FOUR WEEKS IN IRELAND.

A QUAKER LADY BOARDING WITH TENANTS AND LANDLORDS.

Her Experience in the Cabin of a Farmer—How She Lived in an Irish Castle—What She Ate, Drank, Saw, Did, and Heard—The Irish Land League and its Influence.

I.

I spent four weeks in Ireland. My aim was to ascertain the condition of the farmer who follows the plough. It is about fifty years since Griffith, an agent of the English Government, made a valuation of Irish lands. Since that time rents have risen in some cases over 100 per cent. The Land League is trying to reduce them to what they were under the Griffith valuation. When tenants are evicted, others take the lands at their peril, and the evicted are supported by contributions to the Land League. I call it an agricultural strike.

Through the courtesy of a Catholic priest I secured board with a farmer in County Cork. Mr. and Mrs. Collins met me at the station and took me to their house in their cart. Collins was not very poor for an Irish cultivator. He was doubtless considered quite fortunate in owning a horse and cart, even if the cart had no box and no seats, but was simply a bed or frame. Upon it lay a great bag of corn meal, on which sat Mrs. Collins and myself. I steadied myself down hill, with one arm at her waist, and with my right hand grasped a projection of the cart. I expressed surprise at the number of ruined and abandoned dwellings, for we were within ten miles of one of the largest towns in Ireland. Collins said that farms once separate have been thrown together. When the population of a country falls thirty-seven per cent. in about thirty-four years, or from over eight millions to about five, it is not strange that abandoned houses are found when built like these, of stone. Dwellings of mud and straw are more readily demolished. Collins's house was on rather a sterile hill. To reach it we rose above the lower and more fertile ground. On our arrival a chair was brought out to enable us to alight from the cart. On entering the house we were followed by a young man, who staggered under the weight of the great five-bushel sack taken from the wagon.

There were twelve in the family—six boys, one girl at home and one away, the old aunt, and the domestics. The living room had an uneven floor of earth. Within the front door stood the slop barrel. A dresser of dishes stood on the left, and beyond it there was a red-painted, two-storied hen coop. A hen and chickens occupied the lower story, and a setting hen the upper one. A second door faced the front door. It generally stood open, discovering a little muddy yard. A great settle or couch of wood stood on the same side of the room. Beyond it, on a low seat, sat a little fair, weak-eyed old woman, the aunt. She sat beside a small fire on the hearth, holding the baby. With her left hand she turned a crank and wheel, which by some invisible agency created an underground draught to kindle the fire. The fire was generally of coals. It bore no proportion to the fireplace, which occupied a large part of the third side of the room. I saw the girl hang over the fire a large Dutch oven, called here a bastible. It was a round iron vessel with a lid. On its top she kindled a fire of furze, and hung the bastible to bake the large cake within, made of flour not fully screened, sour milk, and soda.

Nightfall approached. The bare-footed little ones gathered to the blaze, although it was in the month of June. The babe in arms was Tim, the 3-year-old, Norah, and the 5-year-old in trousers, surmounted by a red woollen frock and blue apron, was Dennis. At one end of the long fireplace stood the heavy cradle. A steep staircase, almost like a ladder with a railing, led to the rooms above, for this house, roofed with slate instead of thatch, had a loft with a board floor. Wet weather makes the uneven earthen floors inconvenient. The water gathers in little pools. The door to my room was at the foot of the staircase. There were only two apartments on the ground floor.

The fourth side of the apartment was lighted by a small window and the doorway through which we entered the house. There were only two windows down stairs, one in this room and one in mine. They were little iron-barred windows. I thought that they might be taxed, but I was mistaken. Collins told me that the glass came from England. They used to have glass manufactories in this country.

I had taken tea before my arrival, and Mrs. Collins gave me some milk. She and her husband had been to Cork, where, she said, they had a cup of tea and a penny bun at a baker's. Remember that their penny is more than our cent. In the evening we had a good talk. I commented on the nice new house standing in the corner, and Mrs. Collins told me that they had lost several chickens by the fox. "And do you still have foxes in Ireland?" I asked, in some surprise.

"We do," she replied.

"And do you kill the foxes?" I inquired.

"No; ma'am, we hunt the fox."

This I afterward thought must be an error, as foxes are vermin, and a gentleman born in the north of Ireland had been prosecuted and evicted for killing fox. Sometimes hunting clubs pay for poultry killed by foxes.

In the evening I spoke of the sun's setting so late and our being so far north and asked the children in what part of Ireland they had studied geography. He said that his mother told me that he had been obliged to leave school at 11, and her manner seemed sad and disapproving. There are no free public schools in Ireland like ours. The poorest children get instruction free, in some schools, but others must. A gentleman in Dublin, who publishes a school journal, told me that he doubted whether these schools would ever become entirely free to the public, like those in my own State. He had never heard that such a movement were contemplated.

In further conversation Mrs. Collins told me that they had lost seven cows in eighteen months, and that they were nearly bankrupt. They had to incur some debt to replace them, and they must meet the rent or be thrown upon the world. Their lease would expire in about six years.

About 10 o'clock in the evening the wooden table was pat before the fireplace. The old aunt had gone to bed. Collins sat in one end of the fireplace, the boy was asleep in the settle, and the eldest slept on the settle. Mrs. Collins made tea and put a bowl of white sugar on the table. She told me that sugar cost about five cents a pound (2½ pence). They cut pieces off of the great cake baked in the Dutch oven, and ate their suppers without any butter. Lastly, she gave each sleepy child a large mother handed her a bit of the warm cake without anything spread on it. Mr. and Mrs. Collins had milk in their tea. Tea cost about forty cents a pound. Collins helped himself quite freely to the cheap and nutritious sugar, one of the blessings which the poor man owes to free trade.

Collins and his wife gave up their own room to me. It was the other room on the ground floor. It also had an earthen floor with the addition of a little fragment, but it was not level. There I slept, and here I dressed my simple meals, more luxurious, however, than the own. Some of the dishes were of china, which belonged to Collins's grandmother. I had plenty of milk, eggs, butter, tea, and baker's bread. They gave me a little milk, rather than cow's milk, for tea. For me especially Mrs. Collins procured meat a bit of pork, but I was not partial to it. They did not, however, go to the extravagance of eating it themselves. I was told by a farmer's family who had fowl and cabbage for a Sunday dinner. Beef was sent for the agent, not seeing such evidences of prosperity, he might raise the rent. Collins and his wife seldom ate meat. He told me that he had two pigs in the morning and the mistress one. He keeps a cow and farrow. Twenty-four were running with one hen. The servant fed them with a mixture of nettles, corn meal, and thick milk, but she said that they scarcely ever ate a turkey, even at Christmas.

In the morning at breakfast Mrs. Collins had a dish of cold mush or stirabout cut up and broiled in sheep's suet. This seemed bread and meat. I observed one day within the back door, and by the chicken coop, a little trough with corn meal. There seemed to be always food there. The chickens came in and helped themselves. In the morning I was out of place when he appeared. Seeing a fowl eating, I said to the aunt: "That rooster ought to be fat." She did not understand me, and I tried again:

"That cock ought to be fat, he eats so much."

"He to ate a chicken of a bless him," she said. She meant "proper him," I think. Some neighbors visited the family one morning, and from my room I heard earnest talk. They spoke of the rumored arrest of Father Murphy, and seemed greatly excited. One man came in who was full of reminiscences of the Cork races on the preceding day. Mrs. Collins allowed him to think that they were present, but they were not.

The girl swept the earthen floor with a bunch of twigs without a handle. I mention little things to show the poverty of the country. They had no almanac at Collins's and no clock, except a Connecticut one, which did not run. Collins once intimated that it was painful to have such a poor harness for his horse.

One day I walked over to the school. I passed a house licensed to sell beer and spirits to be drunk on the premises. It was whitewashed and looked better than most of the farm houses. The boys told me that tea and sugar could be bought there. Bread was sold, but I could buy no stickers of candy for the children. A earlier acquaintance, who lives in Kingstown, near this beer shop, but I saw no country stores, like ours at home.

The Collins family carried water some distance up hill from a spring. This part of the country was supplied from springs. They had excellent roads, apparently Macadamized, and free from tolls. When I spoke in Cork of the great cost of such roads I was told that they were made after the famine, when the Government gave laborers employment. The roads, however, seemed deserted. Once I saw a man on horseback, and occasionally market carts were seen, but of pleasure carriages, like those of the farmers in eastern Pennsylvania, I remember none.

The people were honest. The servant girl at Collins's said to me: "Nothing do ever be taken." I wished to know whether it was safe to leave my towels to dry on furze bushes near the road. Afterward, in a gentleman's house—a gentleman who lived in a disturbed section, and whose tenants were not paying rent—I was told that they would not be afraid to have plate in the house, the people there were so honest.

Collins and his wife were trying to better their condition by going to a market town, and buying butter which she brought home, and reworked and packed into firkins to sell in Cork. This consumed so much of their time that it was hard for me to see much profit in it. They might have got 25 each week more than the butter cost them. Mrs. Collins was pleased in telling me of one firkin or tub that brought the highest market price.

The boys were left alone at the farm work. I did not observe the great pressure on labor seen among our Pennsylvania German farmers. This may be in part owing to open winters in Ireland, which enable the farmer to work the year round, in part to the fact that the patient, ox-like labor of the German is not a trait of the Irishman, and partly to a national disregard of time, producing such a proverb as "Hours were made for slaves."

When I apologized for having talked so long to a poor man and his wife, she answered: "Sure, many a year we'll rest in the grave." Calling on my friend Collins and his wife, before I left the county, I found they had gone with their horse to the funeral of a much respected neighbor, and as they were so long absent, I had doubtless accompanied the funeral to the place of interment, twenty miles. A manufacturer in the County Cork said that the Irish girls in the mills are not greedy enough. They would rather have less wages and more play. They were not indolent, but a bit of fun would call them off. A Quaker lady in Cork said to me: "None of the Irish are thrifty. They do not value their time." And afterward: "They are a thrifty people in the north. They make use of their time." She herself was born in Ireland, but when she spoke of the Irish, she did not mean to include herself. When any one called the Irish lazy, I replied that they did not show it in America. They left their temperate climate, came to our country, and constructed railroads under our broiling suns. I heard in Ireland that girls who go to America say, "If we had worked as hard in Ireland as we do in America we would have been well off there."

I spoke of Mr. and Mrs. Collins's drinking tea at supper. Once when they were absent Mary, the servant, came into my room to hide the teapot, lest the boys should want sugar and bread.

"What do you give them?" I asked.

"Sure, I give them milk," she replied.

"Potatoes?" I suggested.

"They do not care about potatoes," she said.

Our corn meal, among its many other Irish uses, seems likely to supersede the national dish. What a change since 1847, the year of the potato famine! This farinaceous food Indian meal because it was cheaper than oatmeal, but they did not like it so well. As for the inferior animals, they occasionally give horses corn meal, but generally feed them in winter on oats, turnips, grass, and hay. Indian meal and bran go to the pigs and poultry. To pigs corn meal is given the year round, occasionally adding a few boiled potatoes, the sortings. They are fattened on meal and sour milk when it can be spared. Poultry abounds here, and Irish eggs are a staple article of exportation. I never saw corn meal at home stand so constantly in the chicken trough as at Collins's.

I have said that the domestic came into my room to hide the teapot. The cup which cheers but not inebriates is in immense demand here. The aunt was waking up the children to drink the girl for tea. The beggar woman insisted on tea. When the 3-year-old Norah had a pain she cried for tea. It might be a very happy thing for Ireland if the people would confine themselves to such cups as these, but while an alcohol manufactures are languishing in County Cork, the malt liquor and whiskey distilleries are flourishing. Scotland, a Quaker told me, excelled Ireland in regular whiskey drinking. As to what constitutes moderate drinking, I was amused by the remark of a young girl in Cork. Speaking of young men, she said that she did not object to a bottle of porter at dinner and one in the evening, but seven or eight bottles a day she thought gluttony and a sin. Porter, however, is not dear. On draught it sells at about 4 cents the quart imperial. Whiskey is quite another thing. The tax on a gallon is 12s. 6d., or about $3. It has been said that Ireland pays more for whiskey than for rent, yet estimates given me show that while rent amounts to millions of pounds sterling are spent yearly in whiskey, the rent of the country amounts to £73,000,000. Let no one jump to the conclusion that it is the working farmers who expend this great amount, for doubtless the small landlords are great consumers.

Distillers and brewers are great men in such a country. I heard of several celebrated Protestant churches indebted to them for funds. A distiller gave £20,000 and a brewer £10,000 to assist in building an Episcopal cathedral in Cork. It is said that the latter have cost quinpence, the great brewer, £200,000 to remodel St. Patrick's Episcopal Church in Dublin and to build the apportenant houses.

To return to my farmer, Collins, in whose house I was, is an active, intoxicating liquor drunk. He rented seventy acres, of which twenty were bog, nearly worthless. Collins's rent is £34, or about $170. He has slate roofed his house and greatly improved it. He has also built a stone stable and a dairy, with slate roofs. The landlord gave him almost nothing toward these improvements, not even the flooring of the loft. The stone Collins got off the place. When he came here the walls of the farm were mostly of clay or mud, and he has built stone ones. In this neighborhood the walls are made of loose stones. In some cases they are covered with earth, and grass and other plants are growing on them. These walls, I said to him, must take up a great deal of room. That one beside your house is a yard across the top.

Collins's rent is under $170. Land sold in fee simple, apparently a rare thing, generally brings twenty times the annual rental. Yet, as a farmer in Cork informed me, the average value here now, under present depressing circumstances, is only twenty years' rent.

I have spoken of some of Collins's land as of inferior quality. His report of the produce, I therefore infer, is not the average crop. He says that on this land wheat ought to bring 15 cwt. per acre (the cwt. of 112 pounds. On land of decent quality in good years wheat is expected to bring 25 cwt. In this soil of Collins's oats frequently bring 14 cwt. to the acre. This land produces about one and a half tons of hay, and better land about two tons per acre. A patch of potatoes is called a potato garden, even if it contains several acres. The manner in which they are planted was strange to my eye. The land is laid out in beds about four feet wide. Between these beds are deep trenches one and a half feet wide. These beds or ridges are made by turning the sods in with the plough. There are four rows of potatoes to a bed. The ridges are hoed and weeded. The people manure as heavily as they can for potatoes, and then without additional manure, or artificial manures are used. On Collins's soil potatoes have been grown for five years. The potatoes have degenerated in Ireland, but of late a new kind, the Champion, have encouraged the people much. At an exposition in Cork in 1880 some farmers claimed to have raised from 34 to 36 tons per acre.

Turnips are manured, sown in drills or rows in May and June, thinned, hoed, and hand weeded. They turn out twelve tons to the acre. Two men can fork out an acre in a day, and two men can top an acre a day, leaving the tops on the ground.

Domestic animals sell high for food. Beeves sometimes weigh 13 and 14 cwt., and bring about £3 per cwt. Good fat calves of three months sell for £6. Fat sheep, weighing dressed about 120 pounds, will bring £3 or near $15. Mrs. Collins had an exceptional pet, supposed to be a fine bacon pig (such and fat well mixed, or a "riddem" pig. An Irishman is said to have fed his pig one day and starved him the next, that they might be streak of fat and a streak of lean. That pig of Mrs. Collins's weighed when dressed 182 pounds and she got £1 10s. for it, or about 2½ cents a pound. In view of such prices the saying of my Cork landlady is not strange: "May the Lord of heaven spare us the American meat! It keeps the market within our reach."

Fruit is not plentiful in country towns of the County Cork. The children would pluck gooseberries," was a reason given for not having them. A certain priest was supposed to have strawberries and gooseberries in his garden. Probably fruit-loving children did not disturb those of this reverence. When a retired lawyer took me into his garden he unlocked the gate. He had cut down an old orchard and would not plant another, because the neighboring children got at the fruit.

Collins, his wife, and I were riding on the cart going to the market town for butter. I asked whether he expected that there would be a time when there would be no rents to pay. He answered that he did not.

"I understood you to say the other evening that you did," I continued.

"No," he replied; "there has been a proposition for the Government to take the lands and the people to pay rent for thirty years——"

"And then the land to be theirs?" I interrupted.

"Yes," he answered; "but they will never grant that. More moderate things they have refused. All we want is reduced rents, as the people can no longer pay high ones."

On our return journey I had an admirable opportunity to talk with him as he walked by the wagon. I had called on a magistrate in the market town, a Protestant gentleman, who had seemed very ignorant or uncommunicative. He had, however, suggested over-population as a reason for the condition of Irish affairs. I had thought that this reserved gentleman, in the reduction given me by a Roman Catholic clergyman, Collins had suggested an officer of the market as suitable to introduce me. But I was in haste, and carried the letter. The magistrate said that he did not know the priest. "No, sir," said Collins, "you are wrong. You were wrong in two things. You said you were from Philadelphia, and they are afraid of the Americans, or do not like them; and Father O'Byrne is not their kind of man."

I told Collins that some paper in America had said that their magistrates should be elected, as with us in some States. He replied that they are appointed from the aristocracy, the landholding class, and, of course, in cases of dispute between landlords and tenants, their sympathies are with their own class.

"If you were in America we should say that your head is level," I said; but I had to interpret the slang.

"There has been a change in Ireland," he added, "within some years. Formerly the wealthy classes and the learned could make dupes of the Irish people, but of late years there has been more education, and the people see things differently. Ireland was a dark country before the Catholic emancipation. Before the passage of that act no Catholic could hold office in this country. How many places are open to them in the Civil Service and elsewhere?"

Collins intimated that the English are wrong in fearing the Catholic priests, for they counsel the people to peaceful measures, and they are the only persons who have sufficient authority over them to quiet them. He said I spoke of Father Murphy and of priests who had presided at Land League meetings.

"Yes," said Collins, "when peaceful measures were advised."

I replied that the Government would not tread upon the priests, for it thought that the people might become excited and burst from the priests' control, and because they feared that the priests might deceive them. The remark did not please Collins. He said that the people were excited at the report of Father Murphy's arrest, because they have so united to their priests. "One is already in prison," he said. "Father Sheehey; and many meetings have been held to petition the Government to release him and other leaders of the Land League movement."

In a distributing region in another part of the County Cork I was told of a priest who had refused to join the League. The members refused to send their children to the national school under his supervision, and the people thus opposed to him did not call him Canon Desmond, but only Desmond. On the other hand, I was told of two influential priests, lately sent out of Cork by the Bishop for being too active in the Land League. They were placed in country curacies—promotion backward—and sent out of the influence of a wealthy Catholic clique, which does not in politics hold to the Conservative late Lord Beaconsfield party, like the Protestants, but holds to the Liberal party, which is midway between the Conservatives and Land Leaguers. It was added that one of these priests had gone to Rome to lay his case before the Pope, not having been able to get the Archbishop to interfere. The Archbishop did not think it prudent to entertain the complaint.

One, at least, of Collins's remarks may seem unjust to the Government. He said that men's constitutions have changed. They are no longer able to live on potatoes. They must have Indian meal and bread and tea. "I think I would have been dead," he said. "If I had been kept on potatoes; and when men's constitutions are altered any laws the Government can make should be altered to suit them." But it is free trade in Great Britain and Ireland that makes bread and tea cheap.

The great domestic manufactures of the people demand a word. Collins wore to market one day a gray frieze coat there pronounced frizel. Calling at a farmer's house, I found the girls engaged in spinning wool for the boys' clothing—wool that had been beautifully carded at a factory. Collins's coat seemed to be black and white mixed, but the frieze is often dyed blue or red, and is also used for women's petticoats. The girls set up for us a specimen of weaving, a great and somewhat puzzling one. At Dublin it was surprising to find that even the matches in my chamber were marked London. The want of coal in Ireland has been given as one reason for the want of manufactures, but there is great and available water power. The want of capital is also given as a cause of the lack of manufactures, and if we look into this point we come to two of the open sores of Ireland—absent capitalists and want of unity. In Guy's Almanac (a work which I had) I find 1,000 acres and upward in the County Cork, leaseholders of over ninety years being put down as absolute owners. There are 375 of these landholders, of whom about 200 have residences in the county, and the remainder are entirely absentees. Mr. Loftus, Mr. Loftus, go to the national school until they are about 12 years old. In most cases they go winter and summer without shoes and stockings. The laborer takes great pride and pleasure in being able to send his children to school. Sometimes they go to mass on Sunday, and in the afternoon may often be seen in the house or beside a ditch reading a newspaper. After mass they play ball in parties against each other, or have a fiddler and dance on the green or village. Another Protestant organ, particularly in Dublin County, where you can see them on Sundays playing on the banks of the ditches under shelter of a wall."

"What games do they play?" I asked.

"Forfeits and spoil-five," he replied.

The laborer has no political privileges. Unless he pays a rent of over five pounds he pays no poor rates, and no other taxes except the county or Grand Jury cess, and for malicious injuries, such as burnings. He pays this tax, but is not allowed to vote. Would you put us under the Papists" once cried an Irish Protestant, on the question of universal suffrage.

On one occasion, when Mr. Loftus's man was driving for me, he spoke of the desire or the efforts of the laborer to keep his little family together. He said that in his time, or generation, the sexes are separated. Mr. Loftus pointed out to me a building which he called the curse of the country. It is a union. "Children," he said, "brought up there are well fed, and idle, and never want to work." The number of these houses and the amount of money paid to sustain them seem almost incredible. Mr. Loftus's district is very heavily taxed, about five shillings in the pound, or 25 per cent. on the valuation of a man's property. The farmer pays this tax, but the landlord alleges his land in the county of Cork. There are six such poor houses. The one in Mr. Loftus's district contains about 400 inmates, and the one in Cork over 1,000. The Cork poor rate amounts to from 2s. to 4 shillings a pound annually on every pound valuation of property, and the taxable valuation for taxes is only about 60 per cent. of the annual income.

When the country is poorest, these taxes are heaviest. Very few who go into the unions ever get out, excepting children. Said a guardian of the poor: "What can we do with the immense number of paupers in Ireland? Is the able-bodied persons leaving the isle. All the lower classes here speak of America as their home, or final place of settlement. When the poor law passed there was money in their district, the Board of Poor Law Guardians will sometimes supplement it gratuitously, and send the children out at their own expense. The Board sometimes sends out lots of young women that are in the unions."

The region in which Mr. Loftus lives is a disturbed one. On a recent Sunday a Land League meeting was to be held in the town. It had been extensively advertised in the newspapers. On the day before the meeting was to be held the Lord Lieutenant issued a proclamation forbidding it. About 200 dragoons and infantry and 150 armed police arrived at the town, bringing with them provisions, as no farmer nor shopkeeper would dare to sell any to them. One storekeeper had already been Boycotted for not joining the Land League. On the appointed Sunday, after mass, or about 11 o'clock, some 5,000 or 6,000 people came together, with bands of music. Five or six Roman Catholic clergymen were among them. The people desired to hold the meeting after reading a platform on some other spot. Two stipendiary, or salaried, magistrates were present. At the solicitation of the priests they agreed that the soldiers and police should not interfere with the people if they listened to no speeches, but simply formed in an orderly procession and paraded in the town. The affair went off peaceably and the people went quietly home, although feeling such chagrin at the action of the priests. If they had not obeyed the contract the priests would have retired and left them to the mercy of the armed men.

At dinner one day, in the course of conversation, Mr. Loftus said, "The country's well enough if it is left alone.

"But," said I, "you approve, perhaps, of one agitator, O'Connell; you like the effects of Catholic emancipation?"

O'Connell, he cried, "the best man Ireland ever produced; a clever man. Not such a fellow as this Parnell, not fit to clane O'Connell's shoes in cleverness. O'Connell never allowed any quarreling or disturbance. He kept up the agitation, but the people were kept in order. The repeal collections were kept up but there was nothing like the burning, wounding, and killing that is going on in these times.

I asked whether there might not be a home Parliament for local affairs, and delegates to a general Parliament. He answered that the people are so much given to contention that they could not carry on affairs. "If half a dozen of them," he added, "come together at a peer law meeting, they can't behave themselves."

III.

After my return to Cork an acquaintance advised me to visit a town in the southwest, where manners are more primitive. Accordingly I travelled thither, where women in a shop may be heard talking the Irish language. I went third class. The railway terminated at the town. Failing into conversation with an intelligent fellow traveller, he said that he had many men constructing a road. He was a steward or overseer. Looking out at the country, I asked, "Why are there no barns?"

"They have nothing to put into barns," he replied. "They sell their hay in the fields and thrash their grain and get it quickly into market. They even sell their straw sometimes to meet their rent. Then when spring comes the landlord endorses for them in the bank. This answers for one year. On the next year the farmer must go to a money lender, to whom he signs a note for £25, receiving only £20."

An intelligent Protestant to whom I read this statement made some corrections. He said that the landlord would only endorse for the rent, and the money lender would charge 10 or 15 per cent.

I cannot substitute a name for that of my next witness. It is too well known, having been mentioned in Parliament. John Coppithorne is a Methodist. In politics he is a Conservative. He says that if poor Beaconsfield were in there would not be any of these disturbances. He has a shop. He is a river, coloring frieze for the country folks. He rents several acres of land, and finally, unfortunate for him, he lets "cars," or keeps a small posting establishment. It is on account of letting vehicles to the police that he is Boycotted. He has lived for fifty-two years in the town of Skibbereen, in the southwest, near Cape Clear. Skibbereen is the terminus of the railroad, but beyond lies Scull, the residence of Father Murphy. Father Murphy is a quiet Catholic priest. One day a police officer went into his house to get him to use his influence with the people. But Father Sheehy was already in jail, and the people, seeing the policeman, flew to the idea that Father Murphy was to be apprehended. A riot impended, and a message was sent to Skibbereen for a reinforcement of police. Not many police officers were there, but they sent as many as they thought they could spare, and unfortunate John Coppithorne let them have cars to convey them, having no idea that the people would break out as they did. Mrs. Coppithorne was extremely alarmed when the mob attacked their house. They began about 9 P. M. and continued at intervals until daylight, or about half past 2. Windows, doors, and shutters were broken. There were women among the rioters. They brought stones in their aprons and encouraged the men. Horn were blown all night on the surrounding hills—conch shells and cows' horns. The military arrived by special train at 3 A. M., "and their arrival was as grateful as at Lucknow," said Mrs. Coppithorne.

At an early hour of the night some of the mob suggested to the priest that if the armed police were withdrawn they themselves would disperse. The stipendiary magistrate agreed to the proposition. The stipendiary, or paid magistrate, commands the armed forces, soldiers and police, in case of riot. So the police withdrew to barracks, and the mob took the priest on their shoulders and carried him home. The magistrate retired to his hotel, and the mob came back in double force. Having before confined their efforts to the upper windows, they now attacked the doors and shutters below, and ransacked the shop.

"After all it was a false alarm," said Father Murphy was not apprehended. Tears came into Coppithorne's eyes when I lightly asked him the amount of his losses. I hear that he claims damages to the extent of £800. He says that his business, worth perhaps £250 a year, is almost entirely ruined. Sometimes the people will come creeping in, perhaps with a permit, to get frieze left to be dyed before the riot. There was a man in the shop while I was there, who wanted some frieze which some one had left, for a petticoat. He had lost the ticket. The clerk declined to let him have it. Only that the boy was to blame, he said, he would let you have it. So the inconvenience of tearing books is not all on one side.

John Coppithorne is familiar with the pecuniary condition of the farmer. We could hardly expect him to be prejudiced in the farmer's favor. He therefore unmistakably confirms the report of the desperate condition of many of them. Of working farmers round him, he estimates that ten per cent. have barns. About fifty per cent. sell their hay, but fifty per cent. are never forehanded enough to be able to make manure in the winter sufficient to keep their land up to its standard. Poor creatures that have only a few acres can be seen going security for each other in the spring to get a few pounds to buy their seed. They live on potatoes, fish, milk, and Indian meal gruel. If thick it is gruel; if thin, porridge.

About the same percentage sell all their grain to meet their rent and pressing demands, and then buy other grain, and feed themselves and animals. They buy it their seed grain on credit at a high rate, saying, if they pay at all, after the next harvest. Legal process is not infrequently used to oblige them to pay. If money had not been sent into Ireland, and relief given, there would be widespread misery, but the farmers would not have had seed potatoes in the spring of 1880.

Others at Skibbereen said that the competition is too great when farms are to be rented, and some farms are entirely too small to support a family. Seven persons live on five. Near the seacoast an existence can be eked out by fishing, but there are many in Ireland cultivating five acres or less.

During my visit at Skibbereen I saw a funeral. The corpse was followed by wailing women, for the Irish utterly still prevails. I buried the body at the graveyard of the abbey, an old ruin, where the dead were buried coffinless during the famine. At that time some of the people buried their dead in fields near their houses, and in the morning found wild dogs tossing up dead bodies that were buried in trenches. This great famine was caused by the potato rot. A gentleman told me that at that time nineteen-twentieths of the people of the country "rarely ate bread."

While in the County Cork I met another person well qualified to speak of the condition of farmers. Michael McBride's occupations were multifarious. He kept a shop and a public house distinct from it. He farmed many acres of land in different places. He said his cattle ate the fair. A public house is a drinking house, but McBride said that he drank no liquor himself. He was not a member of the Land League. He turned out a tenant and suffered by the League. While we talked in a retired place a man came to him with a loud voice, though for others to hear, in this manner:

"England is getting 16,000,000 pounds a year out of this unfortunate country, and pinching people into jail under the Coercion act for saying nothing but the truth."

McBride said that at one hour for me to call again. In the evening he had to go out and raise contributions for the poor of the parish.

"A very wild summer, thank God, he said; meaning a cold summer unfavorable to agriculture. We thank God for everything," said his landlady. "Sure, we have sufferings, but of my English cousins could not believe that there was any reality in thanking God for bad things." McBride said that he held much land. "Of course you employ some one to work it for you?" I asked.

"Oh, bedad, yes," he replied.

He said that there are men who sell their clover green when in want of money, and who will even take off two or three crops in the year and sell the green grass. He said that private bankers in Ireland are not numerous, but that there are twenty in Cork, some of them pawnbrokers. In various towns there are many poor people who pawn their clothing on Monday and redeem it on Saturday. The poor farmer sells his hay, straw, and turnips to pay his rent, and therefore cannot make barnyard manure in the winter. Guano was selling at 12 shillings a cwt. in the spring of 1880, said McBride. "The poor farmer may sell his cattle at the end of the market at £5 a head, and afterward buy Indian meal at £7 to feed the animals and himself."

In February McBride paid £7 per ton for hay, but in the preceding summer he had bought the same quality was less than £2 per ton. He showed me a note which he had signed to prevent a small farmer or poor man from being turned out. Such must have two endorsers. McBride's signature was enough, however, because he was a man of means. At first he refused. The man wept bitterly, for he was to be served with a writ if he did not pay that day. The note runs in this manner:

[illegible] 1881.

On demand we jointly and severally promise to pay Mr. Mark Kelly [illegible] street, Cork, or order, the sum of [illegible] pounds [illegible]

[illegible] McBride.

McBride added that he supposed that he signed "a thousand a year, and yet he often as I have hairs on my head." On the above note for ten pounds the borrower was to pay ten shillings interest and sixpence extra charges for the use of the money for three months, which is over twenty per cent. annually.

McBride said that the great cause of the present embarrassment is the three bad years of 1877, '78, and '79. Oats, which usually paid interest, were bad. Some wet fields were never cut. McBride said that seventy-five per cent. of the farmers around Cork are unable to pay their debts, and would be bankrupt if forced to do so. They would need three good harvests to bring them up. They will never pay the same rents again. Their condition is owing to high rents, bad harvests, and American competition.

IV.

After leaving the County Cork I spent few days in Dublin. From persons on the train thither and in that city I obtained information concerning other portions of Ireland. To the land the testimony of an Irish gentleman well known in politics, whom I met in London.

A young man from the County Limerick said that that county is all pasture. Not more than forty per cent. of the farmers in his neighborhood could afford to save hay and straw and feed cattle in winter for manure. Farms average from forty to fifty acres, some as low as ten and as high as [illegible]. He knew of a man who farmed over 300 acres, and paid £3 an acre rent for it. He had two or three acres in potatoes, and the same in oats, but all the rest in pasture.

"Can he make money?" I asked.

"Not these late years," he replied. "He is served with an ejectment because he can't pay his rent."

Some of our farmers will be surprised that a man can't make money on grass land at a rent of about six or eight per acre.

Another passenger, who was from Tipperary, said that, with few exceptions, the farmers of that county can keep cattle in winter and keep up their farms. Take the whole of Ireland, however, and farm lands are deteriorating in value. In Tipperary and Limerick [illegible] Golden Vale celebrated for its fertility. I had an impression that Tipperary was wild and riotous. In London I spoke to the political gentleman above alluded to, who knew the county well. In politics he is not in unity with Parnell, and is opposed to the Land League. "Tipperary," said he, "has not of late suffered so much as other districts. Thirty or forty years ago the farmers were entirely at the mercy of their landlords. They took the law into their own hands and fought for their farms, shooting down the landlords or their agents. Many of them were hanged or transported. The Land bill of 1870," he continued, "extended to all Ireland, restrains the landlord from evicting tenants without leases, unless paying them for their improvements." He says that the present trouble is caused mainly by landlords demanding increased rents.

Another gentleman said, that the provisions of the proposed Land bill, by which the tenant is to hold his land as long as he pays his rent, will do away with all abuses. The Three F's of the Land bill are: First, Free sale—that is, the tenant is to have the privilege of selling his right in the farm; second, Fixity of tenure; and, third, Fair rent, to be determined by a court.

When I arrived at Dublin, I lodged at two different temperance houses. In one I met a plain man from the county Galway, in the west. He kept a shop, and was a dealer in hides. He traded from town to town. Of the farmers of Galway, he estimated that seventy per cent. are unable to pay their rent unless they sell horses or mortgage their crops. Even then they would be left in debt to the shopkeeper. He complained greatly of the recent Coercion act, under which, he says, worthy citizens are apprehended or are in danger.

One fellow lodger was a Methodist minister from the County Fermanagh, in the north. He has been attending the Cork Conference. He complained of the increase of luxury among farmers in buying tea and bread and in the clothing of their daughters. He berated them for spending two days a week at market, and five or six shillings each time in treating each other.

"But your congregations are not of this class?" I said.

"Indeed they are," he answered. "There are persons in my congregation who come home tipsy every market night."

He afterward took out some change and called for a bottle of ale. They sent out and got it for him.

I was much interested in the conversation of two men who were dining at the house. One of them, a young man, said that the Three F's would not satisfy the Land Leaguers. They wanted the extermination of the landlords and the possession of the land. The other did not agree with him. He said: "It would be a nice thing for you to be paying £2 10s. for land and a Land Leaguer over the fence be getting it for half the money. I am an Orangeman," he added, "and the son of an Orangeman, and the grandson of an Orangeman; yet I am greatly in sympathy with the poor, suffering tenantry of this country."

He said that he was a landlord in a small way, five or six hundred pounds a year, and that he was now lying out of rents. Rather than disturb tenants he had paid as high as ten per cent. for money, "and glad to get it at that." He was originally from the County Cavan. He said that the average size of farms there is about twelve acres. Some have thirty. About twenty per cent. of the farmers own horses. Many keep donkeys, but these are unfit for farming. They put out manure with jennets, which are not fit for ploughing. The poor farmer must wait until the richer one has done ploughing so as to hire horses, and then the land is ploughed shallow and improved. Both speakers were agreed on the trouble of hiring horses. You must pay ten shillings a day for a pair, feed them and the ploughman, and give him several glasses of whiskey. If you have cash in hand you can get horses, but if you will buy on small farmer cannot pay until he has harvested his crop. He generally pays labor in exchange for horses.

A suggestion that the British Government buy the lands of Ireland, rent them to the people for the space of thirty years, and then the people should then become possessors, met with some favor. The Irish politician whom I met in London found two objections to this plan: First, that it would take from the country the cultivated class; and, second, that for thirty years it would drain the country of money.

P. E. GIMBONS.

THOSE CHINESE STUDENTS.

Why They were Recalled to Their Native Land—Forgetting Their Mother Tongue.

From the Shanghai Courier.

It is said that the recall of the Chinese students was due to an incident that occurred in an interview which a young and learned Chinese had with Li Hung Chang. The Chinese in question had spent some time in America, and the result of the technical education he had received there was that he was as skilful in any foreigner in a certain department of mining engineering. He spoke English perfectly, and had a good knowledge of French; but unfortunately this proficiency in foreign tongues was obtained at the cost of the vernacular, which he could neither speak, read, nor write with fluency or correctness. On arriving in China, the young fellow found himself in what appeared to him to be a strange land, so unaccustomed was he to the language and manners of his people, and furthermore, despite his advanced professional knowledge, he discovered that he could not obtain employment commensurate with his training and attainments.

Some influential friends bestirred themselves in his behalf, and his case was brought under the notice of Li Hung Chang, who summoned the young man to his presence. The young Chinese felt abashed when he found himself before the Viceroy, and, in reply to the brusque question of the latter, "What can you do?" he could only stammer out a few words of shockingly bad Chinese expressive of his respect to the questioner. His power of expressing himself in the vernacular, which was limited at the best of times, completely forsook him on this occasion, and he stood trembling before Li. The Viceroy was outraged at this instance of a man forgetting the language of his fathers, and forcibly told the youth that he was nothing better than a foreigner, adding: "Why, you were sent abroad to study science and gain knowledge not to lose your nationality, and you return here a complete foreigner." Changing from this severe reproof, he addressed the Chinese in a playfully threatening manner. Li intimated to him that he would give him an opportunity of disdaying and exerting his professional knowledge by sending him to assist in working one of the mines; but, added the Viceroy, "if you do not relearn your language by the time your probation is finished, beware!" and the then made a motion significant of the act of decollation.

The student left the presence of the dispenser of life and death with as firm determination to return to the speech of his fathers, and to merit the favor bestowed on him by Li in "exploiting" this mine. He shortly afterward left for the scene of operations, and is now acquitting himself with satisfaction in discharging his duties. He is said to be independent. Li has several interviews with other Chinese who had studied in foreign lands, and the suspicions engendered in his mind by the first-named student with respect to the effect of foreign education became confirmed to such a degree that he disapproved of, if not originated, the act of recalling all Chinese studying in America.

Going to the Prize Fight.

From the New Orleans Times.

A [illegible] car conductor, running on the [illegible] road on Tuesday, stated that on a recent trip he had to deal with a [illegible] full of the worst cranks and cases he had ever seen. On leaving Chicago, he said, he had [illegible] and [illegible] feel sorry, that the "boys" had made up their minds to celebrate themselves while on the train, and they had succeeded. Nothing was allowed to interfere, and it seem