

Farewell Enniskillen

The Letters of "Norah" in her Tour Through Ireland

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Enniskillen Military Pride—The Boys called Soldiers—Remnants of By-Gone Power—
Island of Devenish—A Round Tower—An Ancient Cross—The Cole Family.

Owing to the very great kindness of Mr. Trimble, editor of the *Fermanagh Reporter*, we have seen some of the fair town of Enniskillen. Knowing that Innis or Ennis always means island, I was not surprised to find that Enniskillen sits on an island, and is connected with the mainland by a bridge at either end of the town. Of course, the town has boiled over and spread beyond the bridges, as Derry has done over and beyond her walls. There is a military flavor all over Enniskillen, a kind of dashing frank manner and proud steps as if the dragoon had got into the blood. There is also nourished a pride in the exploits of Enniskillen men from the early times when they struggled to keep their feet and their lives in the new land. They feel pride in the fame of the Enniskillen dragoon, in the deeds of daring and valor of the 27th Enniskilleners all over the world. Enniskillen military pride is closely connected with the Cole family, lords of Enniskillen.

The town is not old, only dating back to the reign of the sapient James the First. Remembrance of the sept of Maguires who ruled here before that time, still lingers among the country people.

Had a sail on Lough Erne at the last of April ; tried to find words sufficiently strong to express the beauty of the lake and found none. It is as lovely as the Allumette up at Pembroke. I can not say more than that. The banks are so richly green, the hills so fertile up to their round tops, checked off by green hedges into fields of all shapes and sizes ; the trees lift up their proud heads and fling out their great arms as if laden with blessing ; the prim-roses, like baby moons, more in number than the stars of heaven, glow under every hedge, and gem every bank, so that though the Lake Allumette is as lovely as Lough Erne, yet the banks that sit round Lough Erne are more lovely by far than the borders of Lake Allumette. They are as fair as any spot under heaven in their brightness of green.

The Island of Devenish, or of the ox, is famed for the good quality of its grass. Here we saw the ruins of an abbey. It has been a very large building, said to have been built as far back as 563. The ruins show it to have been built by very much better workmen than built the more modern Green Castle in Innishowen. The arches are of hewn stone and are very beautifully done without the appearance of cement or mortar. The round tower, the first I ever saw, was a wonderful sight to me. It is 76 feet high, and 41 in circumference.

Near the round tower is the ruins of what was once a beautiful church. The stone work which remains is wonderfully fine. The remaining window, framed of hewn stone wrought into a rich, deep moulding, seems never to have been intended for glass. It is but a narrow slit on the outside, though wide in the inside. There are the remains of two cloistered cells, one above another, very small, roofed and floored with stone, belonging to a building adjoining

the church. Climbed up the little triangular steps of stone that led into the belfry tower, and looked forth from the tower windows over wood and hill, green carpet and blue waters, with a blessing in my heart for the fair land, and an earnest wish for the good of its people.

There is in the old churchyard one of the fair, skilfully carved, ancient crosses to be found in Ireland. It was shattered and cast down, but has been restored through the care of the Government. It is very high and massive, yet light-looking, it is so well proportioned. There are pictures of scriptural subjects, Adam and Eve, David and Goliath, &c., carved in relief over it. Two I saw at Enniskillen had no inscription or carving at all.

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The Earl of Enniskillen and His Tenants—Causes of Dissatisfaction—Spread of The Land League amongst Enniskillen Orangemen—A Sample Grievance—The Agents' Commission—A Link the needs Strengthening—The Landlord's Side.

It seems a great pity that the attachment between the Earl of Enniskillen and his tenants, should suffer interruption or be in danger of passing away. The Earl, now an old man, was much loved by his people, until, in a day evil alike for him and for his tenants, he got a new agent from the County Sligo. Of course, I am telling the tale as it was told to me. Since this agent came on the property, re-valuation, rent raising, vexatious office rules, have been the order of things on the estate. The result of this new state of things, has been that the Land League has spread among the tenants like wildfire. I did not feel inclined to take these statements without a grain of salt. To hear of the Land League spreading among Enniskillen Orangemen, among the Earl's tenants, of dissatisfaction creeping in between these people historically loyal and attached to a family who had been their chiefs and landlords for centuries, was surprising to me.

To convince me that such was the case, I was requested to listen to one of the Earl's tenants reciting the story of his grievances at the hands of the Earl's agent. It was a sample case, I was told, and would explain why the people joined the Land League. It was pleasant enough to have an opportunity of going into the country and to have an opportunity of seeing the farms and the style of living of the Fermanagh farmers, as compared with the Donegal highlands.

The country out of Enniskillen is very pretty, May has now opened, the hedges have leafed out and the trees are beginning lazily to unfold their leaves. The roads are not near so good as the roads in Donegal, which are a legacy from the dreary famine time, being made then. The hedges are not by any means so trim and well kept as the hedges by the wayside in Down or Antrim. The roads up to the farm houses are lanes, such as I remember when I was a child. The nuisances of dunghills near the doors of the farmhouses have been utterly abolished for sanitary reasons, also whitewashing is an obligation imposed by the Government. For these improvements I have heard the authorities both praised and thanked. In these times of discontent, it is well to see the Government thanked for anything. The country is hilly and the hills have a uniform round topped appearance, marked off into fields that run up to the hill tops and over them and down the other side. There are, of course, mountains in the distance, wrapped in a thick veil of blue haze.

The house to which I was bound was, like most of the farm houses, long, narrow, white-washed, a room at each end and the kitchen in the middle. I will now let the farmer tell his grievances in his own words. He is about sixty years of age, a professor of religion of the Methodist persuasion, an Orangeman, and a hereditary tenant of Lord Enniskillen, and now an enthusiastic adherent of the Land League. "In 1844 I bought this farm—two years before I was married. There is 17½ acres. I paid £184. as tenant right—that is, for the good-will of

it. The rent was £19. 7s. 4d. I should have gone to America then ; it would have been better for me. I have often rued that I did not go, but, you see, I was attached to the place. My forbears kindled the first fire that ever was kindled on the land I live on. I held my farm on a lease for three lives ; two were gone when I bought it. I have been a hard-working man, and a sober man. There is not a man in the country has been a greater slave to work than I have been. I drained this place (fetches down a map of the little holding to show the drains). It is seamed with drains ; 11 acres out of 17½ acres are drained, the drains twenty-one feet apart and three feet deep. Drew stone for the drains two miles, £100 would not at all pay me for the drainage I have done. I built a parlor end to my house, and a kitchen ; also, a dairy, barn, byre, stable and pig house. Every year I have bought and drawn in from Enniskillen from sixty to one hundred loads of manure for my farm ; this calculation is inside of the amount. I have toiled here year after year, and raised a family in credit and decency. When the last, life in my lease died, my rent was immediately raised to £27 10s. I paid this for a few years, and then the seasons were bad, and I fell behind. It was not a fair rent, that was the reason I was unable to pay it. I complained of the rent. I wanted it fixed by arbitration ; that was refused. I asked for arbitration to decide what compensation I had a right to, and I would leave ; that was refused too. I was served with a writ of ejectment. The rent was lowered a pound at two different times, but the law expenses connected with the writ came to more than the reduction given. I had the privilege, along with others, of cutting turf on a bog attached to the place at the time I held the lease ; that was taken from us. We had then to pay a special rate for cutting turf, called turbarry, in addition to our rent. So that really I am struggling under a higher rent than before, while I have the name of having my rent lowered. I once was able to lay by a little money during the good times ; that is all gone now. I am getting up in years. If I am evicted for a rent I cannot pay, I cannot sell my tenant right ; I will be set on the world at my age without anything. I joined the Land League. At the time of an election it was cast up to Lord Enniskillen about taking from us the bog. It was promised to us that we should have it back, in these words : ‘ If there is turf there you will get it.’ After the election we petitioned for the bog, and were refused. We were told our petition had a lie on the face of it. It is the present agent, Mr. Smith, that has done all this. He is the cause of all the ill-feeling between the Earl of Enniskillen and his tenants. He has raised the rents £3,000 on the estate, I am told. He gets one shilling in the pound off the rent ; that is the way in which he is paid ; so it is little wonder that he raises the rents ; it is his interest to do so.”

I listened to this man tell his story with many strong expressions of feeling, many a hand clench, and saw he was moved to tears ; saw the hereditary Enniskillen blood rise, the heart that once throbbed responsive to the loyalty felt for the Enniskillen family now surging up against them passionately. I thought sadly that the loss was more than the gain.

After I had listened to the farmer’s wrongs and heard of others who also had a complaint to make, I was obliged to think that their case was not yet so hard as the case of those who suffered from the *eccentricities* of Lord Leitrim. Still, it is a hard case when we consider that the man’s whole life and so much money also sunk in rent, purchase, improvements, and when unable to pay a rent raised beyond the possibility of paying, to lose all and begin life again without money or youth and hope, at sixty years of age. People with exasperated minds are driven to join the Land League, in hope that union will be strength, and that ears deaf to petition of right will grant concessions to agitation.

I began to feel afraid that I was hearing too much on one side and too little on the other, and I requested to be introduced to some who had ranged themselves on the side of the landlords. I was, as a consequence, introduced to several gentlemen at different times, but I got no light on the subject from any of them. They were so very sure that everything was just as it should be, and nothing short of treason would induce any one to find fault. Still when the question was asked squarely, “ Are there no reasons for wishing for reform of the land laws ?” the answer was, “ We would not go quite so far as that ?”

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A Modal Landlord.—Erin's Sons in Other Lands.

I have, at last, heard of a model landlord ; not that I have not heard of good landlords before, as Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Stewart, of Ards, in Donegal. I have seen also the effects of good landlordism. When passing through the Galgorm estate I saw the beneficial changes wrought on that place by Mr. Young ; but I have heard of many hard landlords, seen much misery as the result of the present land tenure, and I did feel glad to hear men praising a landlord without measure. It was a pleasant change. This landlord who has won such golden opinions is Lord Belmore, of Castle Coole. "The Land League has gained no adherents on his estate," says one to me, "because he is such a just man."

As I have listened to story after story of tyranny on the Leitrim estate, so here I listened to story after story of the strict justice and mercy of Lord Belmore. His residence of Castle Coole is outside of Enniskillen a little, and is counted very beautiful. Of course I went to get a peep at it, because he is a lord whom all men praise. "His tenants," said one, "not only do not blame him but they glory in him. Why should they join the Land League ? They get all it promises without doing so."

We drove across a long stretch of gravel drive through scenery like fairyland. A fair sheet of water lay below the house, bordered by trees that seemed conscious of their owner's renown by the way they tossed their heads upward and spread their branches downward, as saying, "Look at us : everything here bears examination and demands admiration." Swans ruffled their snowy plumage and sailed with stately bendings of their white necks across the lake. Wild geese with the tameness of perfect confidence grouped themselves on the shore or played in the water.

My driver, with a becoming awe upon him of the magnificent grounds, the stately house and the high-souled lord, drove along the most unfrequented paths, and we came, in the rear of the great house, to a quaint little saw-mill in a hollow, a toy affair that did not mean business, but such as a great lord might have as a proper appanage to wide land and as a convenience to retainers.

After some whispered consultation with the man in charge, it was certified that we might drive round, quite round the castle, and, favored by fortune, might chance to see the house-keeper and get permission to see the inside of the house. I knew the house was very nice by intuition ; it was very extensive, and I was sure held any quantity of pleasant and magnificent rooms ; but somehow I did not desire to go through it.

We drove down the broad walk just out of sight of the extensive gardens and conservatories, between trees of every style of magnificence down to the lodge gate which was opened to us promptly and graciously. You can always judge of a lord by the courtesy or the want of it in his retainers. Indeed I believe that even dogs and horses are influenced by those that own them, and become like them in a measure. I waft thee my heart's homage, lord of Castle Coole ! Thy good name, thy place in the hearts of thy countrymen, could not be bought for three thousand pounds sterling wrung "by ways that are dark," from an exasperated tenantry. The drive back to Enniskillen with another suggestive peep at the lake was delicious and enjoyable.

In Enniskillen I wandered into the Catholic church, the only church I could wander into without a fuss about getting the key. It is grand, and severely plain in the absence of pictures and ornaments.

I am, told there was a good deal of distress in the County Fermanagh, and that they obtained relief from the Mansion House Fund and from the Johnston Committee Fund. This Johnston was a Fermanagh man, and has risen to wealth in the new world under the Stars and Stripes. The sons and daughters of Ireland do not forget, in their prosperity on far-off shores, the land of their birth and of their childhood's dreams.

Like the daisies on the sod,
With their faces turned to God,
Their hearts' roots are in the island green that nursed them on her lap.

Suffering from want in those hard times must have been comparatively slight in Enniskillen, as the local charity was strong enough to relieve it, I was informed by an Episcopal clergyman.

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Selling Cattle for Rent—The Shadow of Mr. Smith—Generations of Waiting—Under The Wing of The Clergy—A Safe Medium Course—The Constabulary—Exertions of The Priests
—A Termagant.

Hearing that there was a great disturbance apprehended at Manor Hamilton, in the County Leitrim, and that the military were ordered out, I determined to go there. I wanted to see for myself. I put on my best bib and tucker, knowing how important these things are in the eyes of imaginative people. Arrived at the station in the dewy morning, and found the lads whom I had seen carrying their dinners at the Redoubt drawn up on the platform under arms. How boyish, slight and undersized they did look, but clean, smart and bright looking, of course. Applied at the wicket for my ticket, as the 'bus man was eager to get paid and see me safely off. The ticket man told me curtly I was in no hurry, and shut the wicket in my face. The idea prevails here, except in the cases of the local gentry who are privileged, and to whom the obsequiousness is remarkable, that the general public, besides paying for their accommodation, ought to accept their tickets as a favor done them by the Company. This stately official at last consented to issue tickets ; as I had not change enough to pay I gave him a sovereign, and, not having time to count the change, I stuffed it into my portmonnaie and made a rush for the cars as they snorted on the start.

In spite of my determination, made amid the smoke and filth of the third-class cars between Omagh and Strabane, I took a third-class car, and to my agreeable surprise it was clean, and I had it to myself. We steamed out of Enniskillen, all the workers in the fields and the people in the houses dropping their work to stare at the cars, crowded with soldiers, that were passing. I had a letter of introduction to an inhabitant of Manor Hamilton, as a precaution. We passed one of the entrances to Florence Court, the residence of the once-loved Earl of Enniskillen. When I understood that this nobleman was up in years, his magnificent figure beginning to show the burden of age, and that he was blind, I felt a respectful sympathy for him, and wished that the shadow of Mr. Smith and his three thousand of increase of rent had never fallen across his path. After passing the road to Florence Court, when the train was not plunging through a deep cut, I noticed that the land did not, all over, look so green or so fertile as in the farther down North. There was much land tufted with rushes, much that had the peculiar shade of greenish brown familiar to Canadian eyes. There were many roofless cottages standing here and there in the wide clearings. There were bleak bogs of the light colored kind that produce a very worthless turf, that makes poor fuel.

At one of the way stations a decent-looking woman came into the compartment where I sat. Divining at once that I had crossed the water, she spoke pretty freely. Their farm was on a mountain side. It had to be dug with a spade ; horses could not plough it. The seasons had

been against the crops for some years. Yes, their rent had been raised, raised at different times until it was now three times as it was ten years ago. She was going to the office to try to get some favor about the rent. They could not pay it and live at all, and that was God's truth. Had no hope of succeeding. Did not believe a better state of things would come without the shedding of blood. "Oh, yes, it is true for you, they have no arms and no drill, but they look to America to do for them what they cannot do for themselves. Oh, of course it should be the last thing tried, but generations of waiting was in it already, and every hope was disappointed some way." The laws got harder and the crops shorter, that was the way of it.

Arrived at Manor Hamilton, every male creature about congregated with looks of wonder to watch the military arrive. They were a totally unexpected arrival, and caused the more sensation in consequence. There were none to answer a question until these boyish soldiers had been paraded, counted, put through some manoeuvres of drill, and then "'bout face and march" off. They seemed so alive, so eager for fun, so different from the stolid-faced veteran soldier that I hoped inwardly that to-day's exploits would not deepen into anything worse than fun.

When they tramped off, carrying their young faces and conscious smiles away from the station, I found a porter to inform me that Manor Hamilton was a good bit away. As there was no car I must walk, and a passing peasant undertook to pilot me to the town. Passed a large Roman Catholic church in process of erection. It will be a fine and extensive building when finished. They were laying courses of fine light gray hewn stone rounded, marking where the basement ended and the building proper began. Such a building, at such a time, is one of the contradictions one sees in this country.

Stopped at a hotel and was waited on by the person to whom my letter of introduction was directed, who introduced me to some other persons, including some priests. It was ostensibly an introduction, really an inspection. Only for this introduction I should not have got admittance into the hotel. People were arriving from every quarter. I stood at an upper window watching the people arrive in town. The first band, preceded by a solemn and solitary horseman, consisted of a big drum beaten by no unwilling hand, and some fifes. They played, "Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching," with great vim. The next detachment had a banner carried by two men, the corners steadied by cords held by two more. It was got up fancy, in green and gold, a picture of Mr. Parnell on one side, and some mottoes on the other. "Live and let live," was one. The band of this company, some half-dozen fifers, were dressed in jackets of green damask trimmed with yellow braid, and had caps made of green and yellow, or green and white, of the same shape as those worn by the police. The operator on the big drum had a white jacket and green cap. He held his head so high, his back was so straight, his cap set so knowingly on one side, he rattled away with such abandon, and looked as if he calculated that he was a free and independent citizen, that I guessed he had learned those airs and that bearing in classic New York. The next detachment had a brass band and some green favors and a green scarf among them.

One of the clergy to whom I was introduced, volunteered to show me to a position from which I would safely see the whole performance, which was the auction of cattle for rent. I was quite glad to have the kind offices of this gentleman, as without them I would have seen very little indeed. As I passed down the street under the wing of the clergy, I was amused at the innocent manner in which a half-dozen or so would get between his reverence and me, blocking the way, until they understood I was in his care, when a lane opened before us most miraculously, and closed behind us as the human waves surged on.

The police officers and men were patient and polite to high perfection. We made our way to the Court House, where the soldiers were drawn up inside, crowding the entrance hall and standing on the stairs. It was thought the sale would be in the Court House yard, in which

case the official offered me a seat on the gallery. As the building was low, the long windows serving for both stories, it would be only a good position if the cattle were auctioned in the Court yard. This had been done before, and would be prevented if possible this time, as it was too private a proceeding.

It was decided to hold the sale on the bridge, so I was piloted through the military, through a living lane of police, through the surging crowd, to a house that was supposed to command the situation, and found a position at an upper window by the great kindness of the clergyman who had taken me in charge.

It is something awful to see a vast mass of human beings, packed as closely as there is standing room, swayed by some keen emotion, like the wind among the pines. It is wonderful, too, to see the effects of perfect discipline. The constabulary, a particularly fine body of men, with faces as stolid as if they were so many statues, bent on doing their duty faithfully and kindly. They formed a living wall across the road on each side of an open space on the bridge, backs to the space, faces to the crowd, vigilant, patient, unheeding of any uncomplimentary remarks.

The cause of all this excitement was the seizure of cattle which were to be sold for rent due to Cecil White, Esq., by his tenants, at the manor of Newtown.

The crowd here was far greater than at Omagh the day of the Land League meeting. The first roll of the drum had summoned people from near and far in the early morning. I am not a good judge of the number in a crowd, but I should say there were some thousands, a totally unarmed crowd ; very few had even a stick. There were few young men in the crowd—elderly men and striplings, elderly women and young girls, and a good many children, and, of course, the irrepressible small boy who did the heavy part of the hissing and hooting. These young lads roosted on the Court House wall, on the range wall of the bridge so thickly that the wonder was how they could keep their position. The crowd heaved and swayed at the other end of the bridge, a tossing tide of heads. The excitement was there.

I could not see what was going on, but a person deputed by the clergyman before mentioned, came to bring me to a better station for seeing what was going on at the other end of the bridge. The crowd made way, the police passed us through, and we got a station at a window overlooking the scene. Out of the pound, through the swaying mass of people, was brought a very frightened animal. If she had had no horns to grip her by, if she had had the least bit of vantage ground to gather herself up for a jump, she would have taken a flying leap over the heads of some and left debtor and creditor, and all the sympathizers on both sides behind her, and fled to the pasture. She was held there and bid for in the most ridiculous way. All that were brought up this way were bought in and the rent was paid, and there the sale ended

There might have been serious rioting but for the exertions of the Catholic clergy. Members of the Emergency Committee were particularly liable to a hustling at least. The least accidental irritation owing to the temper of the crowd would have made them face the bayonets with their bare breasts. The police were patient, the clergy determined on keeping the excitement down, and all passed off quietly enough. There were a few uncomplimentary remarks, such as addressing the police as “ thim bucks,” which remark might as well have been addressed to the court house for any effect it had. There were a few hard expressions slung at Mr. White which informed all who heard them that Mr. White was cashiered from the army for flogging a man to death, that he had well earned his name of Jack the flogger, &c.

The crowd dispersed from the bridge. The youthful military passed on the march for the train to return to their barracks, the crowd, now good-natured, giving them a few jokes of a pleasant kind as they passed ; the soldiers looking straight ahead in the most soldierly manner they could assume, but smiling all the same, poor boys, for surely compliments are better than hisses and hoots.

I never heard a sound so dreadful as the universal groan or hoot of this great crowd. There was some speaking, a good deal of speaking, from the window of the hotel, praising the crowd for their self-control, and advising them to go home quietly for the honor of the country and the good cause.

After the sale, the three bands and the great crowd paraded the streets. The cattle were brought round in the procession, their heads snooded up for the occasion with green ribbon. I do not think the cattle liked it a bit ; they had had a full share of excitement in the first part of the day.

The most active partisan of the Land League was an elderly girl. She was the inventor and issuer of the most aggravating epithets that were put into circulation during the whole proceedings. Her hair was dark and gray (dhu glas), every hair curling by itself in the most defiant manner. The heat of her patriotism had worn off some of the hair, for she was getting a little bald through her curls—such an assertive upturned little nose, such a firm mouth, such a determined protruding chin. This patriot had a short jacket of blue cloth, and could step as light and give a jump as if she had feathered heels. She reminded me of certain citizenesses in Dickens' " Tale of Two Cities." May God of His great mercy give wisdom and firmness to the rulers of this land.

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The Laboring Classes in Manor Hamilton—Their Homes—Looking for Her Share— Charges Against an Unpopular Landlord.

I called upon a clergyman in Manor Hamilton in pursuit of information as to the condition of the laboring class. Manor Hamilton is a small inland town, depending solely on agriculture. Want of work is the complaint. Out of work is the chronic state of things among the laboring population. A few laborers are employed on the Catholic church in process of erection. The railway is newly finished between Enniskillen and Manor Hamilton. While it was being made it supplied work to a great many. Rail communication with the rest of the country must be a benefit to the town and the surrounding country.

The hopes nourished by the Land League prevent the people from sinking into despair or rousing to desperation. " Have the laboring class any garden ground to their homes ?" I asked. " No. You would not like to see their homes. They are not fit for anyone to go into," was the answer. It is good sometimes to look at what others are obliged to endure.

Having provided myself with infinitesimal parcels of tea and sugar for the very aged or the helplessly sick, I set out with the clergyman and went up unexpected lanes and twisted round unlikely corners, dived into low tenements and climbed up unreliable stairs into high ones. One home, without a window, no floor but the ground, not a chair or table, dark with smoke, and so small that we, standing on the floor, took up all the available room, paid a rent of \$16 per year, paid weekly. The husband was out of work, the wife kept a stall on market days, and sold sweets and cakes on commission.

Another hovel, divided into two apartments like stalls in a horse stable, a ladder leading up to a loft where an old gate and some indescribably filthy boards separated it into another two

apartments, accommodated four families. The rent of the whole was \$52 per year, paid weekly. One of the inmates of this tenement, an old, old man, whose clothing was shreds and patches, excused himself from going into the workhouse by declaring that there were bad characters in there, while he and his father before him were ever particular about their company.

Children, like the field daisy, abound everywhere. In one hovel a brand new baby lay in a box, and another scarcely able to walk toddled about, and a lot more, like a flock of chickens, were scattered here and there. In one of these homes a small child was making a vigorous attempt to sweep the floor. On asking for her mother the little mite said, "She is away looking for her share." This is the popular way of putting a name on begging.

One inhabitant made heather brooms, or besoms, as they are called here. He goes to the mountain, cuts heather, draws it home on his back, makes the besoms, and sells them for a halfpenny apiece.

In one hovel a little boy lay dying of consumption—another name for cold and hunger—his bed a few rags, a bit of sacking and a tattered coat the only bed-clothes. "I am very bad entirely, father," was the little fellow's complaint. I stood back while the father talked to him, and it was easy to see that he had well practised how to be a son of consolation. It was a cold windy day, and the wind blew in freely through the broken door. Surely, I thought, the workhouse would be comparative comfort to this child ; but it seems that the whole family must go in if he went. The saddest consideration of all is the want of work—excitement like what is in the country now must be bad for idle and hungry men.

Mr. Corscadden and Mr. Tottenham, the contractor for the railway, are the two landlords who are most unpopular. Mr. White, one of those who had the cattle seized for rent, is also unpopular, very. Mr. Corscadden is a new landlord, comparatively speaking ; was an agent before he became a proprietor. He is at open war with his tenantry. He requires an escort of police. His son has been shot at and missed by a narrow enough shave, one ball going through his hat, another grazing his forehead. This is coming quite nigh enough. Some buildings on his property in which hay was stored were burned—by the tenants, thinks Mr. Corscadden ; by the Lord, say the people. I hope to see Mr. Corscadden personally, so I have made particular enquiries as to what he has done to deserve the ill-feeling that rages against him.

The chief charges against Mr. Corscadden are wasting away the people off the land to make room for cattle and black-faced sheep ; taking from the people the mountain attached to their farms which they used for pasture, and then doubling the rent on what remained after they had lost part.

The land out by Glenade (the long glen) is very poor in parts. The amount of cultivated fields does not seem enough to supply the inhabitants with food. The country has in a large degree gone to grass. There is also a suspicion of grass on the mountain sides which are bare of heather and whins. They say the grass is sweet and good, and that cattle flourish on it, but the improved quality of stock and milch cows require additional tub feed to keep them in a thriving condition. There are some rich-looking fields, but the most of the land has a poverty-stricken look and the large majority of the houses are simply abominable.

It is spring weather and spring work is going on. Men are putting out manure, carrying it in creels on their backs. Asses are the prevailing beasts of burden, carrying about turf in creels or drawing hay—a big load to a small ass. Men and women and children are out planting potatoes in patches of reclaimed bog. Very few cattle are to be seen compared to the extent of the grazing lands.

The formation of rock here in the mountain tops has a resemblance to the fortification-looking rocks at Mc-Gilligan, but they are neither so lofty nor so abrupt. In one place there was a mighty cleft in the rock, as if some giant had attempted to cut a slice off the front of the rock and had not quite succeeded. I was told by my driver that an old man lived in the cleft behind the rock ; it was said also that a ghost haunted it. I wonder if the ghost makes poteen.

Apart from the condition of the country and the poverty of the people a drive through the long glen of Glenade on a pleasant day is delightful. The hills swell into every shape, the houses—if they were only good houses—nestle in such romantic nooks, and the eternal mountains rising up to the clouds bound the glen on each side. I saw one house made of sods, thatched with rushes, that was not much bigger or roomier than a charcoal heap. I would have thought it was something of that kind only for the hole that served for a chimney.

The people are very civil, and if they only knew what would please you, would say it whether they thought it or not. If they do not know what side you belong to, no people could be more reticent.

The Land League is very popular. Since the Land League spread and the agitation forced public attention to the extreme need of the people many landlords have reduced their rents. Lord Massey is a popular landlord ; anything unpopular done on his estate, Mr. LaTouche, his agent, has laid to his door.

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Tenants Voluntarily Raising The Rent To Assist Their Landlords—Beautiful Irish Landscapes
—Canadian Eyes—Rents in Leitrim—The Potato.

DETERMINED, if possible, to hear something of the landlord's view of the land question, I wrote to Mr. Corscadden, the so unpopular landlord, asking for an interview. This gentleman, some time ago, moved the authorities to erect an iron hut for the police at Cleighragh, among the mountains that garrison Glenade. There had been an encounter there, a kind of local shindy, between him and his tenants, when they prevented him from removing hay in August last. The police came in large numbers to erect the hut, but it could not be got to the place, for no one would draw it out to Glenade.

Mr. Corscadden bought this small parcel of land at Glenade from a Mr. Tottenham ; not the unpopular Tottenham, but another, much beloved by his people. He lived above his income, and was embarrassed in consequence. His tenants voluntarily raised the rents on themselves for fear he would be obliged to sell the land, and they might pass into the hands of a bad landlord. They raised the rent twice on themselves, and after all he was obliged to sell, and the fate they dreaded came upon them ; they passed into Mr. Corscadden's hands.

During the famine this part of Leitrim got relief from the Mansion House Fund. Mr. Corscadden never gave a penny ; never answered a letter addressed to him on the subject.

Having posted my letter I went out among the people who were, or were to be, evicted in the country around Kiltyclogher, (church of the stone house, or among the stones). We left the bright green fields that belt around Manor Hamilton and the grand trees that overshadow the same green fields, and drove up among the hills, in a contrary direction from Glenade. A beautiful day, warm and pleasant, shone upon us ; the round-headed sycamores are leafed out, and the larch has shaken out her tassels, the ditch banks are blazing with primroses and the black thorns are white with bloom, and there are millions of daisies in the grass. We passed over some good land at the roadside, some green fields in the valleys, but there is a very great deal of waste and also of barren land. A great deal of the tilled land is bog, a good deal of the

waste land is shallow earth overlying rocks, some is cumbered with great boulders, and rough with heather and whins.

My companion, a lady active in the Ladies' Land League, thought it good land and worth reclaiming if let at a low rent. I, looking at it with Canadian eyes, would not have taken a gift of it and be bound to reclaim it. If I rented a few acres of those wild hills, and rooted out the whins and raised and removed the stones, I would think it unjust to raise the rent on me because of my labor.

It is admitted by all who know anything of the matter, that the tenants have reclaimed what land is reclaimed. Rent in County Leitrim has been raised from £24,990 to £170,670 within the last eighty years, and is £34,144 above the Government valuation.

We called at the house of a tenant farmer who had been evicted for non-payment of rent, and was back as a weekly tenant. He was putting in some crop, working alone in the field. He came to speak to my companion. He had got no word from the landlord as to whether he would put in any crop or not. He was in sore anxiety between his fear of offending the landlord, and the fear of doing anything against the rules of the Land League. His little boys were putting out manure in creels, carrying it on their shoulders. He had no means of paying rent. If he were forgiven the rent due and a year's rent to come, he might then be in a position to resume paying rent. This is my own opinion. The poor man himself was sorely perplexed and cast down. A thin, white, helpless-looking man. The terrors of the eviction had taken hold of his wife, who was sickly. The only hope they had was, that God would bless the potato crop, for they had secured Champion potatoes for seed.

The potatoes that used to flourish in Ireland forty years ago, have entirely passed away. Even the Champion potato is not very good. The skin is thick and has a diseased appearance and the potato has black spots on the outside. I think the land is suffering from an overdose of such manure as they apply here, and the leaf mould is entirely exhausted. Of course this is the opinion of one who knows nothing of farming.

Passed another house, a widow's, who has been evicted. The family had been put out and the official went to get some water to quench the fire ; all the little household belongings were scattered about. Putting out the fire and fastening up the door were the last acts of the eviction. While the official's back was turned, the widow slipped in again, and was fastened up in the house, the children being outside. Her sons are a little silly. The children camp outside and she holds the garrison inside. She thinks the Land Bill or the Land League, or something miraculous will turn up to help her if she keeps possession for a while. Fear that she has done wrong and laid herself open to some greater punishment, and excitement have blanched her face. In the dim evening she sits at the window inside ; the children have a gipsy fire and sit under the window outside. When the gloaming has passed and dark night settled down, the police come over from the barracks to see if any of the children have gone in beside the mother. This would be taking forcible possession, and some other process of law would be possible. To make assurance sure, the policeman puts his head close to the window, sees the widow's white face and wild eyes sitting in the dark alone, and the children sitting under the window, and then the party, with something like tears in their eyes, something very like pity in their hearts, go back to the barracks.

I wonder how these things will end. It is not stubbornness, but helplessness and despair that makes them cling so to their homes, combined with an utter dread of the disgrace and separation involved in going to the workhouse. I listened to one tale after another of harassment, misery and thoughtless oppression in Kiltyclogher till my heart was sick, and I felt one desire—to run away that I might hear no more. I applied the traditional grain of salt to what I heard, but could not manage to add it to what I saw.

Mr. Tottenham rules part of Kiltyclogher. This man has a very evil name among the tenants. Reclamation of land by very poor people is a very serious matter. Not only do the bogs require drains twenty-one feet apart and three deep (I have seen the people in the act of making such drains again and again) ; not only do the surface stones require to be gathered off, but great stones and immense boulders that obstruct the formation of the drains, have to be removed, and as they have no powder for blasting, they take the primitive method of kindling great fires over the rock and splitting it up that way, so that their husbandry is farming under difficulties. As the Fermanagh farmer said, they put their lives into it.

In the long ago the landlords of Ireland, though extravagant, were not, as a class, unkindly, but their waste involved the land, and their absenteeism prevented any thoughts for the benefit of the country ever occurring to them.

The commercial spirit has invaded the aristocracy and men have begun to see visions of redeeming their lands from encumbrances and to dream dreams of still greater aggrandizement, all to be realized by commercial tact in raising the rents and abolishing the long-suffering people who could not be squeezed any farther. It was then that the beginning of the present desperate state of things was inaugurated. I do not think the landlords deliberately meant to oppress. I think they looked to the one thing, raising their rental, increasing their income, and went over everything, through everything to the desired end. They have succeeded in making a wide separation between the landing-holding and land-tilling classes. It will be a difficult matter to bring them together again.

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A Hard Landlord Interviewed—Conflicting Statements—Cold Steel.

The morning after our return to Manor Hamilton, Mr. Corscadden called on me in response to my note asking for an interview. I had formed a mental picture of what this gentleman would be like from the description I had heard of his actions. I found him very different. An elderly man, tall, gray-haired, soft-spoken, with a certain hesitation of manner, dressed like a better class-farmer, eyes that looked you square in the face without flinching, and yet had a kindly expression.

He, very kindly indeed, entered into an explanation of his management of this property since it fell into his hands. He mentioned, by the way, that he was a man of the people ; had risen to his present position by industry and stern thrift ; what he had he owed, under the blessing of God, to his own exertions and economy. He declared that he ruled his conduct to his tenants by what he should wish to be done to himself if in their place.

He then took up the case of one tenant, James Gilray, who waited on him to enquire, “ What are you going to do with me ? ” This man, according to Mr. Corscadden’s statement, owed three years’ rent, amounting to £30 ; owed £15 additional, money paid into the bank for him ; owed £6 for a field, “ for which I used to get £11 to £12.” “ Now,” said Mr. Corscadden to him, “ what do you want ? ” “ I want,” said the man, “ to have my place at the former rent.” “ Do you,” said Mr. Corscadden, “ want your land at what it was 118 years ago ? Land has raised in value five times since then.” There is here a wide discrepancy between this statement of Mr. Corscadden’s and the statement of another gentleman—not a tenant—who professed himself well acquainted with the subject. He said that before Mr. Corscadden bought the land the tenants had voluntarily increased the rent on themselves twice, for fear of passing out of the hands of the man they knew into the hands of a stranger ; so that it was under a rack rent when Mr. Corscadden bought it.

Another case referred to by Mr. Corscadden was that of a man to whom he had rented a farm of 20 acres at £16. He got one year's rent ; two and a half years were due, when he served a writ of ejectment. Mr. Corscadden said to this man ; " You are a bad farmer and you know it. You have about £150 worth of stock ; I will give you £40 ; leave my place and go to America. He took the money," said the old gentleman pathetically, " and did not go to America, but rented another farm. The woman at Glenade whom you went to see I have kept—supported—for years. Her husband did not pay his rent, and I gave him £10 to pay his passage to America. He is a bad man. It is rumored that he has married another woman ; his wife never hears from him."

" It is wonderful, Mr. Corscadden," I remarked, when you are so kind that you have such a bad name as a landlord. Mr. Tottenham and you are the most unpopular landlords in Leitrim."

" I do not know why ; I act as I would wish others to do to me. I do not forget that I have to give an account to the Holy One."

" You are accused of wasting away the tenants, because cattle and sheep are more profitable than people."

" I transferred two to places down near the sea and gave them better land than I took from them. I have been speaking about the others whom I paid to remove."

" People complain that you took the mountain pasture from the tenants and then raised the rent of the remainder to double of what they had paid for all."

" Not double, nearly double. As to the mountain, I called them together and proposed taking the mountain, as they had nothing to put on it ; they had not a beast. They consented, at least they made no objections. I wanted the mountains for Scotch sheep. I put on about a hundred ; there are few to be seen now ; they have disappeared."

He then mentioned the shooting at his son, the burning of the office houses with hay and potatoes stored there, the trouble he had about the police hut which the constabulary had drawn to Glenade that Morning.

" That will cost the country as much as £500," said Mr. Corscadden. " They are unthrifty in this country, they eat all the large potatoes, plant all the little runts, till they have run out the seed." (Alas, what will not hunger do !) " They come into market with their butter in small quantities, wasting a day and sacrificing the butter." (Need again : time is wasted here, for labor is so plentiful and men are so cheap that time has no value in their eyes.)

I asked Mr. Corscadden what he thought would be a remedy for this dreadful state of things. He did not see a remedy except emigration. Mr. Corscadden took his leave politely, wishing me a pleasant tour through my own country. I have as faithfully as possible recorded Mr. Corscadden's side of the story. The tenant's side I have softened considerably, and omitted some things altogether to be inside of the mark. One thing I forgot to mention : Mr. Corscadden said that the tenants might raise a couple of pigs or a heifer and pay the rent and have all the rest to themselves.

I said, " When these bad years ending in one of positive famine have stripped the poorer tenants bare, and pigs are so dear, where could a poor man get thirty shillings to buy a sucking pig or buy provender to feed it ?" This is true, the first step is the difficulty. They might do this, or this, or this, and it would be profitable, but where are the means to take the first step. It is easy to stand afar off and say, be economical, be industrious, and you will prosper.

In the meantime pay up the back rent or get out of this and give place to better men. They tell me that Mr. LaTouche charges the poor creatures interest on all the back rent. Some who have paid their rent here did not—could not—raise it on their farms, but got it from friends in America.

Mr. Corscadden asked me in the course of our conversation what I would consider a fair rent. I said I would consider the rent fair that was raised on the land for which rent was paid, leaving behind enough to live on, and something to spare, so that one bad season or two would not reduce the tenant to beggary.

The fact of the matter is, and I would be false to my own conscience if I hesitated to say it, these people have been kept drained bare ; the hard years reduced them to helpless poverty, and now the only remedy is to get rid of them altogether. The price of these military and police, the price of these special services rendered to unpopular landlords to aid them in grinding down these wretched people, spent to help them would go far to make prosperity possible to them once more. If they had a rent they could pay and live, the millstone of arrears taken from about their necks, I believe they would become both loyal and contented. Empty stomachs, bare clothing, lying hard and cold at night through poverty is trying to loyalty.

The turbary nuisance is the great oppression of all. Want of food is bad, but want of fuel added to it ! Forty years ago renting land meant getting a bit of bog in with the land. When there is a special charge for the privilege of cutting turf and the times so hard there is much additional suffering.

In the famine time people getting relief had to travel for the ticket, travel to get the meal, and then go to gather whins or heather on the hills to cook it, and the hungry children waiting all the time. A respectable person said to me the famine was worst on respectable people, for looking for the red ticket and carrying it to get meal by it was like the pains of death.

Wherever I went through Leitrim I saw people, scattered here and there, gathering twigs for fuel or coming toward home with their burden of twigs on their backs. I declare I thought often of the Israelites scattered (through the fields of Egypt gathering stubble instead of straw. A tenant who objects to anything, who is not properly obedient and respectful, can have the screw turned upon him about the turf as well as about the rent.

The Letters of “Norah” on Her Tour Through Ireland : Being a Series of Letters to the Montreal ... (1882)

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