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PROSELYTISM IN THE WEST OF IRELAND.

LETTER II.

(From the Special Commissioner of the Weekly Telegraph.)

THE CLIFDEN DISTRICT—APPEARANCE OF THE COUNTRY—SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

The town of Clifden is twenty-six miles from Oughterard, of which I treated in my last communication. The road lies through the heart of Connemara, but until the Half-way-house is reached, the features of the country present a somewhat bleak and uninteresting appearance. We have not penetrated the lofty mountain range, and there is nothing to break the monotony of the journey but a continuation of lakes, bog, and rocks; but when we have traversed twelve miles of road from Oughterard, we arrive at Flynn's Hotel, or the Half-way-house, as it is called. There the scenery is splendid. A beautiful lake, with its wooded islands, lie beneath the hotel in the valley. On the opposite side are the Mountains of Moam, and the Moum Pass, which leads, by the head of Lough Corrib, into Joyce's Country, where the scenery of lake and mountain will amply repay the tourist. The road to Clifden sweeps under the base of the lofty Benevola range, or the "Twelve Pins" of Connemara, whose grey summits, rising to a height of nearly three thousand feet, give an air of grandeur to the surrounding scenery of glen and lake, which it is difficult to describe. We pass on, charmed with the various objects of attraction which arrest the attention at every bend of the road, until we reach the Lake of Ballinahinch, formerly the residence of the late Tom Martin, whose princely estate has passed for ever from his family, and whose race is now extinct.

THE MARTIN ESTATE.

Ballinahinch is a lovely spot, but it by no means equals in scenic attraction many other portions of the property. The traveller is struck with the great facilities which exist for improving the vast expanse of bog and moor-land, which slope down from the mountains to the edge of the lakes, which seem to be a sort of arterial drainage, provided by nature for the reclamation of extensive districts, which are now alone occupied by the snipe or the partridge. For every house we see standing there are, at least, ten unroofed. A great portion of the Martin estate is unoccupied and unstocked. One will sometimes see the traces of a cultivated farm, and discover, by the enclosed fields and yet perceptible ridge and furrow, that busy labor once found employment there; but the house is gone—not even a stone left to mark its site—and no living thing remains to tell that the deserted farm once held a human habitation. Robinson Crusoe could not have been more lonely on his desert island than a person must feel on some of the exterminated portions of the Martin estate. The foot-print in the sand brought to him a sort of joy; but the only traces of human life which we frequently meet in the wilds of Connemara—the lone walks of the evicted cabin—fill the heart with despair, and tell us, in language not to be mistaken, that the old hospitable race are gone for ever. The Martin property has furnished a mass of pauperism to every poor law union in which it is situated, whilst large arrears are still due on the estate. The Law Life Assurance Company create poverty by their evictions, but they are slow in contributing to its support. The only tenantry that could the estate profitable—the only people that could contrive to raise a rental and a living from the rugged mountain and ungrateful soil, have been sent adrift, and how their places are to be supplied is rather mysterious. Scotch or English farming is entirely out of the question in a country where a field is only, in some instances, a few perches square, with huge boulders projecting above the surface of the scanty earth. Spade culture alone can be employed throughout the greater part of Connemara, and the consequence is, that the new settlers who have ventured on the experiment found farming a losing speculation. The original inhabitants only could make a property, like the Martin estate, valuable. Their mode of agriculture is alone adapted to the nature of the ground. They are hardy toilers and contented partakers of the lowest fare. They would live and enjoy comparative prosperity where an English or Scotch settler in Connemara would starve. To drive the inhabitants of this district into exile or the poorhouse was the most fatal policy which the managers of the Law Life Assurance Estate could have pursued. The property is nearly waste, except where the agent has it filled or stocked with his numerous herds, or where Patsy King, the driver, feeds his flocks on the evicted farms. To replace the former tenantry with a plantation of peasantry will be utterly impossible. There are few men accustomed to the enjoyments of civilised society will be satisfied to settle down amid seclusion,

and bear the burden of pauperism in Connemara, and shut themselves out, as it were, from "the breathing world," unless they are deep in love with shooting and fishing and have besides a small taste of the misanthrope in their composition. However, these evictions may have contributed to ruin the property and embarrass the Poor Law Unions in connexion with it, there is one thing it was calculated to improve, and that is, the trade of proselytism. The unfortunate creatures were exterminated by the agent of the company; they sought shelter in the poorhouse, but the guardians of at least one union closed the doors against them, and they had no alternative but to accept relief from the proselytising missionaries, and conform to their rules. As the guardians of the Clifden Union discharged the homeless and the fatherless from the poorhouse, and deprived them of the last sanctuary which the law afforded, the agents of proselytism were hovering around the streets, to seduce them to their schools by promises of clothing and a supply of better rations than they got in the workhouse, even when open to them. Numerous instances could be adduced to prove that the evictions of the Law Life Assurance Company have inflicted serious injury on the other well managed properties of the Clifden Union, and contributed to the spread of proselytism; but I will content myself with giving one townland as an illustration. When we find that this exterminated townland has been made the stronghold of proselytism in this district—that a Priests'-Protection-Society priest has been located thereon as a proselytising parson—and that a large farm has been attached to his school, we must infer that the eviction of the tenant and the perversion of the faith hold the same relation as cause and effect.

DERRYGIMLA.

The townland of Derrygimla contains 2,636 statute acres, now valued under the poor law at only £225 a-year. It is situated in the Errislannan Electoral Division of the Clifden Union, and forms part of the estates of the late Mr. Thomas Martin, who died in the year 1847.

Soon after the death of that gentleman, the Law Life Assurance Company of London, as mortgagees of his estates, entered into possession of Derrygimla, and into actual receipt of the rents. They are now the owners, having become purchasers in the Incumbered Estates Court.

The following facts and figures, taken from public sources, will assist to exhibit some of the recent history of that townland:—

The Government census of June 1841 states that the population then on Derrygimla, numbered 923 souls. This population continued to increase up to the year 1846, since which period it has become greatly reduced, owing to the effects of the potato failures, and the numerous ejectments which have been brought by the agents of the company against the occupiers of that ill-fated property.

The last Government census shows that, previous to the 30th of March, 1851, the population of Derrygimla had been reduced to 97 families, comprising 494 individuals—being 499 persons fewer than its population in June, 1841.

After the taking of the last census, the Law Life Assurance Company caused notices, dated 9th April, 1851, to be served on the relieving officer of the Errislannan Electoral Division, of their intention to eject from the townland of Derrygimla fifty six families, comprising 240 individuals. Pursuant to these notices, numerous ejectment decrees were soon afterwards executed by the Sheriff of the county of Galway. In many cases the occupiers were dispossessed altogether; in other instances they were suffered to re-enter, as mere care-takers, subject to be removed again at any moment.

One result of these evictions was, that on the week ending the 28th of June, 1851, the number of pauper inmates of the Clifden workhouse, from the single townland of Derrygimla, was 130 persons; whilst the total number of pauper inmates from the ten remaining townlands of the Errislannan electoral division was only sixty-seven. Those ten townlands belong to different proprietors, and do not form any portion of the Martin estate.

Whilst this state of things existed, the Law Life Assurance Company, on the 1st of July, 1851, served additional notices on the relieving officer, of their intention to eject twelve other families, comprising forty-nine individuals, from the same townland of Derrygimla. Pursuant to this last batch of notices, other ejectments were executed, and additional paupers thrown on the union for support.

Contemporaneous with these ejectment proceedings, the proselytising movement was carried on amongst the starving and houseless people of Derrygimla; and in the summer of 1851 there was erected on that townland the new "Jumper church," now in charge of the Rev. Roger Ryder, formerly a Roman Catholic curate.

Many of the habitations formerly on Derrygimla, have been demolished; but some of their roofless walls still remain to tell the tourist and the stranger that the desolating march of extermination, which has quenched many an Irish hearth, passed over that remote district. No less than thirty-seven ruins of uninhabited dwelling-houses were counted during a walk over that townland, on the 24th of September, 1852.

Notwithstanding the increased charges for pauperism, caused by all the evictions from Derrygimla, it appears that large arrears of poor rate are due by that townland. The last rate for the Errislannan electoral division was struck on the 16th of June, 1852, at 1s. 6d. in the pound. There is now (October 14th 1852) a sum of £35 1s. 1d. due for poor rates out of Derrygimla, being the entire of the last rate, £16 17s. 6d., and a further sum of £18 3s. 7d., the arrears of former rates. The whole arrears of poor rates now due off the other ten townlands of the Errislannan electoral division are only £4 14s. 4d. It thus appears that the burden of pauperism created by the evictions of the Law Life Assurance Company from the townland of Derrygimla is thrown upon the owners and occupiers of the other ten townlands, notwithstanding numerous applications and remonstrances which have, during the last two years, been addressed to the Law Life Assurance Company in London, and to their local agent in Ireland.

It may be added that if any one of the foregoing facts or figures be incorrect, in any particular, it admits of immediate contradiction and disproof, from a simple reference to public documents, and a mere inspection of the desolated townland of Derrygimla.

The management of another estate in the neighborhood of Derrygimla forms such a striking contrast to that of the Law Life Assurance Company that we cannot avoid referring to it here. The property of Mr. Hyacinth D'Arcy, which extends over a large district, was lately purchased by Mr. Eyre, of London. His agent, Mr. J. Scully, on arriving at Clifden Castle, devoted himself earnestly to improvements on the estate. He re-allotted the farms, abolishing the rendale system, and giving to each tenant a distinct portion. Every inducement was held out to them for cultivating and improving their farms. Better houses were substituted for the wretched cabins in which they formerly dwelt: and the result is, that not a single pauper from this estate is now in the poorhouse, nor is there one penny of poor rates due upon it. The estate formerly belonged to a gentleman who was a proselytiser from conviction, and there are still some traces of the system to be found upon it, just as weeds will remain unradicated in the best cultivated fields. The Clifden estate, under the management of Mr. Scully, is a model which it might be well for the Law Life Assurance Company to imitate. They might do so with advantage to themselves and benefit to the ratepayers of the surrounding properties, who are compelled to support the pauperism which their evictions create.

Proselytism is as little known among the tenantry over whom Mr. Scully presides, as it is in the most prosperous portions of Ireland; thereby affording another corroborative illustration that, like all other seductive vices, it preys and only thrives on the misery and destitution of its victims.

ORIGIN AND CAUSES OF PROSELYTISM IN CLIFDEN.

The first hold which Jumperism obtained in Clifden may be dated from the issue of the Queen's letter, for the relief of Irish distress, in 1846. The funds which were obtained by that appeal, were distributed amongst the schools in this locality—some of which were managed by the Catholic clergy, and others by Mr. (now the reverend) Hyacinth D'Arcy, who was, then, an average Irish landlord, but who, now, having suffered like many others of his class, has been ordained by Bishop Plunkett, and treated to a share of the good things of the Church. He now enjoys the dignity and profit of rector of Clifden, and combines with his more sacred functions those of a justice of the peace. During the distribution of the aid procured by the letters, "Sauvez qui peut" was the maxim. In the intensity of famine, the instinct for food absorbed every other consideration. Mr. D'Arcy's schools, of course, were sought with more eager avidity than the relieving officer, because they afforded more certain relief. When the contributions raised by the Queen's letter were exhausted, and the other schools were left destitute, those in which Mr. D'Arcy was the presiding genius, were supplied by the Church Missionary Society, whose eagerness to raise funds for purposes of proselytism at that period scandalised Archbishop Whately to such a degree, that he published a pamphlet, denouncing the iniquity of using the Irish famine as a means of proselytism. The constitution of the Petty Sessions Court was also favorable to the spread of proselytism in Clifden. The Bible-readers had their friends upon the bench, and

any little breaches of the peace of which they might be guilty in pushing forward their infamous trade, was leniently dealt with. The Liberal resident magistrate, Mr. Dopping, although a Protestant, did not lend his countenance to the nefarious doings of the proselytising agents; but he is now removed by the Government to guard Lord Campbell's oyster beds at Kilkerran Bay. In connection with the exterminating landlords, the Clifden Board of Guardians have largely contributed to swell the ranks of the proselytisers, both by the illegal discharge of paupers from the house, when they had no earthly means of support, and their refusal to admit those in a state of absolute destitution. In June last there were about fifty females, from fourteen to twenty years old, turned out of the Clifden workhouse almost in a state of nudity. Twenty-five of these persons being discharged on a Sunday evening, took refuge in an open forge for the night. They were ashamed to exhibit themselves in the street, so destitute were they of clothing. The Rev. E. Gibbons, C.C., upon another occasion found a young female crying in the streets, with scarcely a rag to cover her. She told him that the Guardians turned her out, and told her to go home. Her home—when she had one—was forty miles distant; but her friends were all dead, and she had no human being to look up to for the slightest support. The rev. gentleman supplied her with clothes, and folded up the rags which had been patched together in the workhouse, in order to send them to the Poor Law Commissioners, that they might have ocular demonstration of the harsh and illegal conduct of the Clifden guardians, but did not send them afterwards. He preserves them as a memorial of the humane treatment which the unfortunate paupers receive at the hands of the landlord guardians of the Clifden Union.

When Bishop Plunkett held his last confirmation in Clifden, seven or eight girls who were in the orphan house, which is a proselytising institution, under the patronage of Mrs. D'Arcy, applied to the Board for admission. Mr. Hildebrand, one of the Protestant guardians, asked them where they had been previously supported? They replied—In the orphan house. Mr. Hildebrand told them to go back again to that institution, as they (the board) would not admit them when they could obtain support outside. They then said that Bishop Plunkett was coming round to confirm them, and that they did not wish to become Protestants—that they would rather go into the poor-house. Mr. Scully moved their admission, and was supported by Mr. Hall, the district Inspector of Poor Laws, but the Protestant guardians prevailed, Mr. Scully having in vain divided the board eight different times on the question of their admission. They were sent back to fall into the churches of the proselytisers.

I shall, in my next letter, give more facts in connexion with this model board, and the correspondence which took place between the Rev. Mr. Gibbons and the Poor Law Commissioners, and other officials, on this subject, with other important matters relating to the system in this district.

THE CELT AND THE SAXON.

(From the Dublin Freeman.)

We have been puzzling our brains for some time past over the question—what can be the object of the *Times* in devoting all the powers of the able pen at its command to the excitement of the bitter animosity between the two great sections of the conquering races (Celt and Saxon) that own allegiance to the British crown? and as yet we have arrived at no satisfactory conclusion upon the subject.

The police reports which grace the columns of our "great Anglo Saxon" cotemporary from day to day, would seem to furnish the only parallel to the vindictive fury with which he has lately fallen, tooth and claw upon the entire Irish nation. We there read, from time to time, how a male member of the "great Anglo Saxon race" having had his temper (at no time particularly good or cheerful) spoiled by a "blowing-up" from a savage "mate," or a knocking-down from a savage "mate," or a loss of money on a horse-race, a dog-fight or a game of skittles, swallows a large quantity of beer and gin, goes home, and vents his pent-up rage upon the female Anglo-Saxon, who, for the time being, fills the place that amongst the homicidal Celt is ordinarily occupied by a wife; and that his mode of action almost uniformly is, first, to exhaust his vocabulary of filthy, blasphemous, and unnatural epithets upon her; next, to knock her down with his fist—like a man, mark you, for he scorns to use a weapon—and lastly, his feet being clad in hob-nailed, thick-soled, ankle-jacks, or wooden clogs, to kick her in the tenderest part of the body especially if she be in the family-way, jump upon her, and, if she should still show signs of life, perchance to throw her down stairs? To be sure it