

Prime Sergeant. The holder of this office took precedence in Ireland of the Attorney-General. When practising at the Bar he fought many duels. He was subsequently, in 1774, appointed Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. He was anxious, when Provost, to establish and endow a professorship of the science of defence in the University of Dublin, and challenged and fought a Mr. Doyle, an Irish Master in Chancery.

Those instances, recorded by Mr. Walsh in "Ireland Sixty Years Ago," and by Sir Jonah Barrington in his "Personal Recollections," are startling. Mr. Walsh only writes of what he heard of the doings of a previous generation, but Sir Jonah Barrington, who lived in the Union period, testifies to what he had seen. Sir Jonah was himself Judge of the Irish Court of Admiralty, and a far-famed duellist.

It is perhaps worthy of note that Mr. Ambrose Hardinge Giffard, a member of the Irish Bar, fought a duel with another barrister, Mr. Bagnal Harvey, by whom he was wounded. Mr. Harvey was subsequently, in 1798, the leader of the Rebellion in the county of Wexford, and was executed for high treason. Mr. Giffard afterwards became, as Sir A. Hardinge Giffard, Chief Justice of Ceylon. He was paternal uncle of Lord Halsbury, the ex-Lord Chancellor of England.

The laws by which duelling is punishable were then, Mr. Walsh observes, as severe as now, but such was the spirit of the times that they remained a dead letter. No prosecution ensued, and even if it did no conviction would follow. Every man on the jury was himself probably a duellist, and would not find his brother guilty. After a fatal duel the judge would leave it to the jury whether there had been "any foul play," with a direction not to convict for murder if there had not.

"Duelling in Ireland," wrote Mr. Walsh in 1840, "is now happily a thing of the past." A few years afterwards, however, the old duelling spirit asserted itself at the Irish Bar on a memorable occasion. Mr. T. B. C. Smith, 1844, as Attorney-General for Ireland, conducted the State prosecution of Mr. O'Connell. Mr. FitzGibbon was one of the leading counsel for the defence. The report of the trial for the 30th Jan., 1844, in the State Trials, contains this remarkable passage: "The court having adjourned for luncheon, during the interval the Attorney-General sent a challenge to FitzGibbon."