

"The miseries which the wretched Irish endured from the vicinity of the royal forces, which prevented them from seeking any means of subsistence, were afflicting to the humanity of even their enemies. Thousands perished by famine; and every road and district was encumbered by their unburied carcases. The hideous resources, sought for allaying the rage of hunger, were more terrible even than such desolation."†

"They performed that service effectually; and brought the rebels to so low a condition, that they saw three children eating the entrails of their dead mother, upon whose flesh they had fed twenty days, and roasted it by a slow fire; and it was manifest, that some older people had been in that starving condition, that they murdered and eat children for a long time together, and were at last discovered and executed for that barbarity. In short the famine of Jerusalem did not exceed that amongst the rebels of Ireland."‡

"And as for the great companies of soldiers, gallowglasses, kerne, and the common people, who followed this rebellion, the numbers of them are infinite, whose blood the earth drank up, and whose carcases the fowls of the air and the ravening beasts of the field did consume and devour. After this followed an extreme famine; and such whom the sword did not destroy, the same did consume and eat out; very few or none remaining alive, excepting such as were fled over into England; and yet the stars in the towns was far spent, and they in distress, albeit nothing like in comparison to those who lived at large: for they were not only driven to eat horses, dogs, and dead carriages; but also did devour the carcases of dead men, whereof, there be numerous examples; namely, one in the County of Cork, where when a malefactor was executed to death, and his body left upon the gallows, certain poor people secretly came, cut him down, and did eat him; likewise, in the bay of Smeerewecke, or St. Mariewecke, the place which was first seasoned with this rebellion, there happened to be a ship to be there lost, through foul weather, and all the men, being drowned, were then cast on land.

"The common people, who had a long time lived on limpets, orewads, and such shellfish as they could find, and which were now spent; as soon as they saw these bodies, they took them up and most greedily did eat and devour them; and not long after, death and famine did eat and couseme them. The land itself, which, before those wars, was populous, well inhabited, and rich in all the good blessings of God, being plentiful of corn, full of cattell, well stored with fish and sundrie other commodities, is now become waste and barren, yielding no fruits, the pastures no cattell, the fields no corn, the aire no birds, the seas (though full of fish,) yet to them ye'lding nothing. Finally, every waie the curse of God was so great, and the land so barren both of man and beast, that whosoever did travell from the one end to the other of all Munster, even from Waterford to the head of Smeerewecke, which is about six score miles, he would not meet anie man, woman or child, saving in towns and cities; nor yet see anie beast but the very wolves, the foxes, and other like ravening beasts; many of them laie dead, being famished, and the residue being gone elsewhere."§

"Suche horrible and lamentable spectacles there are to behold, as the burninge of villages, the ruyn of churches, the wastinge of suche as have been good townes and castells; yea, the view of the bones and scullies of the ded subjects, who, partly by murder, partly by famyn, have died in the fields, as, in troth, hardlie any Christian, with drie eies could behold."¶

"1567. Never sawe I a more waste and desolate lande, no, not in the confines of other countries, where actual warre hath contynuallic been kepte by the greatest princes in Christendomme, and there herde I suche lamentable cryes and dolefull complaynts, made by that small remayne of poor people which yet are left."‡

†Leland, II. 457

‡Cox, 449.

§Holinshed. VI. 455

¶Sydney, I. 21.

‡ibid

Moryson, having stated that the submissions of the Irish were at length received, informs his reader, that it took place 'partly out of human commiseration, having, with their own eyes, daily seen the lamentable state of the country, where we found every where men dead of famine.' He adds 'we have been credibly informed, that in the space of a few months, there were above three thousand starved in Tyrone.'!!!‡

Spenser, the poet, who had been eye witness of these horrors, give the following advice. Having proposed, that twenty days should be allowed to the "rebels" to come in, he continues:

"Afterwards I would have none received, but left to their fortune and miserable end; my reason is, for that those, which will afterwards remaine without, are stout and obstinate rebels such as will never be made dutiful and obedient, nor brought to labour or civill conversation, having once tasted that licentious life, and being acquainted with spoyle and outrages, will ever be ready for the like occasions, so as there is no hope of their amendment or recovery, and are, therefore needfull to be cut off.

"The end will, (I assure me,) bee very short, and much sooner than it can be in so great a trouble, as it seemeth, hoped for, although there should be none of them fallen by the sword nor bee slain by the sword: yet being thus kept from manurance, and their cattle from running abroad, by this hard restraint, they would quickly consume themselves, and devour one another; the proofe whereof I saw sufficiently in these late warres of Munster; for notwithstanding that the same was a most rich and plentiful country, full of corn and cattle, that you would have thought they should have been able to stand long, yet, in one yeare and a halfe they were brought to such wretchedness, as that any stony heart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glynes they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legges could not beare them, they looked like anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eate the dead carriages happy where they could find them, yea, and one another snoue after, insomuch as the very carcases they spared not to scrape out of their graves; and if they found a plot of water cresses or shamrocks, there they flocked as to a feast for the time; yet not able to continue long therewithall; that in short space there was none almost, and a most populous country SUDDAINLY LEFT VOYD OF MAN AND BEAST."§

We shall quote another extract, to shew that in later times the ascendancy had not forgotten the lessons which their fathers had taught them.

"About the yeas 1652 and 1653. the plague and famine had so swept away whole countries, that a man might travel twenty or thirty miles, and not see a living creature, either man, beast, or bird: they being either all dead, or had quit these desolate places, our soldiers would tell stories of where they seen a smock, it was so rare to see either smock by day, or fire or candle by night. And when we did meet with two or three poor cabins, none but very aged men, with women and children, and those with the prophet might have complained, ('We are become as a bottle in the smock, our skin is black like an oven, because of the terrible famine,') I have seen those miserable creatures plucking stinking carrion out of a ditch, black and rotten, and been credibly informed, that they digged corpses out of the grave to eat: but the most tragical story I ever heard, was from an officer commanding a party of horse, who, hunting for tories in a dark night, discovered a light, which they supposed to be a fire, which the tories usually made in those waste countries, to dress their provisions, and warm themselves; but drawing near, they found it to be a ruined cabin, and, besetting it round, some did alight, and peeping at the window, where they saw a great fire of wood, and a company of miserable old women and children sitting round about it, and betwixt them: and the fire, a dead corpse lay broiling, which, as

‡Moryson—apud Curry. I. 50.

§Spenser. 165.