

GWEEEDORE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE.

2

A SKETCH

OF THE

DONEGAL LAND WAR

BY

JEREMIAH MACVEAGH,

BELFAST.

(SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE "DAILY NEWS"
IN DONEGAL.)

*"Evictions are a crop of nameless horrors, whose disastrous fruits
will be gathered in years and generations yet to come."*—JOHN BRIGHT.

PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICES OF
THE HOME RULE UNION,
17 & 18, PALACE CHAMBERS, 9, BRIDGE STREET, LONDON, S.W.

CO-OPERATIVE PRINTING SOCIETY LIMITED, 6, SALISBURY COURT, FLEET STREET,
AND 35, RUSSELL STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

THE OLPHERT ESTATE.

THE Olphert Estate, which has been the scene of many of the most stirring incidents of the Irish Land War, is situated in the midst of the wild scenery of "Dark Donegal." Mountain and valley, crags and copse, lochs and glens, rivulets and islets, cascades and cliffs—bounteous nature seems to have lavished them on the district. Passing through miles of land without a particle of vegetation, we find the appalling wretchedness of the soil relieved by scenery as beautiful as any that could be found in the Trossachs or in Killarney; but the wildest beauties of Nature are clouded by the people's misery.

The estate contains about 600 tenants; and, according to Mr. Olphert's evidence at the Land Commission, its gross rental in 1884 was £2,200. Mr. Olphert admitted at the Land Commission that his family *had not invested anything whatever in the land since the original purchase*; and he still further admitted during the trial of Mr. Conybeare, M.P., that *he had never built a fence, nor drained a farm, nor built a school or church on his entire estate*. And when pressed to say whether he had persistently refused even a site for church or school, the rules of evidence came to his relief, and the question was ruled "irrelevant."

FATHER MacFADDEN.

The estate is situated in the parishes of Falcarragh and Gweedore, the miserable townland of Glasserchoo being included in the latter parish. The parish priest of Gweedore, as everyone knows, is Father MacFadden, one of the most striking figures in the Irish struggle. He is about forty years of age, and has had a more adventurous and brilliant career than any member of the Irish priesthood. For the past fourteen years his name has been indissolubly linked with the fates and fortunes of the poor people of Gweedore, and it has been associated with many an exciting work and fearless labour. Trouble after trouble, and disaster after disaster, have visited him and his unfortunate flock; but though the lines of care and sorrow were soon carved upon his face, his brave spirit never quailed or flinched. He had been able to secure a site for a church only over the bed of a mountain torrent; and one morning, when the congregation was assembled, a tremendous flood swept down from the mountains, and, wrecking the sacred edifice, drowned five of the congregation, who were unable to make headway against the rush of waters. Fortunately for his flock, the brave pastor was saved from being amongst the victims of the sad catastrophe; and, mainly through his exertions and those of the late Mr. A. M. Sullivan, close on £2,000 was collected to enable him to repair the ravages caused by the flood. With this sum he diverted the course of the stream, and executed those improvements in the beautiful little church which both attract and

surprise every visitor to Derrybeg. Coercionists quote the neat appearance of the edifice and the comfortable parochial residence as proofs that there can be no distress in the district; but as a matter of fact the parochial residence was built by the Board of Works, and the church by private charity.

Father MacFadden's zeal in the work of education may be judged from the fact that in Dungloe he built no less than six schools in the two years of his ministry in that parish. His life has been one continual battle with the famine and privations recurrent amongst his flock, and private charity has always been obliged to intervene in a tract of country where Government has persistently failed to do its duty. The people are so circumstanced that a severe year inevitably introduces the horrors of distress, and times out of number the rents have been paid out of private assistance.

Under the Distress Act of 1880, Father MacFadden obtained a grant of £300 for the construction of new roads. With the object of saving as much as possible for the people, he himself acted as engineer and laid out the roads; and with the same laudable object he constituted himself superintendent of workmen. In the Revision Courts he battled for the benefits of the Franchise for his flock; in the Land Courts he is ever the watchful guardian of their rights; at the Quarter Sessions his figure is almost as familiar as that of the judge; and, in fact, at all times and in all places—when and where his people want him and their enemies don't—he is found to prove to his confiding flock their “guide, philosopher, and friend.” Every dispute in the parish, from the gravest to the most paltry, is referred to him, and he possesses an amazing influence over his people who are passionately devoted to him. His arrest and sentence in connection with the land struggle, the doubling of the sentence on appeal by Judge Webb (who was previously a pamphleteer for the “Loyal and Patriotic Union” of Pigott-Houston fame), the incredible meanness of his prison treatment, and the triumphal march on his release, are all events fresh in the public memory. During Father MacFadden's imprisonment his duties were faithfully discharged by Father McNelis and Father Gildea.

FATHER STEPHENS.

The struggle has been waged in Falcarragh by Father Stephens, who is Father MacFadden's junior by about ten years. His piety and unfailing gentleness of manner made him a universal favourite during his collegiate career, in the course of which he gave abundant proofs of that ability and industry which have since characterised him. He was ordained in 1880, and on the recommendation of the present Archbishop of Dublin, Most Rev. Dr. Walsh, he was appointed to the Pro-Cathedral of Liverpool. Throughout his years of missionary labours there, he was distinguished by his great zeal and labours amongst the poor. He went from house to house, and from cellar to garret, in the slums of the city, in search of stray sheep, winning them back by his gentle rebuke to a sense of religion and duty. In the February after his ordination, wearied with the labours of the day, he was called upon in the evening to attend some cases of typhus fever. His weak and delicate frame was in a fit state for the germs of disease to take root, and he was stricken with malignant fever. For weeks he lay between life and death; but the sufferings of the invalid priest were in no small degree assuaged by the loving anxiety of his parishioners, who day and night prayed for his recovery. When he had partly recovered, he was transferred for the benefit of his health to St. Antony's, Scotland Road; and the same cause subsequently necessitated his recall to the land of his birth.

Last year he was the recipient of a fitting recognition from the Royal Humane Society for his act of desperate heroism in rescuing a raving maniac, who had plunged into the Atlantic in a determined effort to end

his existence; and Father Stephens' exertions upon that occasion almost cost him his own life. It is a noteworthy fact that the ninth and tenth anniversaries of his consecration to the service of God have been spent in coercion dungeons.

During and since the imprisonment of Father Stephens, his duties are being discharged in a courageous and fearless manner by his amiable and gifted successor, Father Boyle.

THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE.

In 1887 there was a heavy fall in the value of land produce, and the tenants naturally claimed a corresponding reduction on the rents. The same demand was advanced in Parliament, and was met by the inevitable cant about the "sacredness of contract." But with Tory Governments nature seems, indeed,

"to have fashioned them hollow

On purpose that they may their principles swallow,"

for in a few months afterwards they recognised the principle by legislation in the issue of the Land Schedule. *This schedule, however, could only apply to cases already determined by the Land Courts*, and not to those tenants who (by legal technicalities raised by the landlords) were debarred from having a fair rent fixed. These cases on the Olphert estate constituted the rule instead of the exceptions, and the claim of the tenants drew from the agent the memorable declaration that Mr. Olphert "did not see the necessity of making any concession other than the law directed." Under these circumstances every reasonable man will say that the tenants had no option but to combine in a sort of trades' unionism for their mutual protection.

ADMITTEDLY THE LAND DOES NOT EARN THE RENT.

It must be borne in mind that it is admitted on all hands that the rent is earned by labour abroad, *and not from the land*. Even Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P. (whom no one, even in the wildest flights of imagination, would accuse of saying anything on behalf of the tenants which he could avoid saying), admitted, in the columns of the "Forger" itself, that the rent is earned by the sons and daughters of the tenants, the latter of whom go to service in Ireland, and the former to England and Scotland in the month of August, as harvestmen. Very few politicians will venture to advance the theory that the rent which must be earned by such means is a just rent. Independent, however, of this fact, the harvesting wages were lower than in previous years, which still further strengthens the position of the tenants. It is worth noting that the men who prate most about the "iniquity" of the agitation being supported by "American dollars" are the very men who have received millions of them in the shape of rent.

THE WHITE SLAVE MARKET.

Father Kelly, the gifted pastor of Dunfaraghy, has already drawn the attention of the English people to the fact that in the effort to provide rent for the landlords of Donegal, there is perpetuated in that county a barbarous and revolting relic of slavery. The little children of the peasantry are sent at stated periods of the year to what is known as "hiring fairs" in the towns of Derry, Strabane, and Letterkenny, where they stand in the market squares (as the slaves stood of old) till some employer of labour "purchases" them for farm work. At a very tender age they are thus parted from home and friends and all the best influences for good. They are exposed to innumerable temptations, and are cast amongst heedless strangers at an age when, above all others, they require the tender guidance of their parents. The earnings of the poor little mites go in the shape of rent to swell the

pockets of the landlords, who care not at what expense of lives or souls that rent is acquired; for now, as in the days of Byron—

Their being, end, aim, religion is RENT, RENT, RENT.

HOW THE PEOPLE LIVE.

When the poor peasantry have to make such extraordinary efforts to keep the wolf of hunger from their doors, it will be easily understood that their lives are a continual struggle and their habitations a disgrace to civilisation. The miserable hovels in Glasserchoo absolutely defy description. The ordinary structure is about twelve feet by six, and five feet in height, and consists of only one apartment. At night the father and mother and five or six of a family are scattered over the damp floor; and, in the same apartment with all the family, a cow, and perhaps a calf tied to a stake a few feet distant. What a picture of civilisation! And what a worthy companion-picture to the child slave market! Can such a dreadful state of affairs be defended on the grounds of either morality or sanitation, or can it be justified by any cant about "firm and resolute government," or the "sacredness of contract"?

MR. OLPHERT IN 1858.

It has frequently been asserted that prior to the promulgation of the Plan of Campaign, Mr. Olphert had been always on the best of terms with his tenantry. To anyone who has taken the trouble to investigate the situation, the absurdity of this statement is at once apparent, for, as far back as 1858, we find Mr. Olphert recorded as having admitted before a Parliamentary Committee that his relations with the peasantry were very strained. *It was about this time that he deprived the people of their previously-conceded right to the mountain-lands.*

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

It has already been pointed out that when, in answer to the legitimate demand of the tenants, the agent assured Father MacFadden that the landlord would "make no concession other than the law directed," there was no alternative but combination. Father Stephens, when besought by the peasantry to promulgate the Plan of Campaign, called a public meeting in Falcarragh in January, 1888, at which he and Mr. Blane, M.P., delivered speeches, for which they were afterwards imprisoned. Father Stephens in his speech upon that occasion put the case of the tenants with great ability and logical clearness, and, in conclusion, besought the tenants in God's name to pay the rent if the land had earned it, or if they were able to pay. But if they were not, he would unfurl the banner of the Plan; and as he was prepared to rejoice with them in their joys, so they would find him ready to suffer with them in their sorrows. He warned them of the desperate struggle on which they were entering, and implored of them not to enter the combination unless they were prepared to stand faithfully by each other.

That day the struggle opened; and, in accordance with the rules of the Plan of Campaign, the rents were paid to a trustee, who was empowered to hand the amount over to the landlord as soon as he would manifest a disposition to deal fairly with his tenantry.

DONEGAL UNDER THE MILITARY—THE STAR CHAMBER.

Since that time, Donegal has been virtually in military occupation; and it is computed that close on 500 committals under the Coercion Act have been made in that county since the struggle opened. The first victims were Father MacFadden, Father Stephens, and Mr. Blane, M.P.; and a few months afterwards the Star Chamber Clause, one of the most odious of the entire Coercion Act, was enforced. In virtue of this clause,

the famous "removables" are empowered to summon any man before them, and, with closed doors, to ask any questions on any matter that may suggest itself to their curiosity. Not even a legal adviser is admitted to this resurrected Star Chamber. After a few weeks, however, it was abandoned, for not a man in the whole district would answer any questions whatever; and the authorities became finally and firmly convinced of this fact after they had arrested, committed, and imprisoned, and re-imprisoned again and again dozens of people. The Star Chamber thus died an early death in Donegal.

THE JANUARY EVICTIONS.

In January, 1889, the landlord proceeded to evict his tenantry, who manifested a strong disposition to "keep a firm grip upon their homesteads." The accounts read like those of a country in a state of insurrection; for what with roads cut at intervals, and bridges blown up, and fierce resistance, the January evictions proved very sensational. At three houses in particular, such fierce resistance was offered that an order was given to the military to fire on the defenders, and the houses are since landmarks in the locality, being known respectively as Doogan's Fort, O'Donnell's Fort, and Curran's Fort. On their conclusion the Government initiated the second prosecutions of Father MacFadden and Father Stephens. It was at the attempted arrest of the former that District-Inspector Martin met his death; and Father Stephens and Mr. John Kelly completed, in October, their sentence of six months' imprisonment as "ordinary criminals."

JURY-PACKING.

The tenants charged with resistance to the January evictions could not be sentenced beyond six months' imprisonment at hard labour; but the Removables did not consider this sufficient "vindication of the law," and they returned them for trial to the assizes. The Crown transferred the trials to the Orange town of Enniskillen (for this is one of the privileges of the latest Coercion Act), and in that town they were pretty safe for a conviction; but to make assurance doubly sure, the Crown exercised its right of ordering to "stand aside" every juror suspected of sympathy with the huge majority of his fellow-countrymen.

This iniquitous practice is unknown in England, but it is one with which the Irish people are unfortunately too familiar. *It is pursued in every political case.* The Government always insist that they have no knowledge of the politics of the jurors, but it is a rather curious fact that the jurors ordered to "stand aside" are invariably Catholics, and the jurors sworn invariably Protestants. Coercionists are never ordered to "stand aside," and it is worthy of notice that in the *Bolton v. O'Brien* action (tried, of course, in *Belfast*) the plaintiff (who is a Crown solicitor) admitted that he had marked the politics of the jurors, *and with the assistance of the Secretary of the Conservative Club in Dublin.* Is it any wonder that the Irish people have no respect for "the law"?

It was elicited during the Fermanagh trials that the Sheriff of Fermanagh corrected the special jury panel *on the suggestion of the Crown Solicitor for Donegal, who was prosecuting.* Judge Johnson (one of the very few Irish judges in whose sense of fairness or humanity the people have any confidence), in addressing the jury, dwelt with emphasis and severity on the use of emergency men at the evictions, instead of the Sheriff and his officers, whom he declared to be the properly-constituted authorities; but of course his remonstrance has since been treated with contempt. Although a decided political opponent, the judge was moved to tears in sentencing the brave defenders to eight months' imprisonment; and the prosecutors were disgusted at what they were pleased to call the "weakness" of the sentence.

THE GOVERNMENT REIGN OF TERROR.

On the morning of April 3rd the authorities perpetrated one of the grossest of the blunders which mark the Balfour régime. When Father MacFadden was leaving the church after Divine Service on that Sunday morning, and before he had even divested himself of his sacred robes, District Inspector Martin, brandishing a naked sword, rushed at him; and after formally arresting him, waved the sabre overhead, and shouted in a most offensive manner, "Come along, sir, come along, sir." His devoted people, who feared that his life was in danger, could not endure tamely such a display of provocation and insult; and almost in as short a time as it takes to relate the incident, a disturbance arose, in the course of which the impetuous and injudicious officer was hurled into eternity. The madness of attempting to arrest such a man in the presence of his congregation, and immediately after service, was such that even Mr. Balfour was forced to admit that it was an unfortunate "error of judgment." Now mark what followed.

Extra police were drafted into the district, including relays of detectives. Bodies of military were also requisitioned, and soon the Government initiated a system of terrorism of which we might seek in vain for a parallel in modern history. Dozens after dozens of the peasantry were arrested without justification, some to be discharged in a few hours, others in a few months. Great numbers, who could have had nothing whatever to do with the unfortunate man's death, fled from the district in sheer fright; and the tales of terror which one still hears in the district would cause one to wonder was he living under the British Constitution or in Russia. So many people were wantonly arrested that many fled to the islands of the Atlantic, many to far-off caves, and a story is told of twenty-five men who fled by night to the mountains. Cordons of military were established around the country, the despotic system of "passes" was introduced (and without a pass the citizen could not pass along the Queen's highway); a gunboat was kept cruising off the coast, and the whole panorama constituted what has been rightly described as "a vile parody of Continental tyranny." The authorities acted in such a way as to ensure indignant and frequent charges of excess of duty, of harshness and cruelty, and even of abominable indelicacies. One poor old woman related in the Irish language that the police broke into her house without even the formality of a warrant, and searched the humble dwelling; after which they demanded from her whether her son had been at Derrybeg Chapel on that fatal Sunday. As any other mother would have done, she refused to afford them any information. One of them then seized her by the shoulders, and, after shaking her violently, threatened to handcuff her if she would not answer everything they asked! There was another case of a man who was being pursued by the police, and who was fired at by them because he continued to run. He fled to the water's edge, and was there arrested; and the fact has been more than once brought under the attention of Parliament that a policeman then pointed a revolver at him, and *threatened to shoot him unless he would tell where some of the fugitives were concealed!* One poor woman had her cottage searched both before and after her confinement, the police getting up as she lay there to overhaul the top of the bedstead. Such instances could be multiplied, for the district was indeed full of such complaints, and the results of that reign of terror can scarcely be realised. According to the police evidence, no less than four hundred houses in a radius of seven miles were entered and searched. Thousands who are now in the bloom of youth will carry with them to their graves a bitter and vengeful recollection of the time when their nearest and dearest were fugitives on Irish hillsides to avoid arrest for a crime of which they had no knowledge. An English journalist describing his experience of the time concluded thus: "I have seen, I think, more military parade, more display of the brute force of 'law and order,' in one week on the mountains, bogs, and

pasture lands of Donegal than I have ordinarily seen in London in a year."

And notwithstanding all this display of terrorism and system of wholesale arrests, District-Inspector Crean despatched a cypher telegram months afterwards to Divisional-Commissioner Cameron, in which he stated *that the murderer was not yet arrested*. This telegram was unearthed, deciphered, and published by *United Ireland*. Any impartial observer will readily come to a conclusion as to the keeping of *thirty men* in prison for over seven months without trial, when those who caused their arrest and detention really believed them innocent.

A REVOLTING PICTURE.

One incident in the Government Reign of Terror calls for more than a passing notice. The story cannot be told better than in the language of the prisoner himself, Charles Diver, an intelligent young peasant, who had been arrested during the panic. His statement is as follows:—

"On February 25th, I was on a visit to a friend's house in Innismean Island. The parish was swarming with police and soldiers. They did not seem to know who should be arrested, and they were 'lifting' every young man in the country that came in their way. This drove the people into a state of terror. They had dragged the whole parish on the mainland with police and soldiers and Scots Greys, and up to this the only place in the parish where there was any rest was in the islands. On this day, however, a war vessel steamed up Torry Sound, and the shore on the mainland was lined with soldiers and police, who stopped every boat that came from the islands, and arrested the crews. Anyone found on the shore was arrested, and it was on that day that Head Constable Mahony first issued the 'passes.' Almost every young man on the islands—including even the schoolmaster—was arrested.

"After my arrest I was taken out to the gable of the house. A policeman took off my cap, and told me to keep down my head. In the opinion of an officer, who was standing with a naked sword in his hand, I was too slow in doing this, and he shouted at me '*Keep down your head, or I'll knock it off.*' They handcuffed us, and marched us down to the shore to get on board one of the small boats of the gunboat. One of the lieutenants in charge cried out to the police officer on shore that it was not in accordance with the rules to have the prisoners in irons on board their boats. The officer did not seem to reply; *but he directed the policemen in the boat to charge their guns, and, if anyone in the boat attempted to move, to blow his brains out.* The change to the gunboat was not an improvement to me.

"Our boat pulled up alongside; the sea was excited, and there was a good ground swell, and our boat tossed a good deal. We were tied two and two. There was no ladder or convenience for getting on board. And in this helpless way we had to manage to creep up the sides of the ship as well as we could. There were several policemen at the bulwarks to grapple us up like bags when we came within reach of them. I was suffering excruciating pain in my wrist owing to the handcuffs being much too small for it. The piercing cold made the thing worse, as my wrist swelled, and *the iron manacle was sinking into the flesh.* I complained, *but all to no effect.* When we got on board the Banterer we were driven forward to a part of the deck, and directed to sit down there. The night was cold and wet. *We were not allowed anything to eat or drink till morning, and we had nothing since breakfast.* After a short time a policeman came up and inquired for me. I thought that he was coming to relieve my hand of the small manacle that was eating into my flesh. I still shudder at the thought of it, he carried another manacle smaller still, and put it on my free hand, and tied it to another prisoner! God help me! I thought I would die! Lying there a cold, stormy night with hail showers followed by a keen frost, on the naked deck, with the most agonising pain in my two wrists. *I felt as if my wrist bones had been sawn through.* I complained and I lamented, *but it was all to no purpose.* Tied to my comrades on either

side, and lying on my back against the inside of the ship's bulwarks, with a thick wooden rib behind my shoulders, I was knocked forward by every lurch of the ship. The sailors had thrown some canvas across our legs early in the night, to protect them from the rain and the spray of the sea. In the morning some tea was brought us, but as both my hands were tied I could not take any. The others were attended to, and after they had done—one of my hands was released—I took some tea as a drink, but I could not eat any bread. Soon the time came to put us on shore. The boat was brought alongside. One of my hands had been released, but my right hand was still tied to another prisoner. When it came our turn to descend there was no ladder or other convenience, and the sea was surging and the boat below sinking and rising. I was put forward to descend in front and my comrade to follow after. The police put a rope round his body like a sack, and they held on the rope. As I crept down the ship's side *with only my left hand free, and my right hand dragged high in the air by being tied to the other man*, the boat alongside rose on a wave to within a good step. As I was just going to take the plunge into the boat she sunk away from me several feet, and only I was *held by the torturing manacle* above I would have fallen into the sea, but the drag on my wrist and arm-pit gave me dreadful pang and pain. The boat rose on the next wave to within a short space, and I jumped down. The police did not let away the man above to whom I was bound, and I caught the taft of the boat with my free hand lest I should be dragged back into the sea. I suffered indescribable torture. There was not a bone or sinew in my body that I did not feel crushed and strained, and I thought my arms and chest were torn asunder. I think my whole body was upset and disorganised by this terrible treatment, and it made me an easy prey for any further ill-treatment or abuse.

"When we came to the Bunbeg Barrack, I was stripped naked by Mahony and Varilly—the only persons present—and my body probed and examined minutely. I was then sent downstairs, and we all, ten in number, were huddled into a black hole, cold, dark, and miserable, with flagged floor, and *only a small quantity of straw thinly scattered over it*. That night we suffered intense cold, there were frost and snow, and I felt intensely miserable.

"That day we were driven on outside cars, in snow and cold and storm, a distance of 40 miles to Letterkenny. Each had his hands manacled across in front of him. I had only my waistcoat and a guernsey shirt. I never felt so cold as I did that day. I thought I had some trials of great cold gathering seaweed from the waves in frost and snow, *but I never felt anything to compare with my sufferings from cold that day*.

"I felt very cold and wretched in Derry Gaol. On the first Sunday, as we were being brought to Mass, a warder—I don't know his name—banged open my cell door, and thundered at me to come on. He seemed to be in a dreadful hurry, and as I was walking before him towards the stair head, he rushed at me with a violent driving blow between the two shoulders. He had an immense bunch of keys in his hands at the time. *I thought the blow broke my heart*. For the moment it took my breath away. The blow threw me forward against the wall at the head of the stairs, and I struck my knee violently against the wall. When I got downstairs I felt very bad. I struggled through during the day as well as I could. At eight o'clock I laid myself to rest—sick and sore. I felt very bad, and next morning I was not able to rise. During the day the chaplain called upon me, and administered the last rites. A few days afterwards I commenced to throw off blood. I was sent to hospital, and afterwards sent back to my cell, and it was found necessary to send me back again to hospital. *I was kept there until I was almost dead*. My solicitor got me out on bail on the 29th July. It was well it was so. I think I would have soon died in the gaol. *I don't think I will ever get better—they broke my heart*. I am not able to eat anything, and hardly

able to drink the milk. I feel all swelled in the sides, and my heart feels very sore."

The recital reads like a reminiscence of Bulgarian atrocities than the record of deeds perpetrated in the British Empire in 1889.

"MANDEVILLING" POLITICAL PRISONERS.

Two of the prisoners sentenced at the Fermanagh Assizes were John Magee and Michael Size, both of whom were released in September, 1889, and both of whom died immediately afterwards in consequence of their prison treatment. Poor Magee never reached his home. In the midst of the joyous welcome which everywhere attends an Irish coercion prisoner on his release, the poor fellow sank helpless in the arms of Father Stephens, and in a few hours he died. He was one of the finest young fellows in his native parish; and his friends, who had assembled in Falcarragh to extend a joyous welcome to the buoyant youth, received instead his lifeless body! Michael Size died a few hours afterwards; and the scene of joy had thus become a scene of double mourning! It transpired that when Magee was leaving Derry Gaol, he was obliged to lean for support on the arm of a fellow prisoner. One of the warders shouted to him to "let go there and stop his scheming," whereupon the poor fellow tottered to the ground. In a few hours another addition to the list of "Mandevilled" prisoners proved that his weakness was only too real; and that after having been detained till the very last hour of his imprisonment had expired, he was released to die! The whole picture is one of the most revolting and heartrending in the whole history of the Irish Land War.

THE APRIL EVICTIONS—ARREST OF MR. HARRISON.

In April, 1889, the inhuman work of eviction was renewed, and continued for several days. On the night after its completion the peasantry, "having no roof above them but the broad canopy of Heaven," crept back to their miserable homes under shelter of the night, and in the morning wreaths of smoke again curled merrily up from their chimneys. This sudden *coup* took the authorities by surprise, and large forces of extra police and military were forthwith drafted in. A few days afterwards, the police and military entered on march at daybreak; and, proceeding from house to house, called upon the inmates to leave. The tenants responded that they had built the houses and reclaimed the stony and swampy lands, and that they would not tamely give up what had cost them the best years of their lives. (*For though in England the landlord builds the dwelling houses and dare not raise the rent on the tenants' improvements, in Ireland the landlord has always increased the rent as the tenant built or reclaimed, and the houses have all been built by the tenants themselves*).

Armed patrols of police were placed upon every house, and night and day were kept there with orders that if any persons attempted either to leave or enter, they were to be forthwith arrested. The object of this was clearly to "starve out" the tenants; and, with a view to counter-acting the iniquitous effort, Mr. Conybeare, M.P., Mr. G. R. Benson, and Mr. Henry Harrison (the only three Englishmen in the district at the time) formed themselves into the famous Relief Commissariat.

THE "CRIME" OF FEEDING THE HUNGRY.

The object of the "conspiracy" (as it was afterwards dignified) was to supply food to the besieged and starving inmates; and it was afterwards admitted on oath by the police that in only one house was there any food at all prior to the arrival of the three Englishmen. On the occasion of the second expedition, Mr. Harrison was arrested at the house of Manus McGinlay, whilst handing a loaf of bread to the tenant's wife!

Such a wholesome indignation was raised in England, Scotland, and Wales, that the Government soon regretted the extraordinary proceeding; and Mr. Conybeare subsequently challenged Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons to deny that the Attorney-General for Ireland had stated in Dublin that he had *sent down orders* to the "impartial" Removables not to convict Mr. Harrison. And he was *not* convicted, although he had been kept over a week in goal without trial.

"DIGNIFIED AND MAGISTERIAL Demeanour."

On the night of Mr. Harrison's arrest, Mr. Benson, who had accompanied Mr. Harrison from Oxford, said that he had been guilty of the same "crime" as his friend and comrade, and invited the police to place him also under arrest. A similar course was pursued by Mr. Conybeare. The constabulary, however, refused to do so, and those gentlemen intimated their intention of proceeding from house to house till their work was completed. This was done, and at Mr. Harrison's request he returned alone with the police, who formed a cordon around him. He was met outside the village by Father Boyle, Mr. O'Hea, M.P., and Mr. P. O'Brien, M.P., to whom intelligence of his arrest had meanwhile been conveyed. Mr. O'Hea claimed the right to accompany him into the prison as his solicitor, but *admission was denied him*, and when Mr. Conybeare and Mr. Benson returned on the completion of their work, they waited upon District Inspector Heard, who *refused permission to anyone to enter the barracks*.

Mr. O'Brien remarked that the vilest criminal in England would be allowed to see his legal adviser, even if the criminal were a murderer caught red-handed in his infamy. Mr. Conybeare declared that he intended to see Mr. Harrison, and demanded to be informed of the whereabouts of Mr. Cameron, the divisional magistrate. After considerable hesitation, the district inspector said he was in the house in which the parties to the above conversation then were, and when further pressed pointed out the room. Mr. Conybeare knocked loudly for several minutes at the bedroom door, but no response was returned, and finally Mr. Conybeare entered the room. It has been stated in the public press, and I have never seen any contradiction of it, that thereupon Mr. Cameron, jumping from his bed, shouted loudly, "Get out of my house, or I'll throw you out. How dare you come into my house at one o'clock in the morning! Get out, sir!" Mr. Conybeare said he called to see whether, as magistrate, he was going to order Mr. Harrison's release on bail till the morning. Mr. Cameron's reply was emphatic: "No, I'll take no bail. Get out of my place this instant, or I'll arrest you! By—, if I'd my clothes on I'd arrest you." Mr. Conybeare said he certainly had every reason to thank him for his very dignified, gentlemanly, and magisterial demeanour, and then left the house.

It should be sufficient for the advocates of the handcuff union to know that a young Englishman, highly connected and possessed of the sincere regard of everyone who knows him, spent Easter Sunday of 1889 in Derry Gaol for the crime of succouring a starving peasant.

THE POLICE AS "MOONLIGHTERS" AND EMERGENCY MEN—WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARRESTED.

On April 17th, at four o'clock in the morning, a large force of police and military set out from Falcarragh, and made a raid upon the houses of the evicted, wholesale arrests being effected at that unreasonable hour. The constabulary are stated to have acted with great harshness. For example, when they had arrived at McGinleys, Michael Doohan, who lived next door, rushed out to see the cause of the commotion. A policeman ran forward and shouted to him, "Not to dare to leave the house, or they would knock him to hell." A rifleman at once confronted him, and, pointing at him the sword attached to the rifle, drove the man back into his house.

Meanwhile Doohan heard McGinley's door being smashed open, and from the window he was enabled to see them hurling out the tenant's furniture. McGinley's daughter, a bright girl of about twelve years, states that she jumped from her bed of straw when she heard the noise, and awoke her father, who with her was looking out of the window when the police arrived. She is quite positive that one of the police advanced with a huge hammer or hatchet and broke in the door. Her mother was pulled out of bed, and both her parents, with whom was her little sister of six months, taken into custody. At five houses in succession the same course was pursued and numerous arrests effected, including young children, and several helpless old men and women. An emergency man was left in possession of each house till their limited number was exhausted, *and in the remainder the police were posted.*

At the house of Owen Coyle, the mother, who with amazing spirit had resumed possession of the old homestead, was found almost at the point of death, and could not be removed; but she was placed under arrest, and an emergency man installed in the house. We were refused admission to the house. Mr. O'Hea claimed the right as her legal representative, but with the same result, and even Father Boyle was told that he could not be admitted. Mr. Conybeare and Mr. Benson thought themselves justified by the gravity of the circumstances in pushing the doorkeepers aside and entering the house. Father Boyle resolved to adopt a similar course, whatever the result might be, and the officers of police then decided to admit him and also to leave a neighbour in the house to attend to the poor old woman's wants. The emergency men redeemed their promise of "smashing to the devil" any furniture they found inside the house.

ANOTHER SPECIMEN OF "REMOVABLE" JUSTICE.

On the same day the prisoners were brought for trial before Mr. Beresford, R.M. A large number of very officious District Inspectors of Police were present, and one of them, named Duff, pointed to one of the prisoners and asked the emergency man could he identify that prisoner? Mr. O'Brien indignantly protested against such an outrageous question, but the R.M. insisted upon the question being asked and answered, and refused to hear Mr. O'Brien. The prisoners were returned for trial, and on the conclusion of the cases Mr. O'Brien rose to demand that information be sworn against two emergency men who brutally assaulted a woman on Thursday in his sight. The magistrate said he had important business to attend to, and, leaving the room abruptly, would not hear him. Mr. O'Brien then accosted Divisional Magistrate Cameron, and asked was it a principle of law in Donegal that magistrates should only receive depositions from emergency men. Two of these had brutally beaten a woman, and although they had arrested more than a dozen women for resisting emergency men, Mr. Beresford had refused to hear his complaint. Mr. O'Brien said he knew that no magistrate in all England would refuse to accept a sworn declaration.

At this juncture Mr. Beresford came out of the barracks, and the Divisional Magistrate called to him that Mr. O'Brien wished to swear an information. Mr. Beresford passed on, but Mr. Cameron followed him; and as a result of their conversation, Mr. Beresford intimated his willingness to receive the declarations. Depositions were then sworn against the emergency men, Woods and Smith, by both Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Harrison. In their depositions they declared that the accused were not living in the locality, and that their names and addresses could not be ascertained. They could not, therefore, proceed by summons, but preferred to swear informations. These having been completed, Mr. Beresford approached Mr. O'Brien, and said that he was very sorry that he had acted as he had done towards him; and he hoped that Mr. O'Brien would overlook his conduct, as he was worried at the time. Mr. O'Brien

replied that Mr. Beresford's conduct was such as he would not expect from a common policeman, and was certainly studiously offensive throughout. Mr. Beresford said he was extremely sorry if he had given any offence, and he hoped that Mr. O'Brien would let the matter drop, but that gentleman replied that the magistrate's conduct was such that he would accept of no apology. It should be stated, in justice to Mr. Beresford, that he is one of the least objectionable of the body.

LEGAL LAWLESSNESS.

When Mr. Harrison and the peasants were being removed to Derry Gaol, a crowd which had assembled cheered the prisoners with great enthusiasm, Mr. Conybeare calling for "Three Cheers for the Plan of Campaign." The police car started three times on the road, but each time the horse became restive, and refused to proceed. One wag suggested that the police horse had joined the "conspiracy," and the delighted and good-humoured cheers of the people provoked the police, who soon lost all command of their senses. Mr. "Removable" Burke was heard shouting, "This is disgraceful to cheer prisoners"; and certainly to Englishmen, who are accustomed to very different laws and different administration, the sight of prisoners going to gaol amidst the glad acclaim of an entire populace must be a novel experience. Not satisfied with promulgating this latest "crime," Mr. Burke, pointing his finger at Mr. Conybeare, shouted "Cheering for the Plan of Campaign is an illegal assembly." The meaning of the exclamation was a trifle obscure, and its grammar scarcely faultless, but it was enough for the policemen, one of whom shouted "Get out the bâtons, and knock the Devil out of them!" The onslaught was both brutal and unprovoked, and the minions of the "law" seemed panting for another manifestation of the "Don't hesitate to shoot" policy which covered them with immortal renown at Mitchelstown.

THE PENALTY OF "HESITATING TO SHOOT."

As a matter of fact, Donegal afforded in May, 1889, a specimen of the penalty attached to a violation of the order contained in Pasha Plunkett's famous cypher telegram. When the intelligence spread amongst the people that it was intended to arrest Father MacFadden on the first night of April, thousands of the peasantry assembled from all directions and kept watch upon the house all night. The district is in the centre of a gorge or ravine, and if any hostilities had arisen between the police and the people the former would certainly have been annihilated; for, in addition to the situation, the night was extremely dark. District-Inspector Markham consulted the local officers, all of whom agreed that the police force should be withdrawn at once, which was done. Now, mark the result of this very humane and sensible action. The district-inspector was tried by court martial for "cowardice" (save the mark!); and although the police under his command swore that his action was both right and judicious, for every man of them would have been killed if they had collided with the people; yet he was *censured*, PERMANENTLY *reduced in the service*, and *transferred at his own expense to another station!* The same "judgment" was given in the cases of about half-a-dozen minor officers; and it was specifically stated that the court did NOT consider that any of them were guilty of cowardice. No man can say that District-Inspector Markham did not act both judiciously and humanely; and the only possible inference is that *he was reduced, censured and transferred, because he "hesitated to shoot."* The fact is an interesting one for English electors. It may be added that the police evidence at the "Inquiry" paid an unconscious tribute to the people; for it was sworn by several of the officers that although a body of police would have been killed, yet a few police could walk amongst them with impunity; and as a matter of fact did so on that very evening.

PROSECUTION OF MR. CONYBEARE, M.P.

It is a remarkable fact that Mr. Harrison was arrested on the charge of supplying bread to the wife of Manus McGinley, returned for trial on the charge of (tell it not in Gath!) "housebreaking," and tried on the charge of "conspiracy" to promote the Plan of Campaign. These proceedings prove the hollow farce that "law" is in Ireland, for, after Mr. Harrison's arrest, the authorities saw the great mistake they had made, and accordingly altered the charge to the farcical one of "housebreaking." But even that would hardly pass muster, and accordingly, on the suggestion of the Attorney-General for Ireland, both charges were abandoned, and he was arraigned jointly with Mr. Conybeare for conspiracy. The "Removables" were Messrs. Hamilton and Nagle, the former of whom convicted Mr. John Dillon, M.P., on *post facto* evidence, and afterwards returned Father MacFaden for trial on the charge of wilful murder. Both of them have delivered some notorious judgments; but, to do them justice, neither of them seemed overburdened with that "legal knowledge of which the Lord-Lieutenant should be satisfied."

The beauty of the charge consisted in the fact that the Government was enabled to include as "co-conspirators" men whom neither Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Harrison, nor Mr. Benson had ever either met or heard of; and who, as a matter of fact, were in gaol when those gentlemen arrived in Donegal. And they were enabled to give evidence of occurrences (as proofs of "conspiracy") that took place before any of them ever set foot in Donegal; and when Mr. Conybeare was in South Africa, Mr. Harrison in Oxford University, and Mr. Benson in the United States! These facts can be verified on reference to the public record of the proceedings.

HONOURING THE "CRIMINALS."

Far from being degraded in the eyes of the people, the latest victims of coercion were honoured far beyond their fellows on the very morning of their "trial." After warm congratulations had been extended to them, bouquets of flowers were handed by some of the ladies present to both gentlemen. Before the proceedings of the court opened, the following address was handed to Mr. Harrison on behalf of the English and Scotch visitors present in Falcarragh:—

"To Henry Harrison, Esq.—Sir,—We desire to avail ourselves, as fellow countrymen and country women, of this opportunity, when you are brought for the first time before a Coercion Court in Ireland, of expressing our heartfelt admiration of your heroic efforts to succour the distressed and persecuted tenantry on the Olphert estate. We recognise in the 'crime' with which you are charged, and the self-sacrifice which you have displayed, the fulfilment of the highest duty of a Christian and a gentleman. We know that you do not admit the commission of any crime in the action for which you are now arraigned, namely, the charitable gift of a loaf of bread to a starving family, besieged by the bayonets of an unjust and tyrannical Government. We know that you glory as much as we do in the share of such a 'crime,' and we therefore beg to tender you, not our sympathies, but our sincere congratulations that the lot has fallen upon you to suffer in the cause of the poor and down-trodden peasantry of Ireland; and we trust that if you are this day dignified a 'criminal,' Great Britain may ever proudly boast of many such amongst her noblest sons."

The following address was presented to Mr. Conybeare with the same signatories:—

"To C. A. V. Conybeare, Esq., M.P.—Dear Sir,—You do not require words of ours to express our admiration of your noble and fearless labours on behalf of a persecuted people. They will ever feel under a deep obligation to you, and we shall always remember with a pardonable pride your efforts to relieve a starving peasantry. You lent your brilliant aid

to a people who have been persecuted for "conscience sake," and you will earn your recompense not from our moralising tyrants, but from Him who has promised that even a cup of cold water given in His name shall not go unrewarded."

An address was presented on behalf of the evicted tenantry to Mr. Conybeare and Mr. Henry Harrison, as follows:—

"Gentlemen,—We cannot allow this momentous occasion to pass without congratulating you on the fact that the feelings of pity and promptings of generosity which the sore privations and patient suffering of our people stirred up in your hearts should have their reward in the case of Mr. Harrison in arrest and imprisonment, and in that of Mr. Conybeare in a prosecution on a bogus charge of conspiracy. The civilized world knows that what you and Mr. Harrison did was ennobled into the sublimest of human virtues by Him who preached the Sermon on the Mount, and because public opinion has unequivocally condemned your imprisonment for giving food to the hungry, your mean and cruel persecutors, after keeping you seven days in a solitary confinement, resort to the subterfuge of treating you now as a conspirator. This is in keeping with Balfourian rule in Ireland. You are not the first who have suffered for 'righteousness' sake,' and we trust it will be a solace to you in all that you have gone through, and all that you may yet have to go through, to know that in thousands of homes in persecuted Donegal, and in the millions of Irish homes throughout the world, the names of Conybeare and Harrison will evoke the blessings and heartfelt prayers of a grateful Irish people.

"Signed, on behalf of the evicted tenantry of the Olphert Estate,

"JOHN BOYLE, C.C., Falcarragh.

"PETER KELLY, P.P., Dunfanaghy.

"PATRICK O'BRIEN, M.P., North Monaghan.

"PATRICK O'HEA, M.P., West Donegal.

"J. G. SWIFT MACNEILL, M.P., South Donegal."

THE EVIDENCE.

The evidence throughout the case was of a most instructive nature, the first incident being the unintentional admission of the Crown Solicitor that the Attorney-General had intervened, and furthermore that the real cause of the prosecution was the supplying of bread. "It would be proved," said he, "that Mr. Harrison *persisted in open daylight in supplying the tenants with tea, bread and sugar. That same night they repeated the work, and were detected.*" It would be gilding refined gold, or painting the lily, to comment on such an exquisite declaration. But he did not stop there. He preached a virtuous homily on the wickedness of the Plan of Campaign, and seemed almost to shed tears during his pathetic lamentation that "it had even compelled landlords to earn a living by means to which they had not hitherto been accustomed." Whether he was referring to the fact of certain campaigned landlords having found the billeting of military at their own residence a congenial and paying speculation is not quite clear, but he concluded by an appeal which was a singular mixture of stupidity and insolence. "When the evidence is concluded," said he, "I will ask you to *inflict such a sentence as will deter others from coming over here to play a similar part.*" The answer to the impertinent and silly threat has been found in the continuous stream of English men and women to Donegal.

IS THIS A SWINDLE?

John Wilkinson, Clerk of Falcarragh Petty Sessions, deposed to the signature of warrants by magistrates. Cross-examined by Mr. Conybeare, he said that he himself had been a tenant under Mr. Olphert, and his holding was about 35 statute acres. He and his brother had been evicted, but they managed to redeem within the statutable time, and sold the

holding to James McGinley for £150. After the bargain with McGinley he explained to Mr. Olphert, who made no objection. Subsequently he agreed with Mr. Olphert that the rent should be fixed at £15., and *this agreement was made after his bargain with McGinley, but before the purchase-money was paid, with the result that the tenant was deprived of the right to enter the Land Court for fifteen years.*

[It may here be mentioned that a few weeks after the trials, Mr. McGinley offered a fierce resistance to eviction. Before the siege began, he appeared at an aperture of his house and declared that his rent was not a fair one, but had been fixed by fraud; and that the place for which he had paid all that his son had earned in Australia, and all that he himself had earned in his lifetime, was not going to be surrendered without a struggle. When the house was at length captured, a ruffianly emergency man, *raising a hatchet, split open the head of this poor old man of seventy years, and he was carried out, mangled and bleeding, from the homestead which his own hands had raised.*

The fearful picture required a finishing touch, and it was soon supplied by the Removables, who, on May 20th, 1889, sentenced the brave old victim, with his son and nephew, to four months' imprisonment in Derry Gaol. His wife at this moment was lying on her bed of death. The emergency man was prosecuted by the tenant; the Crown not considering the splitting open of a tenant's head a matter of importance, but, by the decree of the faithful removables, he was triumphantly acquitted!!!]

SMASHING THE TENANTS' POSSESSIONS.

Longmore, clerk to the estate agent, admitted, on cross-examination, that no pains were taken to protect any of the humble furniture found in the houses of the poor tenants. When questioned on this point by Mr. Leamy, M.P., he responded: "Anything found inside was pitched out, and if it was smashed, well and good."

POLICE ESPIONAGE EXTRAORDINARY.

Sometime ago a news agency considered it an item worthy of record that a secret order had been issued to the police in a Russian village directing them to observe and report upon the movements of all strangers entering the district. In the course of the evidence of Sergeant Kenny, the interesting fact was elicited that it is his "duty" to ascertain all particulars about any stranger entering the hotel, or any other house in the village. The first incident of that day's proceedings was an exquisite commentary on the rule of coercion in Ireland. The magistrates had hardly taken their seats before Mr. Leamy, M.P., rose, and, as counsel for the defendant, entered an emphatic protest against the system of espionage which was being pursued in Falcarragh. *After the character of the evidence given on Saturday he found it necessary, he said, to ask his solicitor and clients to accompany him to the scene of Mr. Harrison's arrest, with a view to acquiring information for the purposes of the defence. None but the gentlemen concerned were with him. Notwithstanding this, their footsteps had been dogged by three policemen throughout the entire route, and at least one of the three—probably all of them—were to be called as witnesses for the prosecution. Such proceedings were, he thought, a gross scandal. After consultation, the magistrates expressed the opinion that no obstruction should be placed in the way of the defence.*

As a matter of fact, there is in existence in Ireland to-day a system of espionage with which no Continental Government could compete.

"STARVE THEM OUT."

Cross-examination elicited from Constable Sebrooke the statement that when he was patrolling in front of the besieged houses he received orders from Head-Constable Mahony not to allow any parcels to be put

into them; so that, despite all repudiations, the fact is now established *that a deliberate attempt was made to starve out the tenants.*

Mr. Conybeare, in cross-examining Sergeant Kenny, asked him to explain how it was that, if it was his duty "to watch all strangers," he did not watch a certain Mr. Butcher, inquiring whether the reason was to be found in the fact that Mr. Butcher was residing with Divisional Commissioner Cameron. The witness responded in the negative. Mr. Conybeare drew attention to the fact that no detectives had been set to watch Mr. T. W. Russell during that gentleman's tour around Falcarragh. The witness volunteered the explanation that there were many persons whom he would not set detectives to follow, but when asked for their names his memory failed him. Mr. Conybeare pressed for further information on the point, and amidst loud laughter the intelligent policeman responded that before he set detectives to watch anyone he "*considered the appearance of a man, and saw whether or not he was of respectable appearance and demeanour.*"

Evidently Mr. T. W. Russell came up to Sergeant Kenny's standard of "respectability," but the Sergeant did an unkind thing (though quite unintentional) in declaring that Mr. Russell was "*not long enough in the country to give the police time to watch him.*" That evidence did not augur well for the "investigations" of the flying visitor.

Neither did the result of the libel action subsequently taken against him by Mr. Patrick O'Brien, M.P., for alleging in the columns of the "Forger" that he had refused relief to a Protestant in Falcarragh on the ground of his religion. Mr. T. W. Russell was obliged to admit on oath in the witness box that the charge was a disgraceful one, that it was false, and that it should never have been made. And yet he had never withdrawn or apologised for it. *Ex uno disce omnes.*

"PASSES" UNDER THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

The cross-examination of Head-constable Mahoney was one of the very few events which serve to relieve the dreary monotony of an Irish Coercion Court. Owing to his famous performances in Gweedore it was known that he would be an object of the especial attention of both Mr. Leamy and Mr. Conybeare, and the expectations which were entertained as to a lively cross-examination were not in any degree disappointed. After extorting from the witness the fact that his definition on the previous day of the Plan of Campaign was materially different from that which he advanced at the trial of Father Stephens, he was questioned on the subject of his *having issued passports to enable inhabitants of the district of Gweedore to traverse the Queen's highway.* In his anxiety to get out of the difficulty, he advanced an explanation which only succeeded in affording another proof of the terrorism that must have been practised upon the people. His explanation was that "passes" were only intended to allow the bearers to pass through the cordon of riflemen which was surrounding the district. *In other words, as Mr. Leamy indignantly retorted, the country seemed almost in military possession, and even the riflemen, according to Head-constable Mahoney, were empowered to arrest every peasant on the roadway.* The interesting fact was also elicited that this officious policeman thought the issuing of passports under the British Constitution such a mere trifle that he did not even report it to his superior officers.

In cross-examination by Mr. Conybeare, the facts were drawn from a very unwilling witness that *the best food of the people was tea and dry bread, that meat was never used by them, and butter very seldom.* The fact is noteworthy that a whole countryside is in this state, and living in the most wretched of houses. It should also be borne in recollection that it is to exterminate such a wretched people that all the might and power of the English army is being requisitioned, and a battering-ram built *at the expense of English taxpayers.*

"LEGAL KNOWLEDGE OF WHICH THE LORD LIEUTENANT IS SATISFIED."

Mr. Conybeare was convicted and sentenced by the two Removables to three months' imprisonment, during which, according to their judgment, he should be treated as a burglar or wife beater. The beauties of the sentence are at once apparent. In the first place he was charged with conspiring with Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Harrison was charged with conspiring with Mr. Conybeare. The redoubtable Removables came to the extraordinary conclusion that Mr. Conybeare was guilty of illegally conspiring with Mr. Harrison, *but that Mr. Harrison was not guilty of conspiring with Mr. Conybeare!* In the second place, as I have already pointed out, he was convicted of conspiring with men who were in prison when he came to Donegal, *and of whom he never heard before.* In the third place he was convicted on evidence of events *which occurred when he was travelling in South Africa, and over a year before he came to Falcarragh.* And in the fourth place he was convicted for cheering for the Plan of Campaign, on the theory that as the Plan had been a judged illegal, *therefore to cheer for the Plan of Campaign must also be illegal.* By the same process of argument it could be clearly proved that cheering for marriage with a deceased wife's sister is a heinous illegality, and worthy of a similar period of compulsory association with the scum of society. Assuredly the ways of Removables are wonderful!

"THE SAME LAW IN IRELAND AND IN ENGLAND."

Mr. Conybeare has the satisfaction of being the first English member of Parliament sentenced under the Coercion Act. In England, Scotland, or Wales his guilt or innocence would have been determined by the ordinary law, administered "without fear, favour, or affection"; but in Ireland it was in virtue of an exceptional law, passed to stifle the opinions of political opponents, and only after gagging the constitutional representatives of the people. In England, Scotland, or Wales the question of his liberty would only be determined by the judgment of a jury of his peers; but in Ireland a man's liberty hangs upon the word of two magistrates who are the paid servants of the very men who direct these political prosecutions, and who are "removable" at the will of those directors. In a word, every man's liberty in Ireland lies in the hands of men deputed to discharge the duties of judges and jurors, but who, as judges, are not "independent of the executive," and, as jurors, are not "indifferently chosen." And if still further proof were wanted that the same law does not prevail in Ireland and in England, it is to be found in the fact that when Mr. Conybeare was being sentenced in Falcarragh to three months' imprisonment as an ordinary criminal for cheering for the Plan of Campaign, Mr. Abraham, M.P., was cheering for the Plan at meeting after meeting in Cornwall. If the "same law" prevails in all parts of Great Britain, why does not the Government test the "criminality" of Mr. Abraham before a jury of his peers in England, Scotland, or Wales?

Do the British people know the true meaning of Coercion in Ireland? Can they realise that there is in full swing in that unhappy country to-day a system of government before which that of Poland under Russia, or Venice under Austria, would pale into insignificance?

INHUMAN EVICTIONS ON THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.

In May the fell work of extermination was again resumed, and this time amongst the most miserable tenants of the estate. In Glasserchoo townland, the scene of these evictions, the greatest poverty exists, some of the people actually living on potatoes and seaweed. A London news-

paper compared the potatoes in size to marbles, and characterised the condition of the people as both lamentable and disgraceful. "Old men," it continued, "standing, so to speak, with one foot in the grave, tell of the pangs of hunger; whilst those who are yet young seem to have been stunted by privation, and to be growing aged before their time." Even Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P., described Glasserchoo as "*the most wretched portion of a most wretched district.*" It was amongst such a people that Mr. Olphert now sped his Crowbar Brigade, and the process of turning the poor people out of their wretched hovels (structures for which we would vainly seek a parallel in the territory of the Czar of All the Russias) was so barbarous and inhuman that a large number of English visitors immediately telegraphed to Her Majesty, congratulating her on the attainment of her seventieth birthday, but regretting that it was "being celebrated by her police and soldiery in Donegal in levelling the wretched homesteads of the most miserable of Her Majesty's subjects."

The people clung determinedly to their humble homes, and many (including mothers with tender babes) were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The sight of hundreds of armed men being kept at bay for hours by a few women was almost ludicrous betimes; but what an occupation for the British Army! In one case the "fort was held" by three women, and during the siege a ruffianly emergency man was seen taking deliberate aim through a hole in the roof at the three women, and hurling stones with great violence at them. When the poor creatures were led out prisoners, they vied with Mr. Conybeare in their enthusiastic "cheers for the Plan of Campaign." When complaint of the conduct of the emergency man was made to Mr. Cameron, "Deputy Divisional Commissioner," that important functionary replied that "he had neither seen nor heard of the alleged stone-throwing." But, unfortunately for his veracity, several policemen subsequently admitted the fact upon oath, and swore that Mr. Cameron ordered the emergency man to cease hurling stones.

Another instructive fact is that Mr. Fisher, Coercionist Member of Parliament and Private Secretary to Mr. Balfour, was admitted within the military cordon at the evictions, whilst Mr. O'Brien, M.P., and the representatives of the Press (with the exception of the reporter of the local Coercionist organ) were excluded.

It may be mentioned that after every eviction, the combined forces of police and military marched from the scene of action singing "Who Killed Cock Robin?" "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!" and similar choruses. Mr. T. D. Sullivan, M.P., speaking of the disgusting exhibition, declared that anything more brutal or revolting he had never known.

THE LANDLORD FEARS ARBITRATION.

The most conclusive proof of the landlord's position is his hostility to arbitration. When his friends were "sending round the hat" for him, Mr. Olphert wrote the following letter from Ballyconnell House, Falcarragh, under date of May 15th, 1889:—

"I am determined to fight out the Plan of Campaign, and will not yield in anyway unless with the approval of all my kind supporters. As to arbitration, I know nothing about it except what I read in the papers; nor have I ever been asked or consulted in any way. My son Robert has gone over to London; he is as much opposed to arbitration as myself."

It did not suit the book of the Coercionists that it should be thought Mr. Olphert was hostile to arbitration, and before this letter was published in the *Daily News* a Coercionist M.P., who is famous for his advocacy of the cause of the tenants in his own constituency and the cause of the landlords in all others, declared that Mr. Olphert was willing to arbitrate and had offered to do so. But unfortunately for the propagators of this canard, Mr. Conybeare's trial was proceeding at the time, and Mr. Olphert was summoned as a witness for the defence. The question was

put to him whether he had ever made any offer of concession or arbitration to his tenantry, and he replied "Certainly not." He saw the object of the question—when it was too late.

The tenantry, on the other hand, *have always been and are still willing* to leave to arbitration every claim they have made, and failing this they are equally prepared to continue the struggle for their rights. In October, 1888, Father MacFadden offered, in a public speech at Falcarragh, to lay the whole dispute before an arbitrator. He repeated that offer in the following month in a speech at Glasserchoo, and even on the very day on which the Ardsmore evictions opened in January, he approached the agent, but that gentleman refused to abate his previous demand.

The tenants were not eager for the struggle, and every reasonable man will say that they did everything in their power to avert it.

RACKRENTING EXTRAORDINARY.

Within the present generation the rent in Glasserchoo has been raised by no less than 200 per cent, and a case is quoted in one division of the townland where the rent is said to have been increased *by upwards of 1,000 per cent*. The rents were sustained at the increased figures till 1884, when the Land Courts adjudicated, but on only 18 cases, about 40 tenants being debarred from entering the court on the ground of sub-division, which sub-division was encouraged by the landlord. In some of the Land Court decisions the reductions were as heavy as 50 per cent, the average reduction per cent being 25. It deserves to be borne in recollection that the landlord element predominated on the Commission, and that one of the members dissented from the decision of the Commission on the ground that the reductions were inadequate. Recent descriptions of the land from a quarter hostile to the Nationalists prove the cruelty of casting out on the bleak roadside those who have tried by almost superhuman efforts to cultivate the mountain side and reclaim the sterile swamps of Gweedore. By the sweat of their brows the tenants have rendered fertile many a barren holding. If he be a benefactor who makes the two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, Gweedore can boast of a population of benefactors. It is for the rent of such land that Mr. Olphert is persecuting the miserable people, and it is to assist him in the collection of impossible rents that the might of the Army is requisitioned.

REMARKABLE COMPARISONS.

One of the most remarkable facts connected with the situation in Donegal is that in the first five months of the present year *more than one hundred and fifty committals under the Coercion Act* were made in Falcarragh alone. To anyone acquainted with the real meaning of "crime," the statement will not be surprising that in this same district a conviction for a *really* criminal offence would be an event of surpassing rarity.

Another noteworthy fact is that a conviction for a genuine crime is regarded by the people *an indelible disgrace*; whilst imprisonment under coercion is considered *the acme of a peasant's ambition*.

In former days the only weapons in the hands of the people for the redress of their wrongs were those of the assassin, as the descendants of the Leitrimis, Adairs, Nixons, and others can unfortunately testify. *But since the promulgation of the Plan of Campaign, the people have been drawn from the old path of vengeance and taught to rely upon peaceful combination*. The result is testified in the evidence of Mr. Removable Burke, who swore at the January trials that there was absolutely no crime in the district.

SOME FACTS FOR BRITISH TAXPAYERS.

It had been computed by a Government official that the entire

cost of the Government Plan of Campaign since January, 1888, has been about *ten thousand pounds!!* According to the parish priest of Glenna (who is a bosom friend of the landlord), *the entire rent in dispute is only one hundred pounds at the utmost, or 6d. per £ on the rental!!* He begged Mr. Olphert to forego this amount, but in vain. British taxpayers should note that to recover £100 of impossible rent, no less than £10,000 of their money has been squandered, *and the squandering is still continuing.*

This amount would go a long way towards buying out the entire interest of the landlord.

The battering-ram, a formidable "resource of civilisation," which Mr. J. A. Fox, in his excellent tract, "From Gallilee to Gweedore," has proved to be a relic of ancient warfare, is supplied *at the expense of the British people* for the levelling of the people's homesteads!

A shameless alliance exists between the Government and the landlords for the securing of unjust rents and for the persecution of the tenantry. The forces of the Crown are always at the beck and call of the landlord or his agent, whether at three o'clock in the morning or at any other hour.

CONTEMPT FOR THE LIBERTY OF THE SUBJECT.

The last scene was worthy of all that preceded it. In Great Britain and the Colonies the liberty of the subject is rightly guarded by the people with a very jealous eye, for it has been achieved by the blood of British patriots from the days of Magna Charta, and was snatched from the hands of enthroned tyrants. In Ireland the most cherished principles of a Constitution, which is the noble boast of every Briton, is treated to-day with a supercilious contempt far in excess of that which cost many a Sovereign his crown and life. These things are occurring day by day in Ireland, and cause many a blush to mantle in the cheeks of honest Englishmen. One day it is in Tralee, another in Clonmel, then in Galway, again in Tullamore, and still again in Mitchelstown. The following typical incident occurred in a Coercion Court in Falcarragh:—

At the preliminary investigation of the charges against the men and women who refused to surrender tamely their own homesteads (miserable though they were) at Glasserchoo, the "Removable" sentenced them *to be remanded to Derry Gaol for eight days*, and THEN to come up for trial; the Act only giving him power to remand for a period of eight days or under. When those prisoners were brought for trial before "Removables" Burke and Harvey, the solicitor for the defence drew attention to the fact that although remanded for only *eight days*, they had actually been detained, without further remand or warrant, for *thirteen days, or five days without warrant.* The "Removables" became indignant that the "time of the court" should be wasted on such a trifling matter, and they certainly "did not hesitate" to express that indignation. "*It is nothing to us, sir,*" said one of these model magistrates, "*It is nothing to us, sir, whether they are legally in custody or not, and please go on with the case.*" The solicitor insisted that not only had they been detained in illegal custody in gaol, but furthermore, that the warrant being expired they were not legally in custody at that moment. The answer was characteristic, and deserves to be noted by every freedom-loving Englishman. "*I tell you they are here before us, and we don't care how they came here, or whether they are in legal custody or not. I ask you again to go on with the case.*" Their solicitor repeatedly claimed to see the warrant on which they were detained, or to be supplied with the name of the officer who was responsible for their illegal detention; but all his very reasonable applications were curtly refused. As a last resource, he advised the prisoners to

attempt to leave the court, but they were detained by order of the magistrates, who seemed to think that no prisoner could possibly claim to be "removable" unless at the will of a superior "Removable."

What a spectacle! Many a less outrageous violation of the liberty of the subject has caused a revolution in other lands; and it is noteworthy that *a few days afterwards the Judges of the English Court of Queen's Bench unanimously issued a warrant for the arrest of a naval commander who had illegally detained in custody a man charged with theft and desertion.* Viewed in the light of such events, the assertion that "the same law prevails in Ireland and England" seems a huge joke.

EVICITION.

An Irish eviction must be seen before any idea can be formed of its horrors. Thirty-seven years ago John Bright declared in one of his Irish speeches:—"Ireland is a land of evictions, a word which I suspect is unknown in any other country." And, on another occasion, after declaring that "far more had fallen by eviction than ever fell by the sword in any war that England ever waged," he proceeded to characterise evictions as "a crop of nameless horrors, whose disastrous fruit will be gathered in years and generations yet to come." The poor tenant and his family having by almost superhuman efforts reclaimed the mountain land or swamp, the landlord steps in and in effect declares that the land is now worth double or treble the previous rent; and although the improvements were effected by the sweat and industry of the tenant, he either (in the choice diction of Lord Salisbury) "must pay or go." Thus, after probably a lifelong struggle to keep body and soul together, he finds himself a victim of the insatiable greed of a class which even the *Forging Times* once declared "for selfishness and cruelty has no parallel, and never had a parallel in the civilized world." After the best years of the lives of himself and his family have been spent in labouring and reclaiming the land, they are ruthlessly cast from their humble homestead; and, unless public charity come to their aid, starvation stares them in the face. The situation is assuredly one at which the commonest instincts of humanity revolt. Take, for example, the case of poor old Bessie Doochan, who afforded the latest proof in Donegal that Mr. Gladstone did not exaggerate when he described an eviction notice as "a sentence of death."

The poor woman was lying at the point of death when the crowbar brigade first arrived, but so thoroughly has the spirit of craven servility pervaded the official classes, that the dispensary doctor refused to certify her unfit for removal. The "Deputy Divisional Commissioner," however, acted upon his own responsibility, and refused to allow the eviction to proceed. But on reconsideration it was resolved that the "law" must be vindicated, and another tale of death was added to the horrors of the inhuman extermination. Tender and sympathetic hands bore her from her humble home, the last consolations of her religion were administered to her, and before long she had winged her flight to a better land. A few days more, and we stood by the open grave of the evicted tenant. The brief but impressive service was conducted by the gifted and earnest young curate, Father Boyle, who eloquently exhorted his hearers to live as she had lived, that the dread hour might not find them unprepared. A few heartfelt tears and earnest prayers, and she was laid to rest beneath the humble emblem of that Christianity of which her declining hours had seen such varying examples. I could quote dozens of equally painful cases which came under my own observation in Donegal, and have only to add that in many cases the people were saved from starvation by the sustenance so kindly and generously afforded by the good people of England and Scotland.

God knows it is hard to look tamely on at such atrocities. It is

an easy matter exhorting the poor victims to possess their souls in patience, but who can wonder if sometimes a fond father or loving husband, seeing his wife and family thus thrown on the roadside, should seek for consolation in the "wild justice of revenge"? Who can wonder if the Irish exile in America, whose first lesson of "law" was learned at the ruins of his dismantled homestead, should cherish in his mind that fierce and bitter resentment of which modern history affords us such painful results, and which bears such bitter fruits in that "fearful unrest" of which none of us can see the end?

CONCLUSION.

In the necessarily brief compass of a pamphlet, I have endeavoured to compress the salient features of the Donegal land struggle; and anyone—be he Liberal or Coercionist—must, after impartial investigation, come to the conclusion that the cause of the tenants is a just one, and that their leaders are enduring persecution "for conscience sake." It must be conceded that evictions are both inhuman and far-reaching in their consequences, that the whole course of the authorities in Donegal has been marked by a shameless alliance with the landlord, that the belief has been, and is being, ground into the people that the law is intended only to oppress them; and that to recover a paltry sum of money on this remarkable estate, an almost fabulous amount of British taxes has been squandered. The fear of the landlord to arbitrate is the vindication which the tenants could receive, and the most significant proof that the Plan of Campaign has not been unnecessarily enforced. After an unprecedented system of terrorism the combination is as firm as ever; and, although hundreds of people have been imprisoned, the flag is flying proudly still.

But, however, every righteous man may rejoice that might in this case has not conquered right, he cannot refrain from regretting that the law is daily being brought further into hatred and contempt in Ireland, that thousands and thousands of pounds of the British taxpayers' money have been absolutely squandered, and that the might of a great empire has been centred on the brutal work of giving to a whole countryside the appearance of the train of an invading army. As Dr. Johnson once declared, the policy of making government easy by driving away the population might be successful for a time, but would assuredly prove a short-sighted policy in the end. The weapon in the hands of the population is the only preventative of outrage and vengeance, and the only guarantee of triumph. That triumph must sooner or later be theirs, but it is sad to think that the path to victory is being strewn with broken hearts and ruined homesteads.

It is for the electors of England, Scotland, and Wales to say whether such things shall be possible after another election; whether the course of tyranny on the one hand, and vengeance on the other, is to be continued, or a newer and a brighter one inaugurated of justice and friendship on the one hand, and gratitude and contentment on the other. The electorate is the tribunal where the final appeal will lie, and on it will devolve the settlement of the question whether Government in Ireland is to be government by the paraffin-can and battering-ram, or government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." The present system does not admit of discussion; and, in the words of Lord Beaconsfield, "The system that will not bear discussion is doomed."

THE END.