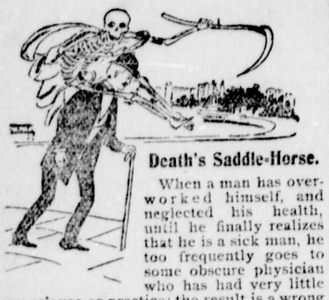

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LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD

An Historical Romance.

BY M. M'D. BODKIN, Q. C.

CHAPTER X.

"ARE YOU CONTENT TO BE OUR GENERAL?"
—Two Gentlemen of Verona.

"Another of his fathom they have none
To lead their business."—Othello.

"Farewell the plumed troup and the big wars
That make ambition virtue. Oh, Farewell."
—Othello.

After a few days spent pleasantly enough in the quaint old town of Quebec, Lord Edward and Blake started together on their homeward voyage, which passed without adventure. Landing at Gibraltar, they thence travelled leisurely on to London, seeing all that was worth seeing by the way.

By both the trip was afterwards remembered as about the happiest time of their lives. The brilliant emotional nature of Lord Edward had a singular charm for his more sedate but not less earnest companion. The war fever was again hot on the fiery young Geraldine. A great Continental war was in the air, and his imagination was dazzled by its stupendous possibilities. Blake, who knew enough about the science to be, at least, a discriminating critic, was amazed at the military genius he displayed—the mastery of detail, and the power of bold and colossal combination which together mark the great general.

Lord Edward's excitement was contagious. Blake was at times quite carried away by it, as the other eagerly discussed the moves of that fascinating game of wholesale murder, in which science exhausts itself to kill, and glory heaps up rewards for massacre and misery.

But Blake's humanity still quickly hastened to the rescue, and fought many a brave battle against Lord Edward's enthusiasm.

On their arrival in London Lord Edward stayed for some little time at the house of his uncle—the Duke of Richmond—with whom he was on very cordial terms.

Blake, for a few days, loitered admiringly through the wonderful metropolis—most wonderful to a man whose life had been lived in the lonely woods. Then his Irish impatience mastered him. With letters of introduction to some of Lord Edward's patriot friends—Arthur O'Connor amongst the number—he crossed, in rough weather, over the tumbling waves of the Channel to Ireland, which he longed to look upon as a child the mother loves but has never seen.

Meanwhile the Duke was delighted with his nephew. He had seen him last a boy, and now found him a man. Sorrow and experience had given a certain firmness to a character which nature, perhaps, had made too gentle. In those days every man was a soldier, and knew something of military science. The Duke of Richmond was no exception. His nephew's proficiency in what he styled the noblest profession, delighted him. He thought he saw his way to do a service at the same time to his kinsman, his party, and himself. He had some talk with Pitt, with whom he was intimate, in which Lord Edward's name was mentioned. Very coldly the great minister admitted that a brilliant young general was specially desirable for the Spanish campaign; but he looked a chilling doubt when he was told that such a general was to be found in the Duke's nephew.

"I can trust your judgment in port, Richmond, if not in nephews," he said in reply to the Duke's invitation to dinner. "I will come to drink one, and test the other, any day you please."

There was for Lord Edward a pleasurable excitement in the thought of meeting the great Minister of England. In Pitt's character and career there was something specially fascinating for a young man. He was the young champion who had wrested all privileges from age and experience. He had deserted his own youth—cast it aside like its follies and delights. He had seized the helm of the greatest empire of the world with a boy's hand, and steadily and fearlessly steered it through a storm that shook the world.

A small party sat down to the admirably served little dinner at the Duke's. There was the great Commoner himself and his inseparable friend Dundas, the host, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and Lord Castlereagh, who was at this time beginning to make himself useful to Pitt, as the jackal makes himself useful to the lion.

Lord Edward had the great but nervous honor of a seat next the Prime Minister. At first he was tongue-tied by modest admiration. Nor was Pitt's stiffly dignified manner at all likely to put the shy young soldier at his ease. But as the good wine flowed freely, after the fashion of the time, the sunshine which the purple grapes had stolen in the bright southern summer a quarter of a century before, and had treasured safe through cold and darkness in its crimson life-blood, began to thaw the ice of ceremony.

Dundas, indeed, was more silent as he drank. The Duke of Richmond kept his manner of stately courteousness. He was, perhaps, a shade more deferential to the Minister, a shade more pompous to the others; that was all. Lord Castlereagh grew blander and blander under the mellowing influence. The sleek servility of his tones when he addressed the Prime Minister became more and more apparent. A softly-purring cat he seemed, whose sharp claws were hid in velvet cushions, but who might scratch as well as purr if a safe chance offered.

Towards Lord Edward, Castlereagh conceived that antipathy which the sleek vermin of the brute world have for their natural enemies, though seen for the first time. It was dislike, tinctured with fear. It may be that his servility awakened some touch of scorn in Lord Edward's simple and manly nature; but he was conscious of no special feeling concerning him. No instinct told him how their careers should clash in the time to come, and the meaner nature triumph over the nobler.

He was too interested, too excited, by Pitt's presence to waste much thought on Lord Castlereagh. The good wine, mellow, but potent, set his young blood aflame. A few well-contrived questions from the Prime Minister completed the charm. The smouldering fire of military enthusiasm was again kindled to a blaze.

He talked freely and brilliantly, because he was master of the subject.

In the great Minister himself the greatest change of all was wrought. Something of his abandoned boyhood seemed to return to him as the liquid sunshine made summer in his blood. He chatted to Lord Edward with a frank abandonment, which was at once delightful and encouraging to the young soldier.

They talked much of the American war. Pitt's interest was keen on the subject, remembering how this suicidal strife had embittered the last days of his great father's life—how, even when the hand of death was heavy upon him, his fiery indignation had kindled his failing powers into a final blaze of surpassing eloquence. Lord Edward was encouraged to give a brief but vivid description of the campaign. He placed the troops, and showed the moves of the great game, as a master of chess expounds the problems of that most elaborate of pastimes.

Very skilfully the Prime Minister drew him on to tell of his trip through Spain. It was wonderful how Lord Edward had caught up and carried away with him the character of the country through which he had passed. It seemed a power more like instinct than observation. A hasty glance told him more than a duller mind could gather from a day's study of the maps. So, if small things may be compared with great, we have seen ladies who, with one scornful flash of the eye, take in a rival's costume in all detail, from boots to bonnet.

About Cadiz the Prime Minister was full of curiosity, which Lord Edward, flattered by his attention, strove to satisfy. He told of the strong points and the weak in its defences. The military engineers, to his thinking, had trusted too much to its natural strength, and given science no fair play. He laughed at the suggestion of Castlereagh that it was impregnable to British soldiers. He assailed and captured it there and then, planting his guns and marshalling his troops on the shining surface of the mahogany.

The enthusiasm of the young soldier and his military aptitude delighted the great War Minister. More than once his keen eyes telegraphed their approval to the Duke of Richmond, who smiled superior at this triumph of his own judgment.

"Richmond," said Pitt, at last, turning to the Duke with a touch of that abrupt and domineering tone by which he had maintained his position from the first in spite of his youth, "you are right this time. Your nephew is a military paragon. I wish I had known of this before. Military genius is not so plentiful that we can afford to waste it these stirring times fighting backwoodsmen in the Colonies"—in England they still spoke of the "American Colonies"—"or drilling recruits in Canada. We can get lots of common place young fellows with pluck and muscle from Eton or Harrow for this common-place work. A soldier who can think as well as fight—who can carry maps and fortifications, and military combinations in his brain—is meant for something better than to lick an awkward squad into shape, or make one in a dashing cavalry charge. We must 'take the goods the gods provide us,' as glorious John has it, and use them to advantage.

"Lord Edward Fitzgerald," he went on, addressing the young soldier, who had listened amazedly to this outburst, "I am glad that it is in my power at the same time to do good service to you, and to England. An expedition is in preparation against Cadiz; will you accept the command?"

Dead silence fell on the company as this startling offer was made. It was in Pitt's customary style, sudden, dazzling, but guided by an unerring judgment of men.

Lord Edward Fitzgerald was himself the most amazed of all.

"But, sir," he faltered out, "I hold only a major's rank. Such command"——

"You shall be promoted by brevet," Pitt broke in, "to the rank of lieutenant-general. Your commission shall be made out immediately. You accept?"

To those present the question seemed formal merely. Delight and gratitude for an offer so dazzling were taken as a matter of course. To their surprise, Lord Edward appeared to hesitate. The suddenness of the thing stunned him. Here all at once was the gate opened to that bright career of military glory of which he had dreamed afar off. The path lay straight before him; the dazzling prize was full in view. He felt his ability to seize it. His pulses throbbed with delirious exultation. Yet was there a whisper far down in his heart, the echo of nobler thoughts that even at that jubilant moment troubled him. He faltered out a few broken words of acknowledgment of the great honor.

"And you accept?" said Pitt again, in a tone that took acceptance as assured.

For the life of him Lord Edward could not answer "Yes."

"Pardon," he pleaded, "what must seem my folly and ingratitude. Most heartily I thank you, but I need a little time to think. I am conscious how silly it must seem, but there have been times when I almost foreswore the profession of arms. There have been times when my soul has revolted against war. The soldier's trade seemed to me at such times more degrading than the hangman's, who at least only slaughters the guilty. I have killed men better than myself in my time for no reason I can give, except that I was sent out to kill."

Dundas laughed out loud, but not unkindly, at this appeal. Lord Castlereagh tittered softly, and there was an insulting undertone in his laughter that jarred upon Lord Edward.

The Duke of Richmond did not laugh. He glared and frowned in mixed wonder and anger at the boyish absurdities of his nephew, who had thrown away such a gallant chance as comes to a man only once in his lifetime.

But the chance was not gone yet. Pitt's manner was kinder than before, as he replied, speaking now with that quiet, overmastering authority which was one of the great secrets of his success.

"I understand your scruples, my gallant young Don Quixote," he said; "and, what is more, I admire them." This with a sharp look at Lord Castlereagh, whose merriment was stilled in a moment. "But they would lead you gloriously astray. It is dangerous to set up a new private personal morality of your own. In all nations—even the people beloved by God—war was, and is, regarded as honorable. A hundred times it approved, and even enjoined, in the Old Scriptures. In the promotion of great designs we must not be too particular as to the means. Be there mud or blood in the path, we must tread it to the desired goal. Through griefs, and wrongs, and slaughter, if need be, great objects are accomplished. If the good outweighs the evil, it is all we can hope for in life, where good and evil are so mixed. So the world moves, and we, perforce, move with it. We may march fast or slow. We cannot stop. Your place, my lord, is with the first. Will you lose it for a foolish scruple?"

He spoke with an authority not to be resisted. Lord Edward's scruples were silenced, if not killed.

"I take your offer," he said, "with gratitude. I will strive hard to prove myself worthy of your confidence."

"I do not doubt it," said Pitt, very kindly. "Your services will be my praise. You cannot choose but share your glory with me."

He filled a bumper of port as he spoke, which glowed like liquid ruby in the cut crystal.

"The future conqueror of Cadiz!" he cried, raising the glass to his lips. "Richmond, you will pledge me in that toast?"

"The future conqueror of Cadiz" cried all — Castlereagh more earnestly than any.

It was late when the party broke up, for those were times when all men sat long and drank deep. The feet of the distinguished guests were a little unsteady on the marble steps as they descended, and their hands heavy on the broad banister of black mahogany.

After the guests were borne away by the patient chairman, Lord Richmond sat for some little time before his final glass of port, pouring mellifluous congratulations into the unheeding ears of his nephew, who, with difficulty, escaped at last to his room.

On close to the dawn Lord Edward lay awake, wearied with the thoughts that coursed each other tumultuously through his brain. He was elated, indeed, but not content. The uneasy whisper at his heart troubled him still, though he refused to listen to it.

"I was right," he kept on saying to himself half aloud, "and Blake was wrong. Destiny rules our lives. I could not turn aside. Fate has forced me into the position I longed for. There is no resisting fate." He slept a little, but his excitement pursued him into sleep in incoherent dreams. He dreamed he was leading his men to an assault, when suddenly his horse wheeled round, and he went charging into the midst of the British troops. He awoke angry with his folly; swore he would dream no more, and slept again a deep, unconscious slumber.

He was late to breakfast next morning, and the Duke of Richmond was seated. The Duke's greeting when he came in, though a little pompous, was very kind.

"A letter from the Prime Minister delivered this morning," he said, with a poor assumption of unconcern, tossing it across to Lord Edward as he spoke. "Read it."

Lord Edward took, and read—

"Dear Richmond"—(so the letter ran)—"Your nephew may possibly desire a formal repetition of last night's offer, to show it was the Prime Minister himself, and not your good port that spoke. Let him be assured his commission shall be made out with all convenient speed. The result, I am sure, will do credit to his military genius and my discernment. By-the-bye, I understand from Castlereagh that Lord Edward still holds his brother's (the Duke of Leinster's) borough in the Irish Parliament. I assume, of course, that his vote and interest will be at the service of the Government.—Yours, W. P."

The blood rushed hotly to Lord Edward's cheek as he read the letter. He felt it was the end of his appointment. Never for one moment did he dream of so bartering away his independence. The very suggestion he regarded as an insult. He suspected (but his suspicion was unjust to the Prime Minister) that this political servility was meant from the first, to be the price of his promotion. "I did not know the borough had been kept for me," he said, looking up quickly.

"Oh! yes," the Duke replied; "Leinster brought you in all right. Lucky, was it not? You have the double chance to serve the Government in peace and war."

"No," the young soldier said quietly. "My appointment is hereby revoked," he went on, while the Duke regarded him with blank amazement. "I might with honor accept a favor from the Prime Minister, but not a bribe. My voice and vote — since a vote has been given me—belong to Ireland, and will be devoted to Ireland's liberty."

The Duke for a moment was too amazed to reply. He thought his nephew had gone mad. He could find no meaning at all in his words.

"But you have pledged yourself," he stammered out at last.

"I pledged my sword," said Lord Edward. "I did not sell my honor. He that demands both can have neither."

CHAPTER XI.

"OUT, OUT! BRIEF CANDLE!"
—Macbeth.

"A little more than kin, and less than kind."
—Hamlet.

"If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore
Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
Thou cunningest pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume."
—Othello.

Lord Edward's firmness changed the Duke of Richmond's surprise to anger. He argued, expostulated, stormed at last in unducal rage. All to no effect. Lord Edward's resolve was not to be shaken, and uncle and nephew parted as they had never parted before—in anger.

Though deeply pained, Lord Edward was no jot stirred from his purpose. When his uncle left him he wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, respectful, but at the same time brief and firm, declining the appointment. He had a duty, he said, to discharge in the Irish Parliament, "to which all other considerations must yield."

In that hour the Rubicon was crossed. Lord Edward was committed thenceforward to the glorious fatal career of an Irish patriot. For a nature like his, his path once chosen no turning back was possible, nor faltering by the way.

A few lines of kindly farewell he wrote and left for his uncle. Believing the Duke's anger would grow fiercer the longer they were together, that very night he took boat for Ireland, where Maurice Blake awaited him with a hearty welcome.

Dublin society, which had lost Lord Edward a careless boy, found him a thoughtful man. Yet his character had rather grown than changed. What it lost in gracefulness it gained in strength. It put forth new power — it bore new fruit. The old charm of gaiety, truth and courage remained. But grave thoughts and stern resolves were at work beneath the sunshiny surface of his nature.

He was now zealous in his attendance in the House of Commons. For the most part he gave a silent vote with the party of patriots led by Henry Grattan; but there were times when cruelty or corruption stirred him beyond endurance, and he flamed into indignant speech.

Maurice Blake was kept by his religion from a seat in the House of Commons; but in the outside organization, which even then began to supersede the Parliament in the confidence of the country, he worked with a will.

The "Whig Club," which Grattan had founded, had already fallen from its high popularity. On its ruins "The Patriots Plot," as it was then half jocosely called, was founded. Thence rose the famous society of "United Irishmen," in which by degrees all the patriotic manhood of the Irish race was included, and which treachery alone prevented from the achievement of Ireland's independence, under Lord Edward's leadership.

The whole time of the two friends was not given over to Parliament and politics. Even if Lord Edward had not loved society as he did, he would have found it impossible to escape the allurements that beset him. Blake, too, first for the sake of his friend, the Duke's son, afterwards for his own sake, was made welcome to the hospital mansions of Dublin.

Young, handsome, a master of all weapons and all sports, with a refinement of manner which ran in his blood, and which his wild life had not tarnished, he rivalled even Lord Edward in popularity.

But Blake had not Lord Edward's love of company. There was one door-step, indeed, on which his foot was frequent, and Lord Edward quizzed him about the dangerous heart affection that carried him so often for a remedy to the famous Dr. Denver, and Blake winced a little under his badinage.

Some months after their arrival, both were bidden to a dinner at Lord Mountjoy's. Lord Edward, remembering his last experience there, felt the old wound throb, and was at first tempted to refuse; but a moment later he made up his mind to go, on the principle that one holds a burned finger to the fire to burn out the pain. He guessed he would meet Lord Dulwich, but he knew he would not meet his wife, as gentlemen only were invited.

Having made up his own mind to go, he insisted on making up Blake's, too, and the other yielded, as a good-natured elder brother yields to the whim of the younger.

The dinner was in magnificent style, even for that magnificent time. The dining room was like a conservatory, with the scent and color of fresh flowers. A miniature fountain splashed and sparkled in the centre of the great round table, where twenty guests were comfortably seated.

They ate off solid silver. They drank the rich wines, amber and crimson, from goblets of the old Waterford glass, where clear-cut facets sparkled like diamonds in the light of the hundreds of wax-tapers in silver branches that illumined the room.

These were the days of reckless extravagance. Irish lords and landlords spent money as if a goldmine were hidden in every acre of bog. The wretched, ragged, starving tenant, toiling his life away in squalid poverty, was the "slave of the lamp," by whom all these wonders were produced for those careless and idle Irish Aladdins.

Yet surely luxury was never more subtly blended with refinement than in those sumptuous Irish entertainments, where good taste and bright wit were honored guests.

Lord Mountjoy was a model host, whose smiling welcome made every guest feel instantly at home. The form of the table contributed to the unchecked flow of conviviality. The guests were not linked in conversational handcuffs with next neighbors, however ungenial. Each one could choose for himself round the great curve of the festive board.

In the earlier stage of the dinner the talk turned lightly on light topics of fashionable life. It was skirmishing before the general engagement. Jest and counter-jest flashed across the table, like the play of the harmless sheet-lightning that "gives delight and hurts not." Curran and Sheridan were of the party, and the wit, polished and bright, that has since dazzled the world, flashed freely from their lips in unrestrained extravagance, like the girl in the story who talked diamonds after the fairy blessed her.

But as the feast advanced the talk grew, if not less brilliant, far more serious. When the cloth was removed and decanters began coursing more rapidly than ever round the broad expanse of shining mahogany, politics, as usual, mastered and killed all other topics of conversation.

Politics ran high and hot in Dublin at the time. Between the placeman and the patriots the feud was fierce.

All shades of opinion were represented around that table, from the rebel to the Castle hack. Good breeding and ability were all that Lord Mountjoy demanded from his guests.

Grattan was there, and Flood, and Lord Castlereagh, bland and smiling, and Lord Clare, lowering and haughty. Blake and Lord Edward Fitzgerald sat with only one between them. Almost opposite, with a sting from the old wound, Lord Edward recognized his defeated enemy and successful rival—Lord Dulwich. Richly dressed was His Lordship. The long, white fingers that protruded from the deep, lace cuffs flashed with jewels, and the pale, impassive face was coldly handsome as ever.

By his side sat a young man who was in every way a contrast. His dress was rich too, but careless; his face handsome but flushed; his black hair curled close round a forehead narrow but smooth and white; his black eyes flashed with restless excitement. His mouth was the feature in his face that caught attention; the lips were thick and blood red, and the teeth sharp and white, and the smile not pleasant to see.

As the wine warmed their blood men spoke out more freely the faith that was in them. Martial law on the one hand, and rebellion on the other hand, found warm advocates. Words were spoken that, embodied in an indictment, would have brought many a speaker to the gallows.

With unfailing courtesy the disputants argued each that the other and his friends must be exterminated. Their politeness was the wonder of it. There was no harsh word, no angry tone, no insulting gesture. The genius of the duel presided at the discussion, sword and pistol in hand! Each man knew that a rude word might mean death. They were brave men there, none braver, but death was not to be incurred without grave reason, even by the bravest. With the older men courtesy had grown so much a custom they could not be rude if they would.

With the younger men it was different. Their tongues were less under command. He who sat beside Lord Dulwich especially gave free rein to his. He flashed quick sarcasm around him, and now and again his words almost touched the limit where, in those days, the only answer was a swordthrust or a pistol shot.

Others took their cue from him. There was lightning in the air. All round the table the uneasy feeling grew that it would never clear without a storm.

Their host noticed without seeming to notice, and quietly led the talk into a safer channel.

"A glass of wine with you, Mark," he cried down the table, courteously, to the young man, who in the excitement of discussion, had let the claret jug rest in front of him longer than custom allowed. "Do not play the dog in the manger with the decanter. Fill and pass."

"May I join in, my lord?" said a pleasant voice at the young man's side.

"Certainly, Sir Miles," cried Lord Mountjoy. "Mark, fill your father's glass to the brim. I will season the wine with a good wish for both of you—May Mark Blake have the good sense to be proud of his father, and Sir Miles good reason to be proud of his son."

Mark Blake winced a little as the words were spoken, for the tone smacked somewhat of reproof. He tossed off his bumper of claret a little impatiently, and was silent.

The names caught Maurice Blake's attention and Lord Edward's at the same moment, and the same thought was in both their minds.

Here, perchance, was one of the strange coincidences of which life is full. The heart of Maurice Blake, who all his life long had never before looked upon the face of a kinsman, beat hard and fast with new-found emotion. Surely by no race in the world are the ties of blood more closely felt than by the Irish? amongst them the words "friend" and "relative" convey the same meaning. His isolation had given this feeling a special sanctity for Blake.

Some instinct told him here were kinsmen at last. Only by a strong effort could he restrain himself from claiming kindred and friendship there and then. The feeling was strongest towards him he thought his father's brother. That kindly and courteous face was infinitely attractive to the young man, whose heart had so long hungered for a father's love.

But for Mark Blake, even while he longed to join hands and claim cousinship with him, he felt a touch of repugnance. The leopard is sleek and graceful, and beautiful and sportive, but there is an instinct which warns against caressing it.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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Where the Apostles are Buried.

All that now remains of the Apostles of Christ are in the following places. Seven are sleeping the sleep of the just in Rome, viz., St. Peter, St Philip, St. James the Lesser, St. Jude, St. Bartholomew, St. Matthias and St. Simon. The remains of three lie in the kingdom of Naples: St. Matthew at Salerno, St. Andrew at Amalfi and St. Thomas at Ortoma. One, St. James the Greater, was buried in Spain at St. Jago de Compostella. Of the exact whereabouts of the remains of St. John the Evangelist there is much dispute.

St. Mark and St. Luke are buried in Italy, the former at Venice and the latter at Padua. St. Paul's remains are also believed to be in Italy. St. Peter is buried in Rome in the church which bears his name; so, too, are St. Simon and St. Jude. St. James the Lesser is buried in the church on that island in the Tiber which bears his name. The "Legends of the Apostles" places the remains of St. Matthias under the altar of the renowned Basilica.

Gained Very Much.

"My wife was afflicted with sciatic rheumatism for three years. Seeing an advertisement of Hood's Sarsaparilla we concluded to give it a fair trial. After she had taken a few bottles she gained very much and she continued its use until she was cured." CHARLES B. ABBOTT, Coldwater, Michigan.

HOOD'S PILLS are the best family cathartic and liver tonic. Gentle, reliable, sure. 25c.

They Never Fail.—Mr. S. M. Boughner, Langton, writes: "For about two years I was troubled with Inward Piles, but by using Parmelee's Pills, I was completely cured, and although four years have elapsed since then they have not returned." Parmelee's Pills are anti-bilious and a specific for the cure of Liver and Kidney Complaints, Dyspepsia, Costiveness, Headache, Piles, etc., and will regulate the secretions and remove all bilious matter.

Tell the Deaf.—Mr. J. F. Kellock, Druggist, Perth, writes: "A customer of mine having been cured of deafness by the use of DR. THOMAS' ECLECTRIC OIL, wrote to Ireland, telling his friends there of the cure. In consequence I received an order to send half a dozen by express to Wexford, Ireland, this week."