JONAH BARRINGTON

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

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DEDICATION

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD STOWELL,

&c. &c

January 1st, 1832.

My Dear Lord,

To experience the approbation of the public in general must ever be gratifying to the author of any literary work, however humble may be its subject: such has been my fortunate lot as to the first two volumes of these light sketches of incident and character.

But when my attempt also received the unqualified approbation of one of the most able, learned, and discriminating official personages that England has, or probably will have to boast of, my vanity was justly converted into pride, and a value stamped upon my production which I durst not previously have looked to.

Greatly indeed was my pleasure enhanced when your Lordship informed me that my Sketches had "given me much repute here, were read with *general avidity*, and considered as giving much insight into the original character of the Irish."

Yet a still stronger testimonial of your Lordship's favour was reserved to augment my pride and pleasure – your Lordship's note to me, stating, that my volumes "had afforded him much amusement, and had given very general satisfaction; and that he was tempted to wish for a third volume composed of similar materials."

Your wish, my Lord, is obeyed. A third volume is composed, and if it should have the good fortune to afford your Lordship an hour's amusement, my gratification will be consummated.

After more than threescore and ten winters have passed over the head of man, any increase of mental faculty, or intellectual powers in a writer can never be expected; at the very best he may be stationary. I can, therefore, only offer you this volume, such as it is: receive it, then, my Lord, as the last and only *souvenir* I can now tender to mark the sincerity, respect, and attachment, with which I am your

Lordship's faithful servant,
JONAH BARRINGTON.

PREFACE

The Introduction prefixed to the first volume of these Sketches somewhat developes the origin of the work, and the source of its materials. Commenced to wear away the tedium of a protracted winter, it continued, for nearly three months, the amusement of my leisure hours. During that short space the entire of the two first volumes was collected and composed.

I do not allude to this as any proof of literary expertness: on the contrary, I offer it as some apology for the inaccuracies incidental to so hasty a performance. In common with all biographical and anecdotical compositions, mine cannot affect to be exempt from small errors; but whatever they may be, I alone am responsible. Not one anecdote – character – sentence – observation – line – or even thought, was contributed or suggested to me by any living person; nor was a single page of the MS. even seen by any friend save one (and that but very partially), on whose suggestion it had been commenced, and on whose recommendation I transmitted the two first volumes to my present publisher, but with (I own) very great diffidence as to their catastrophe. On that point, however, I was most agreeably disappointed. The flattering excitement which originated the present volume appears in the dedication.

In deference to the *goût* of the present fashionable class of readers, I deeply regret that these volumes are not the florid

children of fiction and of fancy. Unfortunately, they are only embellished recitals of actual facts and incidents, extracted from authentic sources, and forming an *Olla Podrida* of variegated materials – some, perhaps, too cheerful for the grave – others too *sombre* for the cheerful, and, on the whole, I fear, rather too *ordinaire* for refinement, or insufficiently *languid* for modern sensibility – particularly of the softer sex, whose favour, of all things, I should wish to cultivate.

I cannot deny also my presumption in having garnished these Sketches here and there with my own crude or digressive observations; but my *ensemble* being altogether a whimsical composition, without sequence or connexion, minor errors may merge in the general confusion, and the originator of them be screened under the gabardine of his singularity.

The only merit which I actually claim is, that the principal sketches somewhat illustrate the native Irish character at *different epochas* in different grades of society, and furnish some amusing points of comparison between the more *remote* and the *modern* manners and habits of that eccentric people; – and there my irregularities are perfectly appropriate. But a far more dangerous ordeal lies glowing hot before me; – I fear my fair readers will never pardon me for introducing so small a proportion of true love into my anecdotes – an omission for which I am bound, so far as in me lies, to give the very best apology I can. But when I reflect on the exquisite tenderness of the female heart, and its intrinsic propensity to imbibe that most delicious of the

passions on every proper opportunity, I almost despair of being able to conciliate the lovely spinsters who may deign to peruse my lucubrations; and if the ladies of an *age mûr* do not take my part, I shall be a ruined author. Trembling, therefore, I proceed to state some matters of fact, which, if dispassionately considered and weighed, may prove that, from the rapid movements of love in Ireland, there can be but very scant materials for interesting episodes in that country.

Ireland has been ever celebrated by every author who characterised it, as the most amatory of islands; and the disinterestedness of its lovers, and their inveterate contempt of obstacles, and abhorrence of any species of procrastination, has been a subject of general eulogium.

Love is the only object of liberty and equality as yet enjoyed by the Irish people. Even among the better orders, *money*, not being in general there the circulating medium of matrimony, is always despised when it does not attend, and abused behind its back as inveterately as if it was a sub-sheriff.

A love-stricken couple seldom lose their precious moments practising idle sensibilities, and waiting for bank-notes that won't come, or parchments that have not one word of truth in them. Such illusory proceedings were very sensibly dispensed with, and a justifiable impatience generally, because quite natural, sent formality about its business. The lovers themselves came to the real point; a simple question and categorical reply settled the *concours* at once; and marriage and possession

occupied not unfrequently the second or third evening after a first acquaintance, whilst the first of a honey-moon, and the commencement of a new family, dated sometimes from the first evening of acquaintance. After that knot was tied, they always had an indefinite time and unrestrained opportunities to cultivate their love, or what remained of it, for the remainder of their existence.

This rapid, but rational consummation of love-matches in Ireland, however, left no opportunity or field for amatory adventures, as in countries where love, jealousy, and murder are often seen bubbling in the same cauldron!

No doubt the Irish manner of courtship plunders love of its episodes, romance of its refinements, and consequently my fair English readers of those sentimentalities which so beautifully garnish the produce of imagination-workers. Take it all for all, however, Irish love is found to answer very well for domestic purposes, and, making allowances for wear and tear, to be, I believe, to the full, as durable as in any other country.

In a plainer way, I now frankly confess that during the composition of the three volumes, my *inventive* genius, (if I have any,) like one of the seven sleepers, lay dormant in my *occiput*, and so torpid, that not one fanciful anecdote or brilliant hyperbole awakened during the whole of that ordinary period; and I fear that there is not an incident in the whole which has any just chance of melting down my fair sensitives into that delicious trickle of pearly tears, so gratifying to the novel writers, or even

into one soft sigh of sympathetic feeling, so naturally excited by exploits in aerial castles, or the embroidered scenery of fancy and imagination.

Of the egotistical tone of these volumes I am also most gravely accused. The best reply I can make, (and it seems rather a decisive one,) is, that it would be a task somewhat difficult for the wisest author that ever put pen to paper, to separate egotism from autobiography; indeed, I believe it has never yet been practically attempted. Were I to leave myself out of three volumes of my own *personal* anecdotes, I rather think I should be consigned to Miss Edgeworth for the destiny of increasing her volume of Irish Blunderers. I fancy also that with most ladies and gentlemen in these civilized parts of this terrestrial globe, the *amour propre* (*alias egotism*) holds a very considerable rank amongst their intellectual gallantries; and, as in *garçon* Cupid's amours, it would be no easy matter for either sex to enforce profound silence on the matter of their adoration; and I apprehend the singular number will hardly be turned out of service in the English grammar to gratify my commentators by making me write nonsense.

These observations are addressed to my good-humoured and playful critics; but there is another class of a very different description. I have been honoured by the animadversions of as many of these sharp-set gentry as any uncelebrated author could possibly expect, or indeed any reasonable writer could possibly wish for; and, though the comparison may be considered as out of course, I shall nevertheless add it to the rest of my *errata*, and

compare my orchestra of cavillers to the performers in a Dutch concert, where every musician plays his own tune, and no two of their airs or instruments are in harmony.

Literary works may be fairly termed literary chopping-blocks; like the human species, they never fail to have plenty of snarlers to cut up the reputation of the author, and probably the very best parts of his production. However, it is consolatory to perceive that many of those ingenious gentry who have done me that honour may with convenience and economy pluck their *own wings* to make their pens of; and I am satisfied that if the Roman gander who saved the Capitol were permitted to return to earth, and visit the metropolis of England, he would feel infinite gratification at finding that so many of his family have been raised to the rank of critics, and are now flourishing amongst the human species.

By some of my most inveterate cavillers I have been accused of personality. Never was an imputation worse founded. I feel incapable of leaning on any fair or worthy person. But it is impossible for any biographical writer to avoid topics of general allusion, which the equivocal good-nature of *intimate friends* seldom fails to find out an appropriate application for. Should the proprietors of shallow egotism or arrogant folly, however, (and such things *are*,) please to fit caps on their own heads, and look at general allusion through a microscope, I do not feel myself bound either to undeceive or confirm their applications – the *qui capit ille facit* is their own act, not my aphorism.

In truth, the multiplicity of inaccuracies, fibs, bounces, and impossibilities imputed to me are of so many families and ranks, that I scarcely know how to arrange their table of precedence; but as all manner of things connected with theology, from the days of Jupiter Ammon to Pope Joan, and thence to our own episcopacy, take place of temporal concerns, so I rather think I should adopt the same course of procedure; and therefore, as the doctrine of spirits and ghosts is incontestably connected with theological dogmas, so I conceive it most decorous to begin with that very supernatural subject.

The article as to Lord Rossmore's Bansheen, (in the first volume,) has been the favourite subject of general animadversion, incredulity, and inveterate impeachment of my orthodoxy, common sense, religion, and morality. Yet, strange to say, I absolutely persist unequivocally as to the matters therein recited, and shall do so to the day of my death, after which event I shall be able to ascertain individually the matter of fact to a downright certainty, though I fear I shall be enjoined to absolute secrecy.

To give new food to my cavillers, I now reassert what has been already read with expressed surprise at my heterodoxy – namely, that no man or woman, old or young, *professing* Christianity, and yet denying the possible appearance of apparitions in the world, can be a genuine, or indeed any Christian at all; nay, not even an unadulterated Deist, and most certainly not a member of the Jewish persuasion, as this can be *his* only argument.

Nor shall I omit in my following challenge every member of the 104 sects that have, like suckers, sprouted out of and weakened the established Church of England, (which, I think, might, after reforming the clergy, have served people very well, without the assistance of any hair-splitters, unless they were unconscionable epicures in theology); to all such folks I here throw down my glove – and by these presents, I invite any preacher, teacher, priest, bishop, deacon, fat dignitary, or lank curate, who disclaims my said doctrine, to reply to it if he can – otherwise I shall crow over him, reasonably considering that "silence gives consent," and set down my doctrines as admitted fully and unanimously by the *nil dicits* of all the Christian clericals and pious labourers in the holy vineyards, and all the singers at the Meeting Houses in the British Empire.

Consistently with my rank as a goblin *chaperone*, I should consider myself guilty of great impoliteness did I not notice one or two of the lectures I have received from lay disputants since the two first volumes have been published, but which other occupations have heretofore prevented me from duly noticing.

The most formidable, because the most rational, of my avowed contraventionists, has attacked me on a point which I admit to be the most assailable of my anecdotes, and to constitute the most plausible ground he could pitch his scepticism on: I allude to his dogma as to my Rossmore Bansheen, in which he asserts that all supernaturals are now-a-days as much out of fashion and as scarce as miracles. I admit that miracles,

eo nomine, have diminished very considerably (without any good reason that I know of) for some centuries past, and consequently, that my assertion of modern supernaturals has, in the opinion of many wise persons, lost the advantage of that scriptural confirmation, which it certainly would have had eighteen hundred years ago. But that is only begging the question without the candour of admitting that if miracles *ever* existed, the same Omnipotence which created may *revive* them, particularly as all these matters are decided in a world that not a priest in Europe has any communication with. Prejudices – whether natural or transplanted – have long roots: they shoot deep and strong, and are most difficult to eradicate. Out of a hundred pertinacious argumentators, I verily believe there is seldom even one of the debaters, who at the conclusion admits a single *scintilla* of diminution in his original hypothesis. So prone is man to prejudice, that I have known clerical rhetoricians argue, on points of their own trade, very *nearly* that black was white; and I really believe all the Saints in the calendar could not make any impression on their sentiments; therefore, yielding all argument deducible either from the Witch of Endor, or the Weird Sisters, &c., I found my tenet upon proven facts and causes, of which the (assailed) anecdote of Lord Rossmore is only as a vanguard.

This plausible and ingenious antagonist, to whom I allude, is a gentleman universally considered to be in his sound senses, and of high respectability; and one who, I believe, both individually and professionally, generally *looks* before he *leaps*:

this gentleman has so billeted his scepticism on his brain, that it lives at free quarters, and shuts its door against all reasoning; and I much fear his incredulity will retain its post, till he becomes a goblin himself, and learns the fallacy of his prejudices by actual demonstration.

Some other intolerant correspondents, of much personal consideration, are fully entitled to my proper observation; and I regret that, a preface being inappropriate to any controversy in detail, I am obliged to postpone paying my *devoirs* to them. But this above-named gentleman having favoured me with a letter of many pages, expressing his unqualified disbelief of Lord Rossmore's Bansheen and all ghosts in general, and his extreme *surprise* that I could venture to support so exploded a doctrine, I should act unhandsomely if I did not acknowledge the receipt of it, and assure him that I shall take the earliest opportunity I can of putting in my rejoinder.

I admit that the reasoning of this respectable intolerant (Mr. T – of Gray's Inn) appeared so moral, rational, religious, pious, and plausible, that even an idiot, or a soft country gentleman with a blank mind, might, without any further imputation against his understanding, be actually convinced by it. However, as I do not boast of these latter qualities, I retain my own doctrine inflexibly, – and so does Mr. T – ; and lamentable it is to say, that there is not the most remote probability of either of us yielding his hypothesis, or any human possibility of finding any person in the whole world who could decide as an arbitrator. Mr. T –

conceives that I cannot be a Christian if I believe in supernaturals, and I am as steadily convinced that he cannot be a true Christian if he does not. The majority of society, who seldom take the trouble of looking deeper than the surface in matters of theology, except when they are text-puzzled on Sundays, are mostly on his side; profound philosophers, theoretical moralists, and all delicate ladies, are on mine. However, there being no mathematical demonstration on either, well authenticated supernaturals are the sole mode of deciding the question in this part of the firmament. On this enigmatical subject my good friends the clergy are rather awkwardly circumstanced. They may be very excellent casuists, so far as their knowledge *extends*; yet, being only simple mortals themselves, they can know no more about the matter than the most ignorant of their parishioners. Though my Lords Spiritual, the Bishops of England, are by far the most temporal, sleek, and comfortable covey of prelates on the surface of this globe – whatever they may do in their political capacities, it would be profane to suppose they could have private audiences either in the upper or lower department of the other world, *until* their *post obitums* fall in, and give them the *entrée*. The fattest prelate of the land, therefore, can know no more of supernaturals than the hungriest curate of his diocese; the happy translation, however, must take place, (and nobody can tell how soon,) and no doubt its approach must be hailed by these parties with great pleasure, as the only tranquil catastrophe they can be absolutely certain of during this ticklish epoch.

I have already mentioned that my reasoning on this subject in detail appears in the first volume of this work; where, though I profess no enthusiastic adoration of Dr. Johnson's morality, I certainly am proud to have the advantage of his coincidence on the subject of supernaturals. I therefore refer my respectable antagonist, Mr. T – , (whom, by-the-by, I never had the honour of speaking to or seeing,) to that volume.

I have also received, amongst many other favours upon the same subject, a letter under the signature of R. H., Brompton; but, though on thick gilt paper, of a very different complexion, and in very different language from that of my last-named correspondent. Mr. R. H. accuses me of publishing *absolute falsehoods*, and putting *dangerous* doctrines into the heads of *silly people*, which he illustrates by the example of his *own wife and daughter*, who, "naturally nervous," ever since reading my argument in favour of ghosts, &c., fall into "twitters" if they hear any noise in the house after nightfall, which they cannot instantly account for. His life is a torment to him! Even a kitten, which was locked up accidentally in a cupboard, and began to rattle the tea-things after the candles were put out, threw Mrs. H. into strong hysterics, and nearly cost Miss H. her reason, besides the expense of drugs and attendance. This Mr. H., of Brompton, describes himself "a *rational* gentleman," (*credat Judæus Apelles!*) I suppose in contradistinction to me; but, whether gentle or simple, he has in his commentary on my anecdote been so far impartial, that he has shown no greater

respect for his own composition than he has for mine. To do him justice, he has not attempted reasoning: therein he was perfectly right; reason does not seem to be his forte, or in unison with either his temper or intellect, and the *retort courteous* with which he has favoured me is vastly better adapted to both the manners and capacity of that gentlemanly personage. To increase his troubles, I have referred him to a decided ghost story ycleped the "Tapestry Chamber," from the celebrated pen of Sir Walter Scott, directing my letter "dead office, Brompton." That story was vouched by Miss Seward, the most learned and religious of the *bas-bleus*. It has been swallowed by the public at large with a greedy avidity, as a genuine undoubted apparition; nor has a single reviewer, commentator, periodical, or other species of critic, ever ventured to call it a *bounce*, or to express the slightest doubt of its absolute authenticity. Whilst Sir Jonah Barrington's "Bansheen of Lord Rossmore," vouched by three living persons, has experienced all manner of ugly epithets, the "Tapestry Chamber," so vouched, remains in full blow, with scarcely an unbeliever. It is observable also that Sir Walter's apparition, coming a year after my "Bansheen," and the public strictures thereupon, proves and exemplifies his coincidence in my belief; and (Miss Seward having been for some time a ghost herself) I trust Sir Walter, not being defunct, will, on his return from his travels, do me the justice of confirming my tenet by his own, and the authority of Miss Seward. In the mean time, as for Mr. R. H. of Brompton, whom I *strongly suspect* to be an M.P.

and a saint —*requiescat in pace!* unless I can trace the writing, and, if I can, he may be assured the public shall have a garnished edition of it.

The Irish mower cutting his *own* head off has also afforded a multiplicity of amusing comments, both from my friends and the periodicals; the former call it *ingenious*, the latter a *bounce*. However, I refer my sceptics to the second edition of the former portion of these Sketches, where that incident is repeated and enlarged upon. That anecdote, not being in any degree *supernatural*, is susceptible of testimony; and it is rather fortunate for me that the very same respectable gentleman, Mr. T., who is so inflexible an anti-Bansheen, was also an avowed disbeliever of my self-decapitation anecdote, until his friend, Lord Mountnorris, *vouched* to him decidedly the *truth* of Dennis's cutting his own *head* off, though his lordship would not give him the same corroboration as to the *ear* of his comrade: however, as to that, *exceptio probat regulam*, and I am contented.

So numerous have been the comments I have read in print, and received in MS., as to different articles of those Sketches, that a rejoinder to one half of them would be more than food for a tolerable quarto, and of course my notices must be very limited.

The letter which I received, marked *private*, by post from London, under the signature Z. Y., though long in my possession, I had no clue to answer, or any *à-propos* opportunity of noticing; and I regret that the limits of a Preface do not even now admit me to go much further than to advert to the subject of it. That subject,

could I here dilate on it, would afford myself a very agreeable field for general as well as individual comment; and indeed, not being devoid of a popular interest, it deserves a distinct, and not limited consideration: such (I intend) it shall receive hereafter on a different occasion. At present I only wish the persons therein alluded to, and particularly the one who, Z. Y. insinuates, "has felt *no pleasure* at my observations," to be assured that I should consider myself much to blame, had I intended to draw any *invidious comparisons*, or lean either by irony, ridicule, or satire, on either of two persons so justly and highly estimated by the public, for whom I feel the sentiments of private friendship, and whom I have known before they could either know or forget themselves.

One observation, however, I may venture, and (though singular) I have very generally found it a true one, namely, that the best writers are the most thin-skinned, and become jealous of comment, *pari passu* with the march of their celebrity. Even when their literary reputation has been popularly established beyond the power of "reviewing" injury, they feel more ticklish at criticism than scribblers in the fifth degree of comparison; and, as if they were afflicted with the disease called "noli me tangere," they consider even the approach of a quill as injurious to their tranquillity. Such species of impression on either a party or a partizan has no doubt procured me the honour of the letter I have alluded to; – it is palpably the work of no ordinary penman. I regret that I must persist in my opinion both as to the lady

and gentleman, and cannot relinquish my consistency as to the principle of distinction between genius and talent, though with modification, and perhaps according to *my* more minute *view* of these modern rarities.

I never found these gifts of intellect completely amalgamated in any one modern writer either in prose or poetry. Heavens and earth – flights of fancy, and matters of fact, *savans* and rainbows, angels, and ladies of quality, &c. &c. &c. afford very different touchstones whereby to assay the extent of human intellect.

The personages that Z. Y. has alluded to may rest assured that not a friend of theirs, either old or new, has a greater pride in their compatriotship than the composer of this terrestrial bagatelle; the one works in prose, and dresses in poetry, the other makes Irish petticoats with foreign flounces to them. Both are good artists – yet I confess myself so very worldly and unrefined a being that I should, under the circumstances of Ireland, prefer one sound, unexaggerated, unagitating true matter-of-*fact* essay on the real condition of my countrymen. The most lovely subjects of madrigal and sonnet, after a curt exhibition of their charms, wax old and ugly, and in some time enjoy little more than a florid epitaph. Time with his extinguisher soon puts out all flames of an amatory description, and reduces both the poet and his muse – the first (if he lives) to a state of dotage, the other to the enjoyment of some "newer lover." But the love of a country blooms for ever: it defies the power of time and the lapse of ages; and I should like to see the produce of some proud and emulative

talent or genius, to decide which is best adapted to descant upon that subject. Two attempts on that matter I have seen; the one has lost reputation by danger – diving too deep; the other gained none by being too superficial. Of all themes, *absenteeism*, if handled strongly, would give great credit, if its writer would take a fair, clear, and comprehensive view of that existing cause of national misfortune.

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OF
THE THIRD VOLUME.

PERSONAL SKETCHES.

PERPLEXITIES OF A BARONET

The Author apologises for ending, instead of commencing, his former volumes, with an inquiry into his pedigree – How to improve a family name – The cognomen of Alderman Sir W. Stammer – Vowel *versus* Consonant – The lady of "masculine understanding" – The Alderman's conditions on altering his surname – Unsuspected presidency of *King James* at the Dublin municipal meetings – Ulster king-at-arms – George the Fourth's visit to Dublin – Various heraldic bearings.

The concluding the second volume of my Biographical Sketches with the recital of a laborious search after my progenitors, doubtless savours somewhat of our national perversions. But those who know the way in which things are done in Ireland, will only call it a "doughan dourish," or "parting drop" – which was usually administered when a man was not very sure which end of him was uppermost.

The English, in general, though not very exquisite philologists, and denominated "Bulls" in every known part of the world, have yet a great aversion to be considered "*blunderers*;" an *honour* which their own misprisions of speech fall short of, owing to the absence of point in their humour (as they call it).

When an English dramatist wants a *good blunder*, he must send to Ireland for it. A few *English* blunders would damn the best

play; and I have known some pieces actually saved by a profusion of Irish ones. As to my misplacing my pedigree, I can only say, that though an English writer, speaking of his origin, would say he was born and bred at London, &c. &c. – an Irishman always places his acquirements before his birth, and says he was bred and born at Drogheda, &c. My mistake is not quite so bad as this; and I shall endeavour to recompense my readers for having made it, by transporting them to the city of Dublin, where, so long as a thing has *fun in it*, we set all cold-blooded critico-cynicals at defiance, and where we never have a lack of families and of good pedigrees – at least for home consumption.

The sketch which I thus introduce has certainly nothing whatever in it connected with myself. However, it is so far in point, that it proves how very differently gentlemen may furbish up families; – one by traversing foreign parts to discover the old cavaliers, arms, and quarterings of his race; – another by garnishing a new coach with new quarters, shields, and bearings, such as no family, ancient or modern, had ever seen or heard of till they appeared emblazoning the pannels of an alderman's landau.

In the year of our Lord 1809, after his late Majesty King George the Third had expended forty-nine years of his life in ruling the state, it pleased his royal fancy to order a universal jubilee, and to elevate his Lord Mayors into Imperial Baronets. At this propitious era, William Stammer, Esquire, Alderman of Dublin, and likewise of Skinners' Alley, wine-merchant, do.

consumer, dealer and chapman, freemason, orangeman, and friendly brother, happened, by Divine Providence and the good-will of the Common Council, to be seated on the civic throne as "the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of the King's good city of Dublin." He ruled with convivial sway the ancient, loyal, joyous, moist, and vociferous municipal corps of the said celebrated city, and its twenty-four federated corporations: – consequently he was, in point of dignity, the second *Lord Mayor* in all *Christendom*, though unfortunately born a few centuries too late to be one of its seven *champions*. However, being thus enthroned at that happy festival time, he became greater than any of these, and found himself, suddenly, as if by magic, (though it was only by patent,) metamorphosed into *Sir* William Stammer, Baronet of the United Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Sir William Stammer, Bart., being (as he himself often informed me, and which I believe to be true,) an excellent, good-hearted kind of person, and having by nature an even, smooth-trotting temper, with plenty of peace and quietness in it, bore his rank with laudable moderation: but as he was the first genuine corporator the Union had honoured by this *imperial* dignity, he felt a sort of loyal fervor, which urged him to make some particular acknowledgment to his gracious Majesty for so unprecedented a mark of distinction. But in what way a sober British king should be complimented by an Irish wine-merchant was a matter which required much ingenuity and profound consideration. At length, it was suggested and strongly urged by

several of his civic friends, (especially those of the feminine gender,) that his Lordship had it actually within his power to pay as loyal and handsome a compliment as ever was paid to any king of England by an Irish gentleman with a twang to his surname; *videlicet*, by sacrificing the old Irish pronunciation thereof, ameliorating the sound, and changing it in such sort, that it might be adapted to the court language, and uttered without any difficulty or grimace by the prettiest mouths of the highest classes of British society; it was, in fact, strenuously argued that, instead of the old hacknied family name commonly pronounced Stam-mer, the word *Steem-er* (being better vowelled and Anglicised) would sound far more genteel and modern, and ring more gratefully in the ear of royalty. It was also urged, how Mrs. Clarke's friend, the Rev. Dr. O'Meara, unfortunately lost the honour of preaching before royalty by his pertinacity in retaining the abominable *O*, and that had he dropped that hideous prefixture, and been announced plainly as the Rev. Doctor Meera, his doctrines might probably have atoned for his Milesianality, and a stall in some cathedral, or at least a rural deanery, might have rewarded his powers of declamation.

"Having begun so well, who knows what famous end you may arrive at, Sir William?" said Sir Jemmy Riddle, the then high sheriff (a very good man too), who was be-knighted on the same occasion. "When we all go to St. James's," continued Sir Jemmy, "to thank our Sovereign and kiss his hand in *his own metrolopus*, sure the name of our Lord Mayor, Sir W. Steemer, will sound

every taste as harmonious if not *harmoniouser*, than that of the great Sir Claudius Hunter, or our own Claudius Beresford, or any Claudius in Europe! – and sure, changing *am* for *ee*, to please his Majesty, is neither a sin nor a shame in any family, were they as old as *Mathuslin*: – besides, old White, the schoolmaster, the greatest scholar, by odds, that ever was in Dublin, told me that one vowel was worth two consonants any day in the year; and that the alteration would make a great difference in the sweetness of the odes he was writing on your promotion."

Sir William, however, being fond of the old proper name which had stuck to him through thick and thin, in all weathers, and which he and his blood relations had been so long accustomed to spell, did not at all relish the proposed innovation. Besides, he considered that any thing like the assumption of a new name might bring him too much on a level with some *modern* corporators, who not having any particular cognomen of their own at the time of their nativity, or at least not being able to discover it, but being well christened for fear of accidents, very judiciously took only provisional denominations for their apprenticeship indentures, and postponed the adoption of any immutable surname until they had considered what might probably be most attractive to customers in their several trades.

The grand measure was nevertheless so strongly pressed – the ladies so coaxed the alderman to take the *pretty* name, and they were so well supported by Sir Charles Vernon, then master of the ceremonies, (and of course the best judge in Ireland

of what was good for Sir William at the Castle of Dublin,) that his resolution gradually softened, wavered, and gave way. He became convinced against his will, and at last, with a deep sigh and a couple of imprecations, ungratefully yielded up his old, broad, national *Stammer*, to adopt an Anglicised mincemeat version thereof; and in a few nights, Sir William *Steemer's* landau was announced as stopping the way at the breaking up of the Duchess of Richmond's drawing-room.

'Tis true, some very cogent and plausible reasons were suggested to Sir William, pending the negotiation, by a lady of excellent judgment, and what was termed in Dublin "masculine understanding." This lady had great weight with his lordship. "You know, my Lord Mayor," said she, sententiously, "you are now nine or ten pegs (at the lowest computation) higher than you were as a common alderman, and a pronunciation that might sound quite in unison with 'sheriff's peer,' would be mere discord in the politer mouths of your new equals."

"Ah! what would Jekey Poole say to all this, if he were alive?" *thought* Sir William, but was silent.

"Consider, also," – pursued the lady, – "consider that Stammer is a very common kind of word; nay, it is a mere verb of Dutch extraction (as that great man Doctor Johnson says), which signifies stuttering; and to articulate which, there is a graceless double chopping of the under jaw – as if a person was taking a bite out of something: – try now, try, Stammer – Stammer!"

"Egad, it's – it's very true," said Sir William: "I – I never

remarked that before."

"But," resumed the lady with the masculine understanding, "the word Steemer, on the contrary, has a soft, bland, liquid sound, perfectly adapted to genteel table-talk. To pronounce Steemer, you will perceive, Sir William, there is a slight tendency to a lisp: the tip of the tongue presses gently against the upper gums, and a nice extension of the lips approaching toward a smile, gives an agreeable sensation, as well as a polite complacency of countenance to the addresser. – Now, try!"

Sir William lisped and capitulated – on express condition; first, that the old County Clare tone of Stammer, in its natural length and breadth, should be preserved when the name was used by or to the Corporation of Dublin.

"Granted," said the lady with the masculine understanding.

"Secondly, amongst the aldermen of Skinners' Alley."

"Granted."

"Thirdly, in the Court of Conscience."

"Granted."

"Fourthly, in my own counting-house."

"Granted – according to the rank of the visitor."

"Fifthly, as to all my *country* acquaintance."

"Granted, with the exception of such as hold any offices, or get into good company."

The articles were arranged, and the treaty took effect that very evening.

Sir William no doubt acquired one distinction hereby, which

he never foresaw. Several other aldermen of Dublin city have been since converted into baronets of the United Kingdom, but not one of them has been able to alter a single syllable in his name, or to make it sound even a semitone more *genteel* than when it belonged to a commonplace alderman. There was no lack of jesting, however, on those occasions. A city punster, I think it was a gentleman called, by the Common Council, Gobbio, waggishly said, "That the Corporation of Dublin must be a set of incorrigible Tories, inasmuch as they never have a feast without *King-James*[1] being placed at the head of their table."

It is said that this joke was first cracked at the Castle of Dublin by a gentleman of the long robe, and that Mr. Gobbio gave one of the footmen (who attended and *took notes*) half a guinea for it. Though a digression, I cannot avoid observing that I hear, from good authority, there are yet some few wits surviving in Dublin; and it is whispered that the butlers and footmen in genteel families (*vails* having been mostly abolished since the Union) pick up, by way of substitute, much ready money by taking notes of the "*good things*" they hear said by the lawyers at their masters' dinner parties, and selling them to aldermen, candidates for the sheriffry, and city humourists,

[1] Two Dublin aldermen lately made baronets; one by his Majesty on his landing in Ireland (Alderman King); and the other by the Marquess of Wellesley on *his* debarkation (Alderman James), being the first public functionary he met. The Marquess would fain have *knighted* him; but being taken by surprise, he conferred the same honour which Aldermen Stammer and King had previously received.There are now four baronets amongst that hard-going corporation.

wherewith to embellish their conversation and occasionally their speeches. Puns are said to sell the best, they being more handy to a corporator, who has no great vocabulary of his own: puns are of easy comprehension; one word brings on another, and answers for two meanings, like killing two birds with one stone, and they seem much more natural to the memory of a common councilman than wit or any thing classical – which Alderman Jekey Poole used to swear was only the d – 'd *garbage* (gibberish) of schoolmasters.

Had the Jubilee concern ended here, all would have been smooth and square: – but as events in families seldom come alone, Providence had decreed a still more severe trial for Sir William *Steemer*– because one of a more important character, and requiring a more prompt as well as expensive decision.

Soon after the luxurious celebration of the Jubilee throughout the three united kingdoms (except among such of the Irish as happened to have nothing in their houses to eat or drink, let their loyalty be ever so greedy), I chanced to call at the Mansion House on official business; and Sir William, always hospitable and good-natured, insisted on my staying to taste (in a family way) some "*glorious turtle*" he had just got over from the London Tavern, and a bottle of what he called "old Lafitte with the red nightcap," which, he said, he had been long preserving wherewith to *suckle* his Excellency the Duke of Richmond.

I accepted his invitation: we had most excellent cheer, and were busily employed in praising the vintage of 1790, when

a sealed packet, like a government dispatch, was brought in by the baronet's old porter. We all thought it was something of consequence, when Sir William, impatiently breaking the seal, out started a very beautiful painting on parchment or vellum, gilded and garnished with ultramarine, carmine, lapis caliminaris, and all the most costly colours.

"Heyday!" said Sir William, staring: "what the deuce have we here? Hollo! Christopher – Kit – I say Kit – who – who – or where the devil did this come from?"

"By my sowl, my lord," replied Christopher, "I dunnough who that same man was that fetched it; but he was neat an' clean, and had good apparel on his body, though it was not a livery like mine, my lord."

"Did – did – he say nothing, Kit?" said Sir William, surprised.

"Oh yes, plenty my lord; he desired me on my peril to give the thing safe and sound to your lordship's own self. He swore, like any trooper, that it was as good as a ten thousand pound bank of Ireland note in your pocket any how. So I curdled up at that word, my lord; I towld him plain and plump he need not talk about peril to me; that I was nothing else but an honest sarvant; and if the said thing was worth *fifty* pounds in *ready money* it would be as safe as a diamond stone with me, my lord."

"And was that all, Christopher?" said Sir William.

"Oh no, my lord," replied Kit, "the man grinned at me all as one as a monkey; and said that, maybe, I'd be a master myself one of these days. 'By my sowl, maybe so, Sir,' says I, 'many a worse

man arrived at being an attorney since I came into service;' and at the word, my lord, the said man held his hand quite natural, as if he'd fain get something into it for his trouble; but the devil a cross I had in my fob, my lord, so I turned my fob inside out to show I was no liar, and he bowed very civilly and went out of the street-door, laughing that the whole street could hear him; though I could swear by all the books in your lordship's office, that he had nothing to laugh at: and that's all I had act or part in it, my lord."

Sir William now seemed a little puzzled, desired Christopher to be gone, and throwing the painting on the table, said, "I didn't want any arms or crests. I had very good ones of my own, and I don't understand this matter at all. My family had plenty of arms and crests since King William came over the water."

"So have mine – a very nice lion rampant of their own, my lord," said her ladyship, as excellent a woman as could be: "I'm of the Rawins's," continued she, "and they have put me into your arms, Sir William: – look!"

"Oh that is all as it should be, my dear," said his lordship, who was a very tender husband. But regarding it more closely, her ladyship's colour, as she looked over his shoulder, mantled a few shades higher than its natural roseate hue, and she seemed obviously discontented.

"I tell you, Sir William," said she, "it is a malicious insult; and if you were out of the mayoralty, or my boy, Lovelace Steemer, had arrived at full maturity, I have no doubt the person who sent

this would be made a proper example of. I hope you feel it, Sir William."

"Feel! – feel what, my love?" said Sir William, calmly, he being not only a courteous, but a most peaceful citizen. "Don't be precipitate, my darling! – let us see – let us see."

"See!" said her ladyship, still more hurt, "ay, see with your own eyes!" pointing to the *insult*: "the fellow that painted that (whoever he is) has placed a pair of enormous horns just over your head, Sir William! – a gross insult, Sir William – to me, Sir William – indeed to both of us."

I was much amused, and could not help observing "that the horns were certainly enormous horns, to be sure; but as the joke must be intended against Sir William himself – not her ladyship – I hope – " said I.

"No, no, Sir Jonah," said the lady interrupting me.

"I see now," said Sir William, looking at the bottom, "this comes from Ulster."

"Read on, Sir William," said I, "read on."

"Ay, Ulster king-at-arms: and who the deuce is *Ulster king-at-arms*?"

"I suppose," said I, "some blood relation to the Escheator of Munster, and – "

"And who – who the d – l is the *Escheator of Munster*?" said Sir William (who had never vacated a seat in the Irish Parliament).

"He is of the same family as the Chiltern hundreds," quoth I.

"Chiltern hundreds! Chiltern hundreds! By Jove, they must be an odd family altogether," said the Lord Mayor, still more puzzled, his lady sitting quite silent, being now altogether out of her depth, – till a small letter, to that moment overlooked, was taken up and read by the Lord Mayor, and was found to be connected with a bill furnished, and wanting nothing but a receipt in full to make it perfect. The countenance of Sir William now became less placid. It proved to be a very proper and fair intimation from his Majesty's herald-at-arms, to the effect that, as the baronetcy originated with the Jubilee, and was granted in honour of King George the Third having ruled half a century, an amplification of the new baronet's heraldry by an additional horn, motto, ribbon, &c., was only a just tribute to his Majesty's longevity! and, in truth, so properly and professionally was the case stated, that Ulster's clear opinion may be inferred that every family in the empire might, in honour and loyalty, take a pair of horns, motto, and ribbon, as well as Sir William, if they thought proper so to do, and on the same terms.

How the matter was finally arranged, I know not; but the arms came out well emblazoned and duly surmounted by a more moderate and comely pair of horns; and Sir William, in regular season, retired from office with due *éclat*, and in all points vastly bettered by his year of government. Though he retired, like Cincinnatus – but not to the plough – Sir William reassumed his less arduous duties of committing rogues to Newgate – long corks to Chateau Margaux – light loaves to the four Marshalsea

Courts – and pronouncing thirteen-penny decrees in the Court of Conscience:[2] every one of which occupations he performed correctly and zealously, to the entire satisfaction of the nobility, clergy, gentry, and public at large, in the metropolis of Ireland.

An incident appertaining to the same body, but with a termination by no means similar, occurred a few years afterward, which, among other matters, contributes to show what different sort of things the Irish at different times rejoice in. In 1809, they rejoiced in full jubilee on the memorable event of his Majesty King George the Third having entered the fiftieth year of his reign, without ever paying one visit to, or taking the least notice of, his loyal Corporation of Dublin: and after he was dead (*de facto*, for the King never dies *de jure*), they celebrated

[2] Every lord mayor of Dublin becomes judge of a "Court of Conscience" for twelve months after the expiration of his mayoralty; each decree costing a shilling; many of the causes are of the most comical description; but never would there have arisen so great a judge as Sancho Panza of Barataria, from presiding in our Court of Conscience.I cannot omit stating, that Sir William, when lord mayor, gave the most numerous, brilliant, and complete masquerade ever seen in Dublin, or, I believe, any where else. There were fourteen or fifteen hundred persons, and I am sure not more than one hundred dominoes; every body went in character, and every person tried to keep up the character he adopted. Ireland, of all places in the world, is, perhaps, best adapted to a masquerade, as every Irishman is highly amused when he can get an opportunity of assuming, by way of freak, any new character.It was the custom for the mob, on those occasions, to stop every carriage, and demand of each person, "What's your character?" I was dreadfully tired of them in the street on the night in question; but fairly put into good-humour by the *jeu d'esprit* of a mob-man, who opened the carriage-door. After I had satisfied him as to character, he desired to know, where I was going? "Shut the door," said I. "Ah, but where are you going?" I was vexed. "I'm going to the *Devil*," said I. "Ough, then, *God* send you safe!" replied the blackguard.

another jubilee on account of his Majesty George the Fourth honouring them with a visit *the very earliest opportunity*. This was the first time any king of England had come to Ireland, except to cut the throats of its inhabitants; and his present Majesty having most graciously crossed over to sow peace and tranquillity among them, if possible, and to do them any and every kindness which they would *submit to*, it was not wonderful each man in Ireland hailed the event as forming a most auspicious commencement of his Majesty's reign, not only over his subjects at large, but, in particular, over that glorious, pious, immortal, and uproarious body, the Corporation of Dublin city. Events have proved how ungratefully his Majesty's beneficent intentions have been requited.

His Majesty having arrived at the hill of Howth, to the universal joy of the Irish people, was received with unexampled cordiality, and in due form, by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, on the very field of battle where O'Brien Borun had formerly acquired undying fame by cutting the Danes into slices (an operation which we have since repeated on them at Copenhagen, though with different instruments). That Right Honourable Lord Mayor was Sir Abraham Bradley King, then one of the best looking aldermen in Europe. On this occasion he obtained, not military honour, but, on the other hand, a more tranquil one than the said King O'Brien Borun ever arrived at; – he was actually *imperialised* as a baronet in very superior style to his brother corporator *Steemer*, on the loyal demi-century

occasion.

I have since heard that an effort was made somewhat to transform the armorial bearings of the Bradley King family, also, in commemoration of this auspicious event; and that it was intended to give him, as an addition to his crest, Sir John Skinner's steam packet, out of which his Majesty had landed just previous to bestowing the baronetcy on Sir Abraham. Here the city punsters began again with their vulgar insinuations; and, omitting the word *packet*, gave out that Alderman King wanted to put Alderman *Steemer* as a supporter to his arms, instead of a griffin rampant or unicorn, as customary on these occasions; but this vile play upon words Sir Abraham peremptorily and properly checked with the same constitutional firmness and success wherewith he had previously refused to "tell tales out of school" about the Orangemen to the House of Commons.[3]

On this occasion, Sir Abraham proudly and virtuously declared that all the heralds in Europe should never *ravish* him as they had done his brother Steemer; and that if any alteration was to be made in his shield by Ulster-at-arms, or any Ulster in Europe, he would permit nothing but an emblematic crown to be introduced therein, in honour and commemoration of his sovereign; and though our national poet, Mr. Thomas Moore, and Sir Abraham, never coalesced upon any point whatsoever (except the consumption of paper), yet on this conciliatory occasion, Sir Abraham declared his willingness to forgive and forget the

[3] This was the first instance I recollect of pertinacity conquering privilege.

religion and politics of the poet for eight and forty hours. This was as it should be; and a crown, with a posy or nosegay in its neighbourhood (instead of a cut and thrust) are accordingly embodied in the armorial bearings of Sir Abraham, the cruel idea of a bloody hand being now softened down and qualified by the bouquet which adorns it.

Again the indefatigable corporation wags, who could let nothing pass, began their jocularities: the worthy Baronet's name being *King*, and the shield having a *crown* in it, the Common Council began to hob-nob him as, *Your Majesty*, or the *Crown Prince*, or such like. But Sir Abraham had been an officer in the King's service, and being a spirited fellow to boot, he declared open and personal hostility against all low and evil-minded corporate punsters. These *titles* were therefore relinquished; and the whole affair ended, to the real satisfaction of every staunch Protestant patriot from Bray to Balbiggen, and as far westward as the College of Maynooth, where I understand the rejoicings terminated – for Sir Abraham found the road *too bad* to travel any farther.

Having endeavoured somewhat to divert the reader's criticism on my pedigree blunder, I have, in compliance with the wish of one of the ablest, wisest, and steadiest public personages of Great Britain (whose title heads this volume), reopened my old trunks, and made a further attempt at amusing myself and other folks – and at depicting, by authentic anecdotes, the various and extraordinary habits and propensities of the Irish people, with

their gradual changes of national character for the last fifty or sixty years, – which (to my grief I say it) will be the work, not of a *novelist*, but a *contemporary*. I fancy there are very few of those who flourished so long ago, who could procure pen, ink, and paper, either for love or money, where they sojourn at present; and of those who still inhabit the same world with the stationers, some have lost one half of their faculties, at least, and scarce any among the remainder possess sufficient energy to retrace by description the events that took place during a long and, perhaps, active career. I shall take Time by the forelock; and, ere the candle goes out, draw as many Sketches of my past day as I may have time to record, before I wish the present generation a good morning – which adieu cannot now be long distant: —*tant pis*!

DANGERS OF REFLECTION

Personal description of Counsellor Conaghty – Singular contrast of physical roughness and mental suavity – A legal costume – The Counsellor's marriage – The bride described – Her plan for inducing her husband to sacrifice to the Graces – The fatal mirror – The Counsellor views himself in a new light – His consternation and false persuasion – The devil unjustly accused – Conaghty's illness and death.

The most extraordinary instance I recollect of a sudden affection of the mind being fatal to the body was presented by an old acquaintance of mine, Counsellor Conaghty, a gentleman of the Irish bar, who pined and died in consequence of an unexpected view of his own person; but by no means upon the same principle as Narcissus.

Mr. Conaghty was a barrister of about six feet two inches in length; his breadth was about three feet across the shoulders; his hands splay, with arms in full proportion to the rest of his members. He possessed, indeed, a set of limbs that would not have disgraced a sucking elephant; and his body appeared slit up two-thirds of its length, as if Nature had originally intended (which is not very improbable) to have made twins of him – but finding his *brains* would not answer for *two*, relinquished her design. His complexion, not a disagreeable fawn-colour, was spotted by two good black eyes, well intrenched in his head,

and guarded by a thick *chevaux de frise* of curly eyebrows. His mouth, which did not certainly extend, like a john-dory's, from ear to ear, was yet of sufficient width to disclose between thirty and forty long, strong, whitish tusks, the various heights and distances whereof gave a pleasing variety to that feature. Though his *tall* countenance was terminated by a chin which might, upon a pinch, have had an interview with his stomach, still there was quite enough of him between the chin and waistband to admit space for a waistcoat, without the least difficulty.

Conaghty, in point of disposition, was a quiet, well-tempered, and, I believe, totally irreproachable person. He was not unacquainted with the superficies of law, nor was he without professional business. Nobody, in fact, disliked him, and he disliked nobody. In national idiom, and Emerald brogue, he unquestionably excelled (save one) all his contemporaries. Dialogues sometimes occurred in Court between him and Lord Avonmore, the Chief Baron, which were truly ludicrous.

The most unfortunate thing, however, about poor Conaghty, was his utter contempt for what fastidious folks call *dress*. – As he scorned both garters and suspenders, his stockings and small-clothes enjoyed the full blessings of liberty. A well-twisted cravat, as if it feared to be mistaken for a cord, kept a most respectful distance from his honest throat – upon which the neighbouring beard flourished in full crops, to fill up the interstice. His rusty black coat, well trimmed with peeping button-moulds, left him, altogether, one of the most tremendous

figures I ever saw, of his own profession.

At length it pleased the Counsellor, or old Nick on his behalf, to look out for a wife; and, as dreams go by contraries, so Conaghty's perverse vision of matrimonial happiness induced him to select a *sposa* very excellent internally, but in her exterior as much the reverse of himself as any two of the same species could be.

Madam Conaghty was (and I dare say still is) a neat, pretty, dressy little person: her head reached nearly up to her spouse's hip; and if he had stood wide, to let her pass, she might (without much stooping) have walked under him as through a triumphal arch.

He was quite delighted with his captivating fairy, and she equally so with her good-natured giant. Nothing could promise better for twenty or thirty years of honey-moons, when an extraordinary and most unexpected fatality demonstrated the uncertainty of all sublunary enjoyments, and might teach ladies who have lost their beauty the dangers of a looking-glass.

The Counsellor had taken a small house, and desired his dear little Mary to furnish it to her own dear little taste. This, as new-married ladies usually do, she set about with the greatest zeal and assiduity. She had a proper taste for things in general, and was besides extremely anxious to make her giant somewhat smarter; and, as he had seldom in his life had any intercourse with looking-glasses larger than necessary just to reflect his chin whilst shaving, she determined to place a grand *mirror* in her

little drawing-room, extensive enough to exhibit the Counsellor to himself from head to foot – and which, by reflecting his loose, shabby habiliments, and tremendous contour, might induce him to trim himself up.

This plan was extremely promising in the eyes of little Mary; and she had no doubt it would be entirely consonant with her husband's own desire of Mrs. Conaghty's little drawing-room being the nicest in the neighbourhood. She accordingly purchased, in Great George Street, at a very large price, a looking-glass of sufficing dimensions, and it was a far larger one than the Counsellor had ever before noticed.

When this fatal reflector was brought home, it was placed leaning against the wall in the still unfurnished drawing-room, – and the lady, having determined at once to surprise and reform her dear giant, did not tell him of the circumstance. The ill-fated Counsellor, wandering about his new house – as people often do toward the close of the evening – that interregnum between sun, moon, and candlelight, when shadows are deep and figures seem lengthened – suddenly entered the room where the glass was deposited. Unconscious of the presence of the immense reflector, he beheld, in the gloom, a monstrous and frightful Caliban – wild, loose, and shaggy, – standing close and direct before him; and, as he raised his own gigantic arms in a paroxysm of involuntary horror, the goblin exactly followed his example, lifting its tremendous fists, as if with a fixed determination to fell the Counsellor, and extinguish him for ever.

Conaghty's imagination was excited to its utmost pitch. Though the spectre appeared larger than any d – l on authentic record, he had no doubt it was a genuine demon sent express to destroy his happiness and carry him to Belzebub. As his apprehensions augmented, his pores sent out their icy perspiration: he tottered – the fiend too was in motion! his hair bristled up, as it were like pikes to defend his head. At length his blood recoiled, his eyes grew dim, his pulse ceased, his long limbs quivered – failed; and down came poor Conaghty with a loud shriek and a tremendous crash. His beloved bride, running up alarmed by the noise, found the Counsellor as inanimate as the boards he lay on. A surgeon was sent for, and phlebotomy was resorted to as for *apoplexy*, which the seizure was pronounced to be. His head was shaved; and by the time he revived a little, he had three extensive blisters and a cataplasm preparing their stings for him.

It was two days before he recovered sufficiently to tell his Mary of the horrid spectre that had assailed him – for he really thought he had been felled to the ground by a blow from the goblin. Nothing, indeed, could ever persuade him to the contrary, and he grew quite delirious.

His reason returned slowly and scantily; and when assured it was only a *looking-glass* that was the cause of his terror, the assurance did not alter his belief. He pertinaciously maintained, that this was only a kind story invented to tranquillise him. "Oh, my dearest Mary!" said poor Conaghty, "I'm gone! – my day is

come – I'm called away for ever. Oh! had you seen the frightful figure that struck me down, you could not have survived it one hour! Yet why should I fear the d – l? I'm not wicked, Mary! No, I'm not *very* wicked!"

A thorough Irish servant, an old fellow whom the Counsellor had brought from Connaught, and who *of course* was well acquainted with supernatural appearances, and had not himself seen the fatal mirror, – discovered, as he thought, the real cause of the goblin's visit, which he communicated to his mistress with great solemnity, as she afterward related.

"Mistress," said the faithful Dennis Brophy, "Mistress, it was all a *mistake*. By all the books in the master's study, I'd swear it was only a mistake! – What harm did ever my master do nobody? and what would bring a d – l overhauling a Counsellor that did no harm? What say could he have to my master?"

"Don't teaze me, Dennis," said the unhappy Mary; "go along! – go!"

"I'll tell you, mistress," said he; "it was a d – l sure enough that was in it!"

"Hush! nonsense!" said his mistress.

"By J – s! it *was* the d – l, or one of his gossoons," persisted Dennis; "but he mistook the house, mistress, and that's the truth of it!"

"What do you mean?" said *the mistress*.

"Why, I mane that you know Mr. – lives on one side of us, and Mr. – lives at the other side, and they are both *attornies*, and the

people say they'll both go to *him*: and so the d – l, or his gossoon, mistook the door, and you see he went off again when he found it was my master that was *in it*, and not an attorney, mistress."

All efforts to convince Conaghty he was mistaken were vain. The illusion could not be removed from his mind; he had received a shock which affected his whole frame; a constipation of the intestines took place; and in three weeks, the poor fellow manifested the effects of groundless horror in a way which every one regretted.

FORMER STATE OF MEDICINE IN IRELAND

Remarks on Sir Charles Morgan's account of the Former State of Medicine in Italy – The author's studies in the Anatomical Theatre of Dublin University – Dr. Burdet – Former importance of farriers and colloughs – Jug Coyle, and her powers of soliloquy – Larry Butler, the family farrier, described – Luminous and veritable account of the ancient colloughs – The *faculty* of the present day – Hoynhymms and Yahoos – Hydrophobia in Ireland, and its method of cure.

Doctor Sir Charles Morgan has given us, at the conclusion of his lady's excellent work "Italy," the state of "medicine" in that country. Our old cookery books, in like manner, after exquisite receipts for all kinds of dainties, to suit every appetite, generally finished a luxurious volume with *remedies* for the "bite of a mad dog – for scald heads – ague – burns – St. Anthony's fire – St. Vitus's dance – the tooth-ache," &c. &c. Now, though the Doctor certainly did not take the cooks by way of precedent, that is no reason why I should not indulge my whim by citing both examples, and garnishing this volume with "the state of medicine in Ireland" fifty years ago.

I do not, however, mean to depreciate the state of medicine

in these days of "new lights" and novelties, when old drugs and poisons are *nicknamed*, and every recipe is a rebus to an old apothecary. Each son of Galen now strikes out his own system; composes his own syllabus; and *finishes* his patients according to his own proper fancy. When a man dies after a consultation (which is generally the case – the thing being often decided by *experiment*) – there is no particular necessity for any explanation to widows, legatees, or heirs-at-law; the death alone of any testator being a sufficient apology to his nearest and dearest relatives for the failure of a consultation – that is, if the patient left sufficient property behind him.

My state of Irish medicine, therefore, relates to those "once on a time" days, when sons lamented their fathers,[4] and wives could weep over expiring husbands; when every root and branch of an ancient family became as black as rooks for the death of a blood relation, though of almost incalculable removal. In those times the medical old woman and the surgeon-farrier – the bone-setter and the bleeder – were by no means considered contemptible practitioners among the Christian population – who, in common with the dumb beasts, experienced the advantages of their

[4] In these times it may not, perhaps, be fully credited when I tell – that four of my father's sons carried his body *themselves* to the grave: that his eldest son was in a state bordering on actual distraction at his death; and in the enthusiastic paroxysms of affection which we all felt for our beloved parent at that cruel separation, I do even now firmly believe there was not one of us who would not, on the impulse of the moment, have sprung into, and supplanted him in his grave, to have restored him to animation. But we were all a family of nature and of heart, and decided enemies to worldly objects.

miscellaneous practice.

An anatomical theatre being appended to the University of Dublin, whenever I heard of a *fresh* subject, or remarkable corpse, being obtained for dissection, I frequently attended the lectures, and many were the beauteous women and fine young fellows then carved into scraps and joints *pro bono publico*.[5] I thereby obtained a smattering of information respecting our corporeal clockwork; and having, for amusement, skimmed over "Cullen's First Lines," "Every Man his Own Doctor," "Bishop Berkeley on Tar Water," and "Sawny Cunningham on the Virtues of Fasting Spittle," I almost fancied myself qualified for a diploma. A Welsh aunt of mine, also, having married Doctor Burdet, who had been surgeon of the Wasp sloop of war, and remarkable for leaving the best stumps of any naval practitioner, he explained to me the use of his various instruments for tapping, trepanning, raising the shoulder-blades, &c. &c.: but when I had been a short time at my father's in the country, I found that the farriers and old women performed, either on man or beast, twenty cures for one achieved by the doctors and apothecaries. I had great amusement in conversing with these people, and perceived some reason in their arguments.

As to the farriers, I reflected, that as man is only a mechanical

[5] I never saw a young woman brought into the dissecting-room but my blood ran cold, and I was immediately set a-moralising. The old song of "Death and the Lady" is a better lecture for the fair sex than all the sermons that ever were preached, including Mr. Fordyce's. 'Tis a pity that song is not *melodised* for the use of the fashionables during their campaigns in London.

animal, and a horse one of the same description, there was no reason why a drug that was good for a pampered gelding might not also be good for the hard-goer mounted on him. In truth, I have seen instances where, in point both of intellect and endurance, there was but very little distinction between the animals – save that the beverage of the one was *water*, and that of the other was *punch*– and, in point of *quantity*, there was no great difference between them in this matter either.

At that time there was seldom more than one regular doctor in a circuit of twenty miles, and a farrier never came to physic a gentleman's horse that some boxes of pills were not deducted from his balls, for the general use of the ladies and gentlemen of the family; and usually succeeded vastly better than those of the apothecary.

The class of old women called colloughs were then held in the highest estimation, as understanding the cure (that is if God pleased) of all disorders. Their *materia medica* did not consist of gums, resins, minerals, and hot iron, – as the farriers' did; but of leaves of bushes, bark of trees, *weeds* from *churchyards*, and mushrooms from *fairy grounds*; rue, garlic, rosemary, birds'-nests, foxglove, &c.: in desperate cases they sometimes found it advisable to put a *charm* into the bolus or stoop, and then it was sure to be "firm and good." I never could find out what either of their charms were. They said they should die themselves if they disclosed them to any body. No collough ever could be a *doctor* whilst she had one tooth remaining in her head, as the remedy

was always reduced to a pulp or paste by her own mumbling of its materials, and the contact of an old grinder would destroy the purity of the charms and simples, and leave the cure, they would say, no better than a farrier's.

Our old collough, Jug Coyle, as she sat in a corner of the hob, by the great long turf fire in the kitchen, exactly in the position of the Indian squaws, munching and mumbling for use an apron-full of her morning's gatherings in the fields, used to talk at intervals very *sensibly* of her art. "Ough! then, my dear sowl, (said she one evening,) what would the poor Irishers have done in owld times but for their colloughs? Such brutes as you!" continued she, (looking at Butler, the farrier of the family, who was seated fast asleep on a bench at the opposite end of the hearth,) "'tis you, and the likes of you, a curse on you, root and branch! that starved the colloughs by giving your poisons to both cows and quality. Sure its the farriers' and pothecaries' drugs that kills all the people-ay, and the horses and cattle too," and she shook her claw-like fist at the unconscious farrier.

"Jug Coyle," said I, "why are you so angry?"

Jug: – "Sure it's not for myself, it's for my calling," said she: "a thousand years before the round towers were built (and nobody can tell *that* time), the colloughs were greater nor any lady in the country. We had plenty of charms in those days, Master Jonah, till the farriers came, bad luck to the race! Ough! may the curse of Crummell light on yees all, breed, seed, and generation, Larry Butler! not forgetting Ned Morrisy of Clapook, the villanous

cow-doctor, that takes the good from the colloughs likewise, and all – ”

Here Jug Coyle stopped short, as the farrier opened his eyes, and she knew well that if Larry Butler had a sup in, he would as soon beat an old woman as any body else. She therefore resumed munching her herbs, but was totally silenced.

Larry Butler was one of the oldest and most indispensable *attachés* of our family. Though nobody remembered him a *boy*, he was as handy, as fresh, and as *rational*, perhaps more so, than half a century before. Short, broad, and bow-legged, bone and muscle kept his body together – for flesh was absent. His face, once extremely handsome, still retained its youthful colouring – though broken and divided: his sharp eye began to exhibit the dimness of age: the long white hair had deserted his high forehead, but fell, in no scanty locks, down each side of his animated countenance. He is before my eye at this moment – too interesting, and, at the same time, odd a figure ever to be forgotten.

I had a great respect for old Butler: he was very passionate, but universally licensed: he could walk any distance, and always carried in his hand a massive firing-iron. I have thus particularly described the old man, as being one of the most curious characters of his class I ever met in Ireland.

Larry soon showed signs of relapsing into slumber; but Jug, fearing it was a *fox's sleep* (an old trick of his), did not recommence her philippic on the farriers, but went on in her

simple praise of the collough practice. “Sure,” said she, “God never sent any disorder into a country that he did not likewise send something to cure it with.”

“Why, certainly, Jug,” said I, “it would be rather bad treatment if we had no cures in the country.”

“Ough! that saying is like your dear father,” said she, “and your grandfather before you, and your great-grandfather who was before him agin. Moreover,” pursued Jug, “God planted our cures in the fields because there was no pothecaries.”

“Very true, Jug,” said I.

“Well, then, Master Jonah,” resumed she, “if God or the Virgin, and I’m sure I can’t say which of them, planted the cures, sure they must have made people who knew how to pick them up in the fields, or what good is their growing there?”

“There’s no gainsaying that, Jug,” gravely observed I.

“Well, then, it was to the colloughs, sure enough, God gave the knowledge of picking the cures up – because he knew well that they were owld and helpless, and that it would be a charity to employ them. When once they learned the herbs, they were welcome every where; and there was not *one* man died in his bed (the people say) in owld times for *twenty* now-a-days.”

“Of that there is no doubt, Jug,” said I, “though there may be other reasons for it.”

“Ough! God bless you agin, avourneen! any how,” said Jug. “Well, then, they say it was Crummell and his troopers, bad luck to their sowls, the murdering villains! that brought the first

farriers (and no better luck to *them*!) to Ireland, and the colloughs were kilt with the hunger. The craturs, as the owld people tell, eat grass like the beasts when the cows were all kilt by the troopers and farriers – avourneen, avourneen!"

Modern practitioners will perceive, by these two specimens of our ancient *doctors*, that the state of medicine in Ireland was totally different from that in Italy. Surgery being likewise a branch of the healing art, no doubt also differed in the two countries, in a similar degree. I shall therefore give a few *instances* of both medico-surgical and surgico-medical practice fifty years ago in Ireland; and if my talented friend, Lady Morgan, will be so good as to inquire, she will find, that though she has left medicine so entirely to her lord, she may get an admirable *doctor* or two to introduce into her next Irish *imaginations*– which I hope will be soon forthcoming – certainly not sooner than agreeable and welcome.

I must here notice a revolution; namely, that of late, since farriers have got a "step in the peerage," and are made commissioned officers in the army, they think it proper to refine their pharmacopeia so as to render it more congenial to their new rank and station, and some horses are now not only theoretically but practically placed on more than a level with the persons who mount them.

The practice of horse medicine is indeed so completely revolutionised, that gas, steam, and the chemistry of Sir Humphrey Davy, are resorted to for the morbid affections of

that animal in common with those of a nobleman. The horse, now, regularly takes his hot bath like my lord and lady, James' powders, refined liquorice, musk, calomel, and laudanum, with the most "elegant extracts" and delicate infusions. As if *Gulliver* were a prophet, he literally described, in the reign of Queen Anne, both the *English horse* and the *Irish peasant* as they exist at the present moment. If the lodging, clothing, cleaning, food, medicine, and attendance of the modern Hoynhymm, be contrasted with the pig-sty, rags, filth, neglect, and hunger of the Yahoo, it must convince any honest neutral that Swift (that greatest of Irishmen) did not overcharge his satire. The sum lavished upon the care of one Hoynhymm for *a single day*, with little or nothing to do, is more (exclusive of the farrier) than is now paid to five Irish Yahoos for *twelve hours'* hard labour, with to feed, clothe, lodge, and nourish *themselves*, and probably five wives and twenty or thirty children, for the same period, into the bargain.

A few very curious cases may elucidate our ancient practice of cure – a practice, I believe, never even heard of in any other part of Europe. The bite of a mad dog was to the Irish peasantry of all things the most puzzling and terrific; and I am sure I can scarcely guess what Doctor Morgan will think of my veracity when I state the two modes by which that horrible mania was neutralised or finally put an end to.

When the bite of a dog took place, every effort was made to kill the beast, and if they succeeded, it was never inquired

whether he actually *was*, or (as the colloughs used to say) *pretended to be* mad: his liver was immediately taken out, dried by the fire till quite hard, then reduced to powder, and given in frequent doses with a draught of holy or blessed water, to the patient for seven days. If it happened that the saliva did not penetrate the sufferer's clothes, or if the dog was *not* actually mad, it was then considered that the patient was *cured* by drinking the dog's liver and holy water; – and if it so happened that the bite set him barking, then the priest and farrier told them it was the will of God that he should bark, and they were contented either to let him die at his leisure, or send him to heaven a little sooner than was absolutely necessary.

The herbs of the colloughs were sometimes successfully resorted to; whether accidental or actual preventives or antidotes, it is not easy to determine: but when I detail the ulterior remedy to cure the hydrophobia in Ireland, or at least to render it *perfectly innoxious*, I am well aware that I shall stand a good chance of being honoured by the periodicals with the appellation of a "bouncer," as on occasion of the former volumes: but the ensuing case, as I can personally vouch for the fact, I may surely give with tolerable confidence.

KILLING WITH KINDNESS

Illustration of the Irish horror of hydrophobia – Thomas Palmer, of Rushhall, Esquire, magistrate and land-agent, &c. – A substantial bill of fare – Dan Dempsey, of the Pike, is bitten by a mad dog – Application to the magistrate for legal permission to *relieve* him of his sufferings – Mode of relief proposed – Swearing scholars – Permission obtained – Dan regularly smothered, by way both of *cure* and *preventive*– Fate of Mr. Palmer himself – Allen Kelly, of Portarlington – "New Way to Pay Old Debts."

Such a dread had the Irish of the bite of a mad dog, that they did not regard it as murder, but absolutely as a legal and meritorious act, to smother any person who had arrived at an advanced stage of hydrophobia. If he made a noise similar to barking, his hour of suffocation was seldom protracted.

In this mode of administering the *remedy*, it was sometimes difficult to procure proper instruments; for they conceived that *by law* the patient should be smothered between two *feather*-beds, – one being laid cleverly over him, and a sufficient number of the neighbours lying on it till he was "out of danger."

The only instance I am able to state from my own knowledge occurred about the year 1781. Thomas Palmer, of Rushhall, in Queen's County, was then my father's land-agent, and at the same time a very active and intelligent magistrate of that county. He

was, *gratis*, an oracle, lawyer, poet, horse – cow – dog and man doctor, farmer, architect, brewer, surveyor, and magistrate of all work. He was friendly and good-natured, and possessed one of those remarkable figures now so rarely to be seen in society. I feel I am, as usual, digressing; – however, be the digression what it may, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of depicting my old friend, and endeavouring to render him as palpable to the vision of my reader as he is at this moment to my own.

Palmer was one of that race of giants for which the rich and extensive barony of Ossory, in Queen's County (now the estate of the Duke of Buckingham), was then and had long been celebrated. His height was esteemed the *middle* height in that county – namely, about six feet two inches; he was bulky without being fat, and strong, though not very muscular. He was, like many other giants, *split up* too much, and his long dangling limbs appeared still longer from their clothing, which was invariably the same: – a pair of strong buck-skin breeches, never *very* greasy, but never free from grease; half jack-boots; massive, long silver spurs, either of his own or of somebody's grandfather's; a scarlet waistcoat with long skirts; and a coat with "*all the cloth* in it." These habiliments rendered him altogether a singular but not other than respectable figure. His visage made amends for both his *outré* boots and breeches; it was as well calculated as could be for a kind-hearted, good-humoured, convivial old man. His queue wig, with a curl at each side, had his grizzle hair combed smoothly over the front of it; and he seldom troubled the powder-

puff, but when he had got the "skins whitened," in order to "dine in good company." He was the *hardest-goer* either at kettle or screw (except Squire Flood of Roundwood) of the whole grand-jury, for whose use he made a new song every summer assize: and it was from him I heard the very unanswerable argument, "that if a man fills the bottom of his glass, there can be no good reason why he should not also fill the top of it; and if he empties the top of his glass, he certainly ought in common civility to pay the bottom the same compliment:" – no man ever more invariably exemplified his own theorem.

Thomas Palmer was hale and healthy; – his fifty-seventh year had handed him over safe and sound to its next neighbour: his property was just sufficient (and no more) to gallop side by side with his hospitality. When at home, his boiler was seldom found bubbling without a corned round withinside it; and a gander or cock turkey frequently danced at the end of a string before the long turf fire. Ducks, hares, chickens, or smoked ham, often adorned the sides of his table; whilst apple-dumplings in the centre and potatoes at cross corners completed a light snack for five or six seven-feet Ossoronians, who left no just reason to the old cook and a couple of ruddy ploughmen, (who attended as *butlers*,) to congratulate themselves upon the *dainty* appetites of their masters, or the balance of nourishment left to liquidate the demand of their own stomachs. But, alas! those pleasurable specimens of solid fare have passed away for ever! As age advances, Nature diminishes her weights and measures in our

consumption, and our early *pounds* and Scotch *pints* (*two bottles*) are at length reduced to the miserable rations of *ounces* and *glassfuls*.

At this magistrate's *cottage*, which had as stout a roof to it as any mansion in the county, I once dined, about the year 1781, when the state of medicine in Ireland was exemplified in a way that neither Cullen, Darwin, Perceval, James, or any other learned doctor ever contemplated, and which I am convinced – had it been the practice in Italy – Doctor Morgan would not have passed over in total silence.

We had scarcely finished such a meal as I have particularised, and "got into the punch," when a crowd of men, women, and children, came up to the door in great confusion, but respectfully took off their hats and bonnets, and asked humbly to speak to his worship.

Tom Palmer seemed to anticipate their business, and inquired at once "if Dan Dempsey of the Pike (turnpike) was in the same way still?"

"Ough! please your worship," cried out twenty voices together, "worse, your worship, worse nor ever, death's crawling upon him – he can't *stop*, and what's the use in leaving the poor boy in his pains any longer, your worship? We have got two good feather-beds at the Pike, and we want your worship's leave to smother Dan Dempsey, if your worship pleases."

"Ough avourneen! he growls and barks like any mastiff dog, please your worship," cried a tremulous old woman, who seemed

quite in terror.

"You lie, Nancy Bergin," said her older husband, "Dan Dempsey does *not* bark like a *mastiff*; – it's for all the world like your worship's white lurcher, when she's after the rabbits, so it is!"

"He snapped three times at myself this morning," said another humane lady, "and the neighbours said it were all as one, almost, as biting me."

"Hush! hush!" said the magistrate, waving his hand: "any of you who can read and write, come in here."

"Ough! there's plenty of that sort, please your worship," said Maurice Dowling, the old schoolmaster. "Sure it's not ignorance I'd be teaching my scholards every day these forty years, except Sundays and holidays, at the Pike. There's plenty of swearing scholards here any how, your worship."

"Come in any three of you, then, who can clearly swear Dan Dempsey barks like a dog, – no matter whether like a mastiff or a lurcher – and attempts to bite."

The selection was accordingly made, and the affidavit sworn, to the effect that "Dan Dempsey had been bit by a mad dog; that he went mad himself, barked like any greyhound, and had no objection to bite whatever Christian came near him. Squire Palmer then directed them to go back to the Pike, and said they might smother Dan Dempsey if he barked any more in the morning; but told them to wait till then.

"Ah, then, at what hour, please your worship?" said Nan

Bergin, accompanied by several other female voices, whose owners seemed rather impatient.

"Three hours after day-break," said the magistrate: "but take care to send to Mr. Calcut, the coroner, to come and hold his inquest after Dan's smothered. Take care of that, at your peril."

"Never fear, please your worship," said Ned Bergin.

They then gathered into a sort of consultation before the door, and bowing with the same respect as when they came, all set off, to smother Dan Dempsey of Rushhall Turnpike.

The magistrate's instructions were accurately obeyed: Daniel barked, and was duly smothered between two feather-beds, three hours after day-break next morning, by the schoolmaster's watch. Mr. Calcut came and held his coroner's inquest, who brought in their verdict that the said "Daniel Dempsey died *in consequence of a mad dog*!"

The matter was not at that day considered the least extraordinary, and was, in fact, never mentioned except in the course of common conversation, and as the subject of a paragraph in the Leinster Journal.

It is a singular circumstance, that the termination of poor Palmer's life resulted from his consistency in strictly keeping his own aphorism which I have before mentioned. He dined at my father's Lodge at Cullenagh; and having taken his *quantum sufficit*, (as people who dined there generally did,) became obstinate, which is frequently the consequence of being pot-valiant, and insisted on riding home, twelve or thirteen miles, in

a dark night. He said he had a couple of songs to write for the high sheriff, which Mr. Boyce from Waterford had promised to sing at the assizes; – and that he always wrote best with a full stomach. It was thought that he fell asleep; and that his horse, supposing he had as much right to drink freely as his master, had quietly paid a visit to his accustomed watering-place, when, on the animal's stooping to drink, poor Palmer pitched over his head into the pond, wherein he was found next morning quite dead – though scarcely covered with water, and grasping the long branch of a tree as if he had been instinctively endeavouring to save himself, but had not strength, owing to the overpowering effect of the liquor. His horse had not stirred from his side. His loss was, to my father's affairs, irreparable.

It is very singular that nearly a similar death occurred to an attorney, who dined at my father's about a month afterward – old Allen Kelly of Portarlington, one of the most keen though cross-grained attorneys in all Europe. He came to Cullenagh to insist upon a settlement for some bills of costs he had dotted up against my father to the tune of fifty pounds. It being generally, in those times, more convenient to country gentlemen to pay by bond than by ready money – and always more agreeable to the attorney, because he was pretty sure of doubling his costs before the judgment was satisfied, Allen Kelly said, that, out of *friendship*, he'd take a *bond and warrant of attorney* for his fifty pounds; though it was not taxed, which he declared would only *increase* it wonderfully. The bond and warrant, which he had ready filled up

in his pocket, were duly executed, and both parties were pleased – my father to get rid of Allen Kelly, and Allen Kelly to get fifty pounds for the worth of ten. Of course he stayed to dine, put the bond carefully into his breeches pocket, drank plenty of port and hot punch, to keep him warm on his journey, mounted his nag, reached Portarlington, where he watered his nag (and *himself* into the bargain). Hot punch, however, is a bad balance-master, and so Allen fell over the nag's head, and the poor beast trotted home quite lonesome for want of his master. Next day Allen was found well bloated with the Barrow water; indeed, swollen to full double his usual circumference. In his pockets were found divers documents which *had been* bonds, notes, and other securities, and which he had been collecting through the country: but unfortunately for his administrators, the Barrow had taken pity on the debtors, and whilst Allen was reposing himself in the bed of that beautiful river, her naiads were employed in picking his pocket, and there was scarcely a bill, bond, note, or any acknowledgment, where the fresh ink had not yielded up its colouring; and neither the names, sums, dates, or other written matters, of one out of ten, could be by any means decyphered. In truth few of the debtors were very desirous, on this occasion, of turning *decypherers*, and my father's bond (among others) was from that day never even suggested to him by any representative of Allen Kelly, the famous attorney of Portarlington.

SKINNING A BLACK CHILD

Lieutenant Palmer and his black servant – The Lieutenant's sister marries Mr. George Washington, a "blood relation" of the American president – This lady presents her husband with a son and heir – Awkward circumstance connected with the birth of the infant – Curious and learned dissertation respecting "fancy-marks," &c. – A *casus omissus*– Speculations and consultations – Doctor Bathron, surgeon and grocer – His suggestion respecting little Washington – Doctor Knaggs called in – Operation begun – Its ill success – "Black and all Black" – The operator's dismay and despair – Final catastrophe of Master Washington.

Another, and a not unpleasant, because not fatal, incident may serve to illustrate the "state of medicine and surgery," between forty and fifty years ago, in Ireland. It occurred near my brother's house, at Castlewood, and the same Lieutenant Palmer, of Dureen, was a very interested party in it. The thing created great merriment among all the gossiping, tattling old folks, male and female, throughout the district.

The lieutenant having been in America, had brought home a black lad as a servant, who resided in the house of Dureen with the family. It is one of the mysteries of nature, that infants sometimes come into this world marked and spotted in divers

fantastical ways and places, a circumstance which the faculty, so far as they know any thing about it, consider as the sympathetic effect either of external touch or ardent imagination; – or, if neither of these are held to be the cause, then they regard it as a sort of *lusus* with which Dame Nature occasionally surprises, and then (I suppose) laughs at the world, for marvelling at her capriciousness, – a quality which she has, as satirists pretend, plentifully bestowed on the fairest part of the creation. Be this as it may, the incident I am about to mention is in its way unique; and whether the occasion of it proceeded from sympathy, fancy, or touch, or exhibited a regular *lusus Naturæ*, never has, and now never can be unequivocally decided.

A sister of the lieutenant, successively a very good maiden, woman, and wife, had been married to one Mr. George Washington, of the neighbourhood, who, from his name, was supposed to be some distant blood relation to the celebrated General Washington; and, as that distinguished individual had no children, all the old women and other wiseacres of Durrow, Ballyragget, Ballyspellen, and Ballynakill, made up their minds that his Excellency, when dying, would leave a capital legacy in America to his blood relation, Mr. George Washington, of Dureen, in Ireland; who was accordingly advised – and, with the aid of the Rev. Mr. Hoskinson, clergyman of Durrow (father to the present Vice Provost of Dublin University), he took the advice – to write a dignified letter to his Excellency, General George Washington of Virginia, President, &c. &c. &c. stating

himself to have the honour of entertaining hopes that he should be enabled to show his Excellency, by an undeniable pedigree (when he could procure it) that he had a portion of the same blood as his Excellency's running in his humble veins. The letter went on to state, that he had espoused the sister of a British officer, who had had the honour of being taken prisoner in America; and that he, the writer, having reasonable expectation of shortly fathering a young Mr. Washington, his Excellency's permission was humbly requested for the child to be named his god-son: till the receipt of which permission, the christening should be kept open by his most faithful servant and distant relation, &c.

This epistle was duly despatched to his Excellency, at Mount Vernon, in Virginia, and Mrs George Washington, of Dureen, lost no time in performing her husband's promise. No joy ever exceeded that which seized on Mr. Washington, when it was announced that his beloved wife had been taken ill, and was in excessive torture. The entire household, master included, were just seated at a comfortable and plentiful dinner; the first slices off the round, or turkey, were cut and tasted; some respectable old dames of the neighbourhood had just stepped in to congratulate the family on what would occur, and hear all that was going forward at this critical, cheerful, and happy moment of anticipation, when Mrs. Gregory (the *lady's doctor*), who was, in her own way, a very shrewd, humorous kind of body, and to whom most people in that country under thirty-five years of

age had owed their existence, entered the apartment to announce the happy arrival of as fine a healthy little boy as could be, and that Mrs. Washington was as well, or indeed rather better, than might be expected *under the circumstances*. A general cheer by the whole company followed, and bumpers of hot punch were drunk with enthusiasm to the success and future glory of the *young* General Washington.

Mrs. Gregory at length beckoned old Mrs. Palmer to the window with a mysterious air, and whispered something in her ear; on hearing which, Mrs. Palmer immediately fell flat on the floor, as if dead. The old dames hobbled off to her assistance, and Mrs. Gregory affected to feel strongly herself about something, – ejaculating, loud enough to be generally heard, and with that sort of emphasis people use when they wish to persuade us they are praying in downright earnest, "God's will be done!"

"What about?" said the lieutenant, bristling up: – "I suppose my mother has taken a glass too much: it is not the first time! – she'll soon come round again, never fear. Don't be alarmed, my friends."

"God's will be done!" again exclaimed the oracular Mrs. Gregory.

"What's the matter? What is all this about?" grumbled the men. "Lord bless us! what can it be?" squalled the women.

"There cannot be a finer or stronger little boy in the 'varsal world," said Mrs. Gregory: "but, Lord help us!" continued she, unable longer to contain her overcharged grief, "It's – it's not so

– so *white* as it should be!"

"Not white?" exclaimed every one of the company simultaneously.

"No, – O Lord, no!" answered Mrs. Gregory, looking mournfully up to the ceiling in search of heaven. Then casting her eyes wistfully around the company, she added – "God's will be done! but the dear little boy is – is – quite *black*!"

"*Black! black!*" echoed from every quarter of the apartment.

"As black as your hat, if not *blacker*," replied Mrs. Gregory.

"Oh! Oh – h!" groaned Mr. Washington.

"Oh! Oh – h!" responded Mrs. Gregory.

"Blood and ouns!" said the lieutenant. – "See how I am shaking," said the midwife, taking up a large glass of potsheen and drinking it off to settle her nerves.

What passed afterward on that evening may be easily surmised: but the next day Mrs. Gregory, the *sage femme*, came into Castle Burrow to "prevent *mistakes*," and tell the affair to the neighbours in her own way; that is, partly in whispers, partly aloud, and partly by nods and winks – such as old ladies frequently use when they wish to divulge more than they like to speak openly.

Sufficient could be gathered, however, to demonstrate that young Master Washington had not one white, or even *gray* spot on his entire body, and that some *frizzled* hair was already beginning to show itself on his little pate; but that no nurse could be found who would give him a drop of nourishment, even

were he famishing – all the women verily believing that, as Mrs. Washington was herself an unexceptionable wife, it must be a son of the d – l by a dream, and nothing else than an imp. However, Mr. Hoskinson, the clergyman, soon contradicted this report by assuring the Protestants that the day for that sort of miracle had been for some centuries over, and that the infant was as fine, healthy, natural, and sprightly a little negro as ever came from the coast of Guinea.

Never was there such a buzz and hubbub in any neighbourhood as now took place in and about the town of Castle Durrow. Every body began to *compute periods* and form conjectures; and though it was universally known that red wine, &c. &c. cast on the mamma, often leaves marks upon children, yet censorious and incredulous people persisted in asserting, that such marks only came in spots or splashes, when the person of a lady happened to be actually touched by the colouring matter: but that no child could be black, and *all* black, unless in a *natural* way. Among the lower orders, however, the thing was settled at once in the most plausible and popular manner, and set down as downright witchcraft and nothing else: and suspicion fell on old Betty Hogan of the Seven Sisters, near Ballyspellen, who was *known* to be a witch, and able to raise the devil at Hallow Eve, to turn smocks, and tell fortunes; and she was verily seen by more than one to go into the Cave of Dunmore with a coal-black cur dog (without tail or ears) after her, the very night and minute Mrs. Washington was delivered of the devil; and nobody ever saw the cur dog before

or since.

Mr. Washington and the lieutenant were, however, by no means at ease upon the subject of this freak of Nature, and were well warranted in their dissatisfaction; as at length all the old women agreed in believing, that the black lad from America was nothing else but the devil disguised, who had followed the lieutenant as a servant boy, to gain over the family, and particularly Mrs. Washington, as Satan did Eve; – and that he ought to be smothered by the priests, or at least transported out of the country, before he did any more mischief – or there would not be a white child in the whole barony the next season.

Lieutenant Palmer was of course high in blood for the honour of his sister, and Mr. Washington cock-a-hoop for the character of his wife: and so great was their ire, that it was really believed the black boy would have been put down a draw-well, as the people threatened, – that being the approved method of getting rid of a devil whenever he showed his face in that part of the country: but as, possibly, Betty Hogan might be a better judge of him than themselves, they suspended the execution till they should bring the old witch and confront her and *the devil* together – when of course he would show his cloven foot, and they might both be put into the well, if they did not take every *taste* of the black off *Master Washington*.

The father and uncle decided more calmly and properly to lay the whole affair before a consultation of doctors, to know if it was not a regular *imagination mark*– whether a child might not

be marked by mere fancy, without the marking material (such as grapes, currants, or the like,) touching the mother; and lastly, why, as children in general are only partially marked, this child was not *spotted* like others, but as black as ebony every inch of it.

All the doctors in the neighbourhood were called in to the consultation. Old Butler, the farrier (heretofore mentioned), came with all expedition to Dureen, and begged leave to give his opinion and offer his services, wishing to see Master Washington before the doctors arrived, as he had a secret for turning any skin ever so brown as white as milk!

On seeing Master Washington, however, he declared he was *too* black *entirely* for his medicines, or any body else's. "The devil so black a crethur," says he, "ever I saw, except Cornet French's *Black and all Black*, that beat the Pandreen mare for the King's hundred at the races of Gort: – the devil a white hair had *he* from muzzle to tail, good, bad, or indifferent. By my sowl! it's a neat crust poor George Washington has got to mumble any how! I never saw luck or grace come of the negers, bad luck to them all!"

The day for the consultation being fixed, several apothecaries and bone-setters attended at the house of Mr. George Bathron, of Dureen, grocer, wine-merchant, surgeon, apothecary, druggist, and physician.

The first point stated and unanimously agreed on, was, "that the child was black." The reasons for that colour being universal on the young gentleman were not quite so clear. At length

Dr. Bathron, finding he had the lead, and having been some years at school when a boy, and likewise apprenticed to a grocer and apothecary at Ballyragget, where he learned several technical words in the Latin tongue; finding, besides, that he had an excellent opportunity to prove his learning to those less educated, – declared with great gravity that he had read many authors upon the subject of *marks*, and could take upon himself positively to assert that the child was (according to all authority on such matters) a *casus omissus*. The others, not being exactly sure either of the shape, size, or colour, of a *casus omissus*, thought it better to *accede* to what they did not *comprehend*, and all subscribed to the opinion that the child was a *casus omissus*. It was immediately circulated outside the house, that all the doctors found the child to be a *casus omissus*; and old Skelton, who had been a trooper in Germany, declared that a doctor there told him that was the true surname of a devil incarnate. And the prevailing notion then was, that the black lad, old Betty Hogan, the witch, and Master Washington, should all be put down the draw-well together, to save the other married women of the country from bearing devils instead of children.

The *doctors*, however, having given their opinion, were extremely ticklish in taking any step with a *casus omissus*; and not wishing to pitch themselves against any infernal personification, left future proceedings to the entire management of Dr. Bathron.

Doctor Bathron was a smart, squat, ruddy, jovial apothecary, and he was also a professed poet, who had made some celebrated

odes on the birthday of Miss Flower, Lord Ashbrooke's sister, when she visited Castle Durrow; and on this occasion he required a fortnight to make up his mind as to the best proceedings to bring the skin to its proper colour. Having, by search of old book-stalls in Dublin (whither he went for the purpose), found an ancient treatise, translated from the work of the high German Doctor Cratorious (who flourished in the fourteenth century), on *skinning* certain parts of the body to change the colour or complexion, or effectually to disguise criminals who had escaped from prison; – by which means, likewise, disfiguring marks, freckles, moles, &c. might be removed, – Doctor Bathron decided, that if this could be done partially, why not on the entire body, by little and little, and not skinning one spot till the last should be healed? He therefore stated to Mr. Washington, and all the good family of Dureen, that he would take upon himself to *whiten* the child – as he was perfectly satisfied the black skin was merely the outside, or scarf-skin, and that the real skin and flesh underneath were the same as every body else's.

The mode of operating was now the subject of difficulty. It was suggested, and agreed on, to call in Mr. Knaggs, the doctor of Mount Meleck, who, though he had injured his character as a practitioner of judgment by attempting to cut off the head of Sam Doxy of the Derrys, as hereinafter mentioned, had at the same time proved himself a skilful operator, having gashed boldly into the nape of Mr. Doxy's neck without touching the spinal marrow, which a bungler needs must have done. He had

also acquired the reputation of science by writing a treatise on the Spa of Ballyspellen, which the inn-keeper *there* had employed him to compose, in order to bring customers to his house to drink the waters as "a specific for numerous disorders, when mixed in due proportion with excellent wines, which might be had very reasonable at the sign of the Fox and Piper, at Ballyspellen," &c.

This man, in fine, together with Doctor Bathron, undertook to bring Master Washington to a proper hue by detaching the exterior black *pelt* which was so disagreeable to the family, and letting the natural white skin, which they had no doubt was concealed under it, come to light – thereby restoring the boy, as he ought to be, to his happy parents.

"You'll gain immortal honour," said the grandmother: "I am sure they will all be bound to pray for you!"

The state of practice in Ireland suggested but two ways of performing this notable operation – one purely surgical, the other surgico-medical: namely, either by gradually flaying with the knife, or by blisters.

It was at length settled to begin the operation the ensuing week, previously preparing the heir-at-law by medicine to prevent inflammation; the first attempt was to be on a small scale, and the operation to be performed in Doctor Bathron's own surgery; – and he being still undecided whether the scalpel and forceps, or Spanish flies, would be the most eligible mode of skinning Master Washington, determined to try both ways at once, one on each arm, and to act in future according as he saw

the skin yield easiest.

Most people conceived that, as a blister always raises the skin, it would be the readiest agent in loosening and carrying off the black one that had created so much uneasiness in the present instance: – the doctor's doubts as to which, were, that the blister alone might not rise regularly, but operate at one place better than at another – in which case the child might be *piebald*, which would make him far worse than before.

The operation at length proceeded, and Lieutenant Palmer himself recounted to me every part of the incident. A strong blister, two inches by three, was placed on the child's right arm, and being properly covered, remained there without inflicting any torture for above an hour. The left arm was reserved for the scalpel and forceps, and the operator entertained no doubt whatever of complete success.

The mode he pursued was very *scientific*; he made two parallel slashes as deep as he could in reason, about three inches down the upper part of the arm, and a cross one, to introduce the forceps and strip the loose black skin off, when he could snip it away at the bottom, and leave the white or rather red flesh underneath, to generate a new skin, and show the proper colouring for a godchild of General Washington.

All eyes were now rivetted to the spot. The women cried in an under key to Master George, who roared. "Hush, hush, my dear," said the Doctor, "you don't know what's good for you, my little innocent!" whilst he applied the forceps, to strip off the skin like

a *surtout*. The skin was tight, and would not come away cleverly with the first tug, as the doctor had expected; nor did any thing *white* appear, though a sufficiency of red blood manifested itself.

The doctor was greatly surprised. "I see," said he, "it is somewhat deeper than we had conceived. We have not got deep enough." Another gash on each side; but the second gash had no better success. Doctor Bathron seemed desperate; but conceiving that in so young a subject one short cut – be it ever so deep – could do no harm, his hand shook, and he gave the scalpel its full force, till he found it touch the bone. The experiment was now complete; he opened the wound, and starting back, affected to be struck with horror, threw down his knife, stamped and swore the child was in fact either the devil or a *lusus Naturæ*, for that he could see the very bone, and the child was actually coal-black *to* the bone, and the bone black also, and that he would not have taken a thousand guineas to have given a single gash to a thing which was clearly supernatural – actually dyed in grain. He appeared distracted; however, the child's arm was bound up, a good poultice put over it, the blister hastily removed from the other arm, and the young gentleman, fortunately for Doctor Bathron, recovered from the scarification, and lived with an old dry-nurse for four or five years. He was then killed by a cow of his *father's* horning him, and died with the full reputation of having been a devil in reality, which was fully corroborated by a white sister of his, and his mother, (as I heard,) departing about the very same time, if not on the next day. It was said he took

their souls away with him, to make his peace with his master for staying so long.

Doctor George Bathron, who was the pleasantest united grocer and surgeon in the county, at length found it the best policy to tell this story himself, and by that means neutralise the ridicule of it. He often told it to me, whilst in company with Mr. Palmer; and by hearing both versions, I obtained full information about the circumstance, which I relate as a very striking example of the mode in which we managed a *lusus Naturæ* when we *caught* one in Ireland five and forty years ago.

THE FARRIER AND WHIPPER-IN

Tom White, the whipper-in of Blandsfort – An unlucky leap – Its consequences – Tom given over by the *Faculty*– Handed to the farrier – Larry Butler's preparations – New way to *stand fast*– The actual cautery – Ingredients of a "charge" – Tom cured *intirely*.

Tom White, a whipper-in at my father's at Blandsfort, had his back crushed by leaping his horse into a gravel pit, to pull off the scut of a hare. The horse broke his neck, the hare was killed, and the whipper-in, to all appearance, little better; and when we rode up, there lay three carcases "all in a row." However (as deaths generally confer an advantage upon some survivor), two of the *corpses* afforded good cheer next day: – we ate the hare, the hounds ate the horse, and the worms would certainly have made a meal of Tom White, had not old Butler, the farrier, taken his cure in hand, after Doctor Ned Stapleton, of Maryborough, the genuine bone-setter of that county, had given him up as broken-backed and past all skill. As has been already seen, our practice of pharmacy, medicine, and surgery in Ireland, fifty years ago, did not correspond with modern usages; and though our old operations might have had a trifle more of *torture* in them – either from bluntness of knives or the mode of *slashing* a patient; yet, in the end, I conceive that few more lives are saved by hacking, hewing, and thrusting, *scientifically*, according to

modern practice, than there were by the old trooper-like fashion.

I was in Blandsfort House when Mr. Jemmy Butler, our hereditary farrier, who had equal skill – according to the old school – in the treatment of dogs, cows, and horses, as well as in rat-catching, began and concluded his medico-surgical cure of Tom White: I can therefore recount with tolerable fidelity the successful course adopted toward that courageous sportsman.

Tom's first state of insensibility soon gave way; and incontrovertible proofs of his existence followed, in sundry deep groans, and now and then a roaring asseveration that his back was broke. He entreated us to send off for his *clergy* without any delay, or the reverend father would not find him in this world. However, Mr. Butler, who had no great belief in any world either above or below the Queen's County, declared, "that if the clergy came, he'd leave Tom White to die, as he well knew Tom was a thief; and if any clergy botheration was made about his sowl, it would only tend to irritate and inflame his hurt." But he undertook to give him a better *greasing* than all the priests in the barony, if they should be seven years anointing him with the best salvation oil ever invented.

Tom acquiesced; and, in fear of death, acknowledged "he was a great thief, sure enough, but if he recovered, he would *take up*, and tell all he had done, without a word of a lie, to Father Cahill of Stradbally, who was always a friend to the poor sarvants."

Mr. Butler now commenced his cure, at the performance of which, every male in the house, high and low, was called on

to be present. The farrier first stripped Tom to his shirt, and then placed him flat on the great kitchen table, with his face downward; and having (after being impeded by much roaring and kicking) tied a limb fast to each leg of it – (so as to make a St. Andrew's cross of him) he drew a strong table-cloth over the lower part of the sufferer's body; and tying the corners underneath the table, had the pleasure of seeing Tom White as snug and fast as he could wish, to undergo any degree of torture without being able to shift a quarter of an inch.

Mr. Butler then walked round in a sort of triumph, every now and then giving the knots a pull, to tighten them, and saying, "Mighty well, – mighty good! Now *stand fast*, Tom."

Tom's back being thus duly bared, the *doctor* ran his immense thumb from top to bottom along the spine, with no slight degree of pressure; and whenever the whipper-in roared loudest, Mr. Butler marked the spot he was touching with a lump of chalk. Having, in that way, ascertained the tender parts, he pressed them with all his force, as if he were kneading dough – just, as he said, to *settle the joints* quite even. No bull in the midst of five or six bull-dogs tearing him piecemeal could, even in his greatest agonies, amuse the baiters better, or divert them with more tremendous roars, than the whipper-in did during the greatest part of this operation.

The operator, having concluded his *reconnoitring*, proceeded to real action. He drew parallel lines with chalk down Tom's back – one on each side the back-bone; at particular points he made

a cross stroke, and at the *tender parts* a *double* one; so that Tom had a complete ladder delineated on his back, as if the doctor intended that something should mount by it from his waistband to his cravat.

The preliminaries being thus gone through, and Mr. Butler furnished with a couple of red-hot irons, such as maimed horses are fired with, he began, in a most deliberate and skilful manner, to fire Tom according to the rules and practice of the *ars veterinaria*. The poor fellow's bellowing, while under the actual cautery, all the people said, they verily believed was the loudest ever heard in that country since the massacre of Mullymart.[6] This part of the operation, indeed, was by no means superficially performed, as Mr. Butler *mended* the lines and made them all of a uniform depth and colour, much as the writing-master mends the letters and strokes in a child's copy-book: and as they were very straight and regular, and too well *broiled*, to suffer any effusion of red blood, Tom's back did not look much the worse for the tattooing. In truth, if my readers recollect the excellent mode of making a cut down each side of a saddle of mutton, just to elicit the brown gravy, they will have a good idea of the longitudinal cauteries in question. On three or four of the tender places before mentioned Mr. Butler drew his transverse cross bars, which quite took off the uniform appearance, and gave

[6] A massacre of the Irish at a place called Mullymart, in the county of Kildare, which is spoken of by Casaubon in his Britannia as a thing prophesied: the prophesy did actually take effect; and it is, altogether, one of the most remarkable traditionary tales of that country.

a sort of *garnished* look to the whole drawing, which seemed very much to gratify the operator, who again walked round and round *the body* several times with a red-hot iron in his hand, surveying, and here and there retouching the ragged or uneven parts. This *finishing* rendered the whipper-in rather *hoarse*, and his first roars were now changed to softer notes – somewhat as an opera singer occasionally breaks into his falsetto.

"Howld your bother," said Mr. Butler, to whom Tom's incessant shrieking had become very disagreeable: "howld your *music*, I say, or I'll put a touch[7] on your nose as tight as yourself did on Brown Jack, when I was firing the ring-bone out of him: you're a greater beast yourself nor ever Brown Jack was."

Mr. Butler having partly silenced the whipper-in through fear of the *touch*, the second part of the process was undertaken – namely, depositing what is termed by farriers the cold charge, on the back of Tom White. However, on this occasion the regular *practice* was somewhat varied, and the *cold* charge was nearly boiling hot when placed upon the raw *ladder* on the whipper-in's back. I saw the *torture* boiled in a large iron ladle, and will mention the ingredients, just to show that they were rather more exciting than our milk-and-water charges of the present day: –

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[7] An instrument used in the practice of farriers. It is a piece of cord passed round the nose of a horse (being the most sensitive part of that animal); and being twisted tight by a short stick, it creates a torture so exquisite, that all other tortures go for nothing. Therefore, when a horse is to have his tail cut off, or his legs burned, &c., a touch is put upon his nose, the extreme pain whereof absorbs that of the operation, and, as they term it, makes the beast "*stay easy*."

viz. Burgundy pitch, black pitch, diaculum, yellow wax, white wax, mustard, black resin, white resin, sal ammoniac, bruised hemlock, camphor, Spanish flies, and oil of origanum, boiled up with spirits of turpentine, onion juice, and a glass of whisky; it was kept simmering till it became of a proper consistence for application, and was then *laid on* with a painter's brush, in the same way they calk a pleasure-boat. Four coats of this savoury substance did the farrier successively apply, each one as the former began to cool. But, on the first application, even the dread of the touch could not restrain Tom White's vociferation. After this had settled itself in the chinks, he seemed to be quite stupid, and tired of roaring, and lay completely passive, or rather insensible, while Mr. Butler *finished* to his taste; dotting it over with short lamb's-wool as thick as it would stick, and then another coat of the unction, with an addition of wool; so that, when completed by several layers of charge and lamb's-wool, Tom's back might very well have been mistaken for a saddle of Southdown before it was skinned. A thin ash board was now neatly fitted to it down Tom's spine by the carpenter, and made fast with a few short nails driven into the charge. I believe none of them touched the quick, as the charge appeared above an inch and a half thick, and it was only at the blows of the hammer that the patient seemed to feel extra sensibility. Tom was now untied and helped to rise: his woolly carcase was bandaged all round with long strips of a blanket, which being done, the operation was declared to be completed, in less than three quarters of an hour.

The other servants now began to make merry with Tom White. One asked him, how he liked purgatory? – another, if he'd "stop thieving," after that *judgment* on him? – a third, what more could Father Cahill do for him? *Doctor* Butler said but little: he assumed great gravity, and directed "that the whipper-in should sit up stiff for seven days and nights, by which time the *juices would be dried on him*; after that he might lay down, if he *could*."

This indeed was a very useless permission, as the patient's tortures were now only in their infancy. So soon as the charge got cold and stiff in the nitches and fancy figures upon his back, he nearly went mad; so that for a few days they were obliged to strap him with girths to the head of his bed to make him "stay easy;" and sometimes to gag him, that his roars might not disturb the company in the dining parlour. Wallace the piper said that Tom's roarings put him quite *out*: and an elderly gentleman who was on a visit with us, and who had not been long married to a young wife, said his bride was so shocked and alarmed at the groans and "pullaloes" of Tom White, that she could think of nothing else.

When the poor fellow's pains had altogether subsided, and the swathing was off, he cut one of the most curious figures ever seen: he looked as if he had a stake driven through his body; and it was not till the end of four months that Mr. Butler began to pour sweet oil down his neck, between his back and the charge, which he continued to do daily for about another month, till the charge gradually detached itself, and broken-backed Tom was declared cured: in truth, I believe he never felt any inconvenience

from his fall afterward.

This mode of cauterising the people was then much practised by the old farriers, often with success; and I never recollect any fatal effects happening in consequence.

The farriers' rowelling also was sometimes had recourse to, to prevent swellings from coming to a head: and I only heard of two fatalities arising herefrom; one, in the case of a half-mounted gentleman at Castle Comber, who died of a locked jaw; and another, in that of a shopkeeper at Borris, in Ossory, who expired from mortification occasioned by a tow and turpentine rowell being used to carry off an inflammation.

THE RIVAL PRACTITIONERS

Dr. Fletcher, Dr. Mulhall, and the author's father – Interesting particulars of a medical consultation – Family recollections – Counsellor, afterward Judge Fletcher – First meeting between him and the author – Catching a Tartar – Sam Doxy of the Derrys – Breaks his neck in riding to a Turnpike-Board dinner – Pronounced dead by Mr. Knaggs, the apothecary – That eminent practitioner's judgment disputed by Lieut. Jerry Palmer – The apothecary proceeds to show that the patient *must*, or at least *ought* to be, dead – An incision, and its consequences – Lieut. Palmer's successful mode of treatment – Recovery of the corpse.

In addition to my preceding illustrations of the former state of medicine and surgery in Ireland, I cannot omit a couple of convincing proofs of the *intuitive knowledge* possessed by Irish practitioners in my early days. They present scenes at which I was myself present, and one of which was the most distressing I had witnessed, while the other was more amusing at its conclusion than any operation I ever saw performed by any, either of the farriers or colloughs of Ireland.

Doctor Knaggs, the hero of the second incident, was a tall, raw-boned, rough, dirty apothecary; but he suited the neighbours, as they said he had "the skill in him," and was "mighty successful." Sam Doxy, his patient, was, on the contrary, a broad,

strong, plethoric, half-mounted gentleman. He had his lodge, as he called it, in the midst of a *derry* (a bog), drank his gallon of hot punch to keep out the damp, and devoured numerous cock turkeys, and cows that were past *child-bearing*, to keep down the potsheen. Every neighbour that could get to him was welcome, and *the road* was seldom *in a fit state* to permit their going away again quickly.

The first of these anecdotes I still relate with some pain, though forty-five years and more have of course blunted the feeling I experienced on its occurrence; and as I shall soon be in the same situation myself as the parties now are, I can, comparatively speaking, look lightly on an event which, in youth, health, and high blood, was quite chilling to my contemplation.

The father of the late Judge Fletcher of the Common Pleas was an *actual* physician at Mount Melec, about seven miles from my father's. He was a smart, intelligent, and very humorous, but remarkably diminutive doctor. He attended my father in his last moments, in conjunction with the family practitioner, Doctor Dennis Mulhall, whose appearance exactly corresponded with that of Doctor Slop, save that his paunch was doubly capacious, and his legs, in true symmetry with his carcase, helped to *waddle* him into a room. He was a matter-of-fact doctor, and despised *anatomy*. His features had been so confused and entangled together by that unbeautifying disorder, the smallpox, (which I have so often alluded to,) that it almost required a chart to find their respective stations.

These two learned gentlemen attended my poor father with the greatest assiduity, and daily prescribed for him a certain portion of every drug the Stradbally apothecary could supply: but these were not very numerous; and as every thing loses its vigour by age, so the Stradbally drugs, having been some years waiting for customers (like the landlord of the Red Cow in "John Bull"), of course fell off in their efficacy, till at length they each became, what the two doctors ultimately turned my poor father into – a *caput mortuum*. Notwithstanding the drugs and the doctors, indeed, my father held out nearly ten days; but finally, as a matter of course, departed this world. I was deeply and sincerely grieved. I loved him affectionately, and never after could reconcile myself to either of his medical attendants. I had overheard their last consultation, and from that time to this, am of opinion, that one doctor is as good as, if not better than, five hundred. I shall never forget the dialogue. After discussing the weather and prevalence of diseases in the county, they began to *consult*. – "What do you say to the *pulveres Jacobi*?" said Dr. Mulhall (the family physician).

"We are three days too late," smirked Doctor Fletcher.

"What think you then of cataplasmus, or the *flies*? – Eh! Doctor, eh! the flies?" said Mulhall.

"The flies won't rise in time," replied Doctor Fletcher: – "too late again!"

"I fear so," said Mulhall.

"'Tis a pity, Doctor Mulhall, you did not suggest blistering

breast and spine sooner: you know it was not my business, as I was only *called in*: – I could not duly *suggest*."

"Why," replied Doctor Mulhall, "I thought of it certainly, but I was unwilling to *alarm the family* by so definitive an application, unless in *extremis*."

"We're in *extremis* now," said Doctor Fletcher – "he! he!"

"Very true – very true," rejoined Doctor Mulhall; "but Nature is too strong for art; she takes her way in spite of us!"

"Unless, like a wife, she's kept down at first," said Fletcher – "he! he! he!"

"Perhaps I was rather too discreet and delicate, doctor; but if the colonel can still get down the *pulveres Jacobi*– " said Mulhall.

"He can't!" said Fletcher.

"Then we can do no more for the patient," replied Mulhall.

"Nothing *more*," said Fletcher; "so you had better break your '*give-over*' to the family as tenderly as possible. That's your business, you know: there is no use in my staying." And so, as the sun rose, Doctor Fletcher jumped into his little cabriolet, and I heard him say in parting, "This is no jest, I fear, to his family."

The next day I lost my father; and never did grief show itself more strong, or general, than on that mournful occasion. There was not a dry eye amongst his tenantry. My mother was distracted: for more than thirty years that they had been united, a single difference of opinion was never expressed between them. His sons loved him as a brother; and the attachment was mutual. His person was prepossessing – his manners those of a man of

rank – his feelings such as became a man of honour. He had the mien of a gentleman, and the heart of a philanthropist; but he was careless of his concerns, and had too rustic an education. He left large landed estates, with large incumbrances to overwhelm them; and thirteen children survived to lament his departure.

After I was called to the bar, Counsellor Fletcher, the doctor's son (already mentioned in a former Vol.), was in the best of practice. On my first circuit, I did not know him, and of course wished to make acquaintance with my seniors. Lord Norbury went circuit as judge at the same time I went first as barrister; he therefore can be no *juvenile* at this time of day.

Fletcher was, as has already been mentioned, of very uncertain humour, and when not pleased, extremely repulsive. The first day I was on circuit he came into the bar-room, perhaps tired, or – what was far worse to him – hungry, for nothing ruffled Fletcher so much as waiting for dinner. Wishing to lose no time in making acquaintance with any countryman and brother barrister, and supposing he was endowed with the same degree of urbanity as other people, I addressed him in my own civil, but perhaps over-vivacious manner. He looked gruff, and answered my first question by some monosyllable. I renewed my address with one of the standing interrogatories resorted to by a man who wishes to fall into conversation. – Another monosyllable.

I was touched: – "You don't know me, perhaps, Counsellor Fletcher?" said I.

"Not as yet, sir," said Fletcher.

I was angry: – "Then I'll refresh your memory," said I. "Your father *killed* mine."

The barristers present laughed aloud.

"I hope you don't mean to revenge the circumstance on *me*, sir?" said Fletcher, with a sardonic smile.

"That," said I, "depends entirely on your making me an apology for your father's ignorance. I forgive *your own*."

He seemed surprised at the person he had to deal with, but no increase of ire was apparent. He looked, however, rather at a loss. The laugh was now entirely against him, when Warden Flood (my predecessor in the Admiralty), who was then father of the circuit bar, happened to come in, and formally introduced me as a new member.

After that time Fletcher and I grew very intimate: – he had several good qualities, and these induced me to put up with many of his humours. He was a very clever man, possessing good legal information; had a clear and independent mind, and never truckled to any one because he was great. He often wrangled, but never quarrelled with me, and I believe I was one of the few who maintained a sincere regard for him. He was intimate with Judge Moore, who now sits in his place, and was the most familiar friend I had at Temple. I have alluded to Judge Fletcher incidentally, as a public character who could not be bribed to support the Union, and was appointed a judge by the Duke of Bedford during his short viceroyalty.

I have introduced Doctor Fletcher's medical practice in my

glance at the Irish *faculty*, the more particularly, because I was present at another consultation held with him, which was (as I hinted at the commencement of this sketch) connected with as droll an incident as any could be, little short of terminating fatally.

I rode with Mr. Flood, of Roundwood, to the meeting of a turnpike-board, held at Mount Rath, a few miles from my father's house. One of the half-mounted gentlemen already described, Sam Doxy of the Derrys, being on his way to the same meeting, just at the entrance of the town his horse stumbled over a heap of earth, and, rolling over and over (like the somerset of a rope-dancer), broke the neck of his rider. The body was immediately – as usual when country gentlemen were slain in fox-hunting, riding home drunk at nights, or the like – brought on a door, and laid upon a bed spread on the floor at the next inn. Mr. Knaggs, the universal prescriber, &c. for the town and vicinity, was sent for to inspect *the corpse*, and Doctor Fletcher being also by chance in the place, was called into the room to consult as to the *dead man*, and vouch that the breath was out of the body of Mr. Samuel Doxy of the Derrys.

The two practitioners found he had no pulse, not even a single *thump in his arteries* (as Doctor Knaggs emphatically expressed it). They therefore both shook their heads. His hands being felt, were found to be cold. They shook their heads again. The doctors now retired to the window, and gravely consulted: first, as to the danger of stumbling horses; and second, as to the probability of

the deceased having been sober. They then walked back, and both declared it was "all over" with Mr. Doxy of the Derrys. His neck was broken – otherwise dislocated; his marrow-bones (according to Dr. Knaggs) were disjointed; and his death had of course been instantaneous. On this decisive opinion being promulgated to the turnpike-board, Dr. Fletcher mounted his pony, and left the town, to *cure* some other patient.

The coroner, Mr. Calcut, was sent for to hold his inquest before Sam's body could be "forwarded" home to the Derrys; and Mr. Knaggs, the apothecary, remained in the room, to see if any *fee* might be stirring when his relations should come to carry away the dead carcase; when, all of a sudden, an exclamation of "by J – s!" burst forth from Mr. Jerry Palmer (already mentioned) of Dureen, near Castle Durrow, an intimate acquaintance of Sam Doxy: "I don't think he's dead at all: – my father often made him twice *deader* at Dureen, with Dan Brennan's double-proof, and he was as well and hearty again as any dunghill cock early in the morning."

"Not dead!" said Knaggs with surprise and anger. "Is not dead, you say? – Lieutenant Jer Palmer, you don't mean to disparage my skill, or injure my business in the town, I hope? There is no more life left in Sam Doxy than in the leg of that table."

The lieutenant bristled up at the doctor's contradiction. "I don't care a d – n, Pothecary Knaggs, either for your skill, your business, or yourself; but I say Sam Doxy is *not* dead, and I repeat that I have seen him *twice as dead* at Dureen, and likewise, by

the same token, on the day Squire Pool's tenants of Ballyfair had a great dinner in Andrew Harlem's big room at Maryborough."

"Pothecary Knaggs" was now much chagrined. "Did you ever hear the like, gentlemen of the turnpike-board?" said he. "Is it because the lieutenant was in the American wars that he thinks he knows a corpse as well as I do?"

"No I don't do that same," said Palmer: "for they say here that you have *made* as many dead bodies yourself as would serve for a couple of battles, and a few skirmishes into the bargain. But I say *Sam* is not dead, by J – s!"

"Well now, gentlemen," said Knaggs, appealing to public candour from the rough treatment of the lieutenant, "you shall soon see, gentlemen, with all your eyes that I am no *ignoramus*, as the lieutenant seems to say." Then opening his case of instruments and strapping a large operation knife on the palm of his fist, "now, gentlemen of the turnpike-board," pursued he, "I'll convince you all that Sam Doxy is as dead as Ballaghlanagh.[8] Its a burning shame for you, Lieutenant Jer Palmer, to be after running down a well-known practitioner in this manner, in his own town. Gentlemen, look here, now, I'll show you that Sam is dead. Living, indeed! Oh, that's a fine story!"

We all conceived that Doctor Knaggs only intended to *try* to

[8] Ballaghlanagh was the name of an old Irish bard (by tradition), whose ghost used to come the night before to people who were to be killed fighting in battle on the morning: and as a ghost offers the most convincing proof that the mortal it represents is no longer living, the term *Ballaghlanagh*, came, figuratively, to signify a "dead man." I learnt this explanation from the old colloughs, who all joined exactly in the same tradition.

bleed him; and with this impression flocked round the body. Doctor Knaggs turned *the corpse* on one side, took off the cravat, and the neck appeared to have somewhat of a bluish look on one side. "Now, gentlemen," said he, "here's the spot (pressing it with his finger): the spinal marrow is injured, perhaps in more places than one, or two either; the bones are dislocated, and the gristle between them is knocked out of its place. The formation of a gentleman's neck is just the same as that of a horse's tail; and as most of you have either yourselves docked and nicked, or been present at the docking and nicking of the tail of a hunter, you'll understand precisely the structure of Sam Doxy's vertebre. Now, gentlemen, (all this time placing Sam's head in a convenient position to make an incision, or, had the coroner been present, to *cut the head off*, for clearer demonstration,) see, now, I'll just make a slight longitudinal gash along the back joints of the neck, and by withdrawing the skin and the covering of fat on either side, I'll show as clear as his nose the fatal fracture of the spinal cord."

Every person in company now began instinctively to feel the nape of his own neck for the spinal cord which the doctor was speaking of. "No man," resumed Doctor Knaggs, "ever recovered when this cord was fairly cracked, and that's the real secret of hanging, I assure you; and it has been remarked that no culprit at Maryborough has ever given a kick after he was duly strung and the shelf fell, for these three last years, since I humanely taught the hangman the proper way. The *jerk* is

the thing, gentlemen; and whether the spine is broken by its being pulled up from a man's shoulders by a cord, or thrust down into his shoulders by a fall on the head, makes no sort of difference. Not dead!" resumed he, with a sneer at the lieutenant: "Gentlemen, (every body came close) now, you see, the gristle which we call cartilage lies between those two bones, and the cord runs over and within also: – when cut through, then, the head, gentlemen, having no support, bobs forward, and the dislocation will appear quite plain. See, now," and as he spoke he gave a pretty smart gash from the nape of Sam's neck downward toward his shoulders; and proceeding to draw back the skin and fat on each side, to get a view of the bones, to the surprise of the turnpike-board, the amazement of Doctor Knaggs himself, and the triumph of Lieutenant Jer Palmer, a stream of warm red blood instantly issued from the gash, and a motion appeared in one eyelid of the corpse.

"By J – s!" shouted the lieutenant, "I told you the man was not dead – not a taste of it. Oh! you diabolical pothecary, if you attempt to give another slash, I'll cut your own wezand; and if the poor follow dies *now*, of this cutting, which I think he may, I'll prosecute you for the murder of Sam Doxy of the Derrys – a fair honest man, and a friend of my father's!"

Doctor Knaggs stood petrified and motionless.

"Gentlemen," continued Jer Palmer, "lend me your cravats. (An immense jug of hot punch was smoking on the hearth ready made for the proposed dinner.) I know well enough what to do,"

said the lieutenant: "my father's own neck was broken two years ago, coming home drunk one night from Ballyspellen Spa, at the widow Maher's house-warming: his horse tumbled over at the Seven Sisters; but Dr. Jacob soon brought him to again. – I recollect now all about it. Here, gentlemen, stir, give me your *cravats*; you have no *handkerchiefs* I suppose."

They all obeyed the lieutenant, who immediately plunged the cravats into the hot punch, and lapped one of them round the *dead man's* neck, then another over that, and another still, and kept dropping the hot punch on them, whereat the blood flowed freely. He then, putting his knees to the dead man's shoulder, gave his head two or three no very gentle lugs, accompanying them in the manner of a view holloa, with "Ough! Hurra! Hurra! By J – s he's alive and kicking! Oh! you murdering thief of a pothecary, get off, or I'll cut your throat!"

The poor apothecary stood motionless at the window; for Palmer (whom, in his paroxysm, he durst not go near) was between him and the door; but he wished himself a hundred miles off. The lieutenant then put a spoonful of the punch into Sam Doxy's mouth, and down it went, to the surprise of the turnpike-board. In a short time a glassful was patiently received the same way. A groan and a heavy sigh now proved the fallibility of Pothecary Knaggs; and the lieutenant's superior treatment was extolled by the whole board. The dead man at length opened one eye, then the other; in about half an hour he could speak; and in the course of an hour more the broken-necked Doxy was able to

sit up. They then got some mulled wine and spices for him, and he was quite recovered, with the exception of a pain in his head and neck; but he could bear no motion, so they fixed him in an upright position in an arm-chair, and Palmer remained with him to perfect his miraculous cure. We dined in another room.

Mr. Flood and myself called on Doxy next day, and brought him and Lieutenant Palmer home to Roundwood; and poor Dr. Knaggs' wanting to cut off the head of Mr. Sam Doxy of the Derrys became a standing jest, with a hundred embellishments, till both have been forgotten. I know not if Knaggs is living. Sam Doxy was at last choked by the drumstick of a turkey sticking in his throat whilst he was picking it.

TRANSFUSION OF BLOOD

The Irish on the continent – Slow travelling of remittances – Inconveniences thereof – Sir John Burke, of Glinsk – Reasonable points of curiosity – Prompt satisfaction —*Messieurs des Créanciers*– Sir John's health declines – Given over by the faculty generally – Doctor T – 's perseverance – Its success – A game at cross purposes – Custodiums in Ireland – New mode of liquidating a debt – Galway gore – Receipt for ennobling the *bourgeois* of Paris – Sir John Burke's marriage and visit to Rome – His return – Lady Burke – Glinsk Castle.

It has been generally observed, that our fellow-subjects who sojourn long on the continent often lose many of their national traits, and imbibe those of other countries. The Irish, however, present an exception to this rule. I have scarce ever met a thorough-paced Irishman whose oddities totally deserted him; the humorous idiom of his language, and the rich flavour of his dialect, are intrinsic, and adhere as steadily to his tongue as *fancy* does to his brain, and eccentricity to his actions.

An Irishman is *toujours* an Irishman, and wheresoever he "puts up" seldom fails to find one inveterate enemy – "himself." This observation is not confined to the lower or middle classes of Hibernians, but occasionally includes the superior orders. Like the swine, when the demon got into them, Irishmen on

the continent keep frisking, pirouetting, galloping, and puffing away, till they lose their footing; and there is scarcely a more entertaining spectacle than that afforded by the schemes, devices, and humours of a true son of Erin, under these circumstances.

I was greatly amused by an incident which took place at Paris some time since; – it possesses as much of the Irish *flavour* as any bagatelle anecdote I recollect to have met with; and as the parties are above the medium class, well known, all alive, and still on the same *pavé* in perfect harmony, the thing is rendered more entertaining.

An Irish baronet of very ancient family (an honour which he never suffered any person to be ignorant of after twenty minutes' conversation), proprietor of a large Galway territory, garnished with the usual dilapidated chateau, brogueless tenantry, managing attorneys, and mis-managing agents, having sufficiently squeezed his estate to get (as he terms) the *juice* out of it, determined to serve a few campaigns about St. James' Street, &c., and try if he could *retrench* at the several club-houses and "hells" to be met with amidst what is called "high life" in our economical metropolis.

After having enacted with *éclat* all the parts in the various scenes usually performed on that great theatre, he at length found, that the place was not much *cheaper* than *sweet* Glinsk, or any old principality of his own dear country. He therefore resolved to change the scene for a more diverting and cheerful one; and by way of a *finish*, came over to Paris, where any

species of ruin may be completed with a taste, ease, and despatch unknown in our boorish country.

The baronet brought over three or four thousand pounds in his fob, just (as he told me) to try, by way of comparison, how long that quantity of *the dross* would last in Paris[9]– on which point his curiosity was promptly satisfied: – "Frascati" and the "Salon des Etrangers," by a due application of spotted bones, coloured pasteboard, and painted whirligigs, under the superintendence of the Marquis de Livere, informed him at the termination of a short novitiate, that nearly the last of his "Empereurs" had been securely vested in the custody of the said Marquis de Livere.

Though this seemed, *primâ facie*, rather *inconvenient*, yet the baronet's dashing establishment did not immediately suffer diminution, until his valet's repeated answer, *pas chez lui*, began to alarm the crew of grooms, goddesses, led captains, &c.

Misfortune (and he began to fancy this was very like one) seldom delays long to fill up the place of ready money when that quits a gentleman's service: and it now seemed disposed to attach itself to the baronet in another way. Madam Pandora's box appeared to fly open, and a host of bodily ills beset Sir John, who, having but indifferent nerves, was quite thrown on his back.

Such was the hapless situation of Sir John Burke, while

[9] Last year, the son of a very great man in England came over to Paris with a considerable sum in his pocket for the very same purpose. The first thing he did was gravely to ask his banker (an excellent and sensible man), "How long six thousand pounds would last him in Paris?" The reply was a true and correct one, "If you play, three days; if you don't, six weeks."

exercising his portion of the virtue of patience, in *waiting for remittances*– a period of suspense particularly disagreeable to travellers abroad – every post-day being pretty certain to carry off the *appetite*; which circumstance, to be sure, may be sometimes considered *convenient* enough.

Families from the interior of Hibernia are peculiarly subject to that suspense; and where their Irish agent happens to be an old *confidential solicitor*, or a *very dear friend*, or a near relation of the *family*, the attack is frequently acute. An instance, indeed, occurred lately, wherein the *miscarriage* of an Irish letter actually caused the very same accident to a new-married lady!

The baronet, however, bore up well; and being extremely good-humoured, the surliest *créanciers* in Paris could not find in their hearts for some time to be angry with him; and so, most unreasonably left him to be angry with himself, which is a thousand times more tormenting to a man, because *sans* intermission.

At length, some of his most *pressing* friends, who a short time before had considered it their highest honour to enjoy the *pratique* of Monsieur le Chevalier, began to show symptoms of losing temper; – as smoke generally forebodes the generation of fire, something like a blaze seemed likely to burst forth; and as the baronet most emphatically said to me – "The d – d duns, like a flock of jack snipes, were eternally thrusting their *long bills*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.