

There was an extensive collection of the best society in Ballingoole in former times; whist parties — concluding with very potent negus, goloshes and lanterns—substantial dinners, with weighty joints, strawberry fêtes, and hunt breakfasts, were of common occurrence. To tell the truth, “the town” was somewhat exclusive, and secretly turned up its nose at most of the county folk; but now, alas! times were changed, and the county turned up its nose at the town.

As years went on, ancient inhabitants who remembered the illuminations after Waterloo, and told anecdotes of George the Fourth, had been gradually gathered to their family vaults, and there was no inducement for other gentry to take their places. Some of the finest houses were let in tenements, and displayed small washings fluttering from upper windows. Several stood empty, with rusty area-railings, and shattered panes. Over the late abode of a baronet, hung three weather-beaten golden balls, and the mansion in which Mrs. General Moriarty once held her famous routs and card parties, thinks itself very lucky to be no worse than the police barrack!

Yes, the big houses now merge into shops, the shops into one-storeyed cottages, and the cottages into squat mud hovels, at the foot of the hill, down which Ballingoole has been going in more ways than one, for many years past. At the head of the street, two residences are still let to genteel tenants. Mrs. Finny, a doctor's widow, and her daughter; and Miss Dopping, an eccentric old maid, occupy the best houses in the place, for the traditional old song. This is a consideration with Mrs. Finny, a lady with a limited income; but Miss Dopping is rich, and could afford herself a house in Park Lane, if so disposed. She is the last of her family, the sole legatee of more than