman of this degree ever distrained a tenant for rent: indeed the parties appeared to be quite united and knit together. The greatest abhorrence, however, prevailed as to tithe proctors, coupled with no great predilection for the clergy who employed them. These certainly were, in principle and practice, the real country tyrants of that day, and first caused the assembling of the White Boys.

I have heard it often said that, at the time I speak of, every estated gentleman in the Queen's County was *honoured* by the gout. I have since considered that its extraordinary prevalence was not difficult to be accounted for, by the disproportionate

quantity of acid contained in their seductive beverage, called rum-shrub – which was then universally drunk in quantities nearly incredible, generally from supper-time till morning, by all country gentlemen – as they said, to keep *down their claret*.

My grandfather could not refrain, and therefore he suffered well: – he piqued himself on procuring, through the interest of Batty Lodge, (a follower of the family who had married a Dublin grocer's widow,) the very first importation of oranges and lemons to the Irish capital every season. Horse-loads of these, packed in boxes, were immediately sent to the Great House of Cullenaghmore; and no sooner did they arrive, than the good news of *fresh fruit* was communicated to the Colonel's neighbouring friends, accompanied by the usual invitation for a fortnight.

Night after night the revel afforded uninterrupted pleasure to the joyous gentry; the festivity being subsequently renewed at some other mansion, till the gout thought proper to put the whole party *hors de combat*; having the satisfaction of making cripples for a few months such as he did not kill.

Whilst the convivials bellowed with only toe or finger agonies, it was a mere bagatelle; but when *Mr. Gout* marched up the country, and invaded the head or the stomach, it was then called *no joke*; and Drogheda usquebaugh, the hottest-distilled drinkable liquor ever invented, was applied to for aid, and generally drove the tormentor in a few minutes to his former quarters. It was, indeed, counted a specific; and I allude to it the

more particularly, as my poor grandfather was finished by over-doses thereof.

It was his custom to sit under a very large branching bay-tree in his arm-chair, placed in a fine sunny aspect at the entrance of the garden. I particularly remember his cloak, for I kept it twelve years after his death: it was called a *cartouche* cloak, from a famous French robber who, it was said, invented it for his gang for the purposes of evasion. It was made of very fine broad-cloth; of a bright blue colour on one side, and a bright scarlet on the other: so that on being turned, it might deceive even a vigilant pursuer.

There my grandfather used to sit of a hot sunny day, receive any rents he could collect, and settle any accounts which his indifference on that head permitted him to think of.

At one time he suspected a young rogue of having slipped some money off his table when paying rent; afterward, when the tenants began to count out their money, he threw the focus of his large reading-glass upon their hands: – the smart, without any visible cause, astonished the ignorant creatures! – they shook their hands, and thought it must be the *devil* who was scorching them. The priest was let into the secret: he seriously told them all it *was* the devil sure enough, who had mistaken them for the boy that stole the money from the Colonel; but that if he (the priest) was *properly considered*, he would say as many masses as would *bother fifty devils*, were it necessary. The priest got his fee; and another farthing never was taken from my grandfather.

My grandfather was rather a short man, with a large red nose – strong made; and wore an immense white wig, such as the portraits give to Dr. Johnson. He died at eighty-six years of age, of shrub-gout and usquebaugh, beloved and respected. I cried heartily for him; and then became the favourite of my grandmother, the best woman in the world, who went to reside in Dublin, and prepare me for college.

Colonel John Barrington, my great-grandfather, for some time before his death, and after I was born, resided at Ballyroan. My grandfather having married Margaret, the daughter of Sir John Byrne, Bart., had taken the estates and mansion, and given an annuity to my great-grandfather, who died, one hundred and four years old, of a fever, having never shown any of the usual decrepitudes or defects of age: he was the most respectable man by tradition of my family, and for more than seventy years a parliament man.

Sir Daniel Byrne, Bart. my great grandfather, lived at his old castle of Timogrie, almost adjoining my grandfather Barrington: his domains, close to Stradbally, were nearly the most beautiful in the Queen's County. On his decease, his widow, Lady Dorothea Byrne, an Englishwoman, whose name had been Warren, (I believe a grand-aunt to the late Lady Bulkley,) resided there till her death; having previously seen her son give one of the first and most deeply to be regretted instances of what is called forming *English connexions*. Sir John Byrne, my grand-uncle, having gone to England, married the heiress of the Leycester family: – the

very name of Ireland was then odious to the English gentry; and previous terms were made with him, that his children should take the cognomen of Leycester, and drop that of Byrne; that he should quit Ireland, sell all his paternal estates there, and become an *Englishman*. He assented; and the last Lord Shelburne purchased, for less than half their value, all his fine estates, of which the Marquis of Lansdown is now proprietor.

After the father's death, his son, Sir Peter Leycester, succeeded, and the family of Byrne, descended from a long line of Irish princes and chieftains, condescended to become little amongst the rank of English Commoners; and so ended the connexion between the Byrnes and Barringtons.

My mother was the only daughter of Patrick French, of Peterwell, county Galway, wherein he had large estates: my grandmother (his wife) was one of the last remaining to the first house of the ancient O'Briens. Her brother, my great-uncle, Donatus, also emigrated to England, and died fifteen or sixteen years since, at his mansion, Blatherwick, in Cheshire, in a species of voluntary obscurity, inconsistent with his birth and large fortune. He left great hereditary estates in both countries to the enjoyment of his mistress and natural children, excluding the legitimate branches of his family from all claims upon the manors or demesnes of their ancestors. The law enabled him to do what a due sense of justice and pride would have interdicted.

The anomaly of political principles among the country gentlemen of Ireland at that period was very extraordinary. They

professed what they called "*unshaken loyalty*;" and yet they were unqualified partisans of Cromwell and William, two decided usurpers – one of them having dethroned his father-in-law, and the other decapitated his king.

The fifth of November was always celebrated in Dublin for the preservation of James, a Scottish king, (after Queen Elizabeth had cut his mother's head off) from Guy Fawkes and a barrel of gunpowder in London; then the thirtieth of January was highly approved of by a great number of Irish, as the anniversary of making Charles the First, the son and heir of the said James, shorter by his head. Then the very same Irish celebrated the restoration of Charles the Second, the son of the *shortened* king, and who was twice as bad as his father; and whilst they rejoiced in putting a crown upon the head of the son of the king who could not keep his own head on, they never failed to drink bumpers to the memory of *Old Noll*, who had cut that king's head off; and in order to commemorate the whole story, and make their children remember it, they dressed up a fat *calf's-head*, whole and white, on every anniversary of King Charles's *throat being cut*, and with a red-smoked ham, which they called "Bradshaw," placed by the side of it, all parties partook thereof most happily; washing down the emblem and its accompaniment with as much claret as they could hold, in honour of *Noll the regicide*!

Having thus proved their loyalty to James the First, and their attachment to his son's murderer, and then their loyalty to the eldest of his grandsons, they next proceeded to celebrate

the birth-day of William of Orange, a Dutchman, who had kicked their king, (his father-in-law) the second grandson, out of the country, and who in all probability would have given the Irish another *calf's head* for their celebration, if the said king, his father-in-law, had not got out of the way with the utmost expedition, and gone to live upon charity in France, the *then* mortal enemy of the British nation; and as they dressed a calf's head for the son's murder, so they dressed *sheeps' trotters* every first of July, to commemorate the grandson's running away at the Boyne Water, in the year 1690.

One part of the Irish people then invented a toast, called, "*The glorious, pious, and immortal memory of William, the Dutchman*;" whilst another raised a counter-toast, called "*The memory of the chesnut horse*," *that broke the neck of the same King William*.[1] But in my mind, (if I am to judge of past times by the corporation of Dublin) it was only to coin an excuse for getting loyally drunk as often as possible, that they were so enthusiastically fond of *making sentiments*, as they called them.[2]

As to the politics of my family, we had (no doubt) some very substantial reasons for being both Cromwellians and Williamites; the one confirmed our grants, and the other preserved them for

[1] King William's *neck* was not broken, only his *collar-bone*; his fall from a chesnut horse, however, hastened his dissolution.

[2] Could his majesty, King William, learn in the other world that he has been the cause of more broken heads and drunken men, since his departure, than all his predecessors, he must be the proudest ghost and most conceited skeleton that ever entered the gardens of Elysium.

us; my family, indeed, had certainly not only those, but other very especial reasons to be pleased with King William; and though he gave them nothing, they kept what they had, which might have been lost but for his usurpation.

During the short reign of James the Second in Ireland, those who were not *for* him were considered to be *against* him, and of course were subjected to the severities and confiscations usual in all civil wars. Amongst the rest, my great-grandfather, Colonel John Barrington, being a Protestant, and having no predilection for King James, was ousted from his mansion and estates at Cullenaghmore by one O'Fagan, a Jacobite wig-maker and violent partizan, from Ballynakill. He was, notwithstanding, rather respectfully treated, and was allowed forty pounds a year by his said wig-maker, so long as he behaved himself.

However, he only behaved well for a couple of months; at the end of which time, with a party of his faithful tenants, he surprised the wig-maker, drove him out of possession in his turn, and repossessed himself of his mansion and estates.

The wig-maker, having escaped to Dublin, laid his complaint before the authorities; and a party of soldiers were ordered to make short work of it, if the colonel did not submit on the first summons.

The party demanded entrance, but were refused; and a little firing from the windows of the mansion took place. Not being, however, tenable, it was successfully stormed – the old gamekeeper, John Neville, killed, and my great-grandfather

taken prisoner, conveyed to the drum-head at Raheenduff, tried as a rebel by a certain Cornet M'Mahon, and in due form ordered to be hanged in an hour.

At the appointed time, execution was punctually proceeded on; and so far as tying up the colonel to the cross-bar of his own gate, the sentence was actually put in force. But at the moment the first haul was given to elevate him, Ned Doran, a tenant of the estate, who was a trooper in King James's army, rode up to the gate – himself and horse in a state of complete exhaustion. He saw with horror his landlord strung up, and exclaimed, —

"Holloa! holloa! blood and ouns, boys! cut down the colonel! cut down the colonel! or ye'll be all hanged yeerselves, ye villains of the world, ye! I am straight from the Boyne Water, through thick and thin: Ough, by the hokys! we're all cut up and kilt to the devil and back agin – Jemmy's scampered, bad luck to him, without a 'good bye to yees!' – or, 'kiss my r – p!' – or the least civility in life!"

My grandfather's hangmen lost no time in getting off, leaving the colonel slung fast by the neck to the gate-posts. But Doran soon cut him down, and fell on his knees to beg pardon of his landlord, the holy Virgin, and King William from the Boyne Water.

The colonel obtained the trooper's pardon, and he was ever after a faithful adherent. He was the grandfather of Lieutenant-colonel Doran, of the Irish brigade, afterward, (if I recollect right,) of the 47th regiment – the officer who cut a German

colonel's *head clean off* in the mess-room at Lisbon, after dinner, with one stroke of his sabre.[3] He dined with me repeatedly at Paris about six years since, and was the most disfigured warrior that could possibly be imagined. When he left Cullenagh for the continent, in 1784, he was as fine, clever-looking a young farmer as could be seen; but he had been blown up once or twice in storming batteries, which, with a few sabre-gashes across his features, and the obvious aid of numerous pipes of wine, or something not weaker, had so spoiled his beauty, that he had become of late absolutely frightful.

This occurrence of my great-grandfather fixed the political creed of my family. On the 1st of July, the orange lily was sure to garnish every window in the mansion: the hereditary patereroes scarcely ceased cracking all the evening, to glorify the victory of the Boyne Water, till one of them burst, and killed the gardener's wife, who was tying an orange ribbon round the mouth of it, which she had *stopped* for fear of *accidents*.

The tenantry, though to a man Papists, and at that time nearly in a state of slavery, joined heart and hand in these rejoicings, and forgot the victory of their enemy while commemorating the

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[3] Sir Neil O'Donnel, *who was present*, first told me the anecdote. They fought with sabres: the whole company were intoxicated, and nobody minded them *much* till the German's head came spinning like a top on the mess-table, upsetting their bottles and glasses. He could not remember what they quarrelled about. Colonel Doran himself assured me that he had very little recollection of the particulars. The room was very gloomy: – what he best remembered was, a tolerably effective gash which he got on his left ear, and which nearly eased him of that appendage: – it was very conspicuous.

rescue of their landlord. A hundred times have I heard the story repeated by the "*Cotchers*,"[4] as they sat crouching on their hams, like Indians, around the big turf fire. Their only lament was for the death of old John Neville, the game-keeper. His name I should well remember; for it was his grandson's wife, Debby Clarke, who nursed me.

This class of stories and incidents was well calculated to make indelible impression on the mind of a child, and has never left mine. – The old people of Ireland (like the Asiatics) took the greatest delight in repeating their legendary tales to the children, by which constant, unvarying repetition, their old stories became hereditary, and I dare say neither gained nor lost a single sentence in the recital, for a couple of hundred years. The massacres of Queen Elizabeth and Cromwell were quite familiar to them; and by an ancient custom of every body throwing a stone on the spot where any celebrated murder had been committed, upon a certain day every year, or whenever a funeral passed by, it is wonderful what mounds were raised in numerous places, which no person, but such as were familiar with the customs of the poor creatures, would ever be able to account for.

I have often thought that people, insulated and shut out from society and external intercourse, ignorant of letters and all kinds of legends save their own local traditions, are as likely to be

[4] A corruption of "*Cottager*;" the lowest grade of the Irish peasants, but the most cheerful, humorous, and affectionate. The word is spelt differently and *ad libitum*. Though the poorest, they were formerly the most happy set of vassals in Europe.

faithful historians as the plagiarists and compilers of the present day.

I have heard the same stories of old times told in different parts of the country by adverse factions and cotchers, with scarcely a syllable of difference as to time or circumstance. They denote their periods, not by "the year of our Lord," or reigns, or months; but by seasons and festivals, and celebrated events or eras, – such as "the Midsummer after the *great frost*" – "the All-hallow eve before the *Boyne Water*" – "the Candlemas that Squire Conolly had *all the hounds* at Bally Killeavan" – "the time the *English Bishop*[5] was hanged," &c. &c.

[5] Arthur, Bishop of Waterford, was hung at Dublin for an unnatural crime – a circumstance which the prejudiced Irish greatly rejoiced at, and long considered as forming an epocha.

# ELIZABETH FITZGERALD

My great-aunt, Elizabeth – Besieged in her castle of Moret – My uncle seized and hanged before the walls – Attempted abduction of Elizabeth, whose forces surprise the castle of Reuben – Severe battle.

A great-aunt of mine, Elizabeth Fitzgerald, was married to Stephen Fitzgerald, who possessed the castle of Moret, near Bally-Brittis, not very far from Cullenagh.[6] She and her husband held their castle firmly during the troubles. They had above forty good warders; their local enemies had no cannon, and but few guns. The warders, protected by the battlements, pelted their adversaries with large stones, when they ventured to approach the walls; and in front of each of that description of castle, there was a hole perpendicularly over the entrance, wherefrom any person, himself unseen, could drop down every species of defensive material upon assailants.

About the year 1690, when Ireland was in a state of great disorder, and no laws were regarded, numerous factious bodies were formed in every part of the country to claim old rights, and re-take possession of forfeited estates, by mere force, when their factions were strong enough.

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[6] I have heard the *battle of Moret* told a hundred times, and never with one variation of fact or incident. It was a favourite legend with the old people, and affords a good idea of the habits and manners of those lawless times.

My uncle and aunt, or rather my aunt and uncle (for she was said to be far the most effective of the two), at one time suffered the enemy, who were of the faction of the O'Cahils of Timagho, and who claimed my uncle's property, (which they said – very truly – Queen Elizabeth had turned them out of,) to approach the gate in the night-time. There were neither outworks nor wet fosse; the assailants therefore, counting upon victory, brought fire to consume the gate, and so gain admittance. My aunt, aware of their designs, drew all her warders to one spot, large heaps of great stones being ready to their hands at the top of the castle.

When the O'Cahils, in great numbers, had got close to the gate, and were directly under the loop-hole, on a sudden streams of boiling water, heated in the castle coppers, came showering down upon the heads of the crowd below: this extinguished their fire, and cruelly scalded many of the besiegers.

The scene may be conceived which was presented by a multitude of scalded wretches, on a dark night, under the power and within the reach of all sorts of offensive missiles. They attempted to fly; but whilst one part of the warders hurled volleys of weighty stones beyond them, to deter them from retreating, another party dropped stones more ponderous still on the heads of those who, for protection, crouched close under the castle-walls: the lady of the castle herself, meantime, and all her maids, assisting the chief body of the warders in pelting the Jacobites with every kind of destructive missile, till all seemed pretty still; and wherever a groan was heard, a volley of stones quickly ended

the troubles of the sufferer.

The old traditionists of the country say, that at day-break there were lying one hundred of the assailants under the castle-walls – some scalded, some battered to pieces, and many lamed so as to have no power of moving off; but my good aunt kindly ordered them all to be put out of their misery, as fast as ropes and a long gallows, erected for their sakes, could perform that piece of humanity: – her faithful old partizan, Keeran Karry, always telling them how sorry the lady was that she had no doctor in the castle, she being so *tender-hearted* that she could not bear to hear their groaning under the castle-walls, and so had them hanged out of *pure good-nature*.

After the victory, the warders had a feast on the castle-top, whereat each of them recounted his own feats. Squire Fitzgerald, who was a quiet easy man, and hated fighting, and who had told my aunt, at the beginning, that they would surely kill him, having seated himself all night peaceably under one of the parapets, was quite delighted when the fray was over. He walked out into his garden outside the walls to take some tranquil air, when an ambuscade of the hostile survivors surrounded and carried him off. In vain his warders sallied – the squire was gone past all redemption!

It was supposed he had paid his debts to Nature – if any he owed – when, next day, a large body of the O'Cahil faction appeared near the castle. Their force was too great to be attacked by the warders, who durst not sally; and the former assault

had been too calamitous to the O'Cahils to warrant them in attempting another. Both were therefore standing at bay, when, to the great joy of the garrison, Squire Fitzgerald was produced, and one of the assailants, with a white cloth on a pike, advanced to parley.

The lady on the castle-top attended his proposals, which were very laconic. "I am a truce, lady! – Look here, (showing the terrified squire) we have your husband in hault – yee's have yeer castle *sure* enough. Now we'll change, if you please: we'll render the squire, and you'll render the keep; and if yees won't do that same, the squire will be *throttled* before your two eyes in half an hour."

"Flag of truce!" said the heroine, with due dignity and without hesitation; "mark the words of Elizabeth Fitzgerald, of Moret Castle: they may serve for your own wife upon some future occasion. – Flag of truce! I *won't* render my keep, and I'll tell you why: Elizabeth Fitzgerald *may* get another *husband*, but Elizabeth Fitzgerald may never get another *castle*; so I'll keep what I have; and if you don't get off faster than your legs can readily carry you, my warders will try which is hardest, your skull or a stone bullet."

The O'Cahils kept their word, and old Squire Stephen Fitzgerald, in a short time, was seen dangling and performing various evolutions in the air, to the great amusement of the Jacobites, the mortification of the warders, and chagrin (which however was not without a spice of *consolation*) of my great-

aunt, Elizabeth.

This magnanimous lady, after Squire Stephen had been duly cut down, waked, and deposited in his garden, conceived that she might enjoy her castle with tranquillity; but, to guard against every chance, she replenished her stony magazine; had a wide trench dug before the gate of the castle; and pit-falls, covered with green sods, having sharp stakes driven within, scattered round it on every side – the passage through these being only known to the faithful warders. She contrived, besides, a species of defence that I have not seen mentioned in the Pacata Hibernia, or any of the murderous annals of Ireland: it consisted of a heavy beam of wood, well loaded with iron at the bottom, and suspended by a pulley and cord from the top of the castle, and which, on any future assault, she could let down through the projecting hole over the entrance; – alternately, with the aid of a few strong warders above, raising and letting it drop smash among the enemy who attempted to gain admittance below, – thereby pounding them as if with a pestle and mortar, without the power of resistance on their part.

The castle-vaults were well victualled, and at all events could safely defy any attacks of hunger; and as the enemy had none of those despotic engines called cannon, my aunt's garrison were at all points in tolerable security. Indeed, fortunately for Elizabeth, there was not a single piece of ordnance in the country, except those few which were mounted in the Fort of Dunrally, or travelled with the king's army; and, to speak truth, fire-arms

then would have been of little use, since there was not sufficient gunpowder among all the people to hold an hour's fighting.

With these and some interior defences, Elizabeth imagined herself well armed against all marauders, and quietly awaited a change of times and a period of general security.

Close to the castle there was, and I believe still remains, a shallow swamp and a dribbling stream of water, in which there is a stone with a deep indenture on the top. It was about three feet high – very like a short joint of one of the pillars of the Giant's Causeway. This stone was always full of limpid water, called St. Bridget's water, – that holy woman having been accustomed daily to kneel in prayer on one knee, till she wore a hole in the top of the granite by the cap of her pious joint. She then filled it with water, and *vanished* from that country. It took the saint a full month, however, to bore the hole to her satisfaction.

To this well, old Jug Ogie, the oldest piece of furniture in Moret Castle, (she was an hereditary cook,) daily went for the purpose of drawing the most sacred crystal she could, wherewith to boil her mistress's dinner; and also, as the well was *naturally* consecrated, it saved the priest a quantity of trouble in preparing holy water for the use of the warders. It was *then* also found to boil vastly quicker, and ten times hotter, than any common water, with a very small modicum of any kind of fuel. But the tradition ran that it would not boil *at all* for a year and a day after Madam Elizabeth died. It was believed, also, that a cow was poisoned, which had the presumption to drink some of it, as a just judgment

for a *beast* attempting to turn *Christian*.

On one of these sallies of old Jug, some fellows (who, as it afterward appeared, had with a very deep design lain in ambush) seized and were carrying her off, when they were perceived by one of the watchmen from the tower, who instantly gave an alarm, and some warders sallied after them. Jug was rescued, and the enemy fled through the swamp; but not before one of them had his head divided into two equal parts by the hatchet of Keeran Karry, who was always at the head of the warders, and the life and soul of the whole garrison.

The dead man turned out to be a son of Andrew M'Mahon, a faction-man of Reuben; but nobody could then guess the motive for endeavouring to carry off old Jug, the most ancient hag in that country. However, the matter soon became developed.

Elizabeth was accounted to be very rich, – the cleverest woman of her day, – and she had a large demesne into the bargain: and finding the sweets of independence, she refused matrimonial offers from many quarters; but as her castle was, for those days, a durably safe residence, such as the auctioneers of the present time would denominate *a genuine undeniable mansion*, the country squires determined she *should* marry one of them, since marry willingly she would not – but they nearly fell to loggerheads who should *run away* with her. Almost every one of them had previously put the question to her by *flag of truce*, as they all stood in too much awe of the lady to do it personally: till at length, teased by their importunities, she gave notice of her

fixed intention to *hang* the next flag of truce who brought any such impudent proposals of marriage.

Upon this information, it was finally agreed to decide by lot, at a full meeting of her suitors, who should be the hero to surprise and carry off Elizabeth by force, which was considered a matter of danger on account of the warders, who would receive no other commandant, were well fed, and very ferocious.

Elizabeth got wind of their design and place of meeting, which was to be in the old castle of Reuben, near Athy. Eleven or twelve of the squires privately attended at the appointed hour, and it was determined, that whoever should be the lucky winner was to receive the aid and assistance of the others in bearing away the prize, and gaining her hand. To this effect, a league offensive and defensive was entered into between them – one part of which went to destroy Elizabeth's warders root and branch; and to forward their object, it was desirable, if possible, to procure some inmate of the castle, who, by fair or foul means, might be induced to inform them of the best mode of entry: this caused the attempt to carry off old Jug Ogie.

However, they were not long in want of a spy; for Elizabeth, hearing of their plan from the gossoon[7] of Reuben (a nephew of

[7] A gossoon was then, and till very lately, an indispensable part of a country gentleman's establishment; – a dirty, bare-legged boy, who could canter six miles an hour on all sorts of errands and messages – carry turf – draw water – light the fires – turn the spit, when the dog was absent, &c. tell lies, and eat *any thing*. One of these gossoons took a *run* (as they call it) of ten miles and back for some person, and only required a large dram of whiskey for his payment.

Jug's), determined to take advantage of it. "My lady," said Jug Ogie, "pretend to turn me adrift in a dark night, and give out that my gossoon here was found robbing you – they'll soon get wind of it, and I'll be the very person the squires want – and then you'll hear all."

The matter was agreed on, and old Jug Ogie and the gossoon were turned out, as thieves, to the great surprise of the warders and the country. But Jug was found and hired, as she expected; and soon comfortably seated in the kitchen at Castle Reuben, with the gossoon, whom she took in as kitchen-boy. She gave her tongue its full fling, – told a hundred stories about her "*devil* of a mistress," – and undertook to inform the squires of the best way to get to her apartment.

Elizabeth was now sure to learn every thing so soon as determined on. The faction had arranged all matters for the capture: – the night of its execution approached: the old cook prepared a good supper for the *quality*: – the squires arrived, and the gossoon had to run only three miles to give the lady the intelligence. Twelve cavaliers attended, each accompanied by one of the ablest of his faction – for they were all afraid of each other, whenever the wine should rise upwards; and they did not take more for fear of discovery.

The lots, being formed of straws of different lengths, were held by M'Mahon, the host, who was disinterested; and the person of Elizabeth, her fortune, and Moret castle, fell to the lot of M'Carthy O'Moore, one of the Cremorgan squires, and,

according to tradition, as able-bodied, stout a man as any in the whole country. The rest all swore to assist him till death; and one in the morning was the time appointed for the surprise of Elizabeth and her castle – while in the mean time they began to enjoy the good supper of old Jug Ogie.

Castle Reuben had been one of the strongest places in the county, situated on the river Barrow, in the midst of a swamp, which rendered it nearly inaccessible. It had belonged to a natural son of one of the Geraldines, who had his throat cut by Andy M'Mahon, a game-keeper of his own; and nobody choosing to interfere with the *sportsman*, he, with his five sons, (all rapparees well-armed and wicked) remained peaceably in possession of the castle, and now accommodated the squires during their plot against Elizabeth.

That heroic dame, on her part, was not inactive; she informed her warders of the scheme to force a new master on her and them; and many a round oath she swore (with corresponding gesticulations, the description of which would not be over agreeable to modern readers,) that she never would grant her favours to mortal man, but preserve her castle and her chastity to the last extremity.

The warders took fire at the attempt of the squires. They always detested the *defensive* system; and probably to that hatred may be attributed a few of the robberies, burglaries, and burnings, which in those times were considered in that neighbourhood as little more than occasional pastimes.

"Arrah! lady," said Keeran Karry, "how many rogues 'ill there be at Reuben, as you larn, to-night? – arrah!"

"I hear four-and-twenty," said Elizabeth, "besides the M'Mahons."

"Right, a'nuff," said Keeran: "the fish in the Barrow must want food this hard weather; and I can't see why the rump of a rapparee may not make as nice a tit-bit for them as any thing else: four-and-twenty! – phoo!"

All then began to speak together, and join most heartily in the meditated attack on Reuben.

"Arrah! run for the priest," says Ned Regan; "maybe yee'd like a touch of his reverence's office first, for fear there might be any *sin* in it."

"I thought you'd like him with your brandy, warders," said Elizabeth with dignity: "I have him below: he's *praying* a little, and will be up directly. The whole plan is ready for you, and Jug Ogie has the signal. Here, Keeran," giving him a green ribbon with a daub of old Squire Fitzgerald, (who was hanged,) dangling therefrom, "if you and the warders do not bring me the captain's *ear*, you have neither the courage of a weazel, nor – nor" (striking her breast hard with her able hand) "even the revenge of a woman in yees."

"Arrah, be asy, my lady!" said Keeran, "be asy! by my sowl, we'll bring you *four-and-twenty pair*, if your ladyship have any longing for the ears of such villains, my lady!"

"Now, warders," said Elizabeth, who was too cautious to leave

her castle totally unguarded, "as we are going to be just, let us also be generous; only twenty-four of them, besides five or six of the M'Mahons, will be there. Now it would be an eternal disgrace to Moret, if we went to overpower them by *numbers*: twenty-four chosen warders, Father Murphy and the corporal, the gossoon and the piper, are all that shall leave this castle to-night; and if Reuben is not a big bonfire by day-break to-morrow, I hope none of you will come back to me again."

The priest now made his appearance; he certainly seemed *rather* as if he had not been idle below during the colloquy on the leads; and the deep impressions upon the bottle which he held in his hand, gave ground to suppose that he had been very busy and earnest in his devotions.

"My flock!" said Father Murphy, – somewhat lispingly, – "my flock" —

"Arrah!" said Keeran Karry, "we're not *sheep* to-night: never mind your flocks just now. Father! give us a couple of glasses a piece! – time enough for *mutton-making*."

"You are right, my chickens!" bellowed forth Father Murphy, throwing his old black surtout over his shoulder, leaving the empty sleeves dangling at full liberty, and putting a knife and fork in his pocket for ulterior operations: – "I forgive every mother's babe of you *every* thing you choose to do till sun-rise: but if you commit any sin after that time, as big even as the blacks of my nele, I can't take charge of yeer sowls, without a chance of disappointing you."

All was now in a bustle: – the brandy circulated merrily, and each warder had in his own mind made mince-meat of three or four of the Reuben faction, whose ears they fancied already in their pockets. The priest, spitting on his thumb, marked down the "*De profundis*" in the leaves of his double manual, to have it ready for the burials: – every man took his long skeen in his belt – had a thick *club*, with a strong spike at the end of it, slung with a stout leather thong to his wrist; and under his coat, a sharp broad hatchet with a black blade and a crooked handle. And thus, in silence, the twenty-five Moret warders, commanded by Keeran Karry, set out with their priest, the piper, and the gossoon with a copper pot slung over his shoulders as a drum, and a piece of a poker in his hand, to beat it with, on their expedition to the castle of Reuben.

Before twelve o'clock, the warders, the priest, Keeran Karry, and the castle piper, had arrived in the utmost silence and secrecy. In that sort of large half-inhabited castle, the principal entrance was through the farm-yard, which was, indeed, generally the only assailable quarter. In the present instance, the gate was half open, and the house lights appeared to have been collected in the rear, as was judged from their reflection in the water of the Barrow, which ran close under the windows. A noise was heard, but not of drunkenness; – it was a sound as of preparation for battle. Now and then a clash of steel, as if persons were practising at the sword or skeen for the offensive, was going forward in the back hall; and a loud laugh was occasionally heard.

The warders foresaw it would not be so easy a business as they had contemplated, and almost regretted that they had not brought a less chivalrous numerical force.

It was concerted that ten men should creep upon their hands and feet to the front entrance, and await there until, by some accident, it might be sufficiently open for the ferocious rush which was to surprise their opponents.

But Keeran, always discreet, had some forethought that more than usual caution would be requisite. He had counted on dangers which the others had never dreamt of, and his prudence, in all probability, saved the lives of many of the warders. He preceded his men, crawling nearly on his breast; he had suspected that a dog overheard them, and a bark soon confirmed the truth of that suspicion, and announced the possibility of discovery. Keeran, however, was prepared for this circumstance; he had filled his pockets with pieces of bacon impregnated with a concentrated preparation of nux vomica, then, and at a much later period, well known to the clergy and spirituals on the continent.[8] Its fatal effect on dogs was instantaneous; and the savoury bacon having rendered them quite greedy to devour it, it had now an immediate influence on two great mastiffs and a wolf-dog who roamed about the yard at nights. On taking each a portion, they resigned their share of the contest without further noise.

[8] It was formerly used by nuns, monks, &c. in the warm climates to *temper their blood* withal. There is a sort of cooling root sold at the herbalists in Paris at present, of which the young *religieuses* of both sexes are said to make a cheap, palatable, and powerful *anti-satanic ptisan*. It is displayed in the shops on strings, like dried lemon-peel.

Keeran thus advanced crawling to the door; he found it fast, but on listening, soon had reason to conjecture that the inmates were too numerous and well armed to make the result of the battle at all certain. He crept back to the hedge; and having informed the warders of the situation in which they were placed, one and all swore that they would enter or die. The priest had lain himself down under a hay-stack in the outer yard, and the piper had retired nobody knew where, nor in fact did any body care much about him, as he was but a very indifferent chanter.

Keeran now desired the warders to handle their hatchets, and be prepared for an attack so soon as they should see the front door open, and hear three strokes on the copper kettle. The gossoon had left that machine on a spot which he had described near the gate, and Keeran requested that, in case of any fire, they should not mind it till the kettle sounded. He then crawled away, and they saw no more of him.

The moments were precious, and seemed to advance too fast. At one o'clock, a body armed possibly better than themselves, and probably much more numerous, would issue from the castle on their road to Moret, prepared for combat. The result in such a case might be very precarious. The warders by no means felt pleased with their situation; and the absence of their leader, priest, and piper gave no additional ideas of conquest or even security. In this state of things near half an hour had elapsed, when of a sudden they perceived, on the side of the hay-yard toward their own position, a small blaze of fire issue from a corn-

stack – in a moment another, and another! The conflagration was most impetuous; it appeared to be devouring every thing, but as yet was not perceived by the inmates at the rear of the house. At length volumes of flame illuminated by reflection the waters of the river under the back windows. The warders now expecting the sally, rubbed their hands well with bees' wax, and grasped tightly their hatchets, yet moved not: – breathless, with a ferocious anxiety, they awaited the event in almost maddening suspense. A loud noise now issued from the interior of the house; the fire was perceived by the garrison – still it might be accidental – the front door was thrown open, and above thirty of the inmates poured out, some fully, others not fully armed. They rushed into the hay-yard – some cried out it was "treachery!" whilst others vociferated "accident! accident!" – All was confusion, and many a stout head afterward paid for its incredulity.

At that moment the copper kettle was beaten rapidly and with force: – a responsive sound issued from the house – the garrison hesitated, but hesitation was quickly banished; for on the first blow of the kettle, the warders, in a compact body, with hideous yells, rushed on the astonished garrison, who had no conception who their enemies could be. Every hatchet found its victim; limbs, features, hands, were chopped off without mercy – death or dismemberment followed nearly every blow of that brutal weapon, whilst the broad sharp skeens soon searched the bodies of the wounded, and almost half the garrison were annihilated before they were aware of the foe by whom they had

been surprised. The survivors, however, soon learned the cause (perhaps merited) of their comrades' slaughter. The war cry of "A Gerald! – a Gerald! – a Gerald!" – which now accompanied every crash of the murderous hatchet, or every plunge of the broad-bladed skeen, informed them who they were fighting with: – fifteen or sixteen still remained unwounded of the garrison – their case was desperate. Keeran Karry now headed his warders. The gossoon rapidly and fiercely struck the copper, in unison with the sound of the fatal weapons, whilst the old and decrepit Jug Ogie, within the castle, repeated the same sound, thereby leading the garrison to believe that to retreat inside the walls would only be to encounter a fresh enemy.

The affair, however, was far from being finished; – the survivors rapidly retired, and got in a body to the position first occupied by Keeran's warders. They were desperate – they knew they must die, and determined not to go alone to the other regions. The flames still raged with irresistible fury in the hay-yard. It was Keeran who had set fire to the corn and hay, which materials produced an almost supernatural height of blaze and impetuosity of conflagration. The survivors of the garrison were at once fortified, and concealed from view, by a high holly hedge, and awaited their turn to become assailants: – it soon arrived.

From the midst of the burning ricks in the hay-yard a shrill and piercing cry was heard to issue, of "Ough, murther – murther! – the devil – the devil! ough Holy Virgin, save me! if there is any marcy, save me!" The voice was at once recognised by

the warriors of Moret as that of their priest Ned Murphy, who had fallen asleep under a hay-stack, and never awakened till the flames had seized upon his cloak. Bewildered, he knew not how to escape, being met, wherever he ran, by crackling masses. He roared and cursed to the full extent of his voice; and gave himself up for lost, though fortunately, as the materials of his habit did not associate with flame, he was not dangerously burned, although suffering somewhat in his legs. No sooner did they perceive his situation, than the warders, each man forgetting himself, rushed to save their *clergy*, on whom they conceived the salvation of their souls entirely to depend. They imagined that the fight was ended, and prepared to enjoy themselves by the plunder of Castle Reuben.

This was the moment for the defeated garrison: – with a loud yell of "a Moore! a Moore! a Moore!" they fell in their turn upon the entangled warders in the hay-yard, five of whose original number had been wounded, and one killed, in the first fray; whilst many had subsequently thrown down their hatchets, to rescue their pastor, and had only their spikes and skeens wherewith to defend themselves. The battle now became more serious, because more doubtful, than at its commencement. Several of the warders were wounded, and four more lay dead at the entrance to the hay-yard; their spirit was dashed, and their adversaries laid on with the fury of desperation. Keeran Karry had received two sword-thrusts through his shoulder, and could fight no more; but he could do better – he could command. He called to the

warders to retreat and take possession of the castle, which was now untenanted: this step saved them; they retired thither with all possible rapidity, pursued by the former garrison of the place, who however were not able to enter with them, but killed another man before the doors were fast closed. Keeran directed the thick planks and flag-stones to be torn up, thereby leaving the hall open to the cellar beneath, as had been done at Moret. The enemy were at bay at the door, and could not advance, but, on the other hand, many of the warders having, as we before stated, flung away their hatchets, were ill armed. The moment was critical: Keeran, however, was never at a loss for some expedient; he counted his men; five had been killed in the hay-yard, and one just outside the walls; several others were wounded, amongst whom was the piper, who had been asleep. Keeran told the warders that he feared the sun might rise on their total destruction, if something were not immediately done. "Are there," said he, "five among ye, who are willing to swap your lives for the victory?" Every man cried out at once – and, I! – I! – I! – echoed through the hall. "It is well!" said Keeran, who without delay directed five men, and the gossoon with the copper kettle, to steal out at the back of the castle, creep through the hedges, and get round directly into the rear of the foe before they attacked; having succeeded in which, they were immediately to advance, beating the vessel strongly. – "They will suppose," said the warlike Keeran, "that it is a reinforcement, and we shall then return the sound from within. If they believe it to be a reinforcement, they will submit

to mercy: if not, we'll attack them front and rear – and as our numbers are pretty equal, very few of us on either side will tell the story to our childer! but we'll have as good a chance, at any rate, as them villains."

This scheme was carried into immediate execution, and completely succeeded. The enemy, who were now grouped outside the door, hearing the kettle in their rear, supposed that they should be at once attacked by sally and from behind. Thinking they had now only to choose between death and submission, the mercy, which was offered, they accepted; and peep-o'day being arrived, the vanquished agreed to throw their arms into the well, – to swear before the priest that they never would disturb, or aid in disturbing, Lady Elizabeth or the castle of Moret, – that no man on either side should be called upon by law for his fighting that night; and finally, that the person who had succeeded in drawing the lot for Elizabeth, should deliver up the lock of his hair that grew next his ear, to testify his submission: this latter clause, however, was stipulated needlessly, as M'Carthy O'Moore was discovered in the farm-yard, with nearly all his face sliced off, and several skeen wounds in his arms and body. Early in the morning, the dead were buried without noise or disturbance in a consecrated gravel-pit, and both parties breakfasted together in perfect cordiality and good-humour: those who fell were mostly tenants of the squires. The priest, having had his burnt legs and arm dressed with *chewed*

*herbs*[9] by Jug Ogie, said a full mass, and gave all parties double absolution, as the affair was completed by the rising of the sun. The yard was cleared of blood and havock; the warders and garrison parted in perfect friendship; and the former returned to Moret Castle, bringing back Jug Ogie to her impatient mistress. Of the warders, thirteen returned safe; six remained behind badly wounded, and six were dead. Keeran's wounds were severe, but they soon healed; and Elizabeth afterward resided at Moret to a very late period in the reign of George the First. Reuben soon changed its occupant, M'Mahon, who, in the sequel, was hanged for the murder of his master; and that part of the country has since become one of the most civilized of the whole province.

I have given the foregoing little history in full, inasmuch as it is but little known – is, I believe, strictly matter of fact, and exhibits a curious picture of the state of Irish society and manners in or about the year 1690. A small part of Moret castle is still standing, and presents a very great curiosity. One single ivy tree has, for a period beyond the memory of man, enveloped the entire ruins; has insinuated its tendrils through the thick walls; penetrated every seam and aperture; and now contributes to display one

[9] I believe that most countries produce simple herbs, of a nature adapted to the cure of diseases prevalent in their respective climates. The old Irishwomen formerly had wonderful skill in finding and applying such remedies; they chewed the herbs into a sort of pap, and then extracted the juice, for the patient to take inwardly – whilst the substance was applied as a poultice.Many of the rebels told me, after 1798, that having no doctors, the country bone-setters and the "*Colloughs*" (old women) soon cured their flesh-wounds and broken limbs: "but," added they, "when a *boy's skull* was *smash'd*, there was no more *good* in him."

solid mass of combined masonry and foliage. It stands on the old Byrne (now Lansdowne) estate, about a mile from the great heath, Queen's County.

# IRISH GENTRY AND THEIR RETAINERS

Instances of attachment formerly of the lower orders of Irish to the gentry – A field of corn of my father's reaped in one night without his knowledge – My grandfather's servants cut a man's ears off by misinterpretation – My grandfather and grandmother tried for the fact – Acquitted – The colliers of Donane – Their fidelity at my election at Ballynakill, 1790.

The numerous and remarkable instances, which came within my own observation, of mutual attachment between the Irish peasantry and their landlords in former times, would, were I to detail them, fill volumes. A few only will suffice, in addition to what has already been stated, to show the nature of that reciprocal good-will, which, on many occasions, was singularly useful to both parties; and in selecting these instances from such as occurred in my own family, I neither mean to play the vain egotist, nor to determine generals by particulars, since good landlords and attached peasantry were then spread over the entire face of Ireland, and bore a great proportion to the whole country. Were that the case at present, Ireland would be an aid, and a substantial friend, instead of a burthen and a troublesome neighbour to her sister island. He must be a good prophet that

can even now foresee the final results of the Union.

I remember that a very extensive field of corn of my father's had once become too ripe, inasmuch as all the reapers in the country were employed in getting in their own scanty crops before they shedded. Some of the servants had heard my father regret that he could not by possibility get in his reapers without taking them from these little crops, and that he would sooner lose his own.

This field was within full view of our windows. My father had given up the idea of being able to cut his corn in due time. One morning, when he rose, he could not believe his sight: – he looked – rubbed his eyes – called the servants, and asked them if they saw *any thing odd* in the field: – they certainly did – for, on our family retiring to rest the night before, the whole body of the peasantry of the country, after their hard labour during the day, had come upon the great field, and had reaped and stacked it before dawn! None of them would even tell him who had a hand in it. Similar instances of affection repeatedly took place; and no tenant on any of the estates of my family was ever distrained, or even pressed, for rent. Their gratitude for this knew no bounds; and the only individuals who ever annoyed them were the parsons, by their proctors, and the tax-gatherers for hearth-money; and though hard cash was scant with both landlord and tenant, and no small bank-notes had got into circulation, provisions were plentiful, and but little inconvenience was experienced by the peasantry from want of a circulating

medium. There was constant residence and work – no banks and no machinery; and though the people might not be quite so refined, most undoubtedly they were vastly happier.

But a much more characteristic proof than the foregoing of the extraordinary devotion of the lower to the higher orders of Ireland, in former times, occurred in my family, and is publicly on record.

My grandfather, Mr. French, of County Galway, was a remarkably small, nice little man, but of extremely irritable temperament. He was an excellent swordsman, and proud to excess: indeed, of family pride, Galway County was at that time the focus, and not without some reason.

Certain relics of feudal arrogance frequently set the neighbours and their adherents together by the ears: – my grandfather had conceived a contempt for, and antipathy to, a sturdy *half-mounted* gentleman, one Mr. Dennis Bodkin, who, having an independent mind, entertained an equal aversion to the arrogance of my grandfather, whom he took every possible opportunity of irritating and opposing.

My grandmother, an O'Brien, was high and proud – steady and sensible – but disposed to be rather violent at times in her contempts and animosities; and entirely agreed with her husband in his detestation of Mr. Dennis Bodkin.

On some occasion or other, Mr. Dennis had outdone his usual outdoings, and chagrined the squire and his lady most outrageously. A large company dined at my grandfather's, and

my grandmother launched out in her abuse of Dennis, concluding her exordium by an hyperbole of hatred expressed, but not at all meant, in these words: – "I wish the fellow's ears were cut off! *that* might quiet him."

It passed over as usual: the subject was changed, and all went on comfortably till supper; at which time, when every body was in full glee, the old butler, Ned Regan (who had drunk enough), came in: – joy was in his eye; and whispering something to his mistress which she did not comprehend, he put a large snuff-box into her hand. Fancying it was some whim of her old domestic, she opened the box and shook out its contents: – when, lo! a considerable portion of a pair of bloody ears dropped upon the table! – The horror and surprise of the company may be conceived: on which Ned exclaimed – "Sure, my lady, you wished that Dennis Bodkin's ears were cut off; so I told old Gahagan (the game-keeper), and he took a few boys with him, and brought back Dennis Bodkin's ears – and there they are; and I hope you are plazed, my lady!"

The scene may be imagined; – but its results had like to have been of a more serious nature. The sportsman and the *boys* were ordered to get off as fast as they could; but my grandfather and grandmother were held to heavy bail, and tried at the ensuing assizes at Galway. The evidence of the entire company, however, united in proving that my grandmother never had an idea of any such order, and that it was a misapprehension on the part of the servants. They were, of course, acquitted. The sportsman never

re-appeared in the county till after the death of Dennis Bodkin, which took place three years subsequently, when old Gahagan was reinstated as game-keeper.

This anecdote may give the reader an idea of the devotion of servants, in those days, to their masters. But the order of things is reversed – and the change of times cannot be better illustrated than by the propensity servants now have to rob (and, if convenient, murder) the families from whom they derive their daily bread. Where the remote error lies, I know not; but certainly the ancient fidelity of domestics seems to be totally out of fashion with those gentry at present.

A more recent instance of the same feeling as that indicated by the two former anecdotes, – namely, the devotion of the country people to old settlers and families, – occurred to myself; and, as I am upon the subject, I will mention it. I stood a contested election, in the year 1790, for the borough of Ballynakill, for which my ancestors had returned two members to Parliament during nearly 200 years. It was usurped by the Marquis of Drogheda, and I contested it.

On the day of the election, my eldest brother and myself being candidates, and the business preparing to begin, a cry was heard that the whole *colliery* was coming down from Donane, about eight miles off. The returning officer, Mr. Trench, lost no time: six voters were polled against me; mine were refused generally in mass; the books were repacked, and the result of the poll declared – the election ended, and my opponents just retiring

from the town, – when seven or eight hundred colliers were seen entering it with colours flying and pipers playing; their faces were all blackened, and a more tremendous assemblage was scarce ever witnessed. After the usual shoutings, they all rushed into the town with loud cries of "A Barrinton! a Barrinton! Who dares say *black* is the *white* of his eye? Down with the Droghedas! – We don't forget Ballyragget yet! – Oh, cursed Sandy Cahill! – High for Donane!" &c.

The chief captain came up to me: – "Counsellor, dear!" said he, "we're all come from Donane to help your honour against the villains that oppose you: – we're the boys that can *tittivate*! – Barrinton for ever! hurra!" – Then coming close to me, and lowering his tone, he added, – "Counsellor, jewel! *which* of the villains shall we *settle first*?"

To quiet him, I shook his black hand, told him nobody should be hurt, and that the gentlemen had all left the town.

"Left the town?" said he, quite disappointed: "Why then, counsellor, we'll be after overtaking them. Barrinton for ever! – Donane, boys! – Come on, boys! we'll be after the Droghedas."

I feared that I had no control over the riotous humour of the colliers, and knew but one mode of keeping them quiet. I desired Billy Howard, the innkeeper, to bring out all the ale he had; and having procured many barrels in addition, together with all the bread and cheese in the place, I set them at it as hard as might be. I told them I was sure of being elected in Dublin, and "*to stay azy*" (their own language); and in a little time I saw them

as tractable as lambs. They made a bonfire in the evening, and about ten o'clock I left them as happy and merry a set of colliers as ever existed. Such as were able strolled back in the night; the others next morning; and not the slightest injury was done to any body or any thing.

The above was a totally unexpected and voluntary proof of the disinterested and ardent attachment of the Irish country people to all who they thought would protect or procure them justice.[10]

[10] Here I wish to observe the distinction which occurs to me as existing between the attachment of the Scottish Highlanders to their lairds and the ardent love of the Irish peasantry to their landlords – (I mean, in my early days, when their landlords loved them.)With the Highlanders – consanguinity, a common name, and the prescriptive authority of the Scottish chief over his military clan, (altogether combining the ties of blood and feudal obedience) exerted a powerful and impetuous influence on the mind of the vassal. Yet their natural character – fierce though calculating – desperate and decisive – generated a sort of independent subserviency, mingled with headstrong propensities which their lairds often found it very difficult to moderate, and occasionally impossible to restrain when upon actual service.The Irish peasantry, more witty and less wise, thoughtless, enthusiastically ardent, living in an unsophisticated way but at the same time less secluded than the Highlanders, entertained an hereditary, voluntary, uninfluenced love for the whole family of their landlords. Though no consanguinity bound the two classes to each other, and no feudal power enforced the fidelity of the inferior one, their chiefs resided in their very hearts: – they obeyed because they loved them: their affection, founded on gratitude, was simple and unadulterated, and they would count their lives well lost for the honour of their landlords. In the midst of the deepest poverty, their attachment was more cheerful, more free, yet more cordial and generous, than that of any other peasantry to any chiefs in Europe.The Irish modes of expressing fondness for any of the family of the old landlords (families which, alas! have now nearly deserted their country) are singular and affecting. I witnessed, not long since, a genuine example of this, near the old mansion of my family. – "Augh then! Musha! Musha! the owld times! – the owld times! – Ough! then my owld eyes see a B – before I die. 'Tis I that loved

the breed of yees – ough! 'tis myself that would kiss the track of his honour's feet in the guther, if he was alive to lead us! Ough! God rest his sowl! any how! Ough! a-vourneen! a-vourneen!"Yet these peasants were all papists, and their landlords all protestants: – religion, indeed, was never thought of in the matter. If the landlords had continued the same, the tenantry would not have altered. But under the present system, the populace of Ireland will never long remain tranquil, whilst at the same time it is increasing in number – an increase that cannot be got rid of: – hang, shoot, and exile five hundred thousand Irish, the number will scarcely be missed, and in two years the country will be as full as ever again.It is not my intention to enumerate the several modes recommended for reducing the Irish population, by remote and recent politicians; from Sir William Petty's project for *transporting the men*, – to Dean Swift's scheme of *eating the children*, and the modern idea of *famishing the adults*. A variety of plans may yet, I conceive, be devised, without applying to either of these *remedies*.

# MY EDUCATION

My godfathers – Lord Maryborough – Personal description and extraordinary character of Mr. Michael Lodge – My early education – At home – At school – My private tutor, Rev. P. Crawley, described – Defects of the University course – Lord Donoughmore's father – Anecdote of the Vice-Provost – A country sportsman's education.

A christening was, formerly, a great family epocha: – my godfathers were Mr. Pool of Ballyfin, and Captain Pigott of Brocologh Park; and I must have been a very pleasant infant, for Mr. Pool, having no children, desired to take me home with him, in which case I should probably have cut out of feather a very good person and a very kind friend – the present Lord Maryborough, whom Mr. Pool afterwards adopted whilst a midshipman in the navy, and bequeathed him a noble demesne and a splendid estate near my father's. My family have always supported Lord Maryborough for Queen's County, and his lordship's tenants supported me in my hard-contested election for Maryborough in 1800.

No public functionary could act more laudably than Mr. Pool did whilst secretary in Ireland; and it must be a high gratification to him to reflect that, in the year 1800, he did not sell his vote, nor abet the degradation of his country.

Captain Pigott expressed the same desire to patronise me as

Mr. Pool; – received a similar refusal, and left his property, I believe, to a parcel of hospitals: whilst I was submitted to the guardianship of Colonel Jonah Barrington, and the instructions of Mr. Michael Lodge, a person of very considerable consequence in my early memoirs, and to whose ideas and eccentricities I really believe I am indebted for a great proportion of my own, and certainly not the worst of them.

Mr. George Lodge had married a love-daughter of old Stephen Fitzgerald, Esq. of Bally Thomas, who by affinity was a relative of the house of Cullenaghmore, and from this union sprang Mr. Michael Lodge.

I never shall forget his figure! – he was a tall man with thin legs and great hands, and was generally biting one of his nails whilst employed in teaching me. The top of his head was half bald: his remaining hair was clubbed with a rose-ribbon; a tight stock, with a large silver buckle to it behind, appeared to be almost choking him: his chin and jaws were very long: and he used to hang his under jaw, shut one eye, and look up to the ceiling, when he was thinking, or trying to recollect any thing.

Mr. Michael Lodge had been what is called a Matross in the artillery service. My grandfather had got him made a gauger; but he was turned adrift for letting a poor man do something wrong about distilling. He then became a land-surveyor and architect for the farmers: – he could farry, cure cows of the murrain, had numerous secrets about cattle and physic, and was accounted the best bleeder and bone-setter in that county – all

of which healing accomplishments he exercised gratis. He was also a famous brewer and accountant – in fine, was every thing at Cullenagh: steward, agent, caterer, farmer, sportsman, secretary, clerk to the colonel as a magistrate, and also clerk to Mr. Barret as the parson: but he would not sing a stave in church, though he'd chant indefatigably in the hall. He had the greatest contempt for women, and used to beat the maid-servants; whilst the men durst not vex him, as he was quite despotic! He had a turning-lathe, a number of grinding-stones, and a carpenter's bench, in his room. He used to tin the saucepans, which act he called *chymistry*; and I have seen him, like a tailor, putting a new cape to his riding-coat! He made all sorts of nets, and knit stockings; but above all, he piqued himself on the variety and depth of his *learning*.

Under the tuition of this Mr. Michael Lodge, who was surnamed the "wise man of Cullenaghmore," I was placed at four years of age, to learn as much of the foregoing as he could teach me in the next five years: at the expiration of which period he had no doubt of my knowing as much as himself, and then (he said) I should go to school "*to teach the master*."

This idea of teaching the master was the greatest possible incitement to me; and as there was no other child in the house, I never was idle, but was as inquisitive and troublesome as can be imagined. Every thing was explained to me; and I not only got on surprisingly, but my memory was found to be so strong, that Mr. Michael Lodge told my grandfather *half learning* would answer me as well as *whole learning* would another child. In truth, before

my sixth year, I was making a very great hole in Mr. Lodge's stock of information (fortification and gunnery excepted), and I verily believe he only began to learn many things himself when he commenced teaching them to me.

He took me a regular course by Horn-book, Primer, Spelling-book, Reading-made-Easy, Æsop's Fables, &c.: but I soon aspired to such of the old library books as had pictures in them; and particularly, a very large History of the Bible with cuts was my constant study. Hence I knew how every saint was murdered; and Mr. Lodge not only told me that each martyr had a painter to take his portrait before death, but also fully explained to me how they had all sat for their pictures, and assured me that most of them had been murdered by the Papists. I recollect at this day the faces of every one of them at their time of martyrdom; so strongly do youthful impressions sink into the mind, when derived from objects which at the time were viewed with interest.[11]

Be this as it may, however, my wise man, Mr. Michael Lodge, used his heart, head, and hands, as zealously as he could to teach me most things that he did know, and many things he did not know; but with a skill which none of our schoolmasters practise, he made me think he was only amusing instead of giving me

[11] Formerly the chimneys were all covered with tiles, having scripture-pieces, examples of natural history, &c. daubed on them; and there being a great variety, the father or mother (sitting of a winter's evening round the hearth with the young ones) explained the meaning of the tiles out of the Bible, &c.; so that the impression was made without being called a lesson, and the child acquired knowledge without thinking that it was being taught. So far as it went, this was one of the best modes of instruction.

a task. The old man tried to make me inquisitive, and inclined to ask about the thing which he wanted to explain to me; and consequently, at eight years old I could read prose and poetry, – write text, – draw a house, a horse, and a game-cock, – tin a copper saucepan, and turn my own tops. I could do the manual exercise with my grandfather's crutch; and had learnt, besides, how to make bullets, pens, and black-ball; to dance a jig, sing a *cronaune*,[12] and play the Jew's harp. Michael also showed me, out of scripture, how the world stood stock still whilst the sun was galloping round it; so that it was no easy matter at college to satisfy me as to the Copernican system. In fact, the old Matross gave me such a various and whimsical assemblage of subjects to think about, that my young brain imbibed as many odd, chivalrous, and puzzling theories as would drive some children out of their senses; and, truly, I found it no easy matter to get rid of several of them when it became absolutely necessary, whilst some I shall certainly retain till my death's day.

This course of education I most sedulously followed, until it pleased God to suspend my learning by the death of my grandfather, on whom I doted. He had taught me the broad-sword exercise with his cane, how to snap a pistol, and shoot

[12] The *Cronaune* had *no words*; it was a curious species of song, quite peculiar, I believe, to Ireland, and executed by drawing in the greatest possible portion of breath, and then making a sound like a humming-top: – whoever could *hum* the longest, was accounted the best Cronauner. In many country gentlemen's houses, there was a fool kept for the express purpose, who also played the trump, or Jews'-harp; some of them in a surprising manner.

with the bow and arrow; and had bespoken a little quarter-staff, to perfect me in that favourite exercise of his youth, by which he had been enabled to knock a gentleman's brains out for a wager, on the ridge of Maryborough, in company with the great grandfather of the present Judge Arthur Moore, of the Common Pleas of Ireland. It is a whimsical gratification to me, to think that I do not at this moment forget much of the said instruction which I received either from Michael Lodge, the Matross, or from Colonel Jonah Barrington, – though after a lapse of nearly sixty years!

A new scene was now to be opened to me. I was carried to Dublin, and put to the famous schoolmaster of that day, Dr. Ball, of St. Michael-a-Powell's, Ship-street; – one of the old round towers still stands in the yard – towers which defy all tradition. Here my puzzling commenced in good earnest. I was required to learn the *English* Grammar in the *Latin* tongue; and to translate languages without understanding any of them. I was taught prosody without verse, and rhetoric without composition; and before I had ever heard any oration, except a sermon, I was flogged for not minding my emphasis in recitation. To complete my satisfaction, – for fear I should be idle during the course of the week, castigation was regularly administered every Monday morning, to give me, by anticipation, a sample of what the *repetition day* might produce.

However, notwithstanding all this, I worked my way, got two premiums, and at length was reported fit to be placed under the

hands of a private tutor, by whom I was to be *finished* for the University.

That tutor was well known many years in Digges-street, Dublin, and cut a still more extraordinary figure than the Matross. He was the Rev. Patrick Crawly, Rector of Killgobbin, whose son was hanged a few years ago for murdering two old women with a shoemaker's hammer. My tutor's person was, in my imagination, of the same genus as that of Caliban. His feet covered a considerable space of any room wherein he stood, and his thumbs were so large that he could scarcely hold a book without hiding more than half the page of it: – though bulky himself, his clothes doubled the dimensions proper to suit his body; and an immense frowzy wig, powdered once a week, covered a head which, for size and form, might vie with a quarter-cask.

Vaccination not having as yet plundered horned cattle of their disorders, its predecessor had left evident proofs of attachment to the rector's countenance. That old Christian malady, the small-pox, which had resided so many centuries amongst our ancestors, and which modern innovations have endeavoured to undermine, had placed his features in a perfect state of compactness and security – each being sewed quite tight to its neighbour, every seam appearing deep and gristly, so that the whole visage appeared to defy alike the edge of the sharpest scalpel and the skill of the most expert anatomist.

Yet this was as good-hearted a parson as ever lived: –

affectionate, friendly, and, so far as Greek, Latin, Prosody, and Euclid went, excelled by few: and under him I acquired, in one year, more classical knowledge than I had done during the former six, – whence I was enabled, out of thirty-six pupils, to obtain an early place in the University of Dublin, at entrance.

The college course, at that time, though a very learned one, was ill arranged, pedantic, and totally out of sequence. Students were examined in "Locke on the Human Understanding," before their own had arrived at the first stage of maturity; and Euclid was pressed upon their reason before any one of them could comprehend a single problem. We were set to work at the most abstruse sciences before we had well digested the simpler ones, and posed ourselves at optics, natural philosophy, ethics, astronomy, mathematics, metaphysics, &c. &c. without the least relief from belles-lettres, modern history, geography, or poetry; in short, without regard to any of those acquirements – the classics excepted, – which form essential parts of a gentleman's education.[13]

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[13] Mr. Hutchinson, a later provost, father of Lord Donoughmore, went into the opposite extreme; a most excellent classical scholar himself, polished and well read, he wished to introduce every elegant branch of erudition: – to cultivate the modern languages, – in short, to adapt the course to the education of men of rank as well as men of science. The plan was most laudable, but was considered not monastic enough: indeed, a polished gentleman would have operated like a ghost among those pedantic Fellows of Trinity College. Dr. Waller was the only Fellow of that description I ever saw.Mr. Hutchinson went too far in proposing a riding-house. The scheme drew forth from Dr. Duigenan a pamphlet called "Pranceriana," which turned the project and projector into most consummate, but very coarse and ill-natured ridicule.Doctor

Nevertheless, I jogged on with *bene* for the classics —*satis* for the sciences – and *mediocriter* for mathematics. I had, however, the mortification of seeing the stupidest fellows I ever met, at school or college, beat me out of the field in some of the examinations, and very justly obtain premiums for sciences which I could not bring within the scope of my comprehension.

My consolation is, that many men of superior talent to myself came off no better; and I had the *satisfaction* of hearing that some of the most erudite, studious, and pedantic of my contemporary collegians, who entertained an utter contempt for me, went out of their senses; and I do believe that there are at this moment some of the most eminent of my academic rivals amusing themselves in mad-houses. One of them I lamented much – he still lives; his case is a most extraordinary one, and I shall mention it hereafter: – 'twill puzzle the doctors.

Whenever, indeed, I seek amusement by tracing the fate of such of my school and college friends as I can get information about, I find that many of the most promising and conspicuous have met untimely ends; and that most of those men whose great talents distinguished them first in the university and afterward

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Barrett, late vice-provost, dining at the table of the new provost, who lived in a style of elegance attempted by none of his predecessors, helped himself to what he thought a peach, but which happened to be a shape made of ice. On taking it into his mouth, never having tasted ice before, he supposed, from the pang given to his teeth and the shock which his tongue and mouth instantly received, that the sensation was produced by heat. Starting up, therefore, he cried out (and it was the only oath he ever uttered), "I'm *scalded*, by G – d!" – ran home, and sent for the next apothecary!

at the bar, had entered, as sizers, for provision as well as for learning: – indigence and genius were thus jointly concerned in their merited elevation; and I am convinced that the finest abilities are frequently buried alive in affluence and in luxury: *revolutions* are sometimes their hot-bed, and at other times their grave.

The death of my grandmother, which now took place, made a very considerable change in my situation, and I had sense enough, though still very young, to see the necessity of turning my mind toward a preparation for some lucrative profession – either law, physic, divinity, or war.

I debated on all these, as I thought, with great impartiality: – the pedantry of the book-worms had disgusted me with clericals; wooden legs put me out of conceit with warfare; the horrors of death made me shudder at medicine; the law was but a lottery-trade, too precarious for my taste; and mercantile pursuits were too humiliating for my ambition. Nothing, on the other hand, could induce me to remain a *walking gentleman*: and so, every occupation that I could think of having its peculiar disqualification, I remained a considerable time in a state of uncertainty and disquietude.

Meanwhile, although my choice had nothing to do with the matter, by residing at my father's I got almost imperceptibly engaged in that species of *profession* exercised by young sportsmen, whereby I was initiated into a number of *accomplishments* ten times worse than the negative ones of

the walking gentleman: – namely, – riding, drinking, dancing, carousing, hunting, shooting, fishing, fighting, racing, cock-fighting, &c. &c.

After my grandmother's death, as my father's country-house was my home, so my two elder brothers became my *tutors*– the rustics my *precedents*– and a newspaper my *literature*. However, the foundation for my propensities had been too well laid to be easily rooted up; and whilst I certainly, for awhile, indulged in the habits of those around me, I was not at all idle as to the pursuits I had been previously accustomed to. I had a pretty good assortment of books of my own, and seldom passed a day without devoting some part of it to reading or letter-writing; and though I certainly somewhat mis-spent, I cannot accuse myself of having lost, the period I passed at Blandsfort – since I obtained therein a full insight into the manners, habits, and dispositions of the different classes of Irish, in situations and under circumstances which permitted nature to exhibit her traits without restraint or caution: building on which foundation, my greatest pleasure has ever been that of decyphering character, adding to and embellishing the superstructure which my experience and observation have since conspired to raise.

It is quite impossible I can give a better idea of the dissipation of that period, into which I was thus plunged, than by describing an incident I shall never forget, and which occurred very soon after my first *entrée* into the sporting sphere. – It happened in

the year 1778, and was then no kind of novelty: – wherever there were hounds, a kennel, and a huntsman, there was the same species of *scena*, (with variations, however, *ad libitum*,) when the frost and bad weather put a stop to field avocations.

# IRISH DISSIPATION IN 1778

The huntsman's cottage – Preparations for a seven days' carousal – A cock-fight – Welsh main – Harmony – A cow and a hogshead of wine consumed by the party – Comparison between former dissipation and that of the present day – A dandy at dinner in Bond-street – Captain Parsons Hoye and his nephew – Character and description of both – The nephew disinherited by his uncle for dandyism – Curious anecdote of Dr. Jenkins piercing Admiral Cosby's fist.

Close to the kennel of my father's hounds, he had built a small cottage, which was occupied solely by an old huntsman, (Matthew Querns,) his older wife, and his nephew, a whipper-in. The chase, the bottle, and the piper, were the enjoyments of winter; and nothing could recompense a suspension of these enjoyments.

My elder brother, justly apprehending that the frost and snow of Christmas might probably prevent their usual occupation of the chase, on St. Stephen's day, (26th Dec.) determined to provide against any listlessness during the shut-up period, by an uninterrupted match of what was called *hard going*, till the weather should break up.

A hogshead of superior claret[14] was therefore sent to the

[14] Claret was at that time about 18*l.* the hogshead, if sold for *ready rhino*; if on

cottage of old Querns the huntsman; and a fat cow, killed, and plundered of her skin, was hung up by the heels. All the windows were closed, to keep out the light. One room, filled with straw and numerous blankets, was destined for a bed-chamber in common; and another was prepared as a kitchen for the use of the servants. Claret, – cold, mulled, or buttered,[15]– was to be the beverage for the whole company; and in addition to the cow above mentioned, chickens, bacon, and bread were the only admitted viands. Wallace and Hosey, my father's and my brother's pipers, and Doyle, a blind but famous fiddler, were employed to enliven the banquet, which it was determined should continue till the cow became a skeleton, and the claret should be on its stoop.

My two elder brothers; – two gentlemen of the name of Taylor (one of them afterward a writer in India); – Mr. Barrington Lodge, a rough songster; – Frank Skelton, a jester and a butt; – Jemmy Moffat, the most knowing sportsman of the neighbourhood; – and two other sporting gentlemen of the

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credit, the law, before payment, generally mounted it to 200*l.*; besides bribing the sub-sheriff to make his return, and swear that Squire * * * * had "neither *body* nor *goods*." It is a remarkable fact, that formerly scarce a hogshead of claret crossed the bridge of Banaghu, for a country gentleman, without being followed, within two years, by an attorney, a sheriff's officer, and a *receiver of all his rents*, who generally carried back securities for 500*l.*

[15] Buttered claret was then a favourite beverage – viz. claret boiled with spice and sugar, orange-peel, and a glass of brandy; four eggs, well beat up, were then introduced, and the whole poured in a foaming state from one jug into another, till all was frothy and cream-coloured. 'Twas "very *savoury*!"

county, – composed the *permanent* bacchanalians. A few visitors were occasionally admitted.

As for myself, I was too unseasoned to go through more than the first ordeal, which was on a frosty St. Stephen's day, when the *hard goers* partook of their opening banquet, and several neighbours were invited, to honour the commencement of what they called their *shut-up pilgrimage*.

The old huntsman was the only male attendant; and his ancient spouse, once a kitchen-maid in the family, (now somewhat resembling the amiable Leonarda in Gil Blas,) was the cook; whilst the drudgery fell to the lot of the whipper-in. A long knife was prepared, to cut collops from the cow; a large turf fire seemed to court the gridiron on its cinders; the pot bubbled up as if proud of its contents, whilst plump white chickens floated in crowds upon the surface of the water; the simmering potatoes, just bursting their drab surtouts, exposed the delicate whiteness of their mealy bosoms; the claret was tapped, and the long earthen wide-mouthed pitchers stood gaping under the impatient cock, to receive their portions. The pipers plied their chants; the fiddler clasped his cremona; and never did any feast commence with more auspicious appearances of hilarity and dissipation – anticipations which were not doomed to be falsified.

I shall never forget the attraction this novelty had for my youthful mind. All thoughts but those of good cheer were for the time totally obliterated. A few curses were, it is true, requisite to spur on old Leonarda's skill, but at length the banquet

entered: the luscious smoked bacon, bedded on its cabbage mattress, and partly obscured by its own savoury steam, might have tempted the most fastidious of epicures; whilst the round trussed chickens, ranged by the half dozen on hot pewter dishes, turned up their white plump merry-thoughts exciting equally the eye and appetite: fat collops of the hanging cow, sliced indiscriminately from her tenderest points, grilled over the clear embers upon a shining gridiron, (half drowned in their own luscious juices, and garnished with little pyramids of congenial shalots,) smoked at the bottom of the well-furnished board. A prologue of cherry-bounce (brandy) preceded the entertainment, which was enlivened by hob-nobs and joyous exclamations.

Numerous toasts, as was customary in those days, intervened to prolong and give zest to the repast: every man shouted forth the name of his fair favourite, and each voluntarily surrendered a portion of his own reason, in bumpers to the beauty of his neighbour's mistress. The pipers jerked from their bags appropriate planxties to every jolly sentiment: the jokers cracked the usual jests and ribaldry: one songster chanted the joys of wine and women; another gave, in full glee, "stole away" and "the pleasures of the fox-chase:" the fiddler sawed his merriest jigs: the old huntsman sounded his long cow's horn, and thrusting his fore-finger into his ear (to aid the quaver,) gave the *view holloa!* of nearly ten minutes' duration; to which melody *tally ho!* was responded by every stentorian voice. A fox's brush stuck into a candlestick, in the centre of the table, was worshipped

as a divinity! Claret flowed – bumpers were multiplied – and chickens, in the garb of spicy spitchcocks, assumed the name of *devils* to whet the appetites which it was impossible to conquer.

For some hours my jollity kept pace with that of my companions: but at length reason gradually began to lighten me of its burden, and in its last efforts kindly suggested the straw-chamber as an asylum. Two couple of favourite hounds had been introduced to share the joyous pastime of their friends and master; and the deep bass of their throats, excited by the shrillness of the huntsman's tenor, harmonized by two rattling pipers, a jigging fiddler, and twelve voices, in twelve different keys, all bellowing in one continuous unrelenting chime – was the last point of recognition which Bacchus permitted me to exercise: my eyes now began to perceive a much larger company than the room actually contained; – the lights were more than doubled, without any *real* increase of their number; and even the chairs and tables commenced dancing a series of minuets before me. A faint *tally ho!* was attempted by my reluctant lips; but I believe the effort was unsuccessful, and I very soon lost, in the straw-room, all that brilliant consciousness of existence, in the possession of which the morning had found me so happy.

Just as I was closing my eyes to a twelve hours' slumber, I distinguished the general roar of "stole away!" which seemed almost to raise up the very roof of old Matt Querns's cottage.

At noon, next day, a scene of a different nature was exhibited. I found, on waking, two associates by my side, in as perfect

insensibility as that from which I had just aroused. Our pipers appeared indubitably *dead*! but the fiddler, who had the privilege of age and blindness, had taken a hearty nap, and seemed as much alive as ever.

The room of banquet had been re-arranged by the old woman: spitchcocked chickens, fried rashers, and broiled marrowbones appeared struggling for precedence. The clean cloth looked fresh and exciting: jugs of mulled and buttered claret foamed hot upon the refurnished table; and a better or heartier breakfast I never enjoyed in my life.

A few members of the jovial crew had remained all night at their posts; but I suppose alternately took some rest, as they seemed not at all affected by their repletion. Soap and hot water restored at once their spirits and their persons; and it was determined that the rooms should be ventilated and cleared out for a cock-fight, to pass time till the approach of dinner.

In this battle-royal, every man backed his own bird; twelve of which courageous animals were set down together to fight it out – the survivor to gain all. In point of principle, the battle of the Horatii and Curiatii was re-acted; and in about an hour, one cock crowed out his triumph over the mangled body of his last opponent; – being himself, strange to say, but little wounded. The other eleven lay dead; and to the victor was unanimously voted a *writ of ease*, with sole monarchy over the hen-roost for the remainder of his days; and I remember him, for many years, the proud and happy commandant of his poultry-yard and seraglio.

They named him "Hyder Ally;" – and I do not think a more enviable two-legged animal existed.

Fresh visitors were introduced each successive day, and the seventh morning had arisen before the feast broke up. As that day advanced, the cow was proclaimed to have furnished her full quantum of good dishes; the claret was upon its stoop; and the last gallon, mulled with a pound of spices, was drunk in tumblers to the next merry meeting! – All now retired to their *natural* rest, until the evening announced a different scene.

An early supper, to be partaken of by all the young folks, of both sexes, in the neighbourhood, was provided in the dwelling-house, to terminate the festivities. A dance, as usual, wound up the entertainment; and what was then termed a "raking pot of tea,"[16] put a finishing stroke, in jollity and good-humour, to such a revel as I never saw before, and, I am sure, shall never see again.

When I compare with the foregoing the habits of the present day, and see the grandsons of those joyous and vigorous sportsmen mincing their fish and tit-bits at their favourite box in Bond-street; amalgamating their ounce of salad on a silver saucer; employing six sauces to coax one appetite; burning up the palate to make its enjoyments the more exquisite; sipping their acid claret, disguised by an olive or neutralized by a chesnut;

[16] A *raking pot of tea* always wound up an Irish jollification. It consisted of a general meeting about day-break, in the common hall, of all the "young people" of the house – mothers and old aunts of course excluded; of a huge hot cake well buttered – strong tea – brandy, milk, and nutmeg, amalgamated into syllabubs – the fox-hunter's jig, thoroughly danced – a kiss all round, and a sorrowful "*good*-morning."

lisping out for the scented waiter, and paying him the price of a feast for the modicum of a Lilliputian, and the pay of a captain for the attendance of a blackguard; – it amuses me extremely, and makes me speculate on what their forefathers would have done to those admirable Epicenes, if they had had them at the "Pilgrimage" in the huntsman's cottage.

To these extremes of former roughness and modern affectation, it would require the pen of such a writer as Fielding to do ample justice. It may, however, afford our reader some diversion to trace the degrees which led from the grossness of the former down to the effeminacy of the latter; and these may, in a great measure, be collected from the various incidents which will be found scattered throughout these sketches of sixty solar revolutions.

Nothing indeed can better illustrate the sensation which the grandfathers, or even aged fathers, of these slim lads of the Bond-street and St. James's-street establishments, must have felt upon finding their offspring in the elegant occupations I have just mentioned, than an incident relating to Captain Parsons Hoye, of County Wicklow, who several years since met with a specimen of the kind of lad at Hudson's, in Covent-Garden.

A nephew of his, an effeminate young fellow, who had been either on the Continent or in London a considerable time, and who expected to be the Captain's heir, (being his sister's son) accidentally came into the coffee-room. Neither uncle nor nephew recollected each other; but old Parsons' disgust at the

dandified manners, language, and dress of the youth, gave rise to an occurrence which drew from the bluff seaman epithets wonderfully droll, but rather too coarse to record: – the end of it was, that, when Parsons discovered the relationship of the stranger, (by their exchanging cards in anger,) he first kicked him out of the coffee-room, and then struck him out of a will which he had made, – and died very soon after, as if on purpose to mortify the macaroni!

Commodore Trunnion was a civilized man, and a beauty (but a fool), compared to Parsons Hoye, – who had a moderate hereditary property near Wicklow; had been a captain in the royal navy; was a bad farmer, a worse sportsman, and a blustering justice of peace: but great at *potation*! and what was called, "in the main, a capital fellow." He was nearly as boisterous as his adopted element: his voice was always as if on the quarter-deck; and the whistle of an old boatswain, who had been decapitated by his side, hung as a memento, by a thong of leather, from his waistcoat button-hole. It was frequently had recourse to, and, whenever he wanted a *word*, supplied the deficiency.

In form, the Captain was squat, broad, and coarse: a large purple nose, with a broad crimson chin to match, were the only features of any consequence in his countenance, except a couple of good-enough bloodshot eyes, screened by most exuberant grizzle eye-brows. His powdered wig had behind it a queue in the form of a hand-spike, – and a couple of rolled-up paste curls, like a pair of carronades, adorned its broad-sides; a blue coat,

with slash cuffs and plenty of navy buttons, surmounted a scarlet waistcoat with tarnished gold binding – the skirts of which, he said, he would have of their enormous length because it assured him that the tailor had put *all the cloth in it*; a black Barcelona adorned his neck; while a large old round hat, bordered with gold lace, pitched on his head, and turned up on one side, with a huge cockade stuck into a buttonless loop, gave him a swaggering air. He bore a shillelagh, the growth of his own estate, in a fist which would cover more ground than the best shoulder of wether mutton in a London market.[17] Yet the Captain had a look of generosity, good nature, benevolence, and hospitality, which his features did their very best to conceal, and which none but a good physiognomist could possibly discover.

[17] I once saw the inconvenience of that species of fist strongly exemplified. The late Admiral Cosby, of Stradbally Hall, had as large and as brown a fist as any admiral in His Majesty's service. Happening one day unfortunately to lay it on the table during dinner, at Colonel Fitzgerald's, Merrion Square, a Mr. Jenkins, a half-blind doctor, who chanced to sit next to the admiral, cast his eye upon the fist: the imperfection of his vision led him to believe it was a roll of French bread, and, without further ceremony, the doctor thrust his steel fork plump into the admiral's fist. The confusion which resulted may be easily imagined: – indeed, had the circumstance happened any where but at a *private* table, the doctor would probably never have had occasion for another *crust*. As it was, a sharp fork, sticking a sailor's fist to the table, was rather too irritating an accident for an admiral of the blue to pass over very quietly.

# MY BROTHER'S HUNTING-LODGE

Waking the piper – Curious scene at my brother's hunting-lodge – Joe Kelly's and Peter Alley's heads fastened to the wall – Operations practised in extricating them.

I met with another ludicrous instance of the dissipation of even later days, a few months after my marriage. Lady B – and myself took a tour through some of the southern parts of Ireland, and among other places visited Castle Durrow, near which place my brother, Henry French Barrington, had built a hunting cottage, wherein he happened to have given a house-warming the previous day.

The company, as might be expected at such a place and on such an occasion, was not the most select: – in fact, they were *hard-going* sportsmen, and some of the half-mounted gentry were not excluded from the festival.

Amongst others, Mr. Joseph Kelly, of unfortunate fate, brother to Mr. Michael Kelly, (who by the bye does not say a word about him in his Reminiscences,) had been invited, to add to the merriment by his pleasantry and voice, and had come down from Dublin solely for the purpose of *assisting* at the banquet.

It may not be amiss to say something here of this remarkable person. I knew him from his early youth. His father was a

dancing-master in Mary-street, Dublin; and I found in the newspapers of that period a number of puffs, in French and English, of Mr. O'Kelly's abilities in that way – one of which, a certificate from a French *artiste* of Paris, is curious enough.[18] What could put it into his son's head, that he had been *Master of the Ceremonies at Dublin Castle* is rather perplexing! He became a wine-merchant latterly, dropped the O which had been placed at the beginning of his name, and was a well-conducted and respectable man.[19]

Joe was a slender young man, remarkably handsome; but what, in that part of the country, they emphatically styled "the *devil*!" I recollect his dancing a hornpipe upon the stage in a sailor's costume most admirably. He also sang the songs of Young Meadows, in "Love in a Village," extremely well, as likewise those of Macheath and other parts; but he could never

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[18] Mr. O'Kelly is just returned from Paris. Ladies and gentlemen, who are pleased to send their commands to No. 30, Mary-street, will be most respectfully attended to.Je certifie que M. Guillaume O'Kelly est venu à Paris pour prendre de moi leçons, et qu'il est sorti de mes mains en état de pouvoir enseigner la danse avec succès.Gardel, Maître à Danser de la Reine,et Maître des Ballets du Roi.

[19] But as he was a Roman Catholic, and as no Roman Catholic could then hold any office in the vice-regal establishment of Dublin Castle, Mr. M. Kelly must have been misinformed on that point as to his father, whom I have often seen. Mr. Gofton, a dancing-master of Anne-street, Linen Hall, and uncle to Doctor Barrett, the late extraordinary vice-provost of Trinity College, was a friend of Mr. O'Kelly's, and taught me to the day of his death, which was sudden. Under his tuition, I beat time and danced minuets for four years. Doctor Barrett used to carry his uncle's *kit* till he entered Dublin College, of which he died vice-provost. He had two brothers; the most promising one was *eaten by a tiger* in Dublin, the other died a pawnbroker.

give the acting any effect. He was, strictly speaking, a bravura singer; – there was no deep pathos – nothing *touchant* in his cadences; – but in drinking-songs, &c. he was unrivalled. As his brother has not thought proper to speak about him, it might be considered out of place for me to go into his history, all of which I know, and many passages whereof might probably be both entertaining and instructive. Some parts of it however are already on record, and others I hope will *never* be recorded. The Duke of Wellington knew Joe Kelly extremely well; and if he had merited advancement, I dare say he would have received it. The last conversation I had with him was on the Boulevard Italien, in Paris. I was walking with my son, then belonging to the 5th Dragoon Guards. Kelly came up and spoke to us. I shook him by the hand, and he talked away: – spoke to my son – no answer; – he tried him again – no reply. Kelly seemed surprised, and said, "Don't you know me, Barrington? why don't you speak to me?" – "'Tis because I *do* know you that I do *not* speak to you," replied my son. – Kelly blushed, but turned it off with a laugh. I could not then guess the reason for this cut direct; and my son refused to tell me: I have since, however, become acquainted with it, and think the sarcasm well merited. It was indeed the bitterer, from its being the only one I ever heard my son utter. Joe Kelly killed his man in a duel, for which he was tried, and narrowly escaped. According to his own account indeed, he killed plenty at the battle of Waterloo, and in other actions. He was himself shot at Paris by a commissary with whom he had quarrelled, and the

Irish humorists remarked thereupon that Joe had "died a *natural death*."

Of this convivial assemblage at my brother's, he was, I take it, the very life and soul. The dining-room (the only good one) had not been finished when the day of the dinner-party arrived, and the lower parts of the walls having only that morning received their last coat of plaster, were, of course, totally wet.

We had intended to surprise my brother; but had not calculated on the scene I was to witness. On driving to the cottage-door, I found it open, whilst a dozen dogs, of different descriptions, showed themselves ready to receive us not in the most polite manner. My servant's whip, however, soon sent them about their business, and I ventured into the parlour to see what cheer. It was about ten in the morning: the room was strewed with empty bottles – some broken – some interspersed with glasses, plates, dishes, knives, spoons, &c. – all in glorious confusion. Here and there were heaps of bones, relics of the former day's entertainment, which the dogs, seizing their opportunity, had cleanly picked. Three or four of the Bacchanalians lay fast asleep upon chairs – one or two others on the floor, among whom a piper lay on his back, apparently dead, with a table-cloth spread over him, and surrounded by four or five candles, burnt to the sockets; his chanter and bags were laid scientifically across his body, his mouth was quite open, and his nose made ample amends for the silence of his drone. Joe Kelly, and a Mr. Peter Alley, from the town of Durrow, (one of the half-mounted gentry,) were fast

asleep in their chairs, close to the wall.

Had I never viewed such a scene before, it would have almost terrified me; but it was nothing more than the ordinary custom which we called *waking the piper*.[20]

I sent away my carriage and its fair inmate to Castle Durrow, whence we had come, and afterward proceeded to seek my brother. No servant was to be seen, man or woman. I went to the stables, wherein I found three or four more of the goodly company, who had just been able to reach their horses, but were seized by Morpheus before they could mount them, and so lay in the mangers awaiting a more favourable opportunity. I apprehend some of the horses had not been as considerate as they should have been to tipsy gentlemen, since two or three of the latter had their heads cut by being kicked or trampled on. Returning hence to the cottage, I found my brother, also asleep, on the only bed which it then afforded: he had no occasion to put on his clothes, since he had never taken them off.

I next waked Dan Tyron, a wood-ranger of Lord Ashbrook, who had acted as maître d'hôtel in making the arrangements, and providing a horse-load of game to fill up the banquet. I then inspected the parlour, and insisted on breakfast. Dan Tyron

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[20] *Waking the piper* was an ancient usage. When he had got too drunk to play any more, he was treated as a corpse – stretched out, and candles placed round him: while in this insensible state, they put the drone of his pipe into his mouth, and blew the bellows till he was bloated. This was called *blowing-up* the piper with *false music*. It did him no bodily harm, as burnt whiskey and plenty of pepper soon sent the wind about its business, to the no small amusement of the company.

set to work: an old woman was called in from an adjoining cabin, the windows were opened, the room cleared, the floor swept, the relics removed, and the fire lighted in the kitchen. The piper was taken away senseless, but my brother would not suffer either Joe or Alley to be disturbed till breakfast was ready. No time was lost; and, after a very brief interval, we had before us abundance of fine eggs, and milk fresh from the cow, with brandy, sugar and nutmeg in plenty; – a large loaf, fresh butter, a cold round of beef, (which had not been produced on the previous day,) red herrings, and a bowl-dish of potatoes roasted on the turf ashes; – in addition to which, ale, whiskey, and port made up the refreshments. All being duly in order, we at length awakened Joe Kelly, and Peter Alley, his neighbour: they had slept soundly, though with no other pillow than the wall; and my brother announced breakfast with a *view holloa!*[21]

The twain immediately started and roared in unison with their host most tremendously! it was however in a very different tone from the *view holloa*, – and continued much longer.

"Come boys," says French, giving Joe a pull – "come!"

"Oh, murder!" says Joe, "I can't!" – "Murder! – murder!" echoed Peter. French pulled them again, upon which they roared the more, still retaining their places. I have in my lifetime laughed till I nearly became spasmodic; but never were my risible muscles put to greater tension than upon this occasion. The wall, as I said before, had but just received a coat of mortar, and of course

[21] The shout of hunters when the game is in view.

was quite soft and yielding when Joe and Peter, having no more cellarage for wine, and their eyesight becoming opake, thought proper to make it their pillow; it was nevertheless setting fast from the heat and lights of an eighteen hours' carousal; and, in the morning, when my brother awakened his guests, the mortar had completely set, and their hair being the thing best calculated to amalgamate therewith, the entire of Joe's stock, together with his queue, and half his head, was thoroughly and irrecoverably bedded in the greedy and now marble cement; – so that if determined to move, he must have taken the wall along with him, for separate it would not. One side of Peter's head was in the same state of imprisonment, so as to give his bust the precise character of a bas-relief. Nobody could assist them, and there they both stuck fast.

A consultation was now held on this pitiful case, which I maliciously endeavoured to protract as long as I could, and which was every now and then interrupted by a roar from Peter or Joe, as each made fresh efforts to rise. At length, it was proposed by Dan Tyron to send for the stone-cutter, and get him to cut them out of the wall with a chisel. I was literally unable to speak two sentences for laughing. The old woman meanwhile tried to soften the obdurate wall with melted butter and new milk – but in vain. I related the school story how Hannibal had worked through the Alps with vinegar and hot irons: – this experiment likewise was made, but to no purpose; the hot irons touching *the raw*, only added a new octave to the roars of the captives, and the

Carthaginian solvent had no better success than the old crone's. Peter being of a more passionate nature, grew ultimately quite outrageous: he bellowed, gnashed his teeth, and swore vengeance against the mason; – but as he was only held by one side, a thought at last struck him: he asked for two knives, which being brought, he whetted one against the other, and introducing the blades close to his skull, sawed away at cross corners for half an hour, cursing and crying out during the whole operation, till at length he was liberated, with the loss only of half his hair, the skin of one jaw, and a piece of his scalp, which he had sliced off in zeal and haste for his liberty. I never saw a fellow so extravagantly happy! Fur was scraped from the crown of a new hat, to stop the bleeding; his head was duly tied up with the old woman's *praskeen*;[22] and he was soon in a state of bodily convalescence. Our solicitude was now required solely for Joe, whose head was too deeply buried to be exhumated with so much facility. At this moment Bob Casey, of Ballynakill, a very celebrated wig-maker, just dropped in, to see what he could pick up honestly in the way of his profession, or steal in the way of any thing else; and he immediately undertook to get Mr. Kelly out of the mortar by a very ingenious but tedious process, namely, – clipping with his scissors and then rooting out with an oyster knife. He thus finally succeeded, in less than an hour, in setting Joseph Kelly, Esq. once more at liberty, at the

[22] A coarse dirty apron, worn by working women in a kitchen, in the country parts of Ireland, and exhibiting an assemblage of every kind of filth. Were you to ask a "Collough" why she keeps it so dirty, her reply would be – "Sure nobody never heard of *washing* a *praskeen*, plaze your honor's honor!"

price of his queue, which was totally lost, and of the exposure of his raw and bleeding occiput. The operation was, indeed, of a mongrel description – somewhat between a complete *tonsure* and an imperfect *scalping*, to both of which denominations it certainly presented claims. However, it is an ill wind that blows nobody good! Bob Casey got the making of a skull-piece for Joe, and my brother French had the pleasure of paying for it, as gentlemen in those days honoured any order given while enjoying their hospitality, by a guest, to the family shop-keeper or artizan.

I ate a hearty breakfast, returned to Durrow, and, having rejoined my companion, we pursued our journey to Waterford, – amusing ourselves the greater part of the way with the circumstances just related, which, however, I do not record merely as an abstract anecdote, but, as I observed in starting, to show the manners and habits of Irish country society and sportsmen,[23] even so recently as thirty-five years ago; and to illustrate the changes of those habits and manners,

[23] Pipers at that time formed an indispensable part of every sporting gentleman's establishment. My father always had two – the ladies' piper for the dance, the gentlemen's piper for occasions of drinking. These men rendered that instrument the most expressive imaginable: – with a piece of buff leather on their thigh, they made the double chanter almost speak words, and by a humorous mode of jerking the bag, brought out the most laughable species of chromatic conceivable.They were in the habit of playing a piece called "the wedding," in which words were plainly articulated. The wedding-dinner, the dancing, drinking, &c. all was expressed in a surprising manner. They also played "the Hunt, or Hare in the Corn" through all its parts – the hounds, the horns, the shouts, the chase, the death, &c. If the German who composed the Battle of Prague had heard an old Irish piper, he never would have attempted another instrumental imitation of words.

and the advances toward civilization, which, coupled with the extraordinary *want of corresponding prosperity*, present phenomena I am desirous of impressing upon my reader's mind, throughout the whole of this miscellaneous collection of original anecdotes and observations.

# CHOICE OF PROFESSION

The Army – Irish volunteers described – Their military ardour – The author inoculated therewith – He grows cooler – The Church – The Faculty – The Law – Objections to each – Colonel Barrington removes his establishment to the Irish capital – A country gentleman taking up a city residence.

My veering opinion as to a choice of profession was nearly decided by that military ardour which seized all Ireland, when the whole country had entered into a resolution to free itself for ever from English domination. The entire kingdom took up arms – regiments were formed in every quarter – the highest, the lowest, and the middle orders, all entered the ranks of freedom, and every corporation, whether civil or military, pledged life and fortune to attain and establish Irish independence, but with the same constitution, and under the same king as England, inseparably and for ever united. England tried to *evade*, as she could not *resist* this; but in 1782 Ireland was pronounced a free and independent nation.

My father had raised and commanded two corps – a dragoon troop called the Cullenagh Rangers, and the Ballyroan Light Infantry. My elder brother commanded the Kilkenny Horse, and the Durrow Light Dragoons. The general enthusiasm caught me; and before I well knew what I was about, I found myself a martinet and a red-hot patriot. Having been a university man, I

was also considered to be of course a *writer*, and was accordingly called on to draw up resolutions for volunteer regiments all over the county. This was my first attempt at political subjects; and a general declaration which I wrote being short enough and warm enough to be comprehended by all the parties, it was unanimously adopted – every man swearing, as he kissed the blade of his sword, that he would adhere to these resolutions to the last drop of his blood, which he would by no means spare, till we had finally achieved the independence of our country. We were very sincere, and really, I think, determined to perish, (if necessary) in the cause – at least, I am sure, I was.

The national point was gained, but not without much difficulty and danger. The Irish parliament had refused to grant supplies to the crown or pass a mutiny bill for more than six months. The people had entered into resolutions to prevent the importation of any British merchandise or manufactures. The entire kingdom had disavowed all English authority or jurisdiction, external or internal; the judges and magistrates had declined to act under British statutes: – the flame had spread rapidly, and had become irresistible.

The British Government saw that either temporising or an appeal to force would occasion the final loss of Ireland: 150,000 independent soldiers, well armed, well clothed, and well disciplined, were not to be coped with, – and England yielded.[24]

[24] The Irish patriots demanded 30,000 stand of arms from Government, which the latter not being so circumstanced as to enable them to refuse with safety, they were

Thus the volunteers kept their oaths: they redeemed their pledge, and did not lay down their arms until the independence of Ireland had been pronounced from the throne, and the distinctness of the Irish nation promulgated in the government gazette of London.

Having carried our point with the English, and proposed to prove our independence by going to war with Portugal about our linens, we completely set up for ourselves, except that Ireland was bound, as I before said, constitutionally and irrevocably, never to have any king but the King of Great Britain – whether *de jure* or *de facto*, however, was not specified.

We were now, in fact, regularly in a fighting mood; and being quite in good humour with England, determined to fight the French, who had threatened to invade us. I recollect a volunteer belonging to one of my father's corps, (a schoolmaster of the name of Beal,) proposing a resolution to the Ballyroan Infantry, which purported, "that they would never stop fighting the French till they had flogged every *sowl* of them into mincemeat!" This magnanimous resolution was adopted with cheers, and was, as usual, sworn to, each hero kissing the muzzle of his musket. In truth, the whole nation being well prepared for blows; and disappointed, as a fellow-countryman gravely observed to me at the period, of fighting the English, were quite *anxious* to have a bout with the French: so long, indeed, as they could get a good meal of fighting, they were just then no great epicures as to *who*

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delivered to the volunteers, from the ordnance stores in Dublin Castle, and distributed among those corps which were least able to purchase arms.

were *served up*.

I am not going any further into a history of those times, to which I have alluded only to show what, for the moment, excited my warlike ardour, and fixed my determination, although but temporarily, to adopt the military profession.

On communicating this decision to my father, he procured me, from a friend and neighbour, General Hunt Walsh, a commission in that officer's own regiment, the 30th. The style of the thing pleased me very well: – but, upon being informed that I should immediately join the regiment, in America, my heroic tendencies received a serious check. I had not contemplated transatlantic emigration; and feeling that I could get my head broken just as well in my own country, I, after a few days' mature consideration, perceived my military ardour grow cooler and cooler every hour – until, at length, it was obviously defunct. I therefore wrote to the General a most thankful letter, at the same time "begging the favour of him to present my commission in his regiment to some hardier soldier, who could serve his majesty with more vigour; as I, having been brought up by my *grandmother*, felt as yet too *tender* to be any way effective on foreign service – though I had no objection to fight as much as possible in Ireland, if necessary." General Walsh accepted my resignation, and presented my commission to a young friend of his, (an only son) whose brains were blown out in the very first engagement.

Having thus rejected the army, I next turned my thoughts to

that very opposite profession – the church. But though preaching was certainly a much safer and more agreeable employment than bush-fighting, yet a curacy and a wooden leg being pretty much on a parallel in point of remuneration, and as I had the strongest objection to be either dismembered or half starved, in the service of the king or the altar, I also declined the cassock, assuring my father that "I felt I was not steady enough to make an 'exemplary parson;' and as any other kind of parson generally did more harm than good in a country, I could not, in conscience, take charge of the morals of a flock of men, women, and children, when I should have quite enough to do to manage my own; and should therefore leave the church to some more orthodox graduate."

Medicine was next in the list of professions to which I had, abstractedly, some liking. I had attended several courses of anatomical lectures at Dublin; and although with very repugnant feelings had studied that most sublime of all sciences, human organization, by a persevering attention to the celebrated wax-works of that university. Yet my horror and disgust of *animal putridity* in all its branches was so great, (inclusive even of *stinking venison*, which most people admire,) that all surgical practice by me was necessarily out of the question; and medicine, without a touch of surgery, presenting no better chance of making a fortune, shared a similar fate with the sword and the pulpit.

Of the liberal and learned professions, there remained but one, namely, the law. Now, as to this, I was told by several old

practitioners, who had retired into the country, (as I afterward found, from having no business to do in town,) that if I were even as wise as Alfred, as learned as Lycurgus, or as vociferous as Serjeant Toler, – nobody would give me sixpence for all my law (if I had a hundred weight of it), until I had spent at least ten years in watching the manufacture. However, they consoled me by saying, that if I could put up with light eating during that period, I might then have a very reasonable chance of getting some briefs, particularly after inviting a gang of attorneys to dine with me. – Here I was damped again! and though I should have broken my heart if condemned to remain much longer a walking gentleman, I determined to wait awhile, and see if nature would open my propensities a little wider, and give me some more decisive indication of what she thought me fittest for.

While in this comfortless state of indecision, my father, like other country gentlemen, to gratify his lady under the amiable pretence of educating the children, gave his consent to be launched into the new scenes and pleasures of a city residence. He accordingly purchased an excellent house in Clare-street, Merrion-square; left a steward in the country to *mis*manage his concerns there; made up new wardrobes for the servants; got a fierce three-cocked hat, with a gold button and loop to it, for himself; and removed his establishment (the hounds excepted) to the metropolis of Ireland.

Here my good and well-bred mother (for such she was) had her Galway pride revived and gratified; the old green coach *de*

*cérémonie* was regilt and regarnished, and four black geldings, with two postilions and a sixteen-stone footman (in white, scarlet, and laced liveries) completed her equipage.

I had my *bit of blood* in the stable; my elder brother, who had been in the First Horse, had plenty of them: – my father had his old hunter "brown Jack;" and we set out at what is commonly called a *great rate*– but which great rates are generally, like a fox-chase, more hot than durable. However, the thing went on well enough; and during our city residence many pleasurable and many whimsical incidents occurred to me and other individuals of my family; one of which was most interesting to myself, and will form a leading feature in my subsequent Sketches.

Before adverting to this, however, I will mention a lamentable event which occurred during our stay in Clare-street, to a neighbour of ours, Captain O'Flaherty, brother to Sir John, whom I shall hereafter notice. The captain resided nearly facing us; and though the event I speak of, and the very extraordinary incident which succeeded it, are clearly digressions, yet the whole story is so singular, that I will, without further apology, introduce it.

# MURDER OF CAPTAIN O'FLAHERTY

Murder of Captain O'Flaherty by Mr. Lanegan, his sons' tutor, and Mrs. O'Flaherty – The latter, after betraying her accomplice, escapes – Trial of Lanegan – He is hanged and quartered at Dublin – Terrific appearance of his supposed ghost to his pupil, David Lauder, and the author, at the Temple, in London – Lauder nearly dies of fright – Lanegan's extraordinary escape; not even suspected in Ireland – He gets off to France, and enters the Monastery of La Trappe – All-Hallow Eve – A church-yard anecdote – My own superstition nearly fatal to me.

Captain O'Flaherty, a most respectable gentleman, resided in Clare-street, Dublin, opposite my father's house. He had employed a person of the name of Lanegan, as tutor to the late John Burke O'Flaherty, and his other sons. But after some little time Lanegan became more attentive to Mrs. O'Flaherty, the mother, than to her boys.

This woman had certainly no charms either of appearance or address, which might be thought calculated to captivate any one; and there was a something indescribably repulsive in her general manners, in consequence whereof all acquaintance between her and our family soon terminated. She was not satisfied with the occasional society of Mr. Lanegan, whilst he continued in

the house as tutor, but actually proceeded to form a criminal intercourse with him; and, in order to free herself from all restraint, meditated the very blackest of human crimes, which she determined to perpetrate by giving the unfortunate captain a rice-pudding for his dinner, by virtue whereof she might at any rate be saved the trouble of ever making another for him.

Mr. Lanegan was with this view sent by her to several apothecaries' shops; at each of which, to avoid suspicion, he asked for a *very little* stuff *to kill the rats*; and thus, by small portions, they ultimately procured a sufficient quantity to kill not only the rats, but the husband into the bargain.

The murderous scheme was carried into execution by Mrs. O'Flaherty herself, and the captain was found dead in his bed! Some misgivings, however, were generated from the appearance of the body, which swelled and exhibited black spots: and these, with other unequivocal signs, conspired to prove that the rats (for they were actually dealt with) had not been the only sufferers. The Coroner's Inquest, indeed, soon decided the matter, by a verdict of "*Poisoned by Arsenic*."

Mrs. O'Flaherty and Mr. Lanegan began now to suspect that they were in rather a ticklish situation, and determined to take a private journey into the country until they should discover how things were likely to go. The adulterous wife, full of crime and terror, conceived a suspicion that Lanegan, who had only purchased the poison by her directions, and had not administered it (except to the rats), might turn king's evidence, get the reward,

and save himself by convicting her. Such a catastrophe she therefore determined, if possible, to prevent.

On their journey she told him that, upon full consideration, she conceived there could be no possibility of bringing conclusive evidence against them, inasmuch as it would appear most probable that the captain had, by accident, taken the poison himself – and that she was determined to surrender and take her trial as soon as possible, recommending Mr. Lanegan to do the same. In pursuance of this decision, as they passed near the town of Gowran, County Kilkenny, she said, "There is the gate of a magistrate: do you go up first, put on a bold face, assure him of your entire innocence, and say that, as infamous and false reports have been spread, both of yourself and me, you came expressly to surrender and take your trial; – for that you could not live in society under such vile imputations! Say, also, that you hear Mrs. O'Flaherty intends likewise to surrender herself in the evening, and request that he will be at home to receive her."

Lanegan, suspecting no fraud, followed these instructions literally; – he was secured, though without roughness, and preparations were made for his being taken to Dublin next day in custody. The magistrate waited for Mrs. O'Flaherty, but she did not appear: he sent down to his gate-house to know if any lady had passed by: the porter informed him that a lady and gentleman had been near the gate in a carriage, in the morning, and that the gentleman got out and went up the avenue to the house, after which the lady had driven away.

It now appearing that they had been actually together, and that Lanegan had been telling falsehoods respecting his companion, strong suspicions arose in the mind of the magistrate. His prisoner was confined more closely, sent under a strong guard to Dublin, indicted for murder, and tried at the ensuing commission.

Positive evidence was given of Lanegan's criminal connexion with Mrs. O'Flaherty, coupled with the strongest circumstantial proof against him. He had not the courage boldly to deny the fact, and being found guilty, was sentenced to be hanged and quartered; the former part of which sentence having been carried into execution, his body, after a cut on each limb, was delivered to his mother for burial. – Mrs. O'Flaherty escaped beyond sea, and has, I believe, never since been heard of in the country.

Such is the history which forms the prelude to an occurrence some time afterward in which I was a party, and which may be regarded as a curious illustration of stories of supposed ghosts.

A templar and a friend of mine, Mr. David Lauder, a soft, fat, good-humoured, superstitious young fellow, was sitting in his lodgings, (Devereux-court, London,) one evening at twilight. I was with him, and we were agreeably employed in eating strawberries and drinking Madeira. While chatting away in cheerful mood, and laughing loudly at some remark made by one of us, my back being toward the door, I perceived my friend's colour suddenly change – his eyes seemed fixed and ready to start out of his head – his lips quivered convulsively – his teeth chattered – large drops of perspiration flowed down his forehead,

and his hair stood nearly erect.

As I saw nothing calculated to excite these emotions, I naturally conceived my friend was seized with a fit, and rose to assist him. He did not regard my movements in the least, but seizing a knife which lay on the table, with the gait of a palsied man retreated backward – his eyes still fixed – to a distant part of the room, where he stood shivering, and attempting to pray; but not at the moment *recollecting* any prayer, he began to repeat his *catechism*, thinking it the *next best* thing he could do: as – "What is your name? David Lauder! Who gave you that name? My godfathers and godmothers in my baptism!" &c. &c.

I instantly concluded the man was mad; and turning about to go for some assistance, was myself not a little startled at sight of a tall, rough-looking personage, many days unshaved, in a very shabby black dress, and altogether of the most uncouth appearance. The stranger and I stood for a moment opposite each other, staring and motionless: at length he broke silence, and addressing my friend, said, in a low croaking voice, "*Don't be frightened*, Mr. Lauder; sure 'tis *me* that's here."

When Davy heard the voice, he fell on his knees, and subsequently flat upon his face, in which position he lay motionless.

The spectre (as I now began to imagine it was) stalked toward the door, and I was in hopes he intended to make his *exit* thereby; instead of which, however, having deliberately shut and *bolted it*, he sat himself down in the chair I had previously occupied, with

a countenance nearly as full of *horror* as that of Davy Lauder himself.

I was now totally bewildered; and scarce knowing what to do, was about to throw a jug of water over my friend, to revive him if possible, when the stranger, in his croaking voice, cried —

"For the love of God, give me some of that, – for I am perishing!" – I hesitated, but at length did so: he took the jug and drank immoderately.

My friend Davy now ventured to look up a little, and perceiving that I was becoming so familiar with the goblin, his courage somewhat revived, although his speech was still confused: – he stammered, rose upon his knees, held up his hands as if in supplication, and gazed at the figure for some time, but at length made up his mind that it was tangible and mortal. The effect of this decision on the face of Davy was as ludicrous as the fright had been. He seemed quite ashamed of his former terror, and affected to be stout as a lion! though it was visible that he was not at his ease. He now roared out in the broad, cursing Kerry dialect: "Why then, blood and thunder! is that you, Lanegan?"

"Ah, Sir, speak low!" said the wretched being.

"How the devil," resumed Davy, "did you get your four quarters stitched together again, after the hangman cut them off of you at Stephen's Green!"

"Ah, Gentlemen!" exclaimed the poor culprit, "speak low: have mercy on me, Master Davy; you know it was I taught you your Latin. – I'm starving to death!"

"You shall not die in *that* way, you villanous schoolmaster!" said Davy, pushing toward him a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine that stood on the table, – but standing aloof himself, as though not yet quite decided as to the *nature* of the intruder.

The miserable creature having eaten the bread with avidity, and drunk two or three glasses of wine, the lamp of life once more seemed to brighten up. After a pause, he communicated every circumstance relating to his sudden appearance before us. He confessed having bought the arsenic at the desire of Mrs. O'Flaherty, and that he was aware of the application of it, but solemnly protested that it was *she* who had seduced *him*; he then proceeded to inform us that after having been duly hanged, the sheriff had delivered his body to his mother, but not until the executioner had given a slight cut on each limb, just to *save the law*; which cuts bled profusely, and were probably the means of preserving his life. His mother, conceiving that the vital spark was not extinct, had put him into bed, dressed his wounded limbs, and rubbed his neck with hot vinegar. Having steadily pursued this process, and accompanied it by pouring warm brandy and water down his throat, in the course of an hour he was quite sensible, but experienced horrid pains for several weeks before his final recovery. His mother filled the coffin he was brought home in with bricks, and got some men to bury it the same night in Kilmainham burial-ground, as if ashamed to inter him in open day. For a long time he was unable to depart, being every moment in dread of discovery: – at length, however, he got off by night

in a smuggling boat, which landed him on the Isle of Man, and from thence he contrived to reach London, bearing a letter from a priest at Kerry to another priest who had lived in the Borough, the purport of which was to get him admitted into a monastery in France. But finding the Southwark priest was dead, he then went to Scotland, using various disguises; and returning to town, was afraid, though possessing some little money sent him by his mother, even to buy food, for fear of detection! but recollecting that Mr. Lauder, his old scholar, lived somewhere in the Temple, he had got directed by a porter to the lodging the night before.

My friend Davy, though he did not half like it, suffered this poor devil to sit in the chamber till the following evening. He then procured him a place in the night coach to Rye, from whence he got to St. Vallery, and was received, as I afterward learnt from a very grateful letter which he sent to Lauder, into the monastery of La Trappe, near Abbeville, where he lived in strict seclusion, and died, as I heard, some years since.

This incident is not related as a mere isolated anecdote, unconnected with any serious general considerations; but rather with a view to show how many deceptions a man's imagination may hastily subject him to; and to impress the consideration that nothing should be regarded as supernatural, which can by *possibility* be the result of human interference.

In the present case, if Lanegan had withdrawn before Lauder had arisen and spoken to him, no reasoning upon earth could ever have convinced the Templar of the materiality of the vision. As

Lanegan's restoration to life after execution had not at that time been spoken of, nor even suspected, Lauder would have willingly deposed, upon the Holy Evangelists, that he had seen the *actual ghost* of the schoolmaster who had been hanged and quartered in Dublin a considerable time before; his identification of the man's person being rendered unequivocal from the circumstance of his having been formerly Lanegan's pupil. And I must confess that I should myself have seen no reason to doubt Lauder's assertions, had the man withdrawn from the chamber before he spoke to me – to do which, under the circumstances, it was by no means improbable fear might have induced him.

Thus one of the "best authenticated ghost stories ever related" has been lost to the history of supernatural occurrences. The circumstance, however, did not cure Davy Lauder in the least of his dread of apparitions, which was excessive.

Nor have I much right to reproach my friend's weakness in this particular. I have, on the other hand, throughout my observations admitted – nay, I fear, occasionally boasted – that I was myself *superstitious*. The species of reading I adopted and ardently pursued from my infancy upward may, I admit, have impressed my mind indelibly; and the consciousness of this fact should have served to render me rather *sceptical* than *credulous* upon any subject that bore a mysterious character.

My relations, whilst I was a boy, took it into their heads that I was a decided coward in this way, which though I in round terms denied, I freely admitted at the same time my coyness

with regard to trying any unnecessary experiments or making any superstitious invocations, particularly on *Allhallow-eve*,[25] or other mysterious days, whereupon a sort of bastard witchcraft is always practised in Ireland.

Hence I was universally ridiculed on those anniversaries for my timidity; and, one Allhallow-eve, my father proposed to have a prayer-book, with a £5 bank-note in it, left on a certain tomb-stone in an old catholic burial-ground quite apart from any road, and covered with trees. It was two or three fields' distance from the dwelling-house; and the proposal was, that if I would go there at twelve o'clock at night, and bring back the book and a dead man's bone, (many of which latter were scattered about the cemetery,) the note should be mine; and, as an additional encouragement, I was never after to be charged with cowardice. My pride took fire, and I determined, even though I might burst a blood-vessel through agitation, or break my neck in running home again, I would perform the feat, and put an end to the imputation.

The matter therefore was fully arranged. The night proved very dark; the path was intricate, but I was accustomed to it.

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[25] The pranks formerly played in Ireland on *Allhallow-eve*, were innumerable. The *devil* was supposed to be at large on that night, and permitted to make what prey he could among the human species, by bringing them together. His principal occupation was therefore thought to be match-making, and it was whispered that he got more subjects, and set more Christians by the ears, through the sacrament of matrimony, than all his other schemes put together. Matches were then frequently made by burning nuts, turning shifts, &c.

There were two or three stiles to be crossed; and the Irish always conceive that if a ghost is any where in the neighbourhood, he invariably chooses a stile at which to waylay the passengers.

However, at the appointed hour I set out. I dare say most ladies and gentlemen who may read this know what *palpitation of the heart* means; if so, let them be so good as to fancy an excess of that feeling, and they may then form some idea of the sensations with which I first touched the cold grave-stones of the dead, who, if they had possessed any spirit, would have arisen, *en masse*, to defend their bones from being made the subject of ridiculous experiment.

Having groped for some time in the dark, I found the book, but my hand refused to lift it, and I sat down panting and starting at every rustle of the foliage: through the gloom wherewith the trunks and branches of the trees were invested, my excited imagination conjured up figures and shapes which I expected, at every glance, would open into skeletons or shrouded spectres! I would, at that moment, have given the world to be at home again! – but I really could not stir: my breath had got too short, and my eyesight too confused, for motion.

By degrees these sensations subsided. I obtained a little confidence; the moving of a branch no longer startled me, and I should have got on well enough had not an unlucky goat, which came roaming near the place, though with a different object, thrown me into a complete relapse. At the conclusion of about half an hour, however, which appeared to me at least five-and-

twenty years, I secured the book snugly in my pocket, together with a dead man's thigh-bone, which I tied up in a cloth brought with me for the purpose; and, fastening this round my waist, lest it should drop during my flight, I made a very rapid exit from this scene of perilous achievement.

Having reached the house in triumph, and taken a large tumbler of wine, I proceeded to exhibit my book, put the bank-note in my pocket, and with an affectation of unconcern untied my cloth and flung my huge thigh-bone upon the supper-table. I had my full revenge! The girls, who had been amusing themselves by telling each other's fortunes, tossing coffee, burning nuts, turning shifts, writing *abracadabras*, &c. &c. &c., were cruelly shocked – they all set up a loud shriek, and whilst some were half swooning, others ran headlong out of the room, or rolled over the chairs. My courage now grew rampant: I laughed at their terrors, saying, if they pleased, they might leave the bone on the top of my bed till morning, and that would sufficiently show, who was most in dread of dead people! —

Confidence was at length restored on all sides. I was half cured of my superstitious fears, and the family universally admitted that I certainly should make a brave general if I went into the army. We made merry till a late hour, when I retired joyously to bed, and sleep very soon began to make still further amends for my terrors.

While dreaming away most agreeably, I was suddenly aroused by a rustling noise for which I could not account. I sat up, and,

upon listening, found it to proceed from the top of my bed, whereon something was in rapid motion. The dead man's thigh-bone immediately started into my recollection, and horrible ideas flashed across my mind. A profuse perspiration burst out at once on my forehead, my hair rose, the cramp seized both my legs, and just gathering power to call out "Murder, Murder! – help, help!" I buried my head under the clothes. In this situation, I could neither hear nor see, and was besides almost suffocated: after awhile, I began to think I might have been dreaming, and with that idea thrusting my head fearfully out, the bone (for that it certainly was) sprang with a tremendous crash from the bed down beside me upon the floor, where it exhibited as many signs of life (probably more) than when its original owner was in legal possession of it. Upon viewing this, my spirits sank again, I shook like a man in an ague, gave some inarticulate screams, and at length dropped back, nearly senseless, upon the pillow with my eyes covered.

How long I lay thus, I know not; I only remember that the bone still continued its movements, and now and then striking a chair or table, warned me of my probable fate from its justly enraged proprietor, who, I was apprehensive, would soon appear to demand his undoubted property. Had the scene continued long, I actually believe I should scarce have survived it: but at last, paradise seemed all on the sudden to be regained, though in no very orthodox way. A loud laugh at the door clearly announced that I had been well played off upon by the ladies, for my abrupt

display of a dead man's bone on a supper-table. The whole of the young folks entered my room in a body, with candles; and after having been reassured, and nourished by a tumbler of buttered white wine, I obtained, by degrees, knowledge of the trick which had occasioned a laugh so loud, so long, and so mortifying to my self-conceit.

The device was simple enough: a couple of cords had been tied to the bone, and drawn under the door, which was at the bed's foot; and by pulling these alternately, the conspirators kept the bone in motion, until their good-humoured joke had well nigh resulted in the loss of their kinsman's reason.

My character for bravery as to supernaturals was thus finally demolished; – and my general courage was also considered as a doubtful matter, in consequence of a most plausible piece of argument used by old Christopher Julian, a retired exciseman, who occasionally came down from his little cottage to take some shrub-punch at my father's house. He was very humourous, and we all liked him.

"Sure, Master Jonah," said the old gauger, "cowardice is occasioned only by the fear of death?"

I assented.

"And whether a man comes to that death by another man or by a ghost, it's just the same thing to him?"

"Certainly," said I, very inconsiderately giving in to him.

"Then," said Kit Julian, triumphantly, "how the devil can a man be stout as to a man, and afraid of a ghost? If I knew any

such shy cocks, they never should get into the revenue. The devil a smuggler ever they'd face; and then heigh for the potsheen, and contrabands! If a man's not afraid for his own carcass, he'd never dread another man's winding sheet!"

"That's true," said my father, and the laugh was turned completely against me.

# ADOPTION OF THE LAW

Marriage of my eldest brother – The bridesmaid, Miss D. W. – Female attractions not dependent on personal beauty – Mutual attachment – Illustration of the French phrase *je ne sais quoi*– Betrothal of the author, and his departure for London, to study for the Bar.

My father still conceived that the military profession was best suited to my ardent and volatile spirit. I was myself, however, of a different opinion; and fortune shortly fixed my determination. An accident occurred, which, uniting passion, judgment, and ambition, led me to decide that the Bar was the only road to my happiness or celebrity; and accordingly I finally and irrevocably resolved that the law should be the future occupation of my life and studies.

The recollection of the incident to which I have alluded excites, even at this moment, all the sensibility and regret which can survive a grand climacteric, and four-and-forty years of vicissitude. I shall not dilate upon it extensively; and, in truth, were it not that these personal fragments would be otherwise still more incomplete, I should remain altogether silent on a subject which revives in my mind so many painful reflections.

My elder brother married the only daughter of Mr. Edwards, of Old Court, County Wicklow (niece to Mr. Tennison, M. P. County Monaghan). The individuals of both families attended

that marriage, which was indeed a public one. The bridemaid of Miss Edwards was the then admired Miss D. Whittingham. This lady was about my own age: her father had been a senior fellow of Dublin University, and had retired on large church preferments. Her uncle, with whom she was at that time residing, was a very eminent barrister in the Irish capital. She had but one sister, and I was soon brought to think she had no equal whatever.

They who read this will perhaps anticipate a story of a volatile lad struck, in the midst of an inspiring ceremony, by the beauty of a lively and engaging female, and surrendering without resistance his boyish heart to the wild impulse of the moment. This supposition is, I admit, a natural one; but it is unfounded. Neither beauty, nor giddy passion, nor the glare of studied attractions, ever enveloped me in their labyrinths. Nobody admired female loveliness more than myself; but beauty in *the abstract* never excited within me that delirium which has so impartially made fools of kings and beggars – of heroes and cowards; and to which the wisest professors of law, physic, and divinity, have from time immemorial surrendered their liberty and their reason.

Regularity of feature is very distinct from expression of countenance, which I never yet saw mere symmetry successfully rival. I thank Heaven, that I never was either the captive or the victim of "perfect beauty;" in fact, I never loved any handsome woman save one, who still lives, and I hope will do so long: those whom I admired most (when I was of an age to admire any) had no great reason to be grateful for her munificence to creating

Nature.

Were I to describe the person of D. Whittingham, I should say that she had no beauty; but, on the contrary, seemed rather to have been selected as a foil to set off the almost transparent delicacy of the bride whom she attended. Her figure was graceful, it is true: her limbs fine, her countenance *speaking*; yet I incline to think that few ladies would have envied her perfections. Her dark and deep-sunk, yet animated and penetrating eyes could never have reconciled their looking-glasses to the sombre and swarthy complexion which surrounded them; nor the carmine of her pouting lips to the disproportioned extent of feature which it tinted. In fine, as I began, so will I conclude my personal description – she had *no beauty*. But she seems this moment before me as in a vision. I see her countenance, busied in unceasing converse with her heart; – now illuminated by wit, now softened by sensibility – the wild spirit of the former changing like magic into the steadier movements of the latter; – the serious glance silently commanding caution, whilst the counteracting smile at the same moment set caution at defiance. But upon this subject I shall desist, and only remark further, that before I was aware of the commencement of its passion, my whole heart was hers!

Miss Whittingham was at that time *the fashion* in high society: many admired, but I know of none who loved her save myself; and it must have been through some attractive congeniality of mind that our attachment became mutual.

It will doubtless appear unaccountable to many, whence the spell arose by which I was so devoted to a female, from whom personal beauty seems to have been withheld by Nature. I am unable to solve the enigma. I once ventured myself to ask D. Whittingham if she could tell me *why* I loved her? She *answered* by *returning the question*; and hence, neither of us being able to give an explicit reason, we mutually agreed that the query was *unanswerable*.

There are four short words in the French language which have a power of expressing what in English is inexplicable —*Je ne sais quoi*; and to these, in my dilemma, I resorted. I do not now wish the phrase to be understood in a mere *sentimental* vein, – or, in the set terms of young ladies, as "a *nice* expression!" In my mind it is an *amatory idiom*; and, in those few words, conveys more meaning than could a hundred pages: I never recollect its being seriously applied by any man till he had got into a decided *partiality*.

I have said that the phrase is inexplicable; but, in like manner as we are taught to aim at perfection whilst we know it to be unattainable, so will I endeavour to characterise the *Je ne sais quoi* as meaning a species of indefinable grace which gives despotic power to a female. When we praise in detail the abstract beauties or merits of a woman, each of them may form matter for argument, or a subject for the exercise of various tastes; but of the *Je ne sais quoi* there is no specification, and upon it there can be no reasoning. It is that fascinating enigma which expresses *all*

without expressing *any thing*; that mysterious source of attraction which we can neither discover nor account for; and which nor beauty, nor wit, nor education, nor any thing, but *nature*, ever can create.

D. Whittingham was the *fashion*: – but she depended solely, as to fortune, on her father and her uncle. I was the third son of a largely estated, but not at all prudent family, and was entitled to a younger child's portion, in addition to some exclusive property of my own (from my grandmother): but I had passed twenty-one, and not even fixed on a profession – therefore, the only probable result of our attachment seemed to be misery and disappointment. Notwithstanding, when in the same neighbourhood, we met, – when separate, we corresponded; but her good sense at length perceived that some end must be put to this state of clandestine correspondence, from which, although equally condemning it, we had not been able to abstain. Her father died, and she became entitled to a third of his estate and effects; but this accession was insufficient to justify the accomplishment of our union. I saw, and, with a half-broken heart, acquiesced in, her view of its impossibility until I should have acquired some productive profession. She suggested that there was no other course but the Bar, which might conciliate her uncle. The hint was sufficient, and we then agreed to have a ceremony of *betrothal* performed by a clergyman, and to separate the next moment, never to meet again until Fortune, if ever so disposed, should smile upon us.

The ceremony was accordingly performed by a clerical person in the parlour of the post-office at Bray, County Wicklow; and immediately afterward I went on board a packet for England, determined, if possible, to succeed in a profession which held out a reward so essential to my happiness.

I did succeed in that profession: but, alas! she for whose sake my toil was pleasure had ceased to exist. I never saw her more! Her only sister still lives in Merrion Square, Dublin, and in her has centred all the property of both the father and uncle. She is the widow of one of my warmest friends, Mr. Burne, a king's counsel.

I hasten to quit a subject to me so distressing. Some very peculiar circumstances attended, as I learned, the death of that most excellent of women; but a recital of these would only increase the impression which I fear I have already given grounds for, that I am deeply superstitious. However, I have not concealed so important an incident of my life hitherto not published, and I have done.

# A DUBLIN BOARDING-HOUSE

Sketch of the company and inmates – Lord Mountmorris – Lieut. Gam Johnson, R. N. – Sir John and Lady O'Flaherty – Mrs. Wheeler – Lady and Miss Barry – Memoir and character of Miss Barry, afterward Mrs. Baldwin – Ruinous effects of a dramatic education exemplified – Lord Mountmorris's duel with the Honourable Francis Hely Hutchinson at Donnybrook – His Lordship wounded – Marquis of Ely, his second.

After my return to Dublin from the Temple, before I could suit myself with a residence to my satisfaction, I lodged at the house of Mr. Kyle, in Frederick-street, uncle to the present provost of Dublin University. Mrs. Kyle was a remarkably plain woman, of the most curious figure, being round as a ball; but she was as good as she was ordinary. This worthy creature, who was a gentlewoman by birth, had married Kyle, who, though of good family, had been a trooper. She had lived many years, as companion, with my grandmother, and, in fact, regarded me as if I had been her own child.

In her abode so many human curiosities were collected, and so many anecdotes occurred, that, even at this distance of time, the recollection amuses me. Those who lodged in the house dined in company: the table was most plentifully served, and the party generally comprised from eight to ten select persons.

I will endeavour to sketch the leading members of the society there at the period of which I speak; and first on the list I will place the late Lord Mountmorris, of celebrated memory. He was a very clever and well-informed, but eccentric man; – one of the most ostentatious and at the same time parsimonious beings in the world. He considered himself by far the greatest orator and politician in Europe; and it was he who sent a florid speech, which he *intended* to have spoken in the Irish House of Lords, to the press: – the debate on which it was to be spoken did not ensue; but his Lordship having neglected to countermand the publication, his studied harangue appeared next day in the Dublin newspapers with all the supposititious *cheerings*, &c. duly interposed! I believe a similar *faux pas* has been committed by some English nobleman.

His Lordship, at the period in question, was patronising what is commonly ycleped a *led captain*– one Lieutenant Ham or Gam Johnson, of the royal navy, brother to the two judges and the attorney. He was not, however, a led captain in the *vulgar* application: he was an independent-minded man, and a brave officer; but, like many others, sought for patronage because *he could not get on without it*. Though not absolutely *disgusting*, Lieut. Johnson was certainly one of the ugliest men in Christendom. It was said of him that he need never fire a shot, since his countenance alone was sufficient to frighten the bravest enemy. His bloated visage, deeply indented by that cruel ravager of all comeliness, the smallpox, was nearly as large as the body

which supported it, and that was by no means diminutive. Yet he was civil and mild, and had, withal, a much higher character as an officer than his captain in the Artois frigate, Lord Charles Fitzgerald, who, it was at that time thought, conceived that a sound nap was as good as a hard battle.

Next in the company came Sir John O'Flaherty, Bart. (whose brother had been poisoned by Lanegan), and Lady O'Flaherty his *sposa*. He was a plain, agreeable country gentleman. Her Ladyship was to the full as *plain*, but not quite so agreeable. However, it was (as Mrs. Kyle said) a very *respectable* thing, at a boarding-house, to hear – "*Sir John* O'Flaherty's health!" – and "*Lady* O'Flaherty's health!" – drunk or hobnobbed across the table. – They formed, indeed, excellent stuffing to cram in between my Lord Mountmorris and the simple *gentry*.

Lady Barry, widow of the late Sir Nathaniel Barry, Bart., and mother of Sir Edward, (who was also an occasional guest,) follows in my catalogue, and was as valuable a *curiosity* as any of the set. – She, too, was a good ingredient in the *stuffing* department.

Mrs. Wheeler, the grandmother of Sir Richard Jonah Denny Wheeler Cuffe, a cousin of mine, gave up her whole attention to lap-dogs; and neither she nor the last-mentioned dowager were by any means averse to the fermented grape – though we never saw either of them "*very* far gone."

Lady Barry's only daughter, afterward Mrs. Baldwin, was also of the party. Though this young female had not a beautiful face,

it was peculiarly pleasing, and she certainly possessed one of the finest of figures, – tall, and slender in its proportions, and exquisitely graceful. Her father, Sir Nathaniel Barry, many years the principal physician of Dublin, adored his daughter, and had spared neither pains nor expense on her education. She profited by all the instruction she received, and was one of the most accomplished young women of her day.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.