

with whatever can delight the fancy or feast the senses. Think, then, of a tenant peasantry, physically more deplorable than the serfs of Turkey; and when you have thus thought, look calmly on the assembly before you. Here, gathered at joyous night, is a throng of the noble and the fair; men of gallant bearing, and women of surpassing beauty. Lights stream over decorations which almost transcend what Eastern story feigned of Eastern magic; music floats upon the perfumed air, and grace rules the mazes of the dance. When you recollect the haggard country through which you passed, to arrive at such a mansion; when you recollect the hovels that afflicted you on the way, the sad faces that stared you as you went along, that constantly subdued your reveries to grief; when you recollect the fever and the hunger, that, as you traveled by then, appalled your very soul; all that you see in this abode of grandeur appears unnatural; it seems a brilliant, and yet an agonizing vision; an illusion by some evil genius, powerful to delight, terrible to destroy. You cannot reconcile it with your ordinary associations—with your sentiments of moral harmony; it is incongruous; a rejoicing in an hospital, a feast in a famine-ship, a dance in a charnel-house, a bridal in a sepulchre; your heart becomes convulsed, your head giddy, your imagination confused and sick. You look upon a social class that bewilders you, and you turn from the whole with loathing and disgust.

The social system in Ireland is disjointed and defective. The great proprietors are absentees, and the small ones are impoverished. Another decisive evil in the social state of Ireland is, the want of due gradation. Where there is not general equality, there ought to be successive ranks. But society in Ireland exists only in extremes. The two main divisions of it are the owners of the soil, and its occupiers; and between these there seems a gulf, while one