

# THE CROMWELL OF KERRY! A VISIT TO THE IVERAGH ESTATE OF LORD LANDOWNE.

BY CHARLES RUSSELL, C. C., M. P.  
CONTINUED.

The part of the Lansdowne estate to which I desire next to advert lies in the Iveragh Barony, some miles to the east of Cahirciveen, in the Follimore district. This is a wild, boggy, uninhabited tract of country. But even here fertility has been pushed by arduous effort, long continued, up the bleak hillsides.

The valley below discloses an enormous tract of low-lying boggy land, with the river Foil passing through it, and appearing to afford ready means for the reclamation and drainage of a large district now profligate and barren. A further portion of the estate lies beyond Cahirciveen, on the coast road to Kenmare, near Waterville. Both portions possess many characteristics in common. The houses are in appearance inferior to those on the Kenmare portion of the property, otherwise there is little difference.

While, however, the same feeling in reference to the agency of the estate seems to exist here, I was somewhat surprised to find that a freer tone of criticism and a more independent attitude was assumed by the tenants than in the Kenmare neighborhood. There they seemed literally afraid to call their souls their own. It is no exaggeration to say they spoke with bated breath, as if afraid anger or bailiff might hear them. Here they spoke out their complaints with greater freedom and boldness. The greater distance from the agent's eye perhaps accounted for the difference. Lord Lansdowne was unknown to them. The few who had ever seen him had done so upon the occasion of his attaining his majority. Mr. Trench had only been there once in the last five years, and then his visit had been short. Neither landlord nor agent had visited them in the time of their distress, although Canon Brosnan, the parish priest of Cahirciveen, had given timely written warning to Lord Lansdowne that the condition of his Cahirciveen tenantry was likely to be one of great suffering and privation.

Practically the control of this part of the estate is in the hands of bailiffs, of whom the principal one lives at Waterville. I was unable to find that any considerable money had been laid out by the landlord, and, where it had been, in the pound had been added to the rent as a permanent increase. Some small amount of drainage work within the last few months had indeed been done with the public money, borrowed, I believe, on the favorable terms of which I have already spoken. The rents here are unquestionably very very high, much higher than those in the neighborhood of Kenmare, as compared with Griffith's valuation.

Valuation. £ s. d. £ s. d.  
12 0 0 ..... 14 0 0  
16 0 0 ..... 9 10 0  
21 4 0 ..... 14 11 0  
21 10 0 ..... 10 18 0  
21 10 0 ..... 14 1 0  
15 0 0 ..... 8 17 0  
18 1 0 ..... 10 10 0  
8 10 0 ..... 4 15 0  
18 10 0 ..... 10 7 0  
18 6 0 ..... 11 15 0  
14 5 0 ..... 7 15 0  
14 7 0 ..... 5 0 0  
14 7 0 ..... 8 10 0  
18 0 0 ..... 11 5 0  
14 0 0 ..... 8 0 0  
14 7 0 ..... 7 5 0

These rents have been increased three times within the past twenty-five years. The story of these increases is a remarkable one, and to it I desire especially to call the attention of those who regard the sacred principle of freedom of contract renders them unwilling to interfere by statute with the relations of landlord and tenant. But first I should like to tell the story of how these tenants bled from their own lips.

"I was born on the land; so was my father before me. Rent £35 6s.; valuation £33. Rent used to be £26. It was raised twenty years ago to £44 6s., and it was again raised four or five years ago to £55 6s. I drained about twenty acres of the bog without getting a penny from the landlord. I was poor barren land. I removed a lot of rocks and stones; I built out-offices myself, and did not get a penny from the landlord. I asked for, but did not get, slates or timber. There is a hanging year's rent on the estate, and no tenant on the property can trace when it began. I am forty-five years of age and I heard my father say that he did not remember when the hanging year's rent began.

"I was processed in November, 1867, for the rent due in May, and I had to pay, besides the rent, £2 10s. for costs. I wrote to Mr. Trench saying that times were very bad, and asking for some little time to pay, and his reply was that I would have to pay it at once.

"Rent £16. Valuation £9 10s. In 1855 my rent was £11. It was then raised to £12 10s. Five or six years ago it was again raised to the present rent. I built a cow-house in 1877, the landlord gave me some timber and slates. I drained about three acres of land, and reclaimed altogether about six acres of the bog. Until this year I got no money for drainage.

"Rent £21 4s. Valuation £14 11s. Tenant forty years. Rent used to be £21. The first rise was about twenty-five years ago, 3s. in the pound. Three years afterwards it was raised 3s. 6d. in the pound more, and the last time, five years ago, it was raised 3s. in the pound.

"Rent £16. Valuation £12 18s. Tenant twenty-five years. Rent then £10. Raised then 3s. in the pound. Three years after raised 3s. 6d. in the pound, and five or six years ago 3s. in the pound. The last 5s. was reduced to 3s., as I could not pay the extra 5s.

"Most of my land was all barren ground, but I drained it, built on it, and removed large rocks and stones from my lands, and made fences, but I got no assistance. Till this year I had no drainage money. I had to sign an agreement in the presence of the agent, to pay, in addition to my rent, in the pound or more if it was wanted, for every pound expended in draining my holding. There was drainage done on my farm about twenty years ago, and I was paid nine-pence a perch, which is about half the cost, the

other half I had to bear myself. It was since that the last addition to my rent was made."

"Rent £11 16s. Valuation £14 1s. Forty-eight years of age, and twenty years a tenant. (Describes rises of rent as previous tenants had done.) I drained a deal of the land myself."

"Rent £15. Valuation £8 7s. I am eleven years in occupation; father and grandfather there before me. I was processed for the November rent last May I had to pay it and £15s. costs. I was sick at the time, and my father-in-law had to pay my rent for me. My whole family was also sick at the time.

"I built a house two years ago, and got no allowance from the landlord. In the June Sessions there were about fifty processes by Lord Lansdowne on his Iveragh estates, where there are about 160 tenants altogether."

"Rent £18 1s. Valuation £10 10s. Same raisings of rent as other tenants. I have five or six acres, made a road to my house, and removed a good deal of stone and rocks from my lands. The young men and young women are leaving the parish for America. I am sure near 100 left this year. I would go if I could sell my interest in my farm."

"Rent £28 10s. Valuation £15s. Rent eleven years ago £6 16s. My father drained the land; it was all swamp and bog. I built a house and got no allowance."

"Rent £18 10s. Valuation £10 7s. I was evicted May 27, 1880. The ejectment was served in October 1876. I owed then three half-years' rent, besides the hanging year. I was put back as a care taker. Since Lord Lansdowne attained his majority he has not been seen on the estate except once. The people are afraid to do anything. They are afraid their rent will be raised."

"Aged 78, son 32, farmer tenant fifty years. Six acres grass, rent at first £5 10s. Till this year nothing for drainage. First rise 3s. in the pound, about 1858; second, 3s. 6d. in the pound, 1862; third rise, 5s. in the pound, 1876. Valuation £17 10s. Valuation £8 10s. Have done about £30 worth of drainage, and have been paid £16 up to this time. Five per cent is to be added to the rent. Question, 'Is that to be for ever?' Answer, 'Oh! as long as water flows.' Son built a house in 1875. Cost about £25. Asked for timber, got no answer. Reclaimed about four acres, and drained them. Two brothers in America and three sisters. Got some help from them. Could not have stood up but for this help, and besides I married a fortune, £60. Question, 'On what do you live?' Answer, 'We live on potatoes and Indian meal, with some milk. We cannot afford to eat butter.'

"We cannot eat meat more than once in the year, about Christmas, and not always that same, and before now (this was spoken quite seriously) a piece of an old goat from the mountain side was all we had in that way. Trench has given no abatement in the rent."

"Aged 40. Succeeded my father-in-law about eighteen years ago. Same rises of rent as last tenant. Rent £18. Valuation £11 5s. Drained about £30 worth this year. Received £14. Asked for pay in the pound each year on the rent. Question, 'How long is that to go on?' Answer, 'Oh! for ever. It all lies with the landlord; that is what we are told. It is easy to raise the rent, but it never falls again.'

"I made a road, and was promised an allowance for it. The driver (a bailiff) put 2s. a perch value on it, but I was not allowed 2s., and had to go to Kenmare, walking there and back, and lost two days over it. I owe no rent till next November. Question, 'But is there not a hanging year?' Answer, 'Oh, yes, but that is nothing, so long as I can keep going. If I could not keep going it is then it would come against me.'

"I succeeded my father-in-law, but I paid about £80 for the land when I came in. My rent was £12 17s. It is now £14 17s. Valuation £7 6s. I am also charged 5s. for an out-tenure on the mountain, which I do not want, but I have to pay all the same. I made a road across my land and fenced it. I also built a cowhouse, and got no allowance. Question, 'But has the landlord done nothing for you?' Answer, 'Oh, devil the thing but draw his rent and raise it! I owe no rent till November.' Question, 'But how about the hanging year?' Answer, 'Sure, that is beyond the memory of any man; that goes for nothing, so long as I can keep my head up.' Question, 'But when you came in was it due?' Answer, 'Oh, not at all; but my receipt was dated back.'

The following case illustrates the dealing in reference to the estate hanging year:—Rent £18 6s. Valuation £11 10s. The farm is in my mother's name. In the early part of December, 1879, she owed the hanging year up to May, 1879, and the half year to November, 1879. On December 18, 1879, a civil bill was sent me against her for this rent. A notice was printed on the back of it that if the amount was paid, with 10s. costs, within ten days, all proceedings would be stayed. Within ten days the half year's rent—that is, all that was due excluding the old hanging year—was sent to Trench. His answer was:

"If you send me the full rent named in the ejectment and costs I will take it. If you only pay up to November, 1879, you must send the balance of costs, £1 5s. 3d. Meanwhile, I return your letter and insufficient draft. I am, &c., TOWNSEND TRENCHE."

Now, this money was tendered, as the dates show, within ten days, during which the costs are by law limited to 10s., and yet Mr. Trench seems to make use of this claim for the dormant year's rent as the ground for demanding a wholly illegal sum for costs. At last the tenants went to Kenmare to endeavor to obtain some leniency, and ultimately had to pay the half year's rent of £9 3s., and for cost £2 10s. 3d. The following is, succinctly told, the history of these successive rises of rent, by one who has good reason to know the story well.

"The late Mr. William Stuart Trench, the father of the present agent, Mr. Townsend Trench, succeeded to the management of the Lansdowne estate in Kerry in 1849-50. When he came to Kerry he found the tenantry in general in poverty, and their rents excessive. He

recommended Lord Lansdowne to set on foot a large scheme of emigration, and let the lands anew to the tenantry at the Government valuation. This suggestion was seconded by the then Lord Lansdowne, and the rent was then fixed at Griffith's valuation, with the addition of 3s. in the pound—that is, 15 per cent, added to cover half poor-rates, and, to use Mr. Trench's own words on the occasion, 'the cost of collection of the rent and incidental expenses.' The rent remained fixed as above for about three years, when some weeks before gale day the bailiff went abroad, and the tenants, an entry, warning them to take to the office money for rent, as a rise was decided upon at headquarters. This order had, of course, to be complied with, and the general rise took place, varying in some cases from 4s. to 5s. in the pound. This occurred, I believe, in 1855, with a verbal promise to the tenantry that no further rise should be put on. Eight years more passed away, and there came an improvement in the general condition of the people, and with it came the bailiff's warning to the tenantry to take more money to the office, the rise this time varying from 4s. to 5s. in the pound. Things then went on in this way up to 1874, when the final and crushing blow was dealt to the unfortunate tenants, in the shape of a fourth rise of 5s. in the pound, and all this within the space of twenty-five years! The last part of the story, I believe, is based on the tenantry in the Kenmare district, where the bulk of the Lansdowne estate is situated. The serfs in this (Cahirciveen) part of the property were heightened into compliance by the threat that Lord Lansdowne would sell that part of his property if they refused to pay the rise. The people had so much experience of the hardships and horrors experienced by their neighbors at the hands of 'gombeens,' or small land speculators, that they were left no option but that of saying, 'For God's sake don't sell the property to the gombeens, and we will strive to keep our families and ourselves in poverty and rags.' Now, with this unhappy rise of rent came the first of a succession of bad years, bad in every way for the farmers. In 1876 the people had to sell their land earlier than usual. In 1877 they had not many to spare for sale. In 1878 in many cases they had no cattle at all, and in 1879 many had to run away owing debt alike to the bank, the shopkeeper and the landlord."

It is worth pondering on this story. See the easy fashion in which the rise of rent is accomplished. No independent valuation, no mutual negotiation. The mandate of the agent goes forth. Some may grumble even grumble in a loud voice, but it is useless. They are practically without alternative, and must submit. It is worth my mind positively shocking was told to me by a gentleman, in every way reliable, in reference to this last rise. On that occasion, when Mr. Trench had issued his commands to his bailiffs, and had condescended to notify the rise to some of the tenantry, he said to me, 'I have done a good day's work. I have put £10,000 in Lord Lansdowne's pocket.' In other words, he had additionally taxed the energies and the industry of Lord Lansdowne's Iveragh tenants to the tune of £500 a year, which, capitalized at twenty years' purchase, and the sum of £10,000. Once more, I ask, is it remarkable that in Ireland cultivation is backward, that poverty abounds, that discontent is widespread, that social progress is slow, that man so little responds to the efforts of Nature for his advantage, that, in conditions like these, thrift and industry do not flourish?

HALF HOURS WITH THE SAINTS.  
Saint Abraham.

THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.—Abraham, the solitary, after having disposed of his vast property and having lived in a deep retreat near Edessa, in Mesopotamia, when the bishop of Edessa consecrated him as bishop, and invested him with the mission of converting the inhabitants of a neighboring town, who were still pagans. Abraham undertook this out of a spirit of obedience, and, God aiding, succeeded in the undertaking, but not without vast efforts, and not without having been thrice on the eve of martyrdom. He then withdrew to his beloved solitude, but was obliged to leave it once again. A niece whom he tenderly loved had abandoned her home, and given herself up to evil courses. When, after two years' seeking and prayer, the pious solitary had at length discovered her abode, he assumed a disguise, and went to visit her. So soon as he made himself known she gave way, while pouring out her sorrow, and, of her own accord, implored him to save her from her life. St. Abraham died towards 370.

MORAL REFLECTION.—It is the duty of every Christian to labour for the conversion of sinners, because all partake of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, says the apostle St. Peter: "To declare His virtues, who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light."—(1 Peter ii. 9.)

Saint Patrick.

THE VENGEANCE OF SINNERS.—Patrick, trained in a Christian manner in his father's house, was captured by pirates and sold into slavery in Ireland. What he had to endure from the hunger, nakedness and ill-treatment attaching to the condition of a slave, may be more easily conceived than described. Patrick, however, in the midst of a people then involved in the darkness of paganism, gave himself up to fervent prayer, and his supplications were heard, for he regained his liberty, which had been the main object of his vows. He subsequently passed three years in France, in the monastery of Marmoutier, where he was greatly joy, consecrated him bishop, and sent him on his journey, accompanied by other evangelical labourers. After thirty years of toil, zeal, and devotion, favored

by the benediction of Heaven, St. Patrick converted almost the whole of Ireland to the Christian faith. He died about the year 364.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Leave vengeance to the Lord," says the great apostle; "be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good."—(Rom. xii. 21.)

Saint Cyril.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROPHECIES.—St. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, is one of the greatest prelates that the Church has ever possessed; pious and learned in all sciences human and divine; inflexible in the doctrines of faith, and, for that reason, twice sent into exile; benevolent and charitable beyond measure, abounding with a truly apostolic—such, in brief, was this holy bishop. His episcopate was marked by two great events,—first, the appearance of a luminous cross above Mount Calvary, which was visible to the whole of Judea and Samaria; and next, the accomplishment of the prophecy of Jesus Christ relative to the temple of Jerusalem, Julian the Apostate, having wished to rebuild it in order to set the Gospel at naught, the Jews were all jubilant and the Christians borne down with dread; but Cyril reassured them, and, scolded at the enterprising emperor, and, at last, by the intercession of the apostles, the apostate having died, the undertaking was suspended, and since then never has there been a stone upon a stone. St. Cyril died in 386.

MORAL REFLECTION.—If our faith grow timid, those words of the Divine Master should suffice to calm our disquietude, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my word shall not fail."—(Matt. xxiv. 35.)

When the renowned Mrs. Siddons was playing in Dublin, she, as "Lady Macbeth," came to that part where a drum sounds, and she exclaims, "A drum! a drum! Macbeth do come!" There was some difficulty or neglect in obtaining the necessary instrument, and so, to her amazement, a trumpet sound was immediately sent how about it would be to play drum while the well-known sound of the other met the ears of the vast audience, so she said, "A trumpet! a trumpet!" and stopped short amid breathless silence, not knowing how to rhyme it, when a voice from the gallery called out, "Macbeth do come!" at which the house broke out into one peal of laughter and applause, and the tragedienne advanced to the foot-lights and bowed her acknowledgments for relief.

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