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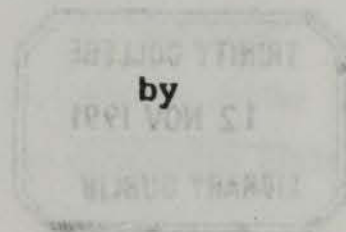
16 October 1991

Volume 2.

**THE LAND WAR AND ITS LEADERS
IN QUEEN'S COUNTY, 1879-82**

Two Volumes

**A thesis submitted to the
Department of Modern History, University of Dublin
in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**



John William Herbert Carter

March 1991

Vol. II

THE LARGO WAR AND ITS LEADERS

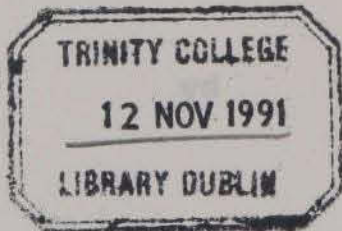
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Thesis
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Vol. II

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IV

THE LAND WAR IN QUEEN'S COUNTY, MAY - OCT. 1881

On 6 May 1881, when Queen's County became a proclaimed district under the Act for the Better Protection of Person and Property in Ireland, 1881¹ it seemed to herald a more clamorous and combative phase of the land war in the county. Support for prisoners added a new dimension to the land war, prompting an increase in the number of public meetings and demonstrations organised by land league branches. At the same time, landlord-tenant relations worsened as the landlords, already buttressed by the Property Defence Association and the Orange Emergency Committee, were further emboldened by the new powers given to the authorities by the coercion act to take assertive action against their recalcitrant tenants. Until October 1881 landlords in the county were demonstrably disunited and slow to organise themselves into any sort of collective response to land league aggression, their small numbers and considerable resources notwithstanding. On the other hand, the land league was torn by self-interest and dissension. Its policy of 'paying rent at the point of the bayonet',² was a costly and essentially fraudulent kind of resistance.

When Gladstone's second land act became law on 22 August 1881³ it went a long way to meet the more immediate demands of the moderate tenants, but did not satisfy either the die-hard land-leaguers in

1. 44 & 45 Vict., c. (21 Mar.); above, pp 119, 196.

2. Above, pp 188-94; below, pp 256-8.

3. 1881 Land Law (Ireland) Act, 44 & 45 Vict., c. 49, (22 Aug.).

Ireland who wanted a total transfer of the 'land to the people', or the majority of the Irish-Americans with their all-important financial resources who wanted an independent Irish republic.'

Parnell tried to prevent a split in the land league by attempting on the one hand to mollify the extremists, and on the other hand to restrain tenants who could benefit from the land act from rushing into the land court. His performance in Maryborough on 26 September 1881 was an important instance of this approach,² which Gladstone interpreted as an attempt 'to arrest the operation of the act, to stand, as Moses stood, between the living and the dead; to stand there, not as Moses stood, to arrest but to expand the plague'.³ On 13 October 1881, with the land league, as he described it, 'breaking fast',⁴ Parnell was arrested and lodged in Kilmainham gaol. Then, on 18 October 1881 when the 'no rent manifesto' was issued from Kilmainham gaol over the names of Parnell and six other land league leaders⁵ it gave Forster what he described as an 'excellent excuse'⁶ to proclaim the land league 'an unlawful and criminal organisation'.⁷

What follows is an account of this complicated and turbulent period in Queen's County - the last twenty-four weeks of the land league's legal existence. It examines the many sided character of the land war, attempting to reflect the uproar and violent language of the

1. For a discussion on 'the way' the 'different sections' of the land league 'pushed in different directions' see Paul Bew, *Land and the National Question*, pp 217-32; cf. below, p.262, n.4.

2. Below, pp 296-8.

3. Gladstone's speech in Leeds on 7 Oct.81 (*Nation*, 15 Oct.81; Lyons, *Parnell*, p.167; Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine*, p.173).

4. Parnell's letter to Katharine O'Shea quoted in Lyons, *Parnell*, pp 174-5.

5. The names were; Parnell, Andrew J. Kettle, Thomas Brennan, John Dillon, Thomas Sexton, Patrick Egan and Michael Davitt (*Freeman's Journal*, 19 Oct.81).

6. Moody, *Davitt*, p.297, n.1.

7. Proclamation...dated 20 Oct.81, [C3125], H.C. 1882, lv, 275-7.

period. The chapter is divided into three parts. 1 describes the arrest, gaoling, and release of suspects in the county from May to October 1881. 2 examines aspects of the increasing disorder which stemmed from the collection of rents after the spring gale of 1881. Here, the land league policy of 'paying rent at the point of the bayonet' is shown to be costly and fraudulent. On the other hand, it is argued that Gladstone was justified in castigating many landlords for their cowardice. 3 analyses the response of the land league to Gladstone's second land act after its passing on 22 August 1881.

1 The Arrest, Gaoling, and Release of Suspects in Queen's County,
May - Oct. 1881.

When Queen's County was proclaimed on 6 May 1881 the authorities acted promptly. On 9 May, a warrant was issued for the arrest of James Lalor,¹ a thirty year-old small tenant farmer from Cool, near Raheen, who was the first suspect in the county to be gaoled.² According to the police, Lalor had 'used threats' against three of his neighbours in Cool who had opposed a resolution of the committee of the Raheen branch of the land league, and then was suspected of maliciously burning Michael Delaney's out offices, hay and cows on Friday night, 25 March 1881.³ Though Lalor may have been guilty of

1. Above, p.190, n.5.

2. Appendix 38, below, p.437.

3. As in n.1.

arson, if the police had had conclusive proof of his guilt he would have been arrested earlier and been prosecuted formally in court. (At the same time, if County Inspector Lucan Bingham is correct in his report to Dublin Castle on 2 July 1881, it is also possible that Lalor's landlord, Dr David Jacob, wanted to have him arrested. Bingham stated, 'I have reason to believe that there are landlords in the county [Queen's County] who are anxious to have certain persons removed off their property, and they may calculate on being able to effect their object through the resident magistrate and protection act.')¹

When Lalor was arrested on 10 May 1881, he was helping to erect a land league hut on the farm of a neighbour for himself, his wife and four children.² Under police escort he reached Maryborough at about 7 p.m., when he was met by six more police and an 'enormous crowd' accompanied by two bands.³ While he was waiting at Maryborough railway station for the 7.45 p.m. train, which would take him to Dublin and gaol in Kilmainham, and was being 'entertained to any quantity of music', Lalor told newspaper reporters that he was 'not in the least daunted', that he had sent the warrant on which he had been arrested to Mrs Nannie Fitzpatrick (the eldest daughter of Richard Lalor M.P., and president of the Maryborough branch of the ladies' land league), and that he had every hope that 'the kind, gentle and

1. Bingham's report (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/23844). When Inspector General George Hillier ordered Bingham to 'submit a more detailed report setting forth the grounds' for his belief, Bingham reported on 13 July 81 that his belief was 'founded' on letters which he had read, and statements made to him by landlords and a magistrate, but added that he 'would rather not be pressed to give names and particulars in writing' because 'those gentlemen' might consider that he had betrayed their confidence (ibid.).

2. L.E., 14 May 81.

3. Ibid.

patriotic lady' and the ladies' land league would take care of his wife and children.'

The arrest of Lalor was soon followed by the gaoling of John Redington, Patrick A. Meehan and Patrick Doran, three officers of the Maryborough branch of the land league. Probably because the police wished to avoid the excitement which attended the arrest of Lalor, the three were arrested in the early hours of 14 May 1881. (According to Meehan, it was at 2 a.m.)² Each suspect's arrest warrant stated that he was guilty of 'unlawfully assembling with others to the terror of Her Majesty's subjects for the purpose of disturbing the public peace, and intimidating persons from bidding at a sheriff's sale, and inciting to riot and assault'.³ (The warrants referred to the sheriff's auction of five cattle in Maryborough on 3 May 1881, which was made the occasion of a series of demonstrations.)⁴

Ten suspects from Queen's County were gaoled before the land league was outlawed on 20 October 1881. The names of the gaoled suspects were invoked constantly at land league meetings where admiration was expressed for them as 'brother land-leaguers and friends... incarcerated...for the glorious crime of patriotism'.⁵ At the same time, the government and landlords were denounced. For example, Patrick Cahill, the editor of the *Leinster Leader*, speaking at a land league indignation meeting in Naas on 27 May 1881, referred to Doran, Meehan and Redington, the suspects from Maryborough, as his 'friends'

1, *L.L.*, 14 May 81.

2, Meehan's evidence to the *Times-Parnell* commission on 11 July 1889 (*Reprint of the shorthand notes of the speeches, proceedings, and evidence...*, vol. x, p.64).

3, Arrests under Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881-2 (S.P.O., C.S.O., vol.i, pp 75-7).

4, Above, pp 188-95.

5, Resolution adopted at land league meeting in Maryborough on 23 May 81 (*L.E.*, 28 May 81).

who had been 'brought and lodged in Naas gaol', and said that the government should have arrested the Queen's County landlords, John G. Adair and Richard Warburton, 'which would have served as a warning to those who are the real cause of disquietude not only in Queen's County but in every county in Ireland.'¹ Similar sentiments were expressed by Fr Thomas Feehan, the curate from Rathdowney, at a land league meeting in Rathdowney on 22 May 1881: after describing the government as 'the willing and ready tool of the landlords in collecting unjust rents by every harsh proceeding', he said that 'instead of arresting or trying the experiment by a punishment by hanging or some other punishment a few of the landlord class, who are the sole cause of the disturbance in the country,...they [the government] have placed at the service of that miserable small class of people their law courts, their sheriffs, their bailiffs, their magistrates, their police, their rifles and bayonets, and their buckshot.'²

The tough action taken by the authorities was variously effective in restoring law and order to the different districts of Queen's County. For example, though Sub-Inspector William D. Grene reported to Dublin Castle on 4 August 1881 that, in his opinion, it was 'impossible to find...a loyal man amongst the majority of the people' in Maryborough,³ on 8 July 1881 Thomas Hamilton R.M. believed that the gaoling of Doran, Redington and Meehan had 'effectually checked' boycotting and intimidation in Maryborough, and recommended 'similar action' in Mountmellick.⁴

1. L.E., 28 May 81.

2. Ibid.

3. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/26453.

4. Report of Hamilton to 'the under-secretary' (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845).

Hamilton's belief was substantiated by the sheriff's auction of seven farms under writs of *fierī facias*¹ obtained by four Queen's County landlords against their tenants for a total of £317 arrears-of-rent, which was held in Maryborough on 16 July 1881.² The auction, which was attended by only one hundred and fifty people, was a vivid contrast to the unruly auction held on 3 May 1881, which had led to the arrest of Doran, Redington and Meehan.³ Six of the seven tenants who owed £297, or almost 94 per cent of the total arrears, bought in their interests and settled with their respective landlords. (Norris Goddard of the Property Defence Association bought the interest in the farm of James Dunne who owed £19.12s.5d. to his landlord, William Kemmis.)⁴ When the auction was over, a meeting attended by fewer than one hundred was held around the steps of the town hall. The speakers were James Lynam, president of the land league branch in Ballycumber, King's County, Fr James Connolly, the Mountmellick curate, John Cantwell, secretary of the land league branch in Athy, William H. Cobbe, treasurer of the land league branch in Portarlinton, and John T. Heffernan,⁵ a land league organiser who was also secretary of the land league branch in Kildare town. Probably because the crowd was so small, the speeches were short, direct, and mainly predictable. However, Heffernan concluded his speech with a significant statement:

1. For the advantages given to landlords by writs of *fierī facias* see below, p.217.

2. The landlords were: William Kemmis (4,706 acres), Richard Warburton (3,491 acres), Sir Anthony C. Weldon (2,498 acres) and Sir Erasmus D. Borrowes (2,467 acres) (*L.E.*, 25 July 81).

3. Above, pp 188-95.

4. *L.E.*, 25 July 81.

5. For an outline of John T. Heffernan's role in the land war see Thomas Nelson, *The Land War in County Kildare* (Maynooth, 1981), one of a series of short studies by undergraduate and graduate students in the Department of Modern History, St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

he said that in Maryborough - where 'such good work' had been done by Redington, Meehan and Doran - the league's 'work was not going on with the same spirit as it was formally carried out', that 'it was not at all to the credit of the parties at the head of the affairs of the Maryborough branch that on a day like this, when farmers from all parts of the county came in to give every opposition...to the landlords, that there was not some demonstration waiting', and that he hoped the Maryborough branch would 'redouble' their efforts from that day.' (Heffernan's organiser's report for the day simply stated, 'July 16th attended sales at Maryborough - the league there is not as active as it was.')

If the league was 'not as active as it was' in Maryborough on 16 July 1881 after the gaoling of local suspects, there was a marked worsening of disorder in Rathdowney after 2 August 1881, when Patrick Murphy, secretary of the local branch of the land league, and his friend, John Campion, were gaoled. (It is interesting to note that in the Rathdowney district there were Roman catholic curates who were zealous land-leaguers,³ while in Maryborough the parish priest, Fr John Doyle, harboured a publicly declared antipathy towards the land league,⁴ and his four curates⁵ were conspicuously absent from all land league meetings.) Though Thomas Hamilton R.M. believed that Fr Thomas Feehan, the president of the Rathdowney branch of the land league, was

1. L.E., 23 July 81.

2. N.L.I., Heffernan papers, MS 9283.

3. Probably the most zealous were Frs Thomas Feehan, James Cosgrave and Edward Rowan, the curates from Rathdowney, Aghaboe and Durrow respectively.

4. Above, p.101.

5. The curates were: Frs Thomas Molony, James Dunny, Peter Dunne and Patrick Bolger.

'a clever and cautious man' and 'undoubtedly the mainspring of the branch', he described Patrick Murphy and John Campion as 'equally active officers'.¹ Murphy was about thirty-four years old, single, ran the 'refreshment room' in Ballybrophy railway station, and owned a public house in Rathdowney² which Hamilton described as 'the great resort for all the land-leaguers in town and country'.³ Murphy's 'constant companion',⁴ John Campion, was about twenty-six years old, single, 'fairly educated', had 'no particular occupation' and worked on the farm of his father Patrick Campion,⁵ who was a tenant of Colonel Edward R. King-Harman. While both Murphy and Campion were suspected of 'writing and posting threatening notices in and about Rathdowney... for the purposes of intimidating the RIC,⁶ Colonel King-Harman⁷ and

1. Hamilton's report on 10 July 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845).

2. Recommendation for arrest form signed by Sub-Inspector James Somerville on 17 July 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018).

3. Hamilton's report on 10 July 81 (op.cit.).

4. On 10 July 81 Sub-Inspector James Somerville, in his recommendation for arrest form on Murphy, wrote that Murphy and Campion were 'constantly together' (n.l. above).

5. Somerville's recommendation for arrest form on Campion (ibid.).

6. The printed notices referring to the RIC were headed 'Landleaguers' in heavy type and stated: 'Beware of the police, especially the Rathdowney police. The sergeant would like to be made a head constable. The acting-sergeant, who was sent to Rathdowney, (after being burned in Borris-in-Ossory) would like to be made sergeant. All the police of Ireland have lately got circulars from 'Buckshot Forster,' to the effect that if they want promotion, they must begin to 'reasonably suspect' as many priests and people as possible. They have got directions from the same 'Buck-shot' to worm themselves into the confidence of the people, in order to betray them. Again therefore, BEWARE OF THE POLICE!' (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/32583)

7. The printed notices referring to Colonel King-Harman, who usually lived in Boyle, County Roscommon, stated:

'To the LANDLEAGUERS of the QUEEN'S COUNTY

COLONEL KING-HARMAN has the unenviable notoriety of being the only landlord in Rathdowney parish who found it necessary to bring military and constabulary to help him to collect rent, while running away from the land bill.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN has persistently scouted all the appeals of his tenants for a reasonable abatement of their rent. Within the last week he has again refused to listen to their too well-founded statements.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN, by this unfair and high-handed treatment of his tenantry, has proved himself to be one of the worst upholders in this neighbourhood of a system of landlordism, which all the civilised world now condemns.

Robert Owen' [two local landlords]..., and being the means of having other notices posted on other occasions for the purpose of intimidation',² it is likely that, because of his age, occupation and position in their branch of the land league, Murphy was the dominant partner. Certainly, it is likely that he was the more devious. According to Sub-Inspector James Somerville (stationed in Abbeylisk), Murphy agreed in May 1881 to supply coal to Sir Erasmus D. Borrowes for a 'protection party' at the farm - then commonly called 'the black farm' - in Bushfield near Borris-in-Ossory³ from which Malachy Kelly had been evicted on 7 February 1880.⁴ On 14 May 1881, Murphy received a threatening letter signed by the ubiquitous 'Rory', but which both Sub-Inspector Somerville and Thomas Hamilton R.M. suspected Murphy had written himself.⁵ The brief, unpunctuated and misspelled letter stated: 'Murphy I heer you are goin to give lodes to burrowes caretakers on the black farm if that be true and that you atemt to give his scounderls raskals a crum of fire Rory wont loose site of you.'⁶ (Even though Murphy's ruse did not allay the suspicions of the

LANDLEAGUERS of Queen's Co. and Rathdowney especially, it rests with you to oppose Col. King-Harman with the only weapon the British law has left in your hands, namely, stern and elaborate BOYCOTTING. You cannot Boycot [sic] Col. King-Harman personally, but you may perhaps reach him through his friends and abettors, such as his law agents, his property agents, and his agents in general, whenever and wherever they appear amongst you. Do not enter the house of any man (farmer, shopkeeper or gentleman) who shows approval, actively or passively, of Col. King-Harman's dealings with his tenants; do not speak to them, do not recognise them. TENANT-FARMERS, all lies in your own hands. Mark the anti-land-leaguers, Those who are not with you are against you, Remember those who support your enemy cannot be your friends,' (ibid.)

1. Below, p 218.

2. Recommendation for arrest forms signed by Sub-Inspector Somerville on 17 July 81 (op.cit.),

3. Ibid.

4. Above, pp 91-3.

5. Hamilton to the under-secretary on 10 July 81, (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018).

6. Ibid.

police, he reneged on his agreement to supply the coal to the 'protection party' at Bushfield.))'

It is worthwhile investigating the various incidents involving Patrick Murphy and John Campion, which caused an anxious Thomas Hamilton R.M. to recommend their arrest, because it permits some insights into the land league where, in the opinion of Hamilton, its 'organisation' was 'stronger than in any other portion' of his district.² On 14 July 1881, when Hamilton was recommending the arrest of Murphy and Campion, he described Maryborough and its neighbourhood as 'perfectly quiet'. At the same time, his comments on Rathdowney were very different. 'I am able', Hamilton wrote,

to state that very considerable intimidation is being practised in the entire country round, and that it is done at the direct instigation of the local league. The object of the intimidation is to prevent the payment of rent, and it is carried out by boycotting, and by inspiring apprehensions of actual violence.³

As regards the 'specific acts' with which Murphy and Campion were, according to Hamilton, 'fairly chargeable', he believed the 'proceeding at Aghaboe' on 28 May 1881 to have been the 'worst of these acts'. Such a 'proceeding', he regarded as 'one most dangerous to the peace of the county', and which convinced him 'that if the action of the league at Rathdowney be not checked and the leaders removed, similar occurrences' would take place, which might 'at any time lead to bloodshed'.⁴ The 'proceeding' was the eviction on 136 acres of grassland (in 1991, still part of the best cattle-fattening

1. Note appended to the threatening letter Murphy allegedly wrote to himself (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018).

2. Notes taken by John Nash Q.C., the law adviser in Dublin Castle, on 14 July 81 (ibid.).

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

area in the county) by the landlord, Robert Hamilton Stubber. (The farm, which was leased for £285.6s.6d. per annum by a Miss Mary Dowling, who lived in Mountmellick, had two sub-tenants but no residence except a small unused house 'suitable for a herd'.¹ According to Stubber - he lived in Moyne House, about a mile north of Durrow, and owned 7,389 acres in Queen's County² - the cause of the eviction was as follows: 'previous' to his 'taking legal proceedings' he received a letter from Miss Dowling in which she stated that she would not pay any rent higher than Griffith's valuation - about 52 per cent of the rent she paid under her lease.³ Then, on the expiration of the lease on the farm in June 1880, when Stubber offered the farm to her at a new rent of £312 per annum - a rent increase of 9.3 per cent - she 'offered to pay the old rent, and to pay up all arrears of rent'. But, as no agreement was reached, and Miss Dowling owed two years' rent on 31 March 1881, Stubber decided to evict her.⁴)

Though Mary Dowling probably was not a member of any branch of the land league in south-west Queen's County,⁵ because she was twenty years old and 'an orphan with four brothers and sisters' the eviction on 28 May 1881 was depicted by local land-leaguers as a 'vile' eviction, and they availed of 'an opportunity of making the affair a

1. Stubber's letter to the editor in *L.E.*, 11 June 81.

2. *Return of owners of land*, ..., [C1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

3. Based on the area and valuation of Aghaboe townland in the census for 1881 (Pt 1, vol. i, *Leinster*, H.C. 1881, xcvi, 785); the area is 308a.1r.39p., the valuation is £337.5s.0d.

4. As in n.1, above.

5. An assumption based on a report of a meeting of the Aghaboe branch of the land league in the *Leinster Leader* on 16 July 81, which stated that the secretary of the branch was instructed to write to Miss Dowling acknowledging her subscription. Of course, it is possible that, because her 'eviction' was a major event in the district, her subscription, whether a renewal or first time, was worth noting publicly.

highly sentimental one'.¹ Before the actual eviction, the scene on the farm was lively: about one thousand 'excited' people gathered from the surrounding districts, while bands from Borris-in-Ossory, Mountrath and Knockaroe marched around playing national airs. Then, when Thomas Hamilton R.M. arrived with 50 RIC and 50 men of the 20th Regiment, the deputy sub-sheriff, Thomas Miller, and his bailiffs proceeded to remove about seventy-five cattle from the farm so that formal possession might be handed over to Stubber.² But 'very considerable obstruction was offered to the sheriff':³ as the cattle were being driven off the land, the bands began to play, the crowd hooted, and the cattle 'took to their heels'.⁴ Eventually, the bailiffs (some of whom were 'assaulted')⁵ brought the cattle under control, but when they were about to march them away the bands played again, the crowds bellowed, and the cattle took off 'in a canter'. It was only when Hamilton ordered the military and police 'to extend in skirmishing order' to keep back the crowd, and two arrests were made, that some sort of order was restored, and formal possession was handed over to Stubber. Afterwards, a meeting was held on the edge of the farm, with a carriage, packed with fourteen speakers including seven priests, serving as a platform. The 'chair' was taken by the local

1. *L.E.*, 4 June 81. Indicating how successful the local land-leaguers were in arousing widespread sympathy for Mary Dowling, on 31 May 81 the ladies' land league branch in George Street, Enniscorthy sent her the following resolution: 'That we sincerely sympathise with Miss Dowling of Aghaboe, and regard the harsh proceedings of the landlord in evicting her as cruel and tyrannical, and thereby depriving the orphans of their just rights. We hope all the ladies of Ireland will raise their voices in sympathy with her' (*ibid.*).

2. *Ibid.*

3. Hamilton to the under-secretary on 10 July 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845).

4. *L.E.*, 4 June 81.

5. Hamilton to the under-secretary on 10 July 81 (*op.cit.*).

parish priest, Fr Matthew Keeffe, who spoke against Stubber's 'vile action of the day'. Other speakers followed also denouncing Stubber, and resolving that 'no man should touch the farm'. The crowd probably paid most attention to Mary Dowling who read from a prepared page:

I am a victim of this harsh barbarous proceeding. I have been brought into this unhappy business without a moment's notice except the bare notice served on me yesterday through the courtesy of Mr Miller to the effect that he was to deprive me of the possession of my holding today, and hand it over to Mr Hamilton Stubber (groans from the crowd) upon the most capricious and unjustifiable eviction. I, myself, offered to pay the rent and all the arrears due. He will accept no offer. This land has been in the possession of my family for years, and now all the improvements are to be confiscated.

I hope my hard case will elicit the sympathy and arouse the just indignation of the Irish people at home and abroad. I am the eldest of five orphans responsible for the younger members of my family. I have done my best to manage this farm. I am still willing to pay the original rent, and I cling to the hope that Mr Stubber will reconsider my case, and readmit me to the possession of the farm of which I have been so harshly deprived today.'

(It is interesting to note that Stubber 'readmitted' two sub-tenants, and Miss Dowling was allowed to keep her cattle on the land.² If his neighbour, a disapproving Robert Owen of Belmont, was correct, then Stubber 'gave in, and came to terms with Miss Dowling', but by 15 July 1881 was 'in just as bad a position as if he had held out'.³)

Though Thomas Hamilton R.M. believed that 'but for the force' under his command 'very serious consequences' might have 'ensued' on the day Stubber evicted Miss Dowling,⁴ there was nothing he could do about the animosity the day engendered in the district of Aghaboe. For at least the Coady and Stanley families the 'consequences' were very serious.

Henry Stanley and his son, Richard, were employed by Stubber as a

1, L.E., 4 June 81.

2, Ibid.

3, Owen to Bernard, E.B Fitzpatrick M.P. on 15 July 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018).

4, Hamilton to the under-secretary on 10 July 81 (op.cit.).

bailliff and driver respectively, and were prominent during the events in Aghaboe on 28 May 1881. In consequence, the Stanley family 'became very obnoxious in the neighbourhood, and no member of it could appear without being called after and insulted by the people.' For example, Henry Stanley Jr was 'met by a crowd of women and children, and pelted with stones' in Rathdowney on 4 June 1881.² This sort of animosity so alarmed the Stanleys that Henry's three sons, Henry Jr, Richard and William, armed themselves.³ Then, on 5 June at about 2.30 p.m., in the townland of Farranville - a 'short distance' from Mary Dowling's farm - Richard Stanley was walking on the public road past the house of James Coady, a labourer, when two of Coady's children 'came out of their house and shouted at him'.⁴ Stanley was reproofing the children when Coady appeared. 'Some words having passed between them', Stanley pulled out a pistol, and shot Coady through the left breast.⁵

If the information given to the RIC by a man named Patrick Conor from Aghaboe is correct, then Richard Stanley's shooting of Coady may have been premeditated. Conor stated that he had seen Richard Stanley pass him at Beckfield Lodge between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. on the Sunday in question, and then about fifteen minutes later he returned and met his two brothers Henry Jr and William who were armed also. According to Conor, when Henry Jr asked Richard, 'Did you shoot him?' he replied that he had proved himself a soldier. Henry Jr then rejoined, 'If you did not, I would.'⁶

1, Irish crime records for June 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., vol. iv, p.2).

2, Ibid.

3, L.E., 11 June 81.

4, Irish crime records (op.cit.).

5, Ibid.

6, Report on petty sessions in Rathdowney on 11 June 81 (L.E., 18 June 81).

On the other hand, as Richard's barrister stated at the assizes in his defence, 'the acts of persecution which were used against Stanley and his family would provoke a saint, and justify a sinner.'¹ Also, there is a tradition in the Stanley family that Richard was volatile,² and liable to respond recklessly to threats and name-calling.

As it was, after the shooting Frs Matthew Keeffe and James Cosgrave of Aghaboe parish, Fr Thomas Feehan of Rathdowney parish, and the police were sent for. A crowd gathered, 'the excitement reached a fearful pitch', and, but for the priests keeping the people 'in check' and the quick arrest of the three Stanley brothers and their father, it was 'feared they would have been lynched'.³ Coady recovered from his wound, but such was 'the strong feeling against the Stanleys that members of the family, who were not in custody, received special police protection.'⁴

For both the Stanley and Coady families the effects of the Farranville shooting, as it was called in the newspapers, were as follows: Henry Stanley Sr, who was apprehended on the day his sons were arrested, was released on the same day;⁵ Henry Stanley Jr and William Stanley, who were charged with being implicated in the shooting, were remanded in custody until 18 June 1881 when they were given bail on their own recognisances;⁶ Richard Stanley, though he persistently applied for bail, was remanded in custody for his own protection for about six months, and eventually in December 1881, when he pleaded guilty, and threw himself on the mercy of the court, he was

1, L.E., 10 Dec. 81.

2, Information provided by his grand-nephew, Alan Stanley of Quinagh, County Carlow.

3, L.E., 11 June 81.

4, Ibid., 18 June 81.

5, Ibid.

6, Ibid., 25 June 81.

released on bail 'to appear and receive sentence when called on'.¹ There is no evidence that any of the Stanleys spent any more time in gaol. However, it is ironical that the *Leinster Express* on 17 December 1881, which reported Richard Stanley's release on bail, also reported the sentencing of Coady to eighteen months hard labour for posting a boycotting notice. Though Coady and his family benefited materially from his shooting,² it is likely that Coady was hostile towards the Stanleys, and probably was watched by the police. As it was, two sub-constables, acting on information received, lay in wait for Coady at Chapel Hill (about one mile from where he was shot) and at about 5 a.m. on 27 November 1881 they arrested him as he posted the notice.³ The notice was printed in large type on a small piece of paper - hardly the production of an illiterate person such as Coady was represented to be - and stated that George Thompson, a local farmer, was boycotted for having employed the 'assassin Stanley', and that all Irishmen were to shun Thompson as their 'deadly enemy'.⁴ (The sentence on Coady was quashed on 15 February 1882 at the quarter

1. *L.E.*, 10 Dec., 17 Dec. 81

2. Coady and his family had been in receipt of 8s. per week outdoor relief from the Donaghmore poor law union, which was reduced to 4s. per week on 22 July 81 because the Coadys were being supported by sympathisers (report of a discussion on the cases of persons in receipt of outdoor relief at a meeting of the Donaghmore board of guardians on 22 July 81, *ibid.*, 30 July 81). However, it is likely that the reduction in their outdoor relief was more than offset by the weekly 'instalments' given to Coady's wife by the Rathdowney branch of the ladies' land league: on 23 June 81, Anna Parnell sent a cheque for £7 'for the family of Coady who was shot by Stanley' with the stipulation that it should be given in instalments if there was 'any danger of this money being given in rent' (report in *ibid.*, 2 July 81 of a meeting of the Rathdowney branch of the ladies' land league on 26 June 81 when a letter from Anna Parnell was read out). In *ibid.*, 2 July 81 Fr James Cosgrave, the curate in Coady's parish, acknowledged the receipt of £1 from the solicitor, Edward Corcoran, from Raheenduff, Timahoe, Queen's County 'for the relief of the wounded man Coady and his helpless family'. *Ibid.*, 3 Dec. 81 reporting the arrest of Coady for posting the boycotting notice, stated: 'Coady and his family have been the recipients of bounty since the time he was shot, and his base ingratitude is only known to those who are familiar with the exertions made for him at the time of the occurrence by the gentleman [George Thompson] whom his notice seeks to injure.'

3. *Ibid.*, Dec., 17 Dec. 81.

4. *Ibid.*, 3 Dec. 81; report on the quashing of Coady's sentence in *Ibid.*, 18 Feb. 82.

sessions in Maryborough, where his defence argued successfully that to bring Coady's case within the Whiteboy Act there should have been independent evidence of some existing conspiracy to which the notice could be referred.¹

Of course, as suggested by Sub-Inspector James Somerville's recommendation for the arrest of Patrick Murphy and John Campion,² the Stanleys and Robert Hamilton Stubber were not alone in being subjected to the vitriolic attention of branches of the land league in south-west Queen's County. Predictably, landlordism *per se* continued to be execrated, and the Upper Ossory Farming Society's annual agricultural show - described by the committee of the Aghaboe branch as a 'landlord production',³ and by the committee of the Borris-in-Ossory branch as 'an institution of landlords and others who have shown no sympathy with the cause of the tenant-farmer'⁴ - to be held on 23 August 1881, had to be cancelled through lack of support.⁵ Particular landlords who used the sheriff's office to evict and auction interests in farms, stock and crops were also execrated by leaders of the land league. Good examples of such landlords in the south-west of the county during the four months July to September 1881 were, along with Stubber, Colonel King-Harman,⁶ Sir Erasmus D.

1. *L.E.*, 18 Feb. 82.

2. Above, p.206, ns 2,4,5; p.207, n.2.

3. Resolution boycotting the show adopted by the Aghaboe committee (*L.E.*, 16 July 81).

4. Resolution boycotting the show adopted by the Borris-in-Ossory committee (*ibid.*, 6 Aug. 81).

5. The cancellation was announced in *ibid.*, 20 Aug. 81; on 19 July 81 Bernard E.B. Fitzpatrick M.P. writing to 'Jephson' (presumably, Henry L. Jephson, private secretary to Thomas Henry Burke, the under-secretary for Ireland) stated: 'They [the land-leaguers] have now boycotted my father's [Lord Castletown] agricultural show which was started for the benefit of the tenantry forty years ago.' (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018).

6. Useful newspaper reports on seizures and auctions initiated by Colonel King-Harman are as follows: *L.E.*, 4 June 81 for a report on the seizure of stock belonging to seven tenants on the Coolkerry (almost a mile east of Rathdowney) part of his estate on 30 May 81 and the ensuing auction

Borrowes,¹ and Dr Samuel Edge.² But it was the treatment meted out to Robert Owen during July 1881 which attracted most attention from the police, and thereby heavily influenced their decision to gaol Patrick Murphy and John Campion.

Robert Owen lived in Belmont House (near Cullahill), owned 360 acres in Queen's County, and managed the nearby 616 acres owned by his brother-in-law, George Ayres³ - a clergyman who lived in Finglas, Dublin, and was rector of St. Patrick's, Mulhuddart, County Meath.⁴ Since the autumn gale of 1880, Owen and Ayres were, in Owen's words, 'fit subjects for assassination...for no earthly reason but because we could not accept the land league terms in dealing with our tenants who were offered, at the time, the most liberal terms, and who still held out against us although having money in their pockets.'⁵ Whether the tenants had 'the money in their pockets' or not, Owen resorted to writs of *fieri facias* to recover rents,⁶ and thereby caused tenants

in Rathdowney on 3 June 81, which was attended by 100 men of the 84th Regiment from the Curragh, 40 men of the 2nd Division of the Scots Greys from Dublin, and 100 RIC commanded by Thomas Hamilton R.M.; Hamilton reported that at the auction 'very large numbers of people assembled with bands and banners, causing very great excitement and danger to the public peace, and offering much obstruction to the sheriff', and that 'this lawless demonstration was arranged and carried out by the Rathdowney land-leaguers' with Fr Thomas Feehan, Patrick Murphy and John Campion 'as usual present and active in carrying it out' (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845); *L.E.*, 30 July 81 reported on the seizures of stock; *ibid.*, 23 July 81 and 13 Aug. 81 reported on the auctions of tenants' interests in their holdings on his estate.

1. Borrowes gained notoriety among land-leaguers for his eviction of Malachy Kelly on 7 Feb. 80, and the farm at Bushfield near Borris-in-Ossory became the focus of a sustained test-of-strength for local boycotting until 1908 (Hilary Walsh, *Borris-in-Ossory, Co. Laois*, p. 172); for a report on the seizures of stock of Borrowes's tenants see *L.E.*, 30 July 81, and for reports on the auctions of tenants' interests in their holdings on his estate see *ibid.*, 23 July and 13 Aug. 81.

2. *Below*, pp 276-7; for report on the sheriff's auction of tenants' interests in their holdings on the estates of Dr Edge, John G. Adair and Sir Anthony C. Weldon see *L.E.*, 30 July 81.

3. *Return of owners of land*, [C1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

4. *Thom's* 1881, pp 892-940.

5. Owen to Forster on 15 May 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/16282).

6. For reports on the execution of writs instituted by Owen see *L.E.*, 30 July, 6 Aug., 27 Aug., and 17 Sept. 81.

consternation and the hostility of their leaders. (Though it was cumbersome and expensive for a landlord to obtain a writ of *fiery facias* from a superior court, such a writ effectively coerced a solvent tenant into paying his rent. If a tenant permitted his interest in his holding to be sold under a writ of *fiery facias*, he could be evicted without any legal restriction on the landlord, he lost all right to claim compensation for improvements or disturbance from his landlord, and if the sale of the interest did not realise the amount owed by the tenant the landlord could bide his time and, whenever it might suit him, seize the property belonging to the tenant sufficient to realise the balance.)' As it was, tenants were 'posted' at Middlemount on Ayres's estate to warn of the approach of process-servers,² and on 6 December 1880 a tramp was 'captured', accused of having a 'pross' in his pocket, stripped, and eventually let go.³ From 10 December 1880 two RIC were lodged in Owen's home for his personal protection.⁴ On 26 December 1880 Owen was denounced at a meeting in Cullahill organised by the local branch of the land league without the knowledge of the RIC, which was held at a place where a similar meeting had been prohibited the previous week, and which was attended by about three thousand.⁵

Relations between Owen and his tenants, already bad, deteriorated after the spring gale of 1881. On Saturday night, 2 July 1881,

1. For a brief analysis of the 'defective nature of the proceedings at a sheriff's sale under a writ of *fiery facias*', see W. Neilson Hancock, *Complaints against bankers in Ireland* (Dublin, 1875), pp 5-6.

2. *L.E.*, 11 Dec. 81.

3. *Ibid.*; above, p.137.

4. 'Strictly confidential' report by Sub-Inspector James Somerville on 19 July 81, and report by County Inspector Lucan Bingham on 30 July 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018); *L.E.*, 18 Dec. 80.

5. Above, p.145.

threatening notices appeared 'in and about Rathdowney'. The notices, which Patrick Murphy and John Campion 'were strongly suspected of having procured and posted', and which were torn down by the RIC on 3 July, read:

Take notice Robert Owen of Belmont, agent to the meek parson Revd George Ayres, Finglas, Co. Dublin over the ill-fated, ill-fed, persecuted, and now bankrupt tenants of Ballykealy is boycotted by the competent tribunal,
NB Any person from this date holding any intercourse with said Owen or his family or his household, lending to or borrowing from him or his, serving or labouring in his employment, tilling or grazing his lands, found entering or leaving them under any pretext whatsoever will be shunned, denounced, banned, and driven from the ranks and fellowship of all true Irishmen as the betrayer, the Corydon,² the Talbot³ of the people.⁴

Though, according to Sub-Inspector James Somerville on 4 July 1881, Owen did not 'mind' the notices,⁵ he was outraged by an extraordinary meeting on 10 July 1881, which was arranged by the Cullahill & Durrow branch of the land league 'to protest', according to the *Kilkenny Journal*, 'against the conduct of Mr Robert Owen in threatening to evict most of his tenants for refusing to pay over Griffith's valuation'.⁶ There was little the RIC could do about the meeting, because, as already indicated, the committee of the Cullahill & Durrow branch of the land league seemed to have a talent for keeping the RIC ignorant of public meetings they were organising,⁷ and as the Abbeylax sub-inspector James Somerville knew of the proposed meeting

1. Undated and unsigned statement in S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018.

2. John Joseph Corydon, alias Carr, a fenian informer who was a witness against Davitt at Marylebone police court and at the Old Bailey in 1870 (Moody, *Davitt*, pp 49, 78, 83, 91-107).

3. Thomas Talbot, a detective who passed himself off so successfully as a water-bailiff called John Kelly at Carrick-on-Suir that local fenians thought he was the head centre for the south of Ireland (Robert Kee, *The Bold Fenian Men*, p.25).

4. As in n.1 above.

5. Sub-Inspector Somerville's report on 4 July 81 (ibid.).

6. *Kilkenny Journal*, 13 July 81.

7. Above, pp 141-6.

only about six hours before it started, he could muster hastily only eleven men to keep the peace.' As it was, the meeting was held at Cullahill castle - a ruined tower house about three hundred yards east of Cullahill hamlet, and about a mile from Belmont House, which was on the other side of the main Dublin to Cork road - and, attended by two thousand along with the Abbeylax and Ballyragget bands, it presented an unusual spectacle. As if emphasising the object of the meeting, which was to denounce Owen, a very large flag trimmed with a deep black edge was suspended on the top of the castle. On one side of the flag was a caricature of Owen hanging and the devil 'as if ready to receive him', while on the other side of the flag in orange, green and black were the words 'Property has its rights. I must have my own.'² Under the flag, people, wearing black rosettes and mourning crape in their hat bands, marched in procession behind the Ballyragget brass band playing the 'Dead March in Saul', and then scornfully they buried an effigy of Owen.³ Thereafter, the meeting was addressed by three curates - Fr James Cosgrave from Aghaboe, Fr Edward Rowan from Durrow and Fr Patrick Meany from Tullaroan, County Kilkenny - and, though there were 'repeated and unfriendly exclamations' about Owen as Fr Rowan was speaking, there was no disorder on any scale, and at about 5.15 p.m. the 'proceedings quietly terminated'.⁴

On 15 July 1881 an outraged Owen wrote to Bernard Fitzpatrick, his neighbour and the M.P. for Portarlinton, that the flag was still on

1. Report of Sub-Inspector Somerville on 11 July 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018).

2. Ibid.; *Kilkenny Journal*, 13 July 81.

3. *Kilkenny Journal*, 13 July 81.

4. Ibid.; Somerville's report on 11 July 81 (op.cit.). There is no detailed report in any newspaper of the priests' speeches, and the RIC had no man there who, according to Sub-Inspector Somerville, 'was qualified to take notes' (Somerville's report on 14 July 81, S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018).

Cullahill castle inflaming the minds of the people against him, and that, as 'matters were never worse' in his 'part' of the county,' it was 'high time under the circumstances that the government should see the necessity of re-establishing the police barrack in Cullahill in order to strike terror into the people'.² While the county inspector, Lucan Bingham, believed that 'nothing short of a station at Cullahill' would 'satisfy' Owen, and admitted that 'ill-feeling against Owen' appeared 'to have increased' during July 'owing to several seizures for rent and evictions carried out by him - at some of which he was present', he advised against a police barrack at Cullahill: this was because a barrack at Cullahill would not give Owen any better protection than he was receiving from the two RIC billeted in his house, and that the numbers of RIC in Queen's County would have to be increased to man such a barrack.³ Andrew Reed, the officer in charge of the crime branch in Dublin Castle, agreed with Bingham, and added that 'considering the demands which are daily made for men in the disturbed counties in the south and west...it would be impracticable just now [31 July 1881] to increase the Queen's County force.'⁴

While a police barrack was not re-established at Cullahill until 1882,⁵ Dublin Castle responded to Thomas Hamilton's advice, given on

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018. To support his opinion that there was an 'organised conspiracy' in his area, Owen stated that John Roe, a solicitor who owned 682 acres in the county, could not set meadowing because he acted for Colonel King-Harman; neighbours were told they would be boycotted if they allowed a 'young fellow', who was staying with Owen, 'about their place again'; because he was boycotted he could not have a shaft put in a car in Rathdowney; there was 'no such thing as coming at these scoundrels' because their 'organisation' was 'so thoroughly complete' (ibid.).

2. Ibid.

3. Bingham's report on 30 July 81 (ibid.).

4. Reed's comment on Bingham's report (ibid.).

5. Below, p.337.

10 July 1881, that the time had come to 'check' the 'agitation' in the Rathdowney district,' when on 2 August Patrick Murphy and John Campion were arrested as suspects, and lodged in Naas gaol. However, the gaoling of Murphy and Campion was counter-productive in that it precipitated two weeks of increasing disorder in south-west Queen's County. On the morning of 2 August, 'early and unexpected as the arrest was, hundreds of people were there [Ballybrophy railway station] to see them off and wish them God speed.'² That evening, at about 8.30, a 'noisy, cheering and groaning' crowd of about three hundred led by William Quinn, a local labourer who carried an effigy, paraded the streets of Rathdowney, and then shouting 'Buckshot Forster!' and 'Down with coercion!' they smashed the effigy outside Patrick Murphy's public house.³ The disorder was repeated the following evening when - undoubtedly goaded by the sheriff's auction at 3 p.m. the same day in Maryborough when, watched by a 'force of military and constabulary',⁴ four of George Ayres's tenants allowed a representative of the Property Defence Association to buy the interest in each of their holdings⁵ - again a 'mob' of about three hundred, two

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018.

2. Transcript of Constable Jeremiah Stringer's shorthand notes of Fr Thomas Feehan's speech at the 'land agitation and indignation meeting' at Rathdowney on 7 Aug. 81 (ibid.); below, pp 222-7.

3. A sub-constable, who witnessed the demonstration, described what Quinn was carrying as 'an effigy' and 'a banner', while a constable, who was a witness also, stated that Quinn carried a banner which 'was the effigy of a man'. Henry A. Blake R.M. believed that Quinn carried an effigy which represented Forster, the chief secretary (a report of the inquiry into a charge of rioting on 2 and 3 Aug. 81 against eleven men in the supplement to L.E., 20 Aug. 81).

4. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/25714.

5. A Captain Mac Farlane bought the interests in the tenants' holdings for £12 - less than 3 per cent of the £524.10s.5d. the tenants owed in rent and costs (L.E., 6 Aug. 81). A statement by Fr Edward Rowan at a meeting held in Maryborough town hall after the auction probably indicates the hostility of the tenants and their supporters: Fr Rowan said, 'not one of the Ballykealy tenantry had the least intention whatsoever of quitting their homesteads or of forfeiting the firesides that their fathers had raised hundreds of years before brogues (an allusion to Cobbler, Robert Owen's nickname) were made under a canvas-covering in Rathdowney streets. Nothing less than the numbers

carrying a blazing barrel, paraded the streets, and 'practically held Rathdowney in its hands'.¹ (This time the 'mob' was led by Joseph Delaney a 'discharged soldier' who gave his followers 'commands in military style'.)² The local police arrested one person each night, but probably because, as suggested by Henry A. Blake, the new resident magistrate,³ in Maryborough court on 13 August 1881, 'the demeanour of the crowd was so excited they did not think it would be safe for them to keep the prisoners in custody.'⁴

Indignation over the gaoling of Murphy and Campion also accounted for a public meeting in Rathdowney on 7 August 1881 which, according to Sub-Inspector William D. Grene, was 'got up privately'.⁵ On Saturday evening 6 August notices appeared throughout the district⁶ announcing 'A great public meeting of the Rathdowney and surrounding branches of the land league will be held at the market square Rathdowney on Sunday evening next 7 August 1881 at 5 o'clock', and over the words 'The land is the people's. God save Ireland.' the notices appealed to land-leaguers 'attend in your thousands'.⁷ About one thousand 'very excited' people attended the meeting,⁸ which - perhaps out of respect for the evening service in the Church of Ireland

and strength of an armed host could drag them from their firesides, and nothing short of that would prevent them from returning' (*Freeman's Journal*, 4 Aug. 81).

1. Supplement of *L.E.*, 20 Aug. 81.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Blake replaced Thomas Hamilton R.M., who was promoted to Dublin Castle in July 81 (*ibid.*, 23 July 81).

4. *Ibid.* On 15 Mar. 82 a William Rafter was bound to the peace for £100 on his own recognisance, to receive sentence when called on, for being one of a riotous assembly in Rathdowney on 2 Aug. 81 (*ibid.*, 18 Mar. 82).

5. Grene's report on 4 Aug. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018).

6. Sub-Inspector James Somerville's report on 8 Aug. 81 enclosing a copy of the poster (*ibid.*).

7. *Ibid.*

8. Transcript of Constable Jeremiah Stringer's shorthand notes, p.1 (*ibid.*).

church, which overlooks the market square in Rathdowney - was held between 5 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. in a field beside Rathdowney. The RIC clearly were apprehensive of disorder, because Henry A. Blake R.M. with fifty RIC watched the meeting.' Head Constable Jeremiah Stringer, a police reporter from Enniskillen who was the target of some abuse, sat on the platform and took shorthand notes of the speeches² while, complying with orders from Dublin Castle, Sub-Inspector James Somerville had two RIC 'in plain clothes' take notes 'so as to be able to give evidence hereafter if necessary'.³

Though, as Sub-Inspector Somerville reported, 'all passed off quietly with the exception of some little excitement',⁴ yet the almost twelve thousand word transcript of police reporter Stringer's shorthand notes⁵ suggests that Fr Thomas Feehan, the Rathdowney curate, and Fr Edward Rowan, the Durrow curate, had loose perceptions of their office as priests,⁶ because their speeches must have contributed to the acrimony in the district of Rathdowney. Along with Fr Feehan, the chairman, and Fr Rowan, the seven speakers from the platform consisted of Fr Matthew Keeffe, the parish priest of Aghaboe, Fr John Doyle, a Rathdowney curate, Thomas Carroll, a farmer from Coolkerry who was vice-president of the Rathdowney branch of the land

1. Sub-Inspector Somerville's report on 8 Aug. 81 (op.cit.)

2. Ibid.; Stringer had to pay 2s.6d. for admission to the platform, while 'friends' had to pay only 1s. (p.1 of the transcript of Stringer's shorthand notes, op.cit.).

3. Oddly, if the two RIC were supposed to be under cover, Somerville selected Constable Thomas Murphy and Sub-Constable Michael Dalton, two RIC stationed locally who, despite wearing 'plain clothes', must have been recognised by many at the meeting (Somerville's note under the 'confidential' instructions from Dublin Castle, ibid.).

4. Somerville's report on 8 Aug. 81 (op.cit.).

5. Ibid.

6. The office of a priest was 'to offer, bless, rule, preach, and baptize' (William E. Addis and Thomas Arnold, *A Catholic Dictionary*, pp 640, 663-4). It is tempting to suggest that the injunction to 'rule' attracted them most.

league, and the respective treasurers of the Borris-in-Ossory and Durrow & Cullahill branches of the land league, Michael Farrell a farmer, and Patrick F. Fletcher, a Durrow merchant. But it was the speeches of Frs Feehan and Rowan which set the mood of the meeting. (Also, their speeches consisted of about 60 per cent of the total words spoken from the platform.)'

Fr Feehan began by stating that the two objects of the meeting were to express deep, ardent, warm and affectionate sympathy with Patrick Murphy and John Campion, and to condemn the government for their arrests. By arresting the two men, Forster had, according to Fr Feehan, 'enacted' a 'lie' on two levels: first, when Forster was introducing his coercion bill he said that the bill would be enforced only against village tyrants and dissolute ruffians, but Murphy and Campion by their gentle belief, unobtrusive conduct, and their practical devotion to their family affairs were deservedly the idols of their families and friends; second, though, according to Forster, the coercion bill was not intended directly to put down the land league, if Murphy and Campion were not arrested for being good, active members of the league, for what, in the name of Heaven, were they arrested? In fact, Murphy and Campion were thrown into gaol simply to gratify the malice and hatred of some petty contemptible representative of the dying system of landlordism. Early and unexpected were the arrests of Murphy and Campion, Fr Feehan accompanied hundreds of people to Ballybrophy railway station to see them off, and as he observed the wet eyes, the set teeth and expressions around him it struck him that not only was it wrong and

unjust, but it was also foolish for the British government to think that force would put down Irish disaffection. But it would be infinitely more foolish if they tried to use force against the brute force of the British government, because being unarmed they would lose. Boycotting, which was a declaration from every honest man that he was not a friend of his enemy, and which Parnell had shown them how to practise, was the only weapon left in their hands, and if it was used skilfully all the swords, rifles, bayonets and buckshot of Britain would not defeat them. The police - the real cause of the disturbances in Rathdowney - the magistrates of the Rathdowney district, and anyone else who identified with the landlord system, which was their greatest enemy, should be boycotted; they should avoid making personal friends of any of the Rathdowney police; there should be no bowing, cringing or scraping to the magistrates; they should not bid for any hay being auctioned by understrappers; during the coming winter when gentlemen, who were their enemies, hunted through their fields they were not bound to hold their stirrups or to buy oats for their horses.' Whether the land bill, then in the House of Lords, was enacted or not they should sustain the land league. It was not for a lease renewable every fifteen years that the land league was started, but to expropriate the bad landlords, and to coax the good ones, and in that way secure the whole soil of Ireland for the men who till it. No bill would ever bring one moment's peace to Ireland so long as Ireland continued to be insulted by a system of landlordism made up of police espionage, magisterial incapacity and

1. For a description of the successful campaign to stop fox hunting in Queen's County see chapter V, part 2, below, pp 318-31.

injustice, government weakness, and landlord savagery.¹

Fr Edward Rowan followed Fr Feehan, and in his usual fustian style² spoke for about forty minutes.³ According to Fr Rowan, Murphy and Campion were two of Rathdowney's most popular and stainless sons, young men of whom a metropolis might be proud, who had worth, ability, and an untarnished name to bring distinction to any race in any clime fighting the battles of truth and honour. Their arrest was an arbitrary exercise of purloined authority by a faction of cockney shopkeepers, who measured every sentiment of patriotism by yards of calico and bushels of coal, who never rose to a higher idea than the profits to be filibustered from puling creoles and hindu temples, and who, like an oligarchy of thieves, lay in wait in the mud creeks and caves of Africa to pilfer the gold dust of King Coffee and the Ashantees. Murphy and Campion despised the arbitrary yokes of such contemptible freebooters, and consequently were kidnapped in the grey of the morning by the body-snatchers. The arrests of Murphy and Campion would be understandable if they had been teaching their companions, as Rowan could teach them in fifteen minutes, 'how to make gun-cotton, how to prepare collodion, a solution of ether and the subsequent state in equal admixtures of nitric and sulphuric acid';⁴ then, one could easily imagine the landlords quaking in their boots, and the small protestant faction, so domineering and insolent in

1. Transcript of Stringer's short hand notes (op.cit.) pp 4-16; S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.N.L. & I.N.L. papers 1879-88, carton 2, p.328.

2. Cf. above, pp 146, 167-8.

3. Estimate based on there being over ten of the forty-two pages of the transcript from Stringer's shorthand notes devoted to Rowan's speech (which was punctuated by cheers), and the meeting lasted for about two and a half hours (transcript from Stringer's shorthand notes, op.cit., pp 16-26).

4. Though Fr Rowan's knowledge of chemistry is suspect, nonetheless clearly he is alluding to the preparation of nitro-glycerine (ibid.; S.P.O., I.N.L.L. & I.N.L. papers 1879-88, carton 2, p.942).

Rathdowney, lifting up the whites of their eyes to Heaven seeing visions of a gun powder blast over the clouds. However, because great political power was progressively descending from their effete, paralysed hands to the people, the cotton lords and wool spinners of England, who arrogated the divine right of governing Ireland by 'garsoons of undertakers, shoneens and cobblers',¹ had good reason to fear. They were laying the foundation of a new movement summoned into life by the teaching of Parnell and Davitt; they should not be half-hearted in the land agitation; they should have no possible communion with the boycotted scum that stood between them and the vindication of their national rights. With strict union amongst themselves under the leadership of their great tribune, Parnell, they would win back from the unscrupulous grasp of puritanical settlers the ancient territory of the O'Moores which, above all other soil in Ireland, was the soil of oppression, fraud, violated faith, broken treaties, and wholesale massacres.²

Though Forster, the chief secretary, described the speeches of Frs Feehan and Rowan as 'shocking', he refrained from direct action against the priests, preferring instead to have their speeches 'laid' before their bishop through 'some appropriate channel'.³ On the other hand, lay agitators continued to be subjected to direct police action. After the indignation meeting in Rathdowney on 7 August 1881 ended at about 7.30 p.m. Sub-Inspector James Somerville and a 'portion' of the

1. What Fr Rowan meant by 'garsoons' is unclear; the word might be a corruption of garrisons or a more likely and derogatory corruption of garsuin, the gaelic word for boys. 'Cobblers' is an allusion to cobbler, the nickname given to Robert Owen by speakers on land league platforms in south-west Queen's County.

2. Transcript of Stringer's shorthand notes (op.cit.).

3. Memorandum of Forster on 16 Aug. 81 (ibid.).

fifty RIC remained in the town until about 10.30 p.m. to keep the peace.¹ Then on Friday morning 12 August 1881, after a 'strong force' of RIC under Head Constable Bernard King of Abbeylax was drafted into the town, eleven men were arrested on charges of rioting in Rathdowney on the evenings of 2 and 3 August 1881, and three of the eleven were also charged with assaulting Constable Thomas Murphy.² However, as with the arrests of Murphy and Campion, which sparked off the demonstrations on 2 and 3 August, the arrests of the eleven produced further disorder. By 1 p.m. a 'huge crowd' had gathered outside the RIC barracks in Rathdowney cheering for the prisoners inside, and groaning for the RIC and 'Buckshot Forster'. Then, when the prisoners in cars were escorted by thirty RIC to Ballybrophy railway station for transport to Maryborough on the 2 p.m. train, the crowd, led by the Erril fife and drum band, followed, and groaning, hissing and yelling, they so packed the station platforms and the bridge spanning the rails that it was only by 'dint of crushing' that the RIC succeeded in putting the prisoners on the train. When the prisoners reached Maryborough, they were escorted by RIC to the court house where they were 'arraigned' before Henry A. Blake R.M. Blake was distinctly unsympathetic towards the eleven prisoners, and informed them that 'on no account' would he allow them out on bail that evening, but on the morrow, when he would be happy to hear their application, it was 'possible' that he might accede to it. On their removal from the court house to Maryborough gaol the prisoners under police escort were followed by the Maryborough brass band and a crowd - some of whom

1. Somerville's report on 8 Aug. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018); L.E., 13 Aug. 81.

2. L.E., 13 Aug. 81.

threw stones at the police.'

Meanwhile, in Ballybrophy railway station, the 'greater part' of the crowd remained in the station expecting that their arrested friends would be released on bail, and would return on the 3.30 p.m. 'down train'. (The refreshment room in the railway station, reminding the crowd of Patrick Murphy, the gaoled Rathdowney suspect, may have sharpened their hostility.) When the 3.30 p.m. train arrived fourteen luckless emergency labourers carrying sacks of provisions and clothing stepped on to the platform to change trains for Birdhill. (To get to Birdhill, a hamlet in west Tipperary, it was necessary to switch at Ballybrophy junction to a train travelling on the Nenagh and Limerick branch of the Great Southern and Western Railway.) When a passenger on the labourers' train pointed them out to the Rathdowney crowd they were set upon immediately. All were assaulted in some way: most were knocked down and kicked, 'their bags were shredded', their loaves used as footballs, and their clothes were torn into 'ribbons', and it was only by taking refuge in the ticket office, opened for them by the station master, Jeremiah Coffey,² that the labourers escaped serious injury. It was then that Coffey took matters in hand: locking the ticket door, which opened on to the public road, he 'motioned' to the crowd in a manner which suggested that the labourers had gone that way, and then when the crowd rushed for the road he ran with the labourers to the Birdhill train, which was waiting on the junction line. Before he could give the signal for the train to depart Coffey's courage was demonstrated further when he stopped a labourer

1. *L.E.*, 13 Aug. 81.

2. *Slater's Directory* 1881, p. 488.

from firing his revolver at one of the crowd who managed to reach the train and was attempting to drag the labourer out, and then when he 'seized' a 'ruffian' who was about to aim a rock at a carriage.¹

But the violence in Ballybrophy station did not end with the departure of the Birdhill train. When the *mêlée* started in the station a telegram was sent to Rathdowney for police, and just as the Birdhill train was leaving four police arrived. Then, watched by the crowd, the four set about picking up the clothing and provisions, which were all over the rails. One constable, who was followed by about half a dozen men, was set upon, his rifle was smashed, and he was brutally beaten and kicked. His cries attracted Coffey and the three other police who were in different parts of the station, and they ran to his rescue. Three men were arrested,² but owing to the 'demeanour' of the crowd the constable in charge took the names of the arrested men, and 'deemed it prudent' to release them. The beaten constable, W.F. Farrier, was bleeding so profusely from the face and head, and was 'so prostrate' that he had to be carried back to a car, and returned to Rathdowney.³

On 13 August 1881, the day after they arrived in Maryborough, the eleven prisoners arrested in Rathdowney, appeared before Henry A. Blake R.M. After hearing the case against the eleven, Blake defined a riot as 'a tumultuous assembly of three or more persons collected without legal authority to the terror of Her Majesty's subjects', and

1. *L.E.*, 20 Aug. 81.

2. On 14 Aug. 81 one man named Martin Malone was charged with the assault; he denied the charge and was remanded on bail (*ibid.*, 20 Aug. 81). Then at Rathdowney petty sessions on 27 Aug. 81 he was discharged because Farrier said that he could not identify Malone as one who had assaulted him (*ibid.*, 3 Sept. 81).

3. *Ibid.*, 20 Aug. 81.

had 'no hesitation in saying' that the assemblies in Rathdowney on 2 and 3 August 1881 were such 'as a great many of Her Majesty's subjects would have hesitated to approach'. Asserting that it was his duty 'to put a stop to a state of things which would be simply intolerable to anyone living in Rathdowney whose opinions did not coincide with those who compose these mobs', Blake said that until 'the state' of that part of the county improved he would exercise the discretion which the law invested in him, and refuse bail in any case from the district of Rathdowney 'arising out of the unfortunate state of the country'.¹ Accordingly, the eleven prisoners were remanded in custody until 27 August when they were released on their own security of £20 each and two independent sureties of £10 each.²

As shown, the worsening of disorder in the Rathdowney district in the first two weeks of August 1881 is traceable to the gaoling of Patrick Murphy and John Campion as suspects. But it would be incorrect to suggest that disorder on any scale usually attended the detention of suspects, because commonly it was accomplished unobtrusively by the RIC on early mornings. However, once in gaol, the suspects' turf and crops (if they had any) were harvested by local sympathisers, and these events sometimes gave rise to extraordinary demonstrations. A good example of such a demonstration occurred in Mountmellick on 25 October 1881 when, after a 'formidable party' dug about fifteen acres of potatoes belonging to Patrick Murphy (the Mountmellick suspect who had been gaoled ten days earlier),³ an unusual procession marched in to Mountmellick under the 'direction' of the local curates, Frs James Connolly and Edward Walsh. Following a

1. L. E., 20 Aug. 81.

2. Ibid., 3 Sept. 81.

3. Appendix 38, below, p. 437.

large banner bearing the emblem of the harp and the legends 'God save Ireland' and 'Land for the People' came about 50 horsemen, 150 horses and carts decorated with green ribbons and boughs, and each carrying 5 to 10 men who shouldered their forks and spades in military style; after the carts came the Summerhill and Maryborough bands, and then 50 little girls wearing green ribbons and carrying boughs brought up the rear. Watched by twenty RIC, the procession marched into the town square where, along with a crowd from the town, they were addressed by the two priests.'

Such demonstrations of solidarity with suspects often were noisy with the sounds of bands, ovations, groans, and speeches from carts after processions. However, the people involved, who never numbered more than hundreds, were always watched by the RIC and, though noisy, they were never riotous. Larger crowds attended receptions given to suspects when they reached Queen's County after their release from prison. These receptions, also always watched by the RIC, tended to follow a set pattern, were conducted in an orderly manner, and normally were followed by processions behind bands. Sub-Inspector William D. Grene of Maryborough believed that such receptions should be tolerated. (Grene's attitude was important because, as a consequence of the ill-health of Lucan Bingham, the county inspector, he was often left in charge of the RIC in Maryborough where most receptions for released suspects took place.) Referring to recent receptions in his report on 13 October 1881 on the state of Maryborough and Mountmellick Grene wrote:

I, L. E., 29 Oct. 81.

No doubt the different suspects were treated to ovations when they arrived here, but that was only natural, and I think any interference with them would have been uncalled for and unwise. They conducted the proceedings in as orderly a manner as possible, and did not interfere with or annoy any person except Dr Jacob. A portion of the processions did, I believe, go out of their way to march past his house, and give some groans. On each occasion there were illuminations, and although a number of non land-leaguers did not do so they were not interfered with.

I believe that it was better for the general state of the district that the people should be allowed to get rid of a certain amount of feeling in this way in what I term a harmless manner than be compelled to restrain themselves when they would probably give vent to it in a more dangerous manner.'

One of the receptions Grene was referring to was the one given to Patrick Doran on 22 August 1881. Doran was the first suspect from Queen's County to be discharged (on 19 August 1881 after serving ninety-seven days in Naas gaol),² and his reception set the pattern for subsequent receptions given to suspects on their return to the county. At about 6 p.m. - an hour before Doran's train arrived in Maryborough - a large crowd, which included two local bands and delegates from neighbouring branches of the land league, started to assemble at the station. Stewarding the crowd were about thirty of the local prominent land-leaguers - each of whom wore a rosette of mixed green and orange, and carried a 'wand' tipped with green and orange ribbons. When the train arrived, and Doran emerged from his carriage to loud cheers and music, he was carried from the platform down to an open carriage which he entered along with William P. Odlum, the president of the Maryborough branch of the land league. Then a brake was drawn up beside the carriage, and from this William Whelan read a long address which was signed by himself and the other officers of the Maryborough branch of the land league. The address does not warrant full reproduction, but a reasonable indication of its verbiage

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743.

2. Appendix 38, below, p.437.

is suggested by the following extract:

When the pygmiest and meanest scum of Ireland's enemies - the perjured slaves who swore your liberty fittingly away in the purlieus or back passages of Dublin's donjon...they little imagined that they were unwittingly selecting you for your future position to be one of the beacon lights of the people's battle in the people's county - that county now amongst the foremost in the gallant struggle for a nation's rights beatified and ennobled as it is with the brilliant mantle of lawlessness from Carlow-Graigue to Cullahill, from Crettyard to Clonaslee - that lawlessness to which you now stand forth one of the living exponents and incarnations. Of lawlessness such as this the Divine Victim of the holiest causes was accused by the perjured judges - the resident magistrates of the Jewish synagogue...¹

The address from the land league was followed by two equally verbose addresses - one on behalf of the Maryborough town commissioners, and one on behalf of the local Catholic Young Men's Society - after which there was a triumphal procession through the town.²

However, there was one aspect of Doran's discharge from gaol which only applied to him and two other suspects from the county. Before being discharged from Naas gaol Doran and the two suspects from Rathdowney, John Campion and Patrick Murphy, each signed a witnessed undertaking, which read as follows:

I [name of suspect], a Prisoner under Warrant duly issued in pursuance of the Act for the better Protection of Person and Property in Ireland (1881), hereby undertake, if released from custody under the said Act, not to commit any act of violence or intimidation against any of Her Majesty's subjects, or in any manner, directly or indirectly, to incite others to the commission of any such act.

I furthermore hereby acknowledge that I shall be liable to be re-arrested if I fail to comply with this undertaking.³

It is evident that Doran was uneasy about signing such an undertaking, because on the day of his discharge he took the precaution of having the following brief statement signed by the other twenty-six suspects, including Meehan, Redington, Delaney, Murphy and

1. L.E., 27 Aug. 81; Whitestone papers; unidentified newspaper cutting (Xerox copy in the author's possession).

2. Ibid.

3. Undertaking signed by Campion (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018).

Campion from Queen's County, who were then in Naas gaol. The statement read:

We the undersigned, the 'suspects' confined in Naas gaol, having heard with much pleasure that one of our number, Mr P. Doran, has unsolicited been offered his release by the government on condition of his signing the usual document, hereby express our entire satisfaction at his doing so; and we heartily rejoice at his release from his unmerited confinement.¹

Given the powers conferred by the coercion act on the police it is difficult to understand the logic behind pressing suspects to sign such undertakings. As Henry A. Blake R.M. observed on 6 September 1881 when considering the 'advisability' of releasing the two Rathdowney suspects from Naas gaol, 'It has been found as a rule that those persons who have been released have withdrawn themselves from active participation in the land league.' In any case, Blake wrote, the 'experiment' of releasing the suspects could be tried, because 'they can be re-arrested if their conduct renders such a course necessary.'²

Because each of the three suspects from the county wrote a letter to the chief secretary withdrawing his undertaking³ it is reasonable to deduce that each came in for criticism on his being discharged. Perhaps they were made to feel that somehow they had abased themselves by signing an undertaking. Some indication of attitudes to suspects who signed undertakings is found in two letters. First, there is the letter which Patrick Murphy and John Campion from Rathdowney sent on 23 September 1881 'To Rt Hon. W.E. Forster M.P., The Castle, Dublin.'

1. Newspaper cutting among Whitestone's papers (op.cit.).

2. Statement on the confidential report of Sub-Inspector William D. Grene (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018).

3. S.P.O., C.S.O., Arrests under Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881-2, vol.i, p.75.

in which they stated:

Sir,

When signing the 'undertaking' which we were obliged to sign previous to our release from Naas prison where we were confined as 'suspects' under the Protection of Person and Property (Ireland) Act, we were not aware that we were, to some extent, making an acknowledgement by implication that we had committed some breach of the law for which we had been arrested.

We now find however, that our friends, with some reason, regard our action in signing that document as an avowal, to some extent, of guilt on our part, and as an act unworthy of our character and of the just and patriotic cause for which alone we were arrested and detained in prison as hostages.

We therefore beg to say that we hereby withdraw the 'undertaking' which we signed in Naas prison on the 14th inst. and beg to inform you that we will remain here for re-arrest or return to prison at any time you require us so to do, without any compulsion whatsoever.

We earnestly request either a public cancelling of our names from that document which we signed or a further imprisonment to such time as would entitle us to unconditional release in order that our former characters may be restored which are dearer to us than our very lives.

Waiting the favour of a reply in course.'

Second, there is Parnell's letter to Fr Thomas Feehan, the Rathdowney curate, which he read to a large land league meeting in the market square in Rathdowney on 2 October 1881. Parnell wrote:

I have always held that it should be left to each individual suspect to decide himself whether he ought to sign conditions of release or not, and that any expression of opinion from others as to the course to be taken by any suspect in signing the conditions of release are quite uncalled for.

I may, however, say that it gives me great pleasure to find that the gentlemen whom you refer to have decided upon recalling the undertaking which they signed as the condition of their release, and if anybody had any doubt previously as to the course taken by them such doubt should certainly now disappear.²

It is unlikely that 'doubt' about suspects who signed undertakings disappeared. Parnell's 'opinion' was implied clearly in his letter when he wrote of his 'great pleasure' over Murphy and Campion

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/27018.

2. L.E., 8 Oct. 81; Fr Feehan claimed to have had a discussion with Parnell during the land league convention in Maryborough on 26 September 1881 (below, pp 294-8) about suspects signing undertakings prior to their release from gaol (L.E., 8 Oct. 81).

'recalling' their undertaking, and this must have been transmitted to the meeting in Rathdowney. Fr Feehan also must have tainted the reputations of Murphy and Campion when on 22 September 1881 he spoke to a 'large crowd' on the Coolkerry property (about one and a half miles east of Rathdowney) of Colonel King-Harman: after the conclusion of a sheriff's auction of the crops of two tenants, Fr Feehan, speaking from an ass's cart, said that the 'enemies' of the land league were circulating a story that Murphy and Campion had signed a 'document'; this document he would not sign himself, but he would be sorry to allow his view 'to interfere with the individual actions in such a matter by others'.

Perhaps even more damaging to the suspects' reputations, was a report in the *Leinster Leader* on 17 September 1881 (three days after the release of Murphy and Campion) of Martin Delaney's boastful response when he was requested to sign an undertaking. Even though Delaney (a Borris-in-Ossory publican and farmer) was one of the suspects in Naas gaol who had signed the published document which expressed 'entire satisfaction' at Doran's signing an undertaking, he said (according to the *Leinster Leader*) he would 'remain a prisoner for life rather than set his name on such an acknowledgement'. (Delaney's 'discharge' had been 'ordered' on 10 September 1881, but when he refused to sign an undertaking the following day he was kept in gaol for an extra two weeks.)²

However, some allowances must be made for the suspects who signed

1. *L.F.*, 24 Sept. 81.

2. *S.P.O., C.S.O.*, Arrests under Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881-2, vol.i, p.179.

undertakings. They may have been worried about their families, farms and businesses. Also, whatever their conditions in gaol, the very fact of being confined must have unnerved some. It is interesting to note the conduct of Patrick A. Meehan and John Redington, the two land-leaguers from Maryborough who were arrested on the same day as Doran, but were still in gaol when Doran was released on 19 August 1881.¹ From 22 August Meehan's health seemed to deteriorate. But, because Meehan was only twenty-nine years old, and probably worried about his young family (eventually he had ten children) and business,² it is tempting to suggest that the deterioration in his health after Doran's release was psychosomatic. On 22 August there was a letter to Forster, the chief secretary, from a Revd P.M. Ward 'begging for consideration' for Meehan, and stating that his life was 'beginning to give away': on 23 August Meehan sent a memorial praying for his discharge; on 24 August the two Carlow M.P.s, Charles Dawson and Edmund Dwyer Gray, wrote letters to Forster 'on behalf' of Meehan; on 27 August a medical report stated that Meehan was 'in delicate health'; finally, on 2 September 1881 Henry A. Blake R.M. recommended that Meehan might be released 'owing to his being three months in prison, and health delicate'.³

John Redington, perhaps the most militant of the Maryborough land-leaguers,⁴ who was about the same age as Meehan, also revealed an anxiety to be released from gaol. On 19 August 1881, the day after Doran's release, Redington successfully petitioned Earl Cowper, the

1. Appendix 38, below, p.437.

2. For a brief biography of Meehan, see *The Members of Parliament for Laois and Offaly, 1801-1918*, pp 68-72, which was written by his grandson, Patrick F. Meehan.

3. S.P.O., C.S.O., Arrests under Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881-2, vol.i, p.76.

4. Below, pp 338-43.

lord lieutenant, for a transfer to Kilmainham gaol' where, 'pending his release', he believed he would have the benefit of 'free and first-class legal opinions' so that he could 'take the full benefit of the land act' and apply to the land court to have a judicial rent fixed on his farm.² Eventually Redington was released from Kilmainham gaol thirteen days after Meehan left Naas gaol.³

Between 10 May 1881, when James Lalor was arrested, and 24 February 1882, when Patrick Cahill, the editor of the *Leinster Leader*, was arrested in Naas, twenty-two suspects from Queen's County were gaoled under the coercion act.⁴ The average term served by twenty-one of the suspects was 107 days. (John Redington is excepted because he was the only suspect to be gaoled twice: he served 130 days from 14 May to 21 September 1881, and because he was on parole from 12 to 22 March 1882 - to attend a land court⁵ - he served only 93 days from 18 February to 1 June 1882. It is interesting to note that during the last months of the legal existence of the land league the average term served by suspects from the county was 102 days, which if one ignores the exceptionally short term of 19 days served by Patrick Delaney, the treasurer of the Arles, Killeen & Ballylynan branch of the land league, contrasts with the average term of 133 days served by suspects from the county arrested after 20 October 1881: probably because the land war in the county became more violent during the winter of 1881-2 the authorities were less willing to discharge prisoners whose behaviour might exacerbate the violence.

1. Redington was transferred to Kilmainham gaol on 24 Aug. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., Arrests under Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881-2, vol. i, p. 77).

2. Redington's memorial to Earl Cowper (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1882/29627).

3. Appendix 38, below, p. 437.

4. Ibid.

There was a predictable farming bias in the occupations of the suspects: 8 depended solely on farming, while 9 had other occupations but did some farming.¹ However, there was some support for the contention at the end of chapter II² that the leadership of the land league in the county was 'broadly reminiscent of the middle-class leadership of the independent club, but with a greater presence of vocal and active traders'. It was noted that the 14 suspects, who were not farmers solely, consisted of 5 publicans (3 also farmed), 3 shopkeepers (2 also farmed), 1 lime-burner who also farmed, 1 agent for the Grand Canal Company who also farmed, 1 auctioneer who also farmed, 1 newspaper editor who also farmed, 1 shopkeeper's son, and 1 printer. 15 of the 21 suspects who normally resided in the county (Cahill worked in Naas) were officers in branches of the land league: 8 were secretaries, 3 were treasurers, 2 were vice-presidents, 1 was a 'chairman of committees', and 1 was his branch's president.³

2 Disorder and the Collection of Rents in Queen's County, May-Oct. 81

While the arrest, gaoling, and release of suspects concerned land-leaguers and the authorities, increasing disorder stemmed from the actions of landlords who were insisting on their rents after the spring gale of 1881.⁴ Attempts by tenants to obstruct the collection of rents were often accompanied by violent language and uproar -

1. In the country as a whole, 62 per cent of 845 persons arrested under the coercion act came from agricultural sector, 32.6 per cent from the commercial and industrial sector, 4.6 per cent from the professional sector, 0.2 per cent from the civil service and defence sector, and 0.6 per cent from the domestic sector (Samuel Clark, *Social origins of the Irish land war*, p. 250).

2. Above, pp 117-18.

3. Appendix 38, below, p.437.

4. Cf. below, pp 274-5.

sometimes fomented by bands. Yet, at the same time, branches of the land league were increasingly beset by dissension as they pursued a fraudulent and costly policy known as 'paying rent at the point of the bayonet'.¹ On the other hand, while some landlords appeared ruthless in their dealings with recalcitrant tenants others were 'weak, defenceless and disunited'.² On the basis of Queen's County alone there was some substance in Gladstone's speech in Leeds on 7 October 1881 when he deplored the 'general cowardice' which, he said, seemed 'to prevail among all the classes who possess property'.³

After the spring gale of 1881 it was a very imprudent process-server or deputy sub-sheriff who tried to do his job without protection from either the police or the military. For example, on 19 May 1881 when William Napper, described by the *Leinster Express* as a 'civil-bills officer', went to Coolagh (west of Clonaslee) to serve six tenants of John G. Adair with civil-bill processes, he 'was met by a crowd of people armed with sticks, stones and pitch forks', who 'forced him to retreat without effecting his object'.⁴ Also, there is the example of Thomas Miller, the deputy sub-sheriff for the county, who got himself into an equally dangerous predicament. On 23 June 1881 Miller went to Wolfhill to put the landlord John D. Grace (Grace lived in Gracefield, about two miles south-west of Ballylynan, and owned 2,112 acres in the county)⁵ into formal possession of eighteen acres which had been rented by Patrick and Mary Brennan.

Perhaps, because he was instructed to allow the Brennans back on

1. Cf. below, pp 258-62.

2. Description by the 'old fox hunter', below, p. 284.

3. Cf. below, p. 285.

4. *L.E.*, 11 June 81.

5. *Return of owners of land...*, [C1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

the farm as caretakers, Miller did not feel it necessary to have either military or police protection. As it was, he was accompanied only by his driver and a boy aged sixteen years. When he arrived in Wolfhill village he was greeted by a crowd of about three hundred (including Patrick Brennan), which had been summoned by the ringing of the local chapel bell. When Miller descended from his car he advanced through the crowd, and explained to Brennan that he was to be allowed back into the holding as soon as formal possession had been taken. But unfortunately, because no one was present to take possession on behalf of the landlord, a delay ensued, and the crowd became increasingly hostile. Miller's car, on which his driver and the boy were seated, 'was assailed, and volleys of stones poured upon it.' Apparently 'matters soon became so serious' that Miller placed himself between the car and the crowd, and drawing his revolver 'deemed it prudent to return home, and relinquish his intention of taking possession from Brennan'. Three RIC from the local station covered Miller's flight by delaying the crowd at a crossroads, and though some of the crowd took a short cut through fields they failed to prevent Miller's retreat.' (It must be stated that it was unusual for either the sub-sheriff or the deputy sub-sheriff not to avail of police or military protection when dealing with tenants at this time. From a reading of issues of the *Leinster Express* and *Leinster Leader* during June, July, August, and September 1881 it was noted that, along with the RIC, soldiers of the following regiments protected either the sub-sheriff or the deputy sub-sheriff: the 20th, 47th, 76th and 84th regiments, the 80th Rifles, the Royal Irish Hussars, the 5th Lancers

and the Scots Greys.)

When the performance of their duty required the RIC to travel any distance from their barracks land-leaguers hampered their hiring of local cars. Car owners who hired out their cars to the RIC, and people who employed such car owners, were boycotted and expelled from branches of the land league. For example, a land-leaguer in Mountrath who allowed the RIC to use his car on 25 June 1881 when they arrested Martin Delaney, the suspect from Borris-in-Ossory, was expelled from the Mountrath branch,¹ and when the Patrician Brothers of St Patrick's Monastery in Mountrath continued to employ the car owner the other car owners in Mountrath on 7 July refused to carry the pupils of the monastery the three miles to Kilbricken railway station when they were going home for the summer vacation.²

The RIC tried to counter such action by the land league, but only with mixed success. First, on 11 December 1880 and 28 April 1881 the inspector general sent circulars to all county inspectors authorising them to buy 'conveyances', horses and harness.³ (In May 1881 three cars, each capable of accommodating eight men, and a cab were bought by Sub-Inspector William D. Grene in Maryborough.)⁴ Then the RIC opposed the licensing of publicans known to have assisted the land league. (Among the counties of Ireland in 1881 Queen's County had about the seventh highest number of 'houses licenced for the sale of intoxicating liquor' per head of population.)⁵ Of course, the RIC

1. Report of the readmission of a 'member' of the Mountrath branch in *L.E.*, 10 Sept. 81.

2. *Ibid.*, 16 July 81.

3. S.P.O., C.S.O., RIC circulars 1880-4, vol. ii.

4. *L.E.*, 28 May 81.

5. Based on *Return showing the number of houses licenced for the sale of intoxicating liquors in Ireland for the year ending 31 March 1871*, H.C. 1872 (434), xlvii, 787. It is unlikely that the

were aware of the high number of publicans in branches of the land league, and how frequently they allowed their licenced premises to be used for branch meetings, but it was difficult either to thwart or observe such meetings.' Then when publicans who had cars for hire refused to hire out their cars to the RIC they seemed to leave themselves open to persecution. As Sub-Inspector William D. Grene said on 20 June 1881 - at the quarter sessions for the division of Maryborough before Joshua Clarke, the chairman of the quarter sessions and the county court judge, when he was describing 'several of the licensed publicans in the district' who had refused to supply the RIC on duty with cars - the publicans had 'thereby, in a sense, committed an offence against the law by obstructing the police in the discharge of their duty'.² Judge Clarke's response to Grene's statement was to order the RIC to notify the publicans in Queen's County that those who obstructed the RIC in the discharge of their duty by refusing to give them cars would not be granted renewals of their licences at the next

position of Queen's County would have changed much by 1881. Above Queen's County in 1871 were Dublin, Waterford, Cork (East Riding), Tipperary (South Riding), Tipperary (North Riding), Louth and Limerick. In 1871 Queen's County had 316 'houses licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors' or 1 such house for every 252 persons in the county. Dublin had the highest number; 1 for every 191 persons. Fermanagh had the lowest number; 1 for every 606 persons. The average for Ireland as a whole was 1 for every 297 persons. In the country as a whole, 1861-1901, the annual *per capita* spirit consumption 'hovered' at about one gallon per head; at the same time, the annual *per capita* consumption of beer rose markedly; 6.6 gallons were consumed in 1861, 10.8 in 1871, 13.4 in 1881, 19.8 in 1891, and 26 in 1901 (Elizabeth Malcolm, *'Ireland sober, Ireland free': drink and temperance in nineteenth-century Ireland*, p.324); for the 'changing patterns' in the consumption of 'drink' in nineteenth-century Ireland see *ibid.*, 322-31.

1. On 5 Feb. 81 the RIC inspector general, George E. Hillier, sent a 'strictly confidential' circular to county inspectors informing them and their sub-inspectors that 'cases having occurred where the constabulary have insisted on entering licensed premises for the purpose of attending land league meetings', no member of the RIC could 'claim any right of entry for such [a] purpose'. (S.P.O., RIC circulars 1880-4, vol.ii)

2. *L.E.*, 25 June 81.

licensing sessions in October.¹

As the holders of publicans', spirit grocers', and beer dealers' licences had to appear before the annual licensing petty sessions to procure the necessary certificate, which would enable them to obtain a licence for the succeeding year from the excise authorities, and as the granting or withholding of such certificates depended on the votes of magistrates,² magistrates in the county - who were landlords predominately³ - seemed to be in a strong position to penalise publicans who supported the land league. At least the magistrates in Portarlinton probably were predisposed to refuse licences to such publicans: this is suggested by their request for legal advice from Dublin Castle on 13 October 1881 when they asked if it was the duty of their clerk to file or prepare for their signatures the certificates of renewal of publicans' licences, and if they had 'any discretionary power to decline receiving them from the hands of the publicans or their attorney'.⁴

However, the RIC failed totally in their opposition to the licensing of publicans. Predictably they tried to impugn the characters of publicans by accusing them of refusing to serve boycotted persons, and refusing to hire vehicles to the RIC. But their supporting evidence was too shaky and, though there were some adjournments and in one case an appeal, the magistrates showed their cowardice by signing all the

1. *L.E.*, 25 June 81.

2. Bram Stoker, *The duties of clerks of petty sessions in Ireland*, pp 147-53; Elizabeth Malcolm, *'Ireland sober, Ireland free'*, p.207.

3. *Below*, p.274.

4. Henry A. Blake R.M. 'To the Under-Secretary' (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/35634). The advice from Dublin Castle was that 'the justices' could not refuse to receive the 'certificates' from a publican or his attorney (*ibid.*).

certificates of renewal of the publicans' licences.' (There is no record of the RIC in Queen's County objecting to the renewal of publicans' licences on any scale after October 1881.)

The efforts of the RIC to counter the land league, and restore law and order by opposing the licensing of publicans were decidedly counter-productive in Mountmellick. On Sunday evening, 25 September 1881, there was a 'celebration of what was considered as the great victory of three publicans having their licences granted in spite of [the] opposition of [the] constabulary'.² Two bands from Maryborough went to Mountmellick to assist in the 'celebration', and 'after playing up and down the town, and attracting a mob of up to one thousand persons, they proceeded to break the windows of all persons who had not illuminated.'³ In the words of Colonel Henry D. Carden, a local magistrate and landlord, 'Mountmellick was completely in the hands of a mob' when 'no respectable person' dared appear, and 'the police, few in number, were prudently shut up in barracks.'⁴ During the evening the crowd was addressed by a belligerent Fr James Connolly, a local curate, who told them that the proceedings of the night would show them who were their friends, and who were their foes, and that in their business dealings they would know who to deal with. The country, Fr Connolly said, was 'like a pot of boiling water, the scum of which rose to the top', and if they would help him he would

1. *L.E.*, 1 Oct., 8 Oct. 81. The appeal concerned Edward Morrissey who owned the De Vesci Arms Hotel in Abbeylisk, and whose licence initially was opposed successfully by the RIC at the licensing sessions on 1 Oct. 81 when Robert Staples and Henry Fitzherbert outvoted Edward Mulhallen Marum (*ibid.*, 8 Oct. 81).

2. Report on outrage dated 29 Sept. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743).

3. *Ibid.*; *L.E.*, 1 Oct. 81 reported a crowd of five to six hundred.

4. Carden to Forster on 30 Sept. 81 describing the 'state of disorder and lawlessness' then existing in Queen's County (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743).

'take off this dirty scum, and throw it out of the country'.

Though the 'mob' was clearly an 'unlawful assembly',² and it was the duty of the magistrates and police to disperse such an assembly,³ no arrests were made, and only one man, who threw stones at the windows in the house of Thomas B. Harpur, the Church of Ireland rector, was identified on information given by a civilian, and a warrant was issued for his arrest.⁴ (The man, Joseph Whelan, was arrested at Queenstown on board one of the Inman liners, having paid his passage to America, and was brought back to Mountmellick where, in a crowded court house on 24 October 1881, he was convicted and sentenced to one month with hard labour.)⁵ Sub-Inspector Grene was unhappy about the conduct of the RIC in Mountmellick: though the head constable stated that with only three men available 'he did not deem it prudent to leave his barrack with that number', Grene felt that 'he might have at least identified some of the parties who broke Miss Parker's windows',⁶ which were within fifty yards of the barracks.⁷ (After a 'full investigation of the case' on 29 September 1881 with Henry A. Blake R.M. Grene recommended the immediate transfer of the head constable and one of the sub-constables whose 'conduct' he did 'not deem satisfactory in the matter'.)⁸

1. Newspaper cutting (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743).

2. On 5 Oct. 81, John Nash Q.C., the law adviser in Dublin Castle, described an unlawful assembly as 'an assemblage of persons in large numbers which from its general appearance and accompanying circumstances is calculated to excite terror and alarm' (ibid.).

3. The duty was stated by John Nash Q.C. on 5 Oct. 81 (ibid.).

4. Report of outrage dated 29 Sept. 81 (ibid.).

5. Report of Sub-Inspector Grene on 24 Oct. 81 (ibid.); *L.E.*, 29 Oct. 81.

6. Grene identified 'Miss Parker' as Bella Parker. This probably was the daughter of Mrs Lucinda Parker who lived in Market Street, the same street as that of the RIC barracks (*Slater's Directory* 1881, pp 459-60).

7. Report of outrage dated 29 Sept. 81 (as in n.4 above).

8. Ibid.

Encouraged by Andrew Reed, the officer in charge of the crime branch in Dublin Castle, both Grene and Blake were unwilling to let the 'unlawful assembly' pass without making some early arrests.¹ When Grene reported that, though the RIC in Mountmellick were unable to identify any of the 'rioters', they were able to identify some of the bandsmen who played into the town, but could not prove that they were present at the time when any of the windows were broken,² Reed's response was to ask if bandsmen could be identified as having played through the town followed by the 'mob': if they could be identified, Reed continued, then it 'would be a matter for consideration for government' whether they 'should not be summoned for taking part in an unlawful assembly'.³ When Grene then reported that only one bandsman, a drummer named William Whelan, could be identified,⁴ he added that, because it was believed that the bands would 'probably' repeat their visit on 9 October 1881, 'it would be very desirable if a summons could be served' for the next petty sessions at Mountmellick on 10 October 1881, 'as it would act as a deterrent'.⁵ However, on the advice of Thomas Whelan, the acting county inspector, proceedings were not taken against William Whelan, the drummer, because 'there were so many persons in the assembly', and, as Whelan stated, (presumably, bearing in mind the failure of the RIC to prevent the licensing of three publicans in Mountmellick) 'if a prosecution failed it would

1. Grene described Blake as 'anxious' to grant 'warrants for arrest' (Grene's report on 30 Sept. 81, op. cit.). (Andrew Reed became inspector general, and as Sir Andrew Reed wrote *The Irish constable's guide*.)

2. Grene's report on 30 Sept. 81 (op. cit.).

3. Reed's inquiry under Grene's report (ibid.).

4. The author discovered no relationship between William Whelan, the drummer, and Joseph Whelan, who was arrested in Queenstown.

5. Grene's report on 2 Oct. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743).

give them a complete triumph.' ' George E. Hillier, the inspector general, approved of Whelan's advice but, revealing dissatisfaction with the RIC in Queen's County, trusted 'that in any future similar demonstration' steps would be taken 'to identify the leaders and other principals of the unlawful assembly'.²

The demonstration on 25 September 1881 unsettled Mountmellick. On the following Wednesday night, 28 September, the town was the scene of another demonstration.³ 'Fortunately', the *Leinster Express* reported, 'the mob did not resort to any acts of violence, for about twenty gentlemen of the town had armed themselves, and were prepared to take the law into their own hands' to protect their property: the newspaper concluded its report by commenting 'If the Maryborough band should visit Mountmellick again, it will probably have the music knocked out of it.'⁴ While the local RIC made a 'full but cautious inquiry' into the newspaper's report about the twenty armed men, and reported on 2 October that there was 'no truth in the statement',⁵ Grene received 'private information' that the Mountmellick curate, Fr James Connolly, had written to the bands in Maryborough requesting them to go to Mountmellick on 3 October 'to test the truth' of the report in the *Leinster Express*.⁶

The bands did not turn up on 3 October, but on 6 October Grene reported that because 'a very uneasy feeling' existed in Mountmellick 'amongst the respectable portion of the inhabitants fearing a

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743.

2. Reed's comment under Whelan's report (ibid.).

3. *L.E.*, 1 Oct. 81.

4. Ibid.; presumably, only one band attended the demonstration on 28 Sept. 81.

5. Grene's report on 3 Oct. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743).

6. Ibid.

threatened visit to the town of the Maryborough bands' he had an 'order' signed by James Milner and James Cole Sheane, two magistrates from Mountmellick, which stated:

In consequence of an information being sworn before us that if a band or bands play through the town of Mountmellick a breach of the peace or probably a riot will take place, we hereby authorise Wm. Grene, sub-inspector, to stop and prevent such bands playing through the streets of Mountmellick.'

Within two days Grene temporarily raised the strength of the RIC in Mountmellick to fifteen men - 'to give confidence to the respectable inhabitants'.²

However much confidence may have been restored to the 'respectable' inhabitants in Mountmellick, it was undermined speedily. During the first week of October 1881 large land league posters signed by the two local branch secretaries, Timothy Murphy and Joseph McMahon, appeared throughout Mountmellick and its environs.³ The posters stated that at a meeting on 2 October the branch's committee agreed on two related resolutions, and announced two forthcoming general meetings of the branch. The two resolutions were that members would light their 'establishments' only with oil or candles, and only do business with establishments lighted with oil or candles.⁴ The object of the first meeting, announced for 9 October at 1 p.m., was 'to come to an unanimous practical resolution on the question of rack-rents';⁵ the second meeting proposed for 16 October seemed innocuous because, the posters stated, its object was to 'appoint by ballot for the coming

1. The information was sworn by Thomas B. Harpur, the Church of Ireland rector (Grene's report on 3 Oct. 81, op.cit.).

2. Grene's reports on 6 Oct. and 13 Oct. 81 (ibid.).

3. S.P.O., C.S.O. R.P., 1881/44845.

4. Cf. below, p. 263, n.3.

5. Poster (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845).

year' a committee and officers for the branch.' Then new posters appeared under the headings 'Irish National Land League and Labour and Industrial Union'² and 'United We Conquer', which announced that a 'monster meeting' would be held on 16 October 1881, and that along with appointing officers and a committee for the branch the meeting would 'advocate the tenant farmer and labour question': the posters also stated that Richard Lalor M.P. and Arthur O'Connor M.P. and 'other prominent members' would attend, and concluded by appealing to land-leaguers to 'assemble' in their thousands.³

Sub-Inspector William D. Grene believed the motive behind changing the meeting of the branch to a 'general meeting' was 'to test the question as to whether the bands [would] be allowed to play through the streets of Mountmellick'.⁴ Serious disturbances were predicted by local magistrates if the bands played through the town, and Henry A. Blake R.M. believed there would be a riot, because, he stated, the 'Protestant young men' were 'determined to use firearms' if any attack was made on their houses again.⁵ While there seemed to be reasonable grounds for prohibiting the meeting Inspector General George E. Hillier did not think it 'expedient' to do so, but ordered that the bands should be prevented from playing through the town.⁶ (As the 'old chapel of Graigue' was the location for the proposed meeting on 16 October, Hillier's orders were reasonable: the now (1991) ruined

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845.

2. The name of the Irish National Land League was expanded at the national convention in the Rotunda, Dublin on 15-17 Sept. 81 to Irish National Land League and Industrial Union (Moody, *Davitt*, pp 492-5).

3. Poster enclosed with Grene's report on 12 Oct. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743).

4. Grene's report on 12 Oct. 81 (ibid.).

5. Blake's report on 12 Oct. 81 (ibid.).

6. Hillier's order under a minute from the attorney general to 'Mr Hamilton's department' (ibid.). Before his promotion to Dublin Castle in July 81 Thomas Hamilton was R.M. in Queen's County.

chapel is on the outskirts of Mountmellick, and as it was approachable from all directions without having to go through the town any disorder which might emanate from the meeting could be kept away from the town by an extra force of RIC or military.) With Hillier's approval, 'fifty RIC from Queen's County, fifty RIC from County Meath, and a detachment of the 76th Regiment from Maryborough occupied Mountmellick on Sunday morning 16 October.'²

However, 16 October 1881 in Mountmellick was an anti-climax. As the *Freeman's Journal* reported: 'in consequence of government preparations, the president of the branch, Revd T. Murphy P.P., and Messrs Timothy Murphy and Joseph McMahon, hon. secs., issued a placard postponing the meeting.'³ 'Thousands' did not assemble, Lalor and O'Connor were elsewhere, and, though the police were hooted, there were no disturbances.⁴ On 25 October Thomas Whelan, the acting county inspector, reported: 'The excitement caused by the demonstration and bands on this occasion at Mountmellick appears to have abated, and the town and district are assuming a more tranquil state.'⁵

Though an anti-climax, the somewhat convoluted story of Mountmellick from 25 September to 16 October 1881 reasonably instances the central role played by bands in the land war in Queen's County. While the tensions of the three weeks did originate in the failure of the RIC to prevent the licensing of three local publicans, the

1. Hillier wrote 'extra force ordered to attend' on Grene's report on 12 Oct. 81 (op.cit.)

2. *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Oct. 81.

3. To keep disorder out of Mountmellick, the RIC and the military had to be in the town well before 1 p.m. on 16 Oct., and the RIC from outside Queen's County must have been accommodated in the county on the previous night. (Grene stated in his report on 12 Oct. (op.cit.) that 'plenty of accommodation' was available.) Therefore the local land-leaguers were forewarned of 'government preparations'.

4. *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Oct. 81.

5. Whelan's report on 25 Oct. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743).

demonstration in Mountmellick on 25 September was, as Sub-Inspector Grene reported, 'of an impromptu character', which was 'so unusual there, and in fact would not have occurred only for the importation of bands.'¹ Also, it is interesting to note that the apprehensions of the authorities and, what Colonel Henry D. Carden described as, 'the orderly and well-conducted portion of the community'² focused on the bands from Maryborough.

Along with the two Maryborough bands, which were in Mountmellick on 25 September 1881, Queen's County had eleven other bands, which were variously active during the land war.³ They were identified clearly with the land league, and usually wearing sashes, following banners and playing national airs they were a conspicuous feature of the public events of the land war. They abetted the revelry of tenants at meetings to form branches of the land league and at receptions for released suspects and national figures such as Parnell, his sister Anna, John Dillon and Davitt: they entertained land-leaguers harvesting crops for suspects in gaol: followed by excited crowds they

1. Grene's report on 13 Oct. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743).

2. Carden to Forster on 30 Sept. 81 (ibid.).

3. Based on reports in the *Leinster Express* and the *Leinster Leader* newspapers, the thirteen bands in Queen's County during the land war probably were as follows: brass bands in Ballyfin, Ballyroan, Borris-in-Ossory, Maryborough (also known as the Catholic Young Men's Society brass band), Mountrath, and Stradbally (also known as the Stradbally juvenile brass band or the Stradbally Orphanage brass band; fife and drum bands in Errill, Knockaroe, Maryborough (also known as the Summerhill fife and drum band after the townland of Summerhill, which skirts the south-east of Maryborough), Rathdowney, and Stradbally. Though it has not been discovered whether they were brass or fife and drum bands there was a band in Clonaslee, and in Kyle.

It is possible that thirteen may be the incorrect number, because the author made two assumptions. First, because Clonmeen North and Clonmeen South are townlands in Kyle South electoral district, references to the Kyle and Clonmeen bands are assumed to refer to the same band. Second, references to the 'local brass band', which played in the environs of Abbeylaxey, are assumed to refer to the Ballyroan brass band, because Ballyroan is about three miles north-east of Abbeylaxey, and no reference to a band described as the Abbeylaxey band has been found.

paraded streets in triumph after the election of Richard Lalor and Arthur O'Connor as M.P.s for Queen's County, the failure to prosecute Parnell in January 1881 and, as just chronicled, the failure of the RIC to prevent the licensing of publicans in Mountmellick: they helped to inflame indignation at meetings held after evictions, seizures of crops and stock, sheriffs' auctions, and the arrests of suspects.¹

Because of their potential to foment disorder, bands elicited predictably different responses from the RIC and land-leaguers. The RIC kept them under close surveillance, and sometimes prevented their playing. Two examples illustrate this. First, in Donaghmore on 29 March 1881, when it was rumoured that a band would 'regale the villagers' after the poor law union election, twenty RIC under Sub-Inspector James Somerville were present to prevent disturbances: everything passed quietly until the evening when strains of distant music filled the air as the RIC were about to be sent home. Somerville and his men must have felt very foolish when, assuming a crowd was gathering, they marched out to meet them, and discovered that the music was 'the production of two tin whistles and an aboriginal tin can, which three juveniles were playing with much patriotic vigour.'² Second, when a band from Maryborough attempted to play through the streets of Portarlinton on 22 July 1881 *en route* to a sheriff's auction of tenants' cattle they were 'warned' to 'desist' by

1. Some useful newspaper references to bands in Queen's County are as follows: playing at indignation meetings: *L.E.*, 6 Mar., 19 Mar., 23 Oct. 81; at meetings to establish branches of the land league: *ibid.*, 15 Jan. 81; leading crowds in triumph through streets: *ibid.*, 10 Apr., 22 May 80, 22 Jan., 29 Jan., 6 May 81; entertaining workers harvesting crops for suspects in gaol: *ibid.*, 29 Oct., 12 Nov. 81; entertaining crowds at a prohibited meeting: *L.L.*, 22 Jan. 81; entertaining Fr Thomas Feehan, a prisoner in Maryborough gaol: *L.E.*, 25 Mar., 15 Apr. 82, *L.L.*, 15 Apr. 82; exciting crowds at sheriffs' auctions: *L.E.*, 19 Mar., 7 May, 17 May 81; fuelling resentment at effigy burning: *L.E.*, 6 Mar. 80, *L.L.*, 25 June 81.

2. *L.E.*, 2 Apr. 81.

C. L'Estrange, the resident magistrate of King's County. (Weight was added to the warning by the presence that day in Portarlinton of forty men from the 47th Regiment in Tullamore and forty RIC from the district of Edenderry, King's County.) Then, when some of the 'mob' accompanying the band 'attempted to create a disturbance' two of the ringleaders, 'a tramp and a farmer's son', were arrested and handcuffed together; 'after this', in L'Estrange's words, 'the sale went off in perfect peace and quietness.'

On the other hand, because bands could highlight indignation and taunt authorities they were encouraged by land-leaguers. This attitude is suggested reasonably by an unidentified newspaper cutting, which, significantly, was pasted inside the cover of the minute book of the Maryborough branch of the ladies' land league.² Headed 'Harvey Duff', the cutting has a print of two lines of repetitive music in 6/8 time, four pulse measure, and three beats to the bar. According to the cutting, this 'simple little tune' had a 'marvellous effect' on the RIC, 'for it sounds to them the very same as abusive language, and it makes them twice as mad as the ordinary madmen in lunatic asylums.' The cutting advised:

In every village there is someone who plays the fiddle or the fife; let him exert his skill on Harvey Duff for the instruction and enjoyment of his neighbours. The local bands, too, can help to make it popular; therefore, bandsmen all, take it up and give it the widest circulation, especially when the emergency men are to the fore.³

As already stated, after the spring gale of 1881 the seizures of stock and crops, and the formal repossessing of tenants' holdings by

1. Reports of C. L'Estrange R.M. and Sub-Inspector Allen of Tullamore on 22 July and 23 July 81 respectively (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/24721); the two men arrested were released later 'to be, if necessary, summoned' (L'Estrange's report, *ibid.*).

2. N.L.I., Lalor papers, MS 2070.

3. *Ibid.*

landlords commonly were scenes of indignant and unruly protest.¹ Crowds were rallied by bands or summoned by chapel bells to intimidate, hoot, and impede the landlord, the sheriff, his bailiffs and their escorting police and military. If local land-leaguers were forewarned sufficiently of an impending visit by the sheriff,² gates were chained, doors were barred, and if the object of the sheriff's visit was the seizure of stock sometimes that stock was removed to neighbours' fields or outhouses. Of course, the RIC, the Property Defence Association and the Orange Emergency Committee did their best to counter such obstacles. For example, at Roskeen (about five miles north of Mountmellick) on 31 June 1881 when Thomas Miller, the deputy sub-sheriff, accompanied by 2 bailiffs, 40 men of the 47th Regiment and 70 RIC, all commanded by Thomas Hamilton R.M., went to evict Andrew Delaney, who was a tenant of John G. Adair: (Delaney farmed 104 acres for an annual rent of £205, which was almost 89 per cent above its government valuation.)³ some RIC were placed in nearby Clonaghadoo chapel to prevent the bell being rung,⁴ a 'force' was

1. Above, p. 240.

2. For a report on Thomas Miller, deputy sub-sheriff, executing a 'writ for possession' at the suit of Sir Erasmus D. Borrowes against William Phelan of Derrykearn on 25 July 81 see *L.E.*, 30 July 81; *L.L.*, 30 July 81 reported that from an 'early hour' the chapel bell at Shanahoe was tolling, and when Miller arrived a crowd of about six hundred were assembled on the sides of William Phelan's lane.

3. Cf. below, p. 265, n.1.

4. On 27 June 81 Inspector General George E. Hillier sent a circular to all county inspectors which stated: 'It being the determination of the government to put a stop to the practice of ringing chapel bells and blowing horns for the purpose of assembling mobs to obstruct the execution of any legal process or otherwise disturb the public peace, you will direct the officers and constables of your county to report to headquarters, on every occasion, the name of persons guilty of the above offences so that they may be at once dealt with in such a manner as the government may deem expedient' (S.P.O., RIC Circulars, vol.ii, circular no.51). In Durrow on 14 Sept.81, when the sub-sheriff, escorted by 80 men of the 80th Rifles and 100 RIC, was about to execute seizures on the holdings of three tenants of George Ayres, the local chapel bell was rung to gather a crowd, and then women and children were brought in to the chapel so that the bell ringers could not be identified (*L.E.*, 17 Sept. 81).

placed in a 'convenient position' on the farm, and when Miller and his bailiffs started to evict Thomas Byrne, a cottier on the farm, they were guarded by four RIC.' (Interestingly, when a bailiff was about to break down Byrne's door with a bill-hook, Miller was told that the rent would then be paid, 'Andrew Delaney being fully satisfied with the protest he had made', and then, inside Byrne's house, the rent was paid.)²

Two examples illustrate the strategy commonly used against tenants who anticipated their stock being seized, and who were likely to have them moved to a neighbour's holding. First, there is the example of Michael Gorman who lived at Cloncock near Mountrath. After Richard Despard had Gorman served with a civil-bill process for non-payment of rent, Gorman gained 'enviable notoriety for having succeeded in dodging the sheriff' by ensuring that his stock were 'moved beyond reach'. Then on 4 October 1881 Sub-Sheriff John Malcolmson and his bailiffs, escorted by Sub-Inspector Henry B. Knox of Mountrath with fifteen RIC, wakened a surprised Gorman at 5 a.m. and seized 9 cows, 1 bull, 10 calves and 1 horse. The stock were moved to Despard's farm at Castletrench (four miles south of Mountrath) where two days later at a sheriff's auction they were bought in for Gorman. (At the conclusion of the auction, a cock of hay owned by Despard, which was near the place of the auction, 'was suddenly observed to be on fire'.)³

Then there is the example of the two Borris-in-Ossory land-leaguers, Martin Delaney from Springhill (an uncle of Martin Delaney,

1, L.E., 2 July 81.

2, Ibid.

3, Ibid, 8 Oct, 81. It required three seizures and auctions of Gorman's stock and crops to raise £232,16s,0d., the sum in the 'writ' against Gorman (N.L.I., Land League papers, MS 8574).

the Borris-in-Ossory suspect, who was then in Naas Gaol) and John Coss of Kilcotton whose stock were seized on 15 September 1881 for the six months' rent they owed to their landlord, William Fallon. Because it was anticipated that the stock on Delaney's farm would be moved the Orange Emergency Committee had six bailiffs watching his farm, and these directed Sub-Sheriff John Malcolmson and his bailiffs, escorted by 100 men of the 76th Regiment and 80 RIC, to a field about a quarter of a mile away into which the animals had been driven by 'a number of men' earlier that morning. When Malcolmson expressed his unease about the legality of seizing stock from a field not owned by Delaney, a Mr Dudgeon¹ of Dudgeon & Emerson, solicitors in Dublin, said that he would incur any responsibility, and accordingly the seizure was made. The field had about forty-five cattle and a hundred sheep. As the sheep were being removed Delaney's son came forward from a watching crowd, and paid the full amount of the debt and costs. After settling with Delaney's son, Malcolmson and his party went to Coss's farm where, finding no stock, they formally seized the crops.² (At a sheriff's auction in Maryborough two days later, which was attended by representatives of the Orange Emergency Committee and the Property Defence Association, the chattel interest in the remainder of a lease for ninety-nine years held by Coss was bought for him for the amount he owed to his landlord.)³

The settlements Delaney and Coss made with their landlord instance the fundamental fraudulence of the land league's policy known as

1. It was either Athol J. Dudgeon or John Dudgeon who with Henry Robert Emerson practised as solicitors at 27 Ormond Quay, Dublin (*Thom's* 1881, p.875.).

2. *L.E.*, 17 Sept. 81.

3. *Ibid.*, 24 Sept. 81.

'paying rent at the point of the bayonet' - a policy which must have confused many tenants. According to this policy, as directed by the land league, tenants were to offer every obstruction they could to the collection of rent, but in the last resort - 'at the point of the bayonet' - they were to pay the rent, if they could do so, in the assurance that the land league would meet all the legal costs incurred by the delay.² However, such a policy was inconsistent with the idea of a rent strike as prescribed by 'militant' land league leaders,³ whom Anna Parnell would describe as 'responsible'.⁴ A reasonable example of such a prescription was at a public meeting of land league supporters in the concert hall in Rathdowney on 22 May 1881 when the local branch vice-president, Thomas Carroll, proposed the following resolution:

In order to carry out effectually the land league organisation we call on tenants of each estate to pledge themselves to act together in paying rent, and so long as one of their fellow tenants continued to be rack-rented to withhold all payment.⁵

In supporting his resolution Carroll described what he said was the 'new rule' of the Rathdowney branch: the tenant whose rent was at or under Griffith's valuation was to 'decline to pay any rent until his neighbour's rack-rent is brought down to a fair standard'; by thus 'presenting a united and solid front to the landlord' they would leave no weak part against which the landlord could 'throw the whole force of his despotic power'.⁶

1. For other instances, see above, pp 193-5, and below, p. 261.

2. *L.E.*, 24 Sept. 81.

3. Moody, *Davitt*, pp 419-20, 457-9; Bew, *Land and the National Question*, pp 110-14, 159. For Richard Lalor's proposal of a rent strike on 4 Apr. 81, and Anna Parnell's supportive response, see above, pp 183-4.

4. For analysis of 'paying rent at the point of the bayonet' see Anna Parnell, *The Tale of a Great Sham*, edited with introduction by Dana Hearne, pp 77-87.

5. *L.E.*, 28 May 81.

6. *Ibid.*

But disunity was endemic in the land league: farmers were (and are) instinctively independent and, as has been established already, a large minority of them were not even nominal members of the land league.¹ The policy of paying rent at the point of the bayonet must have undermined further any possibility of tenants 'presenting a united and solid front' to their landlord. Tenants who could pay their rent did so, and by thus abandoning their less solvent fellow tenants,² perversely they broke the 'rule' of the land league with the sanction of the land league. No wonder then that Anna Parnell and her colleagues in the central office of the land league in 39 Upper Sackville Street, Dublin should conclude that the land league was a fraud when they discovered that the applications for relief from branches of the league were all on behalf of tenants evicted because they were unable to pay their rents.³ In addition, what must have been a bitter pill for hard-line land-leaguers to swallow, many

1. Above, pp 114-16.

2. For example, *L.L.*, 30 July 81 reported that the Ballyadams & Wolfhill committee at its meeting on 22 July 81 adopted the following resolution: 'That this committee emphatically condemn the action of the Clonook tenantry who have paid their rents, thus deserting two of their numbers who, by their action, have gained them a concession, and we hereby record our protest against their conduct as reprehensible and cowardly, and deserving the censure of all honest land-leaguers.' Ibid, 16 July 81 reported tenants from Kildellig townland attending a meeting of the Aghaboe branch committee to explain why they had paid their rents - 'contrary to the rule' of the branch.

3. Anna Parnell, *The Tale*, pp 88-103. Two examples from Queen's County of the sort of applications received in Aug. 81 by the ladies were: (1) From the Ballyadams & Wolfhill branch on behalf of Thomas Hennessy who, at the time of his eviction from a holding in Mullaghmore townland on 20 Apr. 79, owed £52 (two years' rent on a holding valued at £18) to his landlord, John D.F. Grace. Hennessy was 'indifferently able to labour' because of illness; his children were too young to work and, because Hennessy refused to go into the workhouse, he and his family of seven lived in a 'miserable wigwam made up of sods against the road ditch and covered with furze and rushes', which he had built beside his holding at Mullaghmore (N.L.I., 'eviction form' signed by Denis Kilbride, secretary of the Ballyadams & Wolfhill branch, MS 17704); (2) From the Aghaboe branch on behalf of Michael Collins, who at the time of his eviction on 8 Aug. 81 owed £37 (two years' rent on seven acres valued at £4) to his landlord, Dr Samuel Edge; Collins still had 'a few acres' but was supporting two 'old sisters' and a 'very old' and 'decrepit' mother (ibid., 'eviction' form signed by Michael Whittaker, secretary of the Aghaboe branch). (For Edge's side of the eviction see S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/31681.) As £5 and a date are written on both eviction forms the ladies' land league probably sent £5 to both Collins and Hennessy.

tenants who were evicted received grants from the land league, which then they paid to the landlords to redeem their holdings - as legally they were entitled to do within six months. Furthermore, the delays and obstructions, accompanied as they were by uproar and violent language, which helped to obscure the shortcomings of the land league, were pointlessly costly: damage to trees and roads to hinder the sheriff, injuries to the property of land grabbers, landlords or boycotted persons, and charges for extra police were all levied on localities by the grand juries;¹ landlords could afford to wait long enough for the sheriff protected by the RIC and the military to collect their rents or as much as the tenants could pay on account. Finally, there was the excessive waste of land league resources through the payment of legal costs incurred by the tenants in their 'rent at the point of the bayonet' policy. For example, between 3 May and 17 September 1881, a sample of thirteen tenants in Queen's County, whose landlords instituted legal proceedings against them for rent totalling £560.3s.2d., all resisted paying until they were about to be evicted, their stock or crops seized or auctioned, or their interests in their holdings auctioned;² then they paid their rent plus the legal costs, which added £105.2s.9d. (almost 19 per cent) to their debt.³

1. For example, see the compensation paid to Oliver T. Slocock and William C. Cooper (above, p.122), and to Michael Delaney (above, p.190); cess payers in Queen's County paid £112.15s.2d. towards the cost of the extra RIC drafted into the county during the year ending 30 Sept.81 (report of county-at-large presentment sessions for Queen's County in *L.E.*, 26 Nov.81).

2. Ibid., 7 May, 4 June, 13 Aug., 24 Sept. 81; receipts and claim forms in a box of land league papers (N.L.I., MS 17710); Raheen branch minute book (N.L.I., MS 9219); letters to J.P. Quinn, clerk of the land league in its central office, Dublin (N.L.I., MS 17694).

3. Ibid. Legal costs consisted of solicitors' fees, auctioneers' fees, payments to bailiffs, poundage (if stock were being auctioned), travelling expenses for the sheriff, and advertising. Usually, the solicitor's fee was the biggest single cost item. For example, in Maryborough on 16 July 81 when William and Nicholas Fennell, tenants of Sir Anthony C. Weldon, bought back the interest on their farms, costs defrayed by the land league totalled £14.11s.4d., of which £10.12s.0d. (73 per cent) was paid to the solicitor (N.L.I., Land League papers, MS 17719 <3>).

(To put the costs in perspective, in 1881 the annual rent on 89.5 acres in Clonadadoran (east of Mountrath) farmed by nine tenants of Viscount De Vesci was £104.4s.5d.)¹ With figures like these in mind, it was with some justification that James Lynam - the local land league organiser from Tullamore, King's County, who often visited Queen's County - wrote on 16 July 1881 to Thomas Sexton in the land league central office in Dublin. Writing, as he stated, 'at the request of many prominent members of the land league', Lynam continued:

they are of [the] opinion that there is a useless expenditure in paying all the costs at sheriffs' sales, as it is a pity to have the money subscribed by the friends in America getting into the clutches of bailiffs and sheriffs, and going towards the support of all the paraphernalia of landlord rascality, and, moreover, there are some I know well who are imposing themselves on the country as cheap martyrs.²

Along with the debilitating effects of such 'cheap' martyrdom,³ the land league was beset by growing discord within its branch committees. The promise of the 3Fs and 'Land for the People'⁴ probably induced accord among local land league leaders during the buoyant early days of the land war, but as the war wore on relations between local land

1. N.L.I., Raheen branch minute book, p.32, MS 9219.

2. N.L.I., Land League papers, MS 17710, Offaly envelope. Lynam also was president of the Ballycumber branch near Tullamore. On the basis of his statement of expenses for six days ending Saturday 23 July 81 Lynam may have been a hypocrite: his expenses - car hire, train fares, driver's fees, hotel expenses and waiters - totalling £4.14s.3d, suggest that during weeks like the one ending 23 July 81 Lynam lived well at the land league's expense (ibid., MS 8291(11)).

3. Anna Parnell thought that up to £20,000 in costs might have been 'incurred' by the land league 'in a single day' if the policy of 'paying rent at the point of the bayonet' had been continued (Anna Parnell, *The Tale*, p.97).

4. Admittedly, as Paul Bew rightly stresses, there was a wide range of tenant demands in 1879 (Bew, *Land and the National Question*, p.32). However, as Bew concedes in his discussion on Parnell successfully and 'persistently raising the stakes in the land war' in the 'latter half of 1880', the 3Fs would have satisfied the moderate land-leaguers, and unless the pressure for peasant proprietorship was kept up it was possible the tenantry 'would end up with less' than the 3Fs (ibid., pp 115-44). Interestingly, on 14 Jan.81 Dublin's *Daily Express* asked rhetorically why the tenants should settle for the 3Fs when they had already won a stronger position in the course of the agitation.

league leaders became more strained.¹ The proceedings at meetings of the Mountmellick branch committee on 19 June, 10 July and 11 September 1881 reasonably represent such strained relations. According to a police report by Edward Colbert, the Mountmellick head constable, at the Mountmellick committee meeting on 19 June the local curate, Fr James Connolly, called Pat Murphy a 'traitor', and said that Murphy went behind their backs and paid his rent, and should be turned out of the committee room.² (It is interesting to note that in the same report by Colbert on 25 June 1881 he advised against prosecuting the other curate from Mountmellick, Fr Edward Walsh, for intimidation³ because, as he stated, 'a good deal of dissension' had set in among the committee, and 'a prosecution against Father Walsh would be the means of making those parties forget their differences and act more

1. For other examples of discord in committees of land league branches in Queen's County see: (1) *L.E.*, 24 Sept. 81 for a report on a meeting of the Maryborough committee when it was decided by 15 votes to 7 that £74 received by William Whelan, the branch secretary, from the land league central office in Dublin, should be handed over to the branch treasurer; (Whelan refused to be bound by the decision, and resigned from the committee.) (2) *L.L.*, 25 June 81 for a report of a meeting of the Ballyroan branch committee when, after a dispute about the propriety of expelling members from the branch without their having an opportunity to answer charges against them, the branch's vice-president, John McMahon, left the meeting. Later, McMahon resigned his office (*ibid.*, 30 July 81).

2. *S.P.O.*, *C.S.O.*, *R.P.*, 1881/44845.

3. On 22 June 81 Fr Walsh told Robert Goodbody, manager of the Mountmellick gas works, that if the gas works did not sack an employee named Michael Hyland gas would be used no longer in either the local chapel or the coffee palace. (Goodbody, a Quaker, also was a draper and the clerk to the Mountmellick board of guardians (*Slater's Directory* 1881, p.460).) Apparently, Hyland had offended local land-leaguers by grazing cows on fields from which John G. Adair had evicted 'some people' in 1877 or 1878. In any case, because Hyland was not sacked, by 5 Oct. 81 the local land-leaguers had so intimidated the people of Mountmellick that the Quaker families of James Pim & Son, Thomas and Samuel Pim were the only people who 'continued to use gas all through' - despite notices calling on people to boycott them, and heavy losses in their wholesale businesses. On 29 Nov. 81 Sub-Inspector William D. Grene reported that Hyland was sacked by the gas works. (Reports of Head Constable Edward Colbert on 23 and 25 June 81, and reports of Sub-Inspector Grene on 5 Oct. and 29 Nov. 81 in *S.P.O.*, *C.S.O.*, *R.P.*, 1881/44845) Interestingly, a proposal at the meeting of the Mountmellick board of guardians on 22 Oct. 81 'That paraffin oil and candles be substituted for gas in the workhouse' was rejected by 13 votes to 7, and then 'amended' to 'That the board not being satisfied that oil or candles would be cheaper or as safe as gas, and believing that the motion is caused by party-feeling decline to entertain it' (Laois County Library, minutes of meetings of Mountmellick board of guardians).

unitedly.'')' At the meeting of the Mountmellick committee on 10 July when Fr Walsh proposed a vote of censure on two officers for alleged neglect of duty the resolution was rejected, and instead the committee passed a vote of confidence in the two officers: then when Fr Walsh called on the committee to declare that a local blacksmith was 'unjustly treated' the committee decided they would not interfere - as they believed they were not responsible for any 'inconvenience' from which the blacksmith might have suffered.² Reacting to both rebuffs Fr Walsh tendered his resignation from the committee, but it was refused on a motion proposed by the branch president, the local parish priest, Fr Thomas Murphy.³ Fr Walsh also was a principal in the uproar on 11 September when the Mountmellick committee met to appoint a delegate to the land league convention, held in Dublin four days later: when an irate Fr Walsh rebuked the branch joint secretary, Joseph McMahon (a nineteen year-old shop assistant)⁴ for being responsible for references to him in newspaper reports as mister - which he described as being 'blackguarded' - one committee member exclaimed 'How dare he [McMahon] call the priest, mister!', and Fr Walsh's fellow curate, Fr James Connolly, declared 'His mister should be knocked down his throat!': then, when the branch treasurer, John McMahon, a local shopkeeper, attempting to defend his son said Joseph had done all he could to forward the interests of the league, Fr Walsh's response was an excited 'I will thrash yourself and your son!': later in the heated meeting, when Fr Walsh was proposed as a

1, Head Constable Edward Colbert's report on 25 June 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845).

2, *L.E.*, 16 July 81.

3, *Ibid.*

4, Recommendation for arrest form on Joseph McMahon (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845).

delegate to the land league convention in Dublin, William Delaney' said Fr Walsh was not qualified to represent Mountmellick or any other branch at the convention, and notwithstanding Fr Walsh's fury castigated him with the words:

You [Fr Walsh] went to no auction. You let the farms and the crops be sold, but you did not show your face at all. You put the people into John Adair's mouth, then you left them there. You are loud enough when you are under cover and there is no danger. But when danger comes, you slink away.²

If the friction in the committee of the Mountmellick branch of the land league, which has been described, reflected badly on its members, the apparently unprincipled and greedy behaviour of Thomas Brennan, the treasurer of the Maryborough branch, was more reprehensible. Doubtless, Brennan was a half-hearted land-leaguer,³ but he did attend a public meeting in Maryborough's town hall on 23 May 1881 to express sympathy for Patrick Doran, Patrick A. Meehan and John Redington, the three Maryborough suspects who were gaoled on 14 May 1881,⁴ and proposed the first resolution protesting against 'the arrest of our brother land-leaguers and friends'.⁵ At the same meeting William Whelan, who had replaced Meehan as the branch secretary, read out a letter from two Rathdowney farmers, Thomas Carroll and John Barber, which instructed him to order for them from Mrs Doran a half ton each of turnip manure as a token of their sympathy for the 'unjust incarceration of Mr Doran'.⁶ The following week Brennan sold manure

1. In June 81 Delaney's father settled with his landlord, John G. Adair (above, pp 256-7).

2. *L.E.*, 17 Sept. 81.

3. 'He very often absented himself from meetings of the committee.' When the three Maryborough suspects, Doran, Meehan and Redington, were arrested at 2 a.m. on 14 May 81 Brennan 'refused to get up', and, in Meehan's words, 'was a cur not to come down [to Maryborough railway station] to see his colleagues when [they] were being taken away to gaol'. (Patrick A. Meehan's evidence to the *Times-Parnell* commission on 11 July 89, *Special commission act, 1888; reprint of the shorthand notes...*, vol. x, p. 64.)

4. Appendix 38, below, p. 437.

5. *L.E.*, 28 May 81.

6. *Ibid.*

and seeds to a man, 'knowing', according to the rest of the Maryborough branch committee, that that man 'had previously intended to buy those goods at the establishment of Mr Patrick Doran'.¹ The committee learned of Brennan's sale, and when they denounced him at their meeting on 30 May 1881 Brennan claimed he had sent grocery customers, whom he did not identify, to deal at Doran's shop. But the committee did not believe Brennan's attempts to wriggle out of his predicament, and after a long, animated and 'at times most warm discussion' eventually he 'admitted that his conduct had been unsatisfactory'.² (Significantly, Brennan did not attend the Maryborough committee meeting on 6 June 1881,³ and afterwards newspaper reports about the Maryborough committee name a Mark Walsh as its treasurer.⁴)

Doubtless, commercial opportunism partly accounted for Brennan's 'unsatisfactory' conduct, just as it must have motivated some land-leaguers to misuse boycotting - the land league's most important weapon. Of course, land league leaders widely advocated boycotting 'the enemies of the people, traitors to the league, or instruments of unjust eviction or other landlord injustice',⁵ but it is certain that some victims of boycotting could not be so designated, even by the land league. In this context (though strictly it is outside the time-span of this chapter) it is worth examining the much publicised attempts to boycott Humphry Smith of Mountmellick. Humphry Smith, a

1. Meehan's evidence to the *Times*-Parnell commission on 11 July 89 (op.cit.),

2. Ibid., pp 63-4.

3. Ibid.; according to the minute book of the Maryborough branch of the land league, which was read to the commission, the branch secretary was directed to write to Brennan,

4. Walsh was the treasurer William Whelan refused to hand the £74 to in Sept. 81 (cf. above, p. 263, n. 1).

5. Moody, *Davitt*, p. 438.

Quaker,¹ was a very successful merchant² and cattle farmer.³ On 1 January 1881 small slips of printed paper measuring 3½ by 3½ inches were distributed to people attending the fair in Maryborough, and then on 3 January to people in Abbeyleix: the slips were headed, 'New Year's Day 1881', and stated 'Humphry Smith, Merchant, Mountmellick has this day been Bycotted [sic]. Fellow Countrymen, rally round the Flag of the Irish National League.'⁴ Immediately Smith made representations to the executive of the land league in Dublin maintaining that, far from being opposed to the principles of the land league, he had done all in his power to advance them.⁵ Then at a meeting of the executive on 4 January Davitt said the boycotting slips did not emanate from the Mountmellick branch, nor was the land league in any way identified with the slips, and enquiries would be made in Mountmellick as to their origin.⁶

Davitt's assertions about the source of the slips were flawed for three reasons. First, the boycotting notices were printed by a printer from Mountmellick, Francis Moran, whose name normally appeared at the foot of Mountmellick branch posters.⁷ Second, the Mountmellick branch joint secretary, Joseph McMahon, seemed to be in the 'habit' of

1. Smith was married with eight children (lists of members of the Society of Friends in Mountmellick in the Friends' Historical Library, Dublin).

2. *Slater's Directory* for 1881, p.460, lists Smith under six headings: grocers, ironmongers and hardwaremen, linen drapers and haberdashers, provision merchants, wine and spirit merchants, and farmers.

3. Smith owned 25la.2r.5p. (*Return of owners of land*,...[C1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876]); *L.E.*, 5 June 80 reported Smith shipping six shorthorn bulls and three shorthorn heifers, insured for £600, to Liverpool on their way to estacias near Buenos Aires.

4. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845.

5. *L.E.*, 8 Jan. 81.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Sub-Inspector William D. Grene described Moran as a drunken fellow, in poor circumstances, aged forty and married with no children (recommendation for arrest form on Moran in S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845); Grene had an expert confirm that a series of boycotting slips, including the ones against Smith, were in the same type as the posters printed with Moran's name attached (*ibid.*).

ordering such boycotting notices from Moran.¹ Third, after a Mountmellick branch committee meeting on 11 January 1881, chaired by the local parish priest, Fr Thomas Murphy, there was public disagreement between at least four of the committee members about the meeting's resolutions. The two branch secretaries, Timothy Murphy and Joseph McMahon, had a notice posted throughout the district of Mountmellick which printed three resolutions² adopted by the meeting over a *nota bene* which read: 'Two other resolutions condemnatory of the annoyance to which Mr H. Smith has been subjected by being boycotted were proposed but not seconded.'³ (As if to stress the bias of Murphy and McMahon the word proposed was in heavy type, and the words not seconded were in capitals.) Then, in response to the notice, Fr Murphy wrote a letter to the editor of the *Leinster Leader* on 18 January 1881⁴ asserting that of the two resolutions, which he had proposed, the first was adopted. This was 'We regret the annoyance to which Mr H. Smith has been subjected by being boycotted, and we again declare that our committee has nothing to do with causing that annoyance.' The second resolution, Fr Murphy claimed, was objected to, but 'after some discussion' it was arranged that its

1. Recommendation for arrest form on Moran signed by Sub-Inspector Grene (op.cit.); S.P.O., Arrests under Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881-2, vol.iii, p.479.

2. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743. Interestingly, one of the resolutions suggests that Eldon Graham, a Mountmellick baker, who, though not a member of the land league, saw profit in its name. The resolution was 'That, having learned that a placard bearing the words Irish National Land League was posted as an advertisement on a travelling bread cart belonging to Mr Eldon Graham, Mountmellick, and his explanation appearing unsatisfactory, we hereby censure such employment of said placard as calculated to lead the public into error, and as a wanton infringement of the rights of this branch of the league. We also inform all whom it may concern that the said placard was used without our knowledge, and that Mr Eldon Graham has no connection whatever with the Irish National Land League.' (According to William Delaney's letter in *L.L.*, 22 Jan, 81, Graham joined the land league the following week.)

3. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/36743.

4. *L.L.*, 22 Jan, 81.

consideration should be postponed until the next committee meeting. This second resolution was 'Having fully examined the charge brought against Mr Smith in reference to Mr Thomas Gowing's farm, we are satisfied that the charge is unfounded that Mr Smith's conduct in that affair was such as the land league would not find fault with.' The *Leinster Leader* compounded the confusion, and underlined the disagreement within the Mountmellick committee by publishing a letter from another Mountmellick committee member, William Delaney, in which he objected to the newspaper publishing Fr Murphy's two resolutions.¹ According to Delaney the meeting at which the resolutions were proposed was not a representative one because it was held on a day 'before the ordinary day' of committee meetings without 'most' of the committee members being notified; the resolutions did not pass as they were not seconded; the resolutions were not part of the proceedings of the committee meeting because they did not appear in the minutes.²

Davitt probably resolved the dispute. According to Hugh Moran in *The Land League: a narrative of four years of Irish agitation*, in every instance where it was discovered that boycotting was being misused the land league leaders, especially Davitt, 'promptly interfered, removed the censure from the implicated party, and so far as they could, inflicted a punishment on the wretch who, to serve more selfish ends, misused a weapon devised for the advantage of the community at large'.³ Though Moran does not name him, his case in

1. Delaney to editor, *L.L.*, 22 Jan. 81.

2. Ibid.

3. Moran, *The Land League: a narrative...* (Sydney, 1883), pp 24-5. Moran's book was written at the suggestion of John E. Redmond, who wrote an introduction, and because it was sympathetic to the land league its judgement on the Mountmellick land-leaguers rings true.

point - 'a respectable merchant ostracised on the strength of a rumour set afloat by a rival in business' - probably referred to Humphry Smith. Davitt travelled from Dublin, examined the charge, 'found it to be untrue and unfounded, and removed the censure which had been unjustly cast upon an honest man.'

Along with envy of his business acumen Smith's religion may have contributed to his being 'ostracised'.² Certainly, for the following reasons, there appeared on the surface to be a sectarian aspect to the land war in Queen's County:

(1) It has been noted already that Roman catholic clergymen were prominent members of the Queen's County Independent Club, and they played important roles in founding and leading branches of the land league in the county. Yet at meetings to found branches of the Property Defence Association in Abbeyleix, Stradbally, and Mountmellick they were conspicuous by their absence. At the same time, while protestant clergymen stayed aloof from all land league activity, five Church of Ireland clergymen attended the Property Defence Association meeting in Abbeyleix on 11 October 1881.³ At the preliminary meeting on 28 October 1881 in Stradbally to form a Property Defence Association the local Church of Ireland rector, Robert Armstrong, proposed a resolution expressing 'strong approval' of the government's proclamation on 20 October 1881, which outlawed the land league.⁴ Three protestant clergymen attended the meeting on

1. Moran, *The Land League: a narrative*, ..., op.cit. For a description (seven typed pages) of Mountmellick and its businessmen in the second half of the nineteenth century see C.L. Hutchings, *Some reminiscences of Mountmellick* (Friends' Historical Library, Ir. case III, box 3, 18).

2. Significantly, besides Smith, other Quakers in Mountmellick - Thomas, Samuel and James Pin, and Robert Goodbody - were boycotted (above, p.263, n.3).

3. *L.E.*, 15 Oct. 81.

4. *Ibid.*, 29 Oct. 81.

23 December 1881 to found the Portarlington branch of the Property Defence Association.¹

(2) Landlords, who were predominantly protestant, owned most of the land in the county,² and, identified not just by their class but by their religion, were portrayed by land league leaders on platforms as symbols of confiscation and tyranny.³ It is interesting, for example, that William Fallon, a Roman catholic who owned 484 acres near Aghaboe,⁴ should be castigated by the *Leinster Leader* on 30 July 1881 not just for serving civil-bill processes but that he should 'be ashamed to ally himself with that detestable Orange society for the purpose of oppressing his own catholic tenantry'.⁵

(3) Alfred John Webb, a Quaker who became one of the treasurers of the Irish National League, observed that during the land war the protestant tenantry of Ireland 'coldly stood aside, and let others fight the battle'.⁶ Webb's observation characterised the mass of protestant tenants and shopkeepers in the county who by so distancing themselves from the land league provoked denunciation from its leaders. For example, at a land league meeting on 22 May 1881 in an 'uncomfortably filled concert hall' in Rathdowney to protest against the coercion act and to renew fidelity to the land league, Fr Thomas Feehan, the chairman, said that after a poster advertising the meeting had been sent to all the shopkeepers in Rathdowney for 'exhibition' in

1, *L.E.*, 31 Dec. 81.

2. For example, a sample of thirty of the owners of the largest estates in Queen's County in 1876, whose protestantism could be established confidently, owned 40 per cent of the land in the county (*Return of owners of land* ..., [C1492], H.C., 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876]).

3. Above, pp 125-6, 192, 203, 211-12, 218-20, 224-7.

4. *Return of owners of land* ..., op.cit.

5. Above, p.258.

6. Alfred Webb, *Autobiography*, vol.ii, p.402 (MS in Friends' Historical Library, Dublin).

their windows he was 'surprised to find that with one exception' the only windows in which the posters appeared were 'exclusively those of catholics'. According to Fr Feehan, 'one gentleman' had explained in 'a very courteous letter' that he did not exhibit the poster in his window because 'he had never put any bill of a religious or political character in his window', and the gentleman 'hoped he would be excused, remarking, at the same time, that the movement had his sympathy'. Describing such sympathy as 'cheap', Fr Feehan said that such a 'policy of neutrality' could not be regarded as 'an honest one', and that he would treat those who called themselves neutral as 'strangers'.¹ Though clearly Fr Feehan was advocating boycotting, the almost inevitable outcome of comments such as his was to legitimize attacks on the property of so-called 'strangers'. It is significant that when land league supporters paraded after bands through streets any windows broken tended to be owned by protestants.²

(4) Protestants, who seemed to take up the cause of the land league by joining, becoming branch officers, or sitting on its public platforms, were welcomed and made much of by land league leaders - not because they were farmers or shopkeepers but because they were protestants.³

(5) The administration of justice was perceived by tenant leaders to have a protestant landed-interest bias. A letter written in August 1881 by Fr Edward Rowan, though coloured by local landlord-tenant

1. *L.E.*, 28 May 81.

2. For example, in Mountmellick on 25 Sept. 81 (above, p. 246); interestingly, the Quaker Humphry Smith's windows were broken on 19 Nov. 80, for which he was awarded £16.10s compensation at the assizes on 8 July 81 (*L.E.*, 9 July 81).

3. Cf. above, pp 109-10, 146.

tension, probably expressed the views of some tenant leaders. In his letter to Robert Hamilton Stubber, the local magistrate living nearby, Rowan wrote that the 'council' of his land league branch had 'not one scintilla of faith' in the petty sessions courts, and looked upon them as 'abortive, insignificant survivals of the star chambers and defective titles, jobberies of Strafford's day...preserved for party and partisan purposes'.

From analyses of two parliamentary returns it is easy to understand such a perception of justice - particularly in relation to agrarian matters in the county. First, as may be noted from table 8 below,² there was a distinct protestant bias in the higher ranks of the RIC throughout Ireland. For example, even though only 28.2 per cent of the RIC were protestants, 80.1 per cent of the total number of county and sub-inspectors - the ranking policemen most commonly confronting

Table 8 The numbers and percentages of officers and constables in the RIC in Ireland on 1 Jan. 80 who were protestant or Roman catholic

rank	protestants		Roman catholics		total
	number	% of total	number	% of total	
inspector general and assist. inspectors general	4	80	1	20	5
county and sub-inspectors	189	80.1	47	19.9	236
head constables	93	39.6	142	60.4	235
constables	536	30	1,249	70	1,785
acting constables and sub-constables	2,387	26.1	6,748	73.9	9,135
total	3,209	28.2	8,187	71.8	11,396

1. Rowan's letter to Stubber published in *L.E.*, 27 Aug. 81.

2. Return showing the number of officers, and constables in the RIC on 1 Jan. 80, distinguishing protestants and Roman catholics, H.C. 1880 (256), lix, 505.

tenant leaders at evictions, seizures and sheriffs' auctions - were protestants. Second, there was an imbalance in favour of protestant landed interests in the local magistrates in the county. Local magistrates presided over the petty sessions courts, and 'associated with' the county court judge exercised jurisdiction and authority in the quarter sessions courts - the courts which dealt with ejectments.¹ An 1884 parliamentary return of the names of 83 magistrates in the county² shows that 76 or 92 per cent of the magistrates were either landed proprietors or land agents when they were appointed: of the other 7 the 2 coroners were medical practitioners, 2 were resident or stipendiary magistrates, 2 were woollen manufacturers (also owning 119 acres and 58 acres respectively),³ and 1 was a builder and malster: in Queen's County, which was 88 per cent Roman catholic, 67 or 80.7 per cent of the 83 magistrates were members of the Church of Ireland, 2 or 2.4 per cent were members of the Society of Friends, and 14 or 16.9 per cent were Roman catholics.

Also, even a cursory reading of the *Leinster Express* and the *Leinster Leader* newspapers from May 1881 to October 1881 shows landlords in the county recovering their rents by the increasing use of the sheriff, protected by the RIC and the military, to evict, to seize, and to auction seized stock, crops, and tenants' interests in their farms. A sample of eighteen landlords who carried out evictions, taken from reports in issues of the *Leinster Express* from 28 May to 10 September 1881, shows that no easy categorisation of such

1. William F. Bailey, *Local and centralised government in Ireland*, pp 50-1. Ejectments were also dealt with at petty sessions (Bram Stoker, *The duties of clerks of petty sessions in Ireland*, p.58).

2. *Return of the names of persons holding the commission of peace in Ireland*, H.C. 1884, lxiii, 406-7.

3. *Return of owners of land...*, [C1492], H.C., 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

landlords may be deduced from the size of their estates or their places of residence. The eighteen landlords owned almost 37,316 acres in the county, with individual estates ranging in area from John B. Brady's 207 acres to John G. Adair's 9,655 acres.¹ (It must be conceded that three of the eighteen landlords owned sizable estates in other counties: Adair owned 16,308 acres in Donegal, Richard Warburton owned 5,841 acres in King's County, and Colonel King-Harman's estate of 72,913 acres included only 1,024 acres in Queen's County.)² Twelve of the eighteen landlords resided on their estates, while the remaining six lived in Ireland but outside Queen's County.

It is probable that most landlords felt themselves the victims of a dishonest conspiracy by which their property rights were being unjustly attacked. Two medical practitioners, Dr David Jacob and Dr Samuel Edge, who were also landlords in Queen's County, epitomise this outlook. As has been described above (pp 188-95) Dr Jacob was in conflict with his tenants in Cool townland since January 1881, and had been forced to institute legal proceedings in an effort to recover his rents. On 2 May 1881, the day before the sheriff's auction of five cattle belonging to two of his tenants, Jacob was visited by William Jessop, a Church of Ireland land-leaguer from Maryborough, who was 'most pressing for a settlement to avoid bad work'. Jacob's 'short, sharp and decisive' answer to Jessop was that he 'would make no compromise', he was 'honest', the tenants were 'rogues', and he 'would not support the cause of rogues and stultify' himself by any settlement.³

1. *Return of owners of land...* (op. cit.)

2. U.H. Hussey De Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland*.

3. Jacob to Sub-Inspector William D. Grene on 2 May 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/29627).

The second landlord instanced was Dr Samuel Edge whose 3,628 acres in the county' centred on Gortnaclea House (about ten miles south of Mountrath) and who described himself as 'born in the country' as had been his father and grandfather, 'most intimately connected with land in every possible way', and because of his profession 'brought into most intimate contact with the labouring and farming classes'.² Dr Edge's disposition towards his tenants after the spring gale of 1881 may be deduced from a letter which the parish priest of Aghaboe, Fr Matthew Keeffe, wrote to the editor of the *Leinster Leader* on 11 May 1881.³ (Of course, Dr Edge's alleged treatment of Fr Keeffe may have coloured his version of the day's events.) According to Fr Keeffe, on 10 May 1881 when a meeting of the Aghaboe branch of the land league decided to present a memorial to Dr Edge, which 'demanded a substantial remission of arrears and a substantial reduction of rents', he reluctantly agreed to accompany the tenants to 'plead their cause'. When Fr Keeffe and the tenants arrived at Gortnaclea House the next day at 11 a.m. Dr Edge 'either did not know or was not willing to practise on the occasion the common courtesies of civilised life' because Fr Keeffe had to read the memorial to Dr Edge 'standing under a burning sun outside'. After the demands were made, and Dr Edge's attention was called to 'the kind and considerate acts of the other landlords of the parish of Aghaboe',⁴ and to the 'poverty and misery

1. *Return of owners of land...* [C1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

2. Edge to Forster on 20 Aug. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/31681).

3. *L.L.*, 14 May 81.

4. On 5 Mar. 81 Matthew H. Franks, the land agent, wrote to Fr Keeffe acknowledging the receipt of a memorial from Lord Castletown's tenants, but stated that Castletown would not accept 'under any circumstances' Griffith's valuation as his rent. However, Franks continued, 'If the year's rent due 29 Sept. and 1 Nov. last are paid to me before 1 Apr. next, he will give an abatement of 10 per cent upon the year's rent then due, and to those tenants who have paid the March and May rents an abatement of 20 per cent due 29 Sept. and 1 Nov. last' (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752(11)).

of the tenants after three years of famine', Dr Edge's response to the memorial was a peremptory 'I will have my rents or my land!'

As suggested by Fr Keeffe's references to the 'kind and considerate acts' of other landlords, it is clear that landlords in Queen's County responded differently to tenants' memorials after the spring gale of 1881, and not all were as unbending as Dr Edge in their relations with their tenants. Where landlords were 'kind' and reached agreements with their tenants without instituting legal proceedings, obviously there was little pressing need for agrarian agitation. It is notable, for example, that the barony of Upperwoods and the northern third of the barony of Maryborough West, which included most of the 47,452 acres of Sir Charles Coote, generally were peaceful during the land war. Coote, lauded as a 'good' landlord by tenant leaders in the early stages of the land war,² probably reached an accommodation with his tenants over rents because his name is conspicuously absent from reports of legal proceedings against tenants, and though he owned the largest estate in the county land league speakers at public meetings of tenants generally ignored him. (In this context, it is worth noting a letter in the *Leinster Leader* on 29 March 1884, which was written by Fr Andrew Phelan, the parish priest of Mountrath. Fr Phelan wrote that Coote did not parade 'his good works', his estate as a whole was let at Griffith's valuation, he never evicted a tenant for the non-payment of 'even that moderate rent', and after the land act of 1881 'he settled with all his tenants out of court without an angry word or sixpence law costs.')

1. Fr Keeffe's letter in *L.L.*, 14 May 81.

2. Cf. above, p. 13.

Henry J.R. Dawson, the earl of Portarlington whose estate of 11,150 acres centred on Emo Park' (about four miles south of Portarlington) was another large landlord in Queen's County who was demonstrably 'considerate' towards his tenants. At the end of May 1881 he accepted Griffith's valuation as his rent, which he calculated as giving his tenants an abatement of about 17 per cent 'overall', and which he described as 'not an out of the way sum when we read daily of landlords giving 20 to 25 per cent.'² After Portarlington had conceded Griffith's valuation to his tenants, his home at Emo Park on 2 June 1881 was the scene of 'enthusiastic popular rejoicing' - an obvious contrast to estates elsewhere in the county.³ An 'enormous gathering of people' from Portarlington, Maryborough, Mountmellick and Ballybrittas met by pre-arrangement, and led by the Maryborough brass band made a circuit of the park playing and cheering for the earl. At about 7 p.m. a meeting was held in the village at which the tenants were congratulated by speakers who included Frs James Connolly and Edward Walsh, the two curates from Mountmellick, and William H. Cobbe, the treasurer of the Portarlington branch of the land league. Huge bonfires were lit in the countryside around Emo village. At about 9 p.m. the band and the crowd followed by a large number of cars and traps went up the mile-long drive from the village, and surrounded the earl's neo-classical mansion. After the band played some music, the earl appeared under the portico, and was cheered for about three minutes. Then briefly he spoke to the crowd thanking them for their ovation, and saying that he hoped they would return to their homes

1. *Return of owners of land...*, [C1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

2. Portarlington's letter to the *Daily Express* published in *L.E.*, 4 June 81.

3. For example, contrast Ryan's estate (below, pp 279-81) and Warburton's estate (below, pp 281-3).

quietly, and let the world see that in their part of the country there were 'good landlords, good labourers and good tenants'. Before the crowd dispersed, William H. Cobbe thanked the earl for his generosity, and regretted that more of the landlords of Ireland had not imitated his example, and so 'gather round them, happy, peaceful and contented tenantry'.

A patently disapproving *Leinster Express* editorial on 4 June 1881 commented on Portarlington's treatment of his tenants. It stated that in conceding Griffith's valuation to his tenants Portarlington appeared 'to have been influenced by a spirit of benignant liberality rather than by a desire to do strict justice between himself and his tenants', and while this generosity would be recognised by the landlords of Ireland 'few of them' could 'afford to make such a sacrifice', and 'none of them' was 'called upon to do so'. While Portarlington had done what he had 'a perfect right to do on his own property', the editorial continued, 'if his example encourages the unjust demands of agitators, he may reflect that this is a misfortune to be attributed to the spirit of the times.'

Whether the tenants' demands were unjust or not, it is likely that the 'kind' treatment given to tenants by landlords such as Sir Charles Coote and the earl of Portarlington encouraged the demands of tenants on neighbouring estates, and thereby fostered disorder where landlords were determined to evict or 'have' their rents. A plausible example of a landlord who may have suffered because of a 'kind' neighbouring landlord was Valentine Ryan. Ryan, a Roman catholic, owned 1,179 acres

1. *L.E.*, 4 June 81. For another report indicating the popularity of the earl of Portarlington see *ibid.*, 3 June 82 for a description of the enthusiastic reception given to him on 1 June 82 when he returned to Emo Park after an absence of ten months due to his suffering from malaria and jaundice.

in the county,' and lived at Belview in Mountrath - a town mostly owned by Sir Charles Coote, and which usually was peaceful during the land war. In April 1881 Ryan evicted a tenant named James Seale for non-payment of rent from a farm in Clonadacasey townland (about three miles east of Mountrath). Thereafter, until 1883, he was subject to censure at land league meetings,² and 'severely boycotted'.³ Notices were posted throughout the district of Mountrath stating that Ryan, the 'rack-renting, exterminating land thief', was boycotted by the 'will of the people' and the 'competent tribunal', and requested 'all persons' not to 'buy, sell or have any other dealings with him lest they should be also left alone'.⁴ Ryan also received some bizarre and crudely threatening letters. One letter stated:

You land villain you are boycotted and don't come to mass any more if you are not well armed for you will be dragged out of the chapel like a mad dog and let you mind yourself. I am going to give you caution [sic] take it or leave it, I don't care [sic] which you do, You will be shot when you will be least expecting it.⁵

Other threatening letters received by Ryan were equally direct. One threatened 'God save Ireland and to hell with landlords. Shirk off your brother that is running about in his beefeet [sic]. I would kick the shitt [sic] out of you.'⁶ Another letter included a sketch of a coffin on top of which appeared a skull and cross-bones and the words 'Val Ryan died 1882 of landlordism'.⁷

While no report of any attempt on Ryan's life has been found, it is clear that life was made difficult for him. No shopkeeper in Mountrath would serve him or his servants, and he had to procure his provisions

1. *Return of owners of land*,...[CI492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

2. For example, see *L.E.*, 17 Sept. 81 for a report on the meeting on 11 Sept. 81 near the Oak schoolhouse (on the main Dublin-Limerick road about half way between Mountrath and Maryborough).

3. S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.L.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

through Sub-Inspector Henry B. Knox, his next door neighbour, who passed the provisions to him at night time over a connecting wall. People, who could be linked to Ryan, were subjected to abuse: Fenton Brennan, who rented the farm in Clonadacasey after James Seale was evicted, was described as a 'grabber' and a 'wretch' in notices ordering him to be boycotted: Henry Campion, who taught Ryan's sons in the local school, was refused service in a shop: Patrick Breen, Ryan's coachman, was described in notices posted in Mountrath as 'the bastard emergency man' and a 'mangy hound', and was warned in a threatening letter that if he and 'other servants' did not leave Ryan's employment there were 'twelve men sworn to murder him' and the other servants, and it was 'decreed by God' that he should be killed.'

Richard Warburton was another landlord whose relations with his tenants may have been worsened inadvertently by a neighbouring landlord apparently giving better treatment to his tenants. Significantly, Warburton's 3,491 acres in the county adjoined the estate of the earl of Portarlington. While it must be conceded that Warburton had strained relations with at least some of his tenants since 1879,² and he was prepared to use legal means to recover his rents,³ the timing of the sheriff's auction of the stock of four of his tenants was inopportune. In Maryborough on 24 May 1881 - almost the same time as Portarlington was conceding Griffith's valuation as the level of his tenants' rents - Warburton had the stock of four of

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., I.N.N.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10.

2. On 27 July 81 in a letter to Sub-Inspector William D. Grene, Warburton wrote: 'In 1879, detectives were sent into this neighbourhood but they were inefficient, and were soon discovered by the people. One came as a tramp, and two came as servants into my employment' (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845).

3. Warburton stated 'the land league branches acted as champions' for six tenants whose stock he had seized (ibid.).

his tenants auctioned for £73, the six months rent owed by the four tenants.¹ (The tenants bought in their stock, and then paid their rents along with legal costs.) It is notable that, watched by RIC and a company of the 20th Regiment, a hooting crowd of about one thousand attended the auction and the meeting afterwards, when they were addressed by speakers who included Fr John Phelan, the Emo parish priest, Fr Jerome Kelly, a curate from Portarlinton, and the Mountmellick curate, Fr James Connolly.² Interestingly, the *Leinster Express* on 4 June 1881, which reported the rejoicing of the earl of Portarlinton's tenants after they had been conceded Griffith's valuation, also published a letter from the Emo parish priest, Fr John Phelan, which listed the rent and valuation on the holdings of each of Warburton's four tenants whose stock were auctioned: according to Fr Phelan's figures, the total rent paid by the four tenants was 52 per cent more than the total valuation of their holdings.³ After the auction, Warburton was 'posted all over the country, and held up to scorn and ridicule'.⁴ 'Not a person' attended an auction of meadowing,⁵ which he had 'sold for more than thirty years',⁶ his 'mowing and threshing machines' were boycotted,⁷ 'no one sent cattle to graze' on his land,⁸ 'injury was done to a pipe attached to

1. *L.E.*, 28 May 81; the £73 is based on the level of rents given in Fr John Phelan's letter to the editor in *ibid.*, 4 June 81.

2. *Ibid.*, 28 May 81.

3. Edward Fennelly: rent £36, valuation £20; Patrick Foynes: rent £38, valuation £26; Thomas Kenna: rent £50, valuation £39.10s.; Richard Hyland: rent £22, valuation £10.10s. Fennelly, Foynes and Kenna came from Dangans, and Hyland came from Ballycrossal.

4. Phillips's 'private' letter to Sub-Inspector Grene on 26 July 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845).

5. Grene reported to Dublin Castle on 27 July 81 that the auction on 25 July 81 'proved a failure, not a person attending it' (*ibid.*).

6. Phillips to Grene on 26 July 81 (*op.cit.*)

7. Boycotting notice labelled 'No VI' (*ibid.*).

8. Warburton to Grene on 27 July 81 (*ibid.*)

Huntington House' (which he owned),¹ and he feared that his workmen would be 'forced' to leave him.² Significantly, in his letter to Sub-Inspector William D. Grene on 27 July 1881 Warburton listed ten people whom he accused of 'taking an active part' against him, and among the ten were Fr James Connolly and William H. Cobbe,³ two of the land league leaders who were prominent in the celebrations at Emo Park on 2 June 1881.⁴

Even from the references just made to six landlords⁵ - who between them owned almost 16 per cent of the land in Queen's County - it is reasonable to infer a lack of unity among landlords in the county. Certainly, as late as October 1881, 'an old fox hunter' (who did not identify himself) complained bitterly of the 'weak, defenceless, and disunited action of many of the Irish landlords'. In his letter in the *Leinster Express* on 22 October 1881 the 'old fox hunter' wrote that it reminded him of 'Nero fiddling while Rome burned' for Irish landlords to be 'hunting over a country in which it is proclaimed from every platform that, deprived of their estates, they must be driven forth beggars along with the English government and every man of English race and protestant religion.' Declaring that 'this agitation' was 'really a war of religion and of race', the 'old fox hunter' advised fox hunting landlords to 'stop hunting at once'.⁶ 'Give up your hounds', he wrote, 'but keep your horses, you may want

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44845.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Above, pp 278-9.

5. Sir Charles Coote, the earl of Portarlington, Dr David Jacob, Dr Samuel Edge, Valentine Ryan and Richard Warburton.

6. For the successful campaign by land-leaguers to stop fox hunting in Queen's County see below, pp 318-31.

them before long if you mean to fight like men for all you have against the bands of robbers who intend to despoil you.'

Given his partisanship, it is easy to understand how landlords provoked this simplistic and intemperate 'old fox hunter'. As there were no more than 150 owners of one hundred or more acres resident in Queen's County,¹ it should not have been difficult for them to mount some sort of collective action against branches of the land league.² Yet, while all landlords probably were aware of how their neighbouring landlords managed their estates³ it is likely that self-reliance and pride dictated that they should act independently of each other when dealing with some of their recalcitrant tenants. Though the *Leinster Express* on 30 July 1881 reported that a branch of the Property Defence Association had been established in the county, and that one of the objects of the branch was to support those who were 'not in a position of sufficient independence...to defy the terrorism of the league' no evidence has been found to suggest that until October 1881 any branch of the Property Defence Association in the county did anything other

1. Based on table 1 (above, p.9) which shows that in 1876 there were 336 proprietors of one hundred acres or more in Queen's County, and Appendix 13 (below, p. 419) which shows that 44.9 per cent of such proprietors in 1870 were resident on or near their property.

2. It must be conceded that after the success of the liberals in the 1880 general election because Lord Castletown, the lieutenant of the county, was a liberal some landlords may have been unwilling to react publicly or collectively to the land league.

3. For example, Thomas W. Webber in his agent's report on Captain Robert A.G. Cosby's estate for 1881 described how, in November 1881, he went through 'the rights and wrongs of each tenant's case', and then made each tenant a 'fair' offer 'with an alternative of law procedure'; this 'course', Webber stated, 'was adopted most successfully by a neighbouring landlord near Portarlinton' (Cosby papers). Then, there is the evidence of Fr James Connolly's speech outside the court house in Maryborough on 2 July 81, when he said that John G. Adair's response to a request from his tenants for a remission of 20 per cent of their rents was that he (Adair) would not follow the example of the earl of Portarlinton (*L.E.*, 9 July 81).

than collect subscriptions.' On the basis of Queen's County alone, there was some substance in Gladstone's speech in Leeds on 7 October 1881 when he said 'A general cowardice seems to prevail among all the classes who possess property, and the government is expected to preserve the peace with no moral force behind it.'²

Gladstone's speech at Leeds enraged landlords in Queen's County. For example, on 2 November 1881 in a letter to his father-in-law, Lord Castletown, Edward S.R. Smyth described a difficulty he had when he chaired a meeting of magistrates in the court house in Maryborough on 31 October 1881.³ Though Smyth had informed Castletown before the meeting that he intended to have his 'own way' regarding resolutions,³ he admitted after the meeting that he could not 'suppress' the resolution of Captain Robert A.G. Cosby,⁵ which stated:

That we take this opportunity of stating the loyal classes in Ireland were never by any party known to be wanting in moral or active support to government engaged in maintaining law and order and the rights of property and peace and security and liberty of its subjects.⁶

The reason Smyth gave for his inability to 'suppress' the resolution was because the magistrates - whom he described as a large body of men with various, contrary, rustic political feelings⁷ - were 'all so

1. *L.E.*, July 81 reported that subscriptions could be sent to its proprietor, George W. Talbot. Apparently, another collector of subscriptions was Colonel Henry D. Carden, who lived at Knightstown (about three miles east of Mountmellick) and owned 2,226 acres in Queen's County; in Lord Castletown's papers there is an acknowledgement of a £5 subscription from Castletown sent through Carden to the Property Defence Association offices in 8 Westmoreland Street, Dublin (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752<11>).

2. *Nation*, 15 Oct. 81; Lyons, *Parnell*, p.167.

3. Smyth to Castletown on 2 Nov. 81 (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752<8>). Smyth was deputising for Castletown who was ill.

4. Smyth to Castletown on 26 Oct. 81 (*ibid.*).

5. Smyth to Castletown on 2 Nov. 81 (*op.cit.*).

6. *L.E.*, 5 Nov. 81.

7. Smyth to Castletown on 2 Nov. 81 (*op.cit.*). The word thought to be 'contrary' is difficult to decipher, but probably is correct.

irate with Gladstone's Leeds utterances that they wanted to give expression to their feelings'.¹

Robert Staples of Dunmore near Durrow, one of the magistrates present at the meeting, had already expressed publicly his indignation over what he described as the 'malignant and insulting calumnies' which, he stated, Gladstone had 'uttered' at Leeds.² On 13 October 1881 Staples wrote a letter directly to 10 Downing Street, which, he informed Gladstone, he intended to have published along with Gladstone's reply. Leaving others 'to deal' with that part of the Leeds speech where Gladstone complained of 'the traditional sluggishness and incapability of the wealthier portions of society in Ireland to do anything whatever for themselves', Staples continued:

As one of that class who has always lived at home and who still continues to do so and to discharge his duty as a magistrate, as a large employer of agricultural labour and in every other relation of life to the best of his poor ability, I feel I am personally maligned and injured by your remarks and especially by your announcement that the Irish landlords are refugees. I have to inform you that in this Queen's County, where I reside, there is not one instance to which such a statement would apply; moreover, having a very wide knowledge of Ireland³,... I believe that in most other counties your statement is equally unfounded.

Irish landlords, as a body, are at their posts endeavouring to do their duty to their queen as magistrates by struggling to stem the torrent of sedition, outrage, plunder, and all but open rebellion [to] which you have largely contributed... It is too true there are instances in certain districts of gentlemen whose lives being in the utmost danger, themselves fired at or their houses fired into, their property destroyed, their peace-of-mind and family life ruined, and the law of the land in your feeble hands unable to protect them, who have fled from the pandemonium in which they live and become refugees. But who had made them so?

As you have given a world-wide circulation to a statement most injurious to as well as ungenerous and untrue of the class to which I have the honour to belong, I have a right to demand of you as public and as full a withdrawal and apology for having uttered it.⁴

1. Smyth to Castletown on 2 Nov. 81 (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752(8)).

2. Staples to Gladstone (L.E., 29 Oct. 81).

3. Along with his 1,424 acres in Queen's County, Staples owned 4,003 acres in County Derry and 1,385 acres in County Mayo (U.H. Hussey De Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland*).

4. Staples to Gladstone (op.cit.).

The reply from Downing Street was direct and dismissive. Over the signature T.A. Godley, the letter simply stated 'Mr Gladstone has received your letter of the 13th inst., the language and temper of which, he regrets to say, entirely preclude him from entertaining upon the subject to which it refers.'¹ Then, acknowledging Gladstone's response, Staples wrote on 19 October 1881 that 'if the language and temper' of his letter 'were too warm' he regretted it, but that his letter was written in indignation over Gladstone's speech at Leeds, which was 'far more inexcusable'. Staples's concluding paragraph tartly stated:

You, who have so deeply injured those very classes by depriving them of their property without compensation, and destroying their moral position and influence, should have been the last to make an attack so ungenerous and untrue, calculated (if not intended) to injure them in public estimation, and for which you now evade to make the only reparation in your power.²

Edward S.R. Smyth told Lord Castletown he was 'exceedingly sorry' about Staples's letter to Gladstone on 13 October 1881.³ This may have been because Smyth was aware of how hot-headed Staples could be – he described resolutions prepared by Staples for the meeting of the magistrates in Maryborough on 31 October 1881 as 'blood and thunder'⁴ – or because he believed Staples's letter embarrassed Lord Castletown who was a staunch Liberal.⁵ However, Smyth did admit to Castletown that magistrates in Portarlinton 'approved' of the letter, and 'they thoroughly understood it.'⁶

1. Staples to Gladstone (L.E., 29 Oct. 81).

2. Ibid.

3. Smyth to Castletown on 2 Nov. 81 (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752 <8>).

4. Smyth to Castletown on 26 Oct. 81 (ibid.).

5. He was M.P. for Queen's County for more than thirteen years before he was elevated to the peerage in 1870 (Walker, *Parliamentary Election Results*, pp 65, 78, 104, 111).

6. Smyth to Castletown on 2 Nov. 81 (op.cit.).

Despite the magistrates' outrage in Maryborough on 31 October 1881 over Gladstone's speech at Leeds, even they inadvertently provided some evidence to support Gladstone's utterances'. First, at their meeting in Maryborough on 31 October 1881 when they discussed Gladstone's speech, Captain John Loftus Bland of Blandsfort (three miles north-east of Abbeylaxey) said that he took exception to Captain Cosby's resolution (above, p.285) because he did not think 'the loyal party in Ireland' had held any meetings to support the government before Gladstone's speech in Leeds: Bland and William Dunne (a neighbour of Cosby who lived in Ballymanus, Stradbally) dissented when Cosby's resolution was being carried by the meeting.' Then, when Smyth informed Castletown that a meeting of magistrates was convened for Maryborough on 8 November 1881, he also stated that 'many will stay away' because, he believed, 'very few [of the magistrates] have the courage to back their opinions.'² (In fact, twelve magistrates including Smyth and Henry A. Blake R.M., Gilbert Kelly, deputy clerk of the peace, and County Inspector Thomas Whelan, attended the meeting³ - a number which contrasts with the thirty-eight magistrates who attended the meeting on 31 October 1881.⁴)

If lacking in 'courage', and independent, might describe some landlords in Queen's County (though, of course, as already suggested, the more determined landlords made use of personnel of the Orange Emergency Committee and the Property Defence Association, the courts,

1. *L.E.*, 5 Nov.81.

2. Smyth to Castletown on 2 Nov.81 (op.cit.).

3. *L.E.*, 12 Nov.81.

4. *Dublin Evening Mail*, 1 Nov.81.

and the sheriff and his staff protected by the police and the military), it is obvious that if the tenants can be described as slow to organise, then their landlords might be labelled similarly. Both the Property Association and the Orange Emergency Committee were founded in December 188~~0~~¹, but it was more than ten months later that three branches of the Property Defence Association, identified with distinct areas - Abbeyleix, Stradbally and Mountmellick - but co-operating with each other, were established in the county.

On 8 October 1881 a circular signed by Viscount De Vesci's agent, Henry C. Fitzherbert, was distributed throughout Abbeyleix and its environs. The circular stated:

Dear Sir,

Lord De Vesci requests your kind attendance at a meeting to be held on Tuesday 11 October at 2 p.m. in the assembly rooms, Abbeyleix to adopt means to support law and order, and protect individual liberty now so severely interfered with by a cruel system of boycotting which is a tyranny extending to every relation of life.²

On 11 October between two and three hundred 'loyalists' attended the meeting, which was chaired by Viscount De Vesci.³ It was clearly an inaugural meeting: Robert Staples, after using the cliché 'Heaven helps those who help themselves', added that he hoped their meeting was 'the beginning of that self-help in this county'.⁴ The substance of the resolutions and their supporting speeches reflected the opening address given by De Vesci. Somewhat imperiously he said:

I have summoned you all without distinction or opinions, whether religious or otherwise, to protest against, and if possible defeat the wanton malice that attempts deliberately to ruin and drive from the country men, whether engaged in trade or

1. Above, pp 177-8.

2. N.L.I., Lalor papers, MS 8569.

3. 'Loyalists' was the name given to those attending the meeting in the report in *L.E.*, 15 Oct. 81.

4. Ibid.

agriculture, who, by their own honest industry and perseverance, have contributed so much to the prosperity of Abbeyleix and the surrounding districts.

I have summoned you here to assist by cordial co-operation those men who, deliberately and for conscientious motives, have declined to join or take part in a movement of which they disapprove.

I have summoned you also as loyal men, without distinction of party or religion, to come forward and give your support to the authorities in their efforts to carry out the law.'

He concluded his speech by appealing to the 'better feelings' of the meeting to 'let bygones be bygones' whenever 'the dark cloud which now overshadows and blights the prosperity of Ireland shall have passed away' so that 'old feelings of resentment may be dispelled, and all classes may live together with the same mutual respect and friendship as hitherto'.² At the end of the meeting, an executive committee chaired by De Vesci was appointed to 'collect subscriptions for this league, and take all necessary steps for carrying out and promoting its objects'.³

Some 'steps' were taken immediately by the 'Abbeyleix Defence League'. (At the outset, they called the Property Defence Association the Property Defence League, and their branch the Abbeyleix Defence League.) Threshing machines belonging to Robert and Joseph Dobbs, both members of the Abbeyleix Defence League, were made available to 'any person who may experience difficulty in procuring labour in consequence of the hostility of the [land] league'.⁴ A blacksmith was engaged.⁵ Advertisements were inserted in newspapers 'with the

1, L.E., 15 Oct. 81.

2, Ibid.

3, Ibid.

4, Ibid., 8 Oct. 81.

5, Ibid., 29 Oct. 81.

object of procuring a suitable butcher'.¹ James Moyles, a local draper and pawnbroker,² was 'requested to procure newspapers for sale', and all members of the Abbeyleix Defence League were 'requested to buy from him':³ on 24 October 1881 Moyles, who was boycotted by the land league, had his potatoes dug by thirty men.⁴

On 25 October 1881, two weeks after its inaugural meeting, the Abbeyleix Defence League had its first general meeting. Again chaired by Viscount De Vesci, the meeting adopted seven resolutions which, in essence, were adopted by the Stradbally and Mountmellick associations. The resolutions were:

(1) A society is hereby formed to be called the Abbeyleix Defence League, and is to be affiliated with the Property Defence League.

(2) It supports, to the utmost of its ability, her majesty's government in the maintenance of law and order.

(3) It is to be composed of members duly enrolled and pledged to carry out the following objects: (a) to protect individual liberty; (b) actively to relieve, support and assist any of its members who are boycotted or otherwise persecuted by the action of the land league.

(4) All persons without distinction are to be invited to join this league, and will be entitled to the privileges and protection of members upon pledging themselves to support its objects.

(5) Members are to pledge themselves actively to support one another and all persons oppressed by the land league.

(6) With a view to rendering the members independent of boycotting, steps are to be taken to set up and support a butcher and a smith in connection with this league.

(7) The following 'gentlemen with power to add to their number' are appointed an executive committee to collect subscriptions for this league, and to take all necessary steps for the carrying out and promotion of its objects: Viscount De Vesci, Captain Richard Despard, Horace U. Townshend, Robert Staples, Thomas Hartford, Joseph Dobbs, Thomas Leech, Allan Leech, Captain John Loftus Bland, Captain James Hughes, Robert C. Hamilton, John Roe, Hamilton Palmer, Henry C. Fitzherbert, honorary secretary and treasurer, and Robert Staples Jr., assistant secretary, to whom all communications are

1, *L.E.*, 22 Oct. 81.

2, *Slater's Directory* 1881, p.321.

3, Resolution adopted by the executive committee at their meeting on 15 Oct. 81 (*L.E.*, 29 Oct. 81).

4, *Ibid.*, 29 Oct. 81.

to be addressed,¹

On 28 October 1881, in the lecture hall in Stradbally, Captain Robert A.G. Cosby chaired a meeting to form a local defence association.² On 23 December 1881 Mountmellick's defence association was formed when a 'large and influential meeting', chaired by Colonel Henry D. Carden, was held in the town hall in Mountmellick.³

3 Responding to the Land Act of 1881: the Land League *in extremis*

By the time Property Defence Association branches were being formed in Queen's County, the land league was *in extremis* - a condition precipitated by Gladstone's second land act on 22 August 1881.⁴

Of course, as has been established, since Gladstone introduced his bill in the House of Commons on 7 April 1881, there was growing conflict of opinion among land-leaguers about its terms.⁵ It was welcomed by all the moderate elements in the land movement⁶ - the

1. *L.E.*, 29 Oct. 81. The occupations of the committee members were as follows: landlords: De Vesci (15,069 acres), Despard (1,207 acres), Staples (1,425 acres), Bland (978 acres), Hughes (349 acres), Palmer (524 acres), Roe (682 acres); Townshend, the county surveyor for Queen's County; Hartford, an ironmonger, a grocer and spirit dealer; Dobbs, petty sessions clerk but probably also a member of the firm D. Dobbs & Son, listed in *Slater's Directory* for 1881 under the headings, bakers, ironmongers, manure agents, corn and seed merchants, drapers, grocers and spirit dealers; Allan and Thomas Leech, woollen manufacturers who owned 119 acres; Hamilton, agent for Royal Insurance who inherited 718 acres at Roundwood near Mountrath; Fitzherbert, De Vesci's agent; Staples Jr, son of landlord Robert Staples; Roe owned 682 acres near Maryborough but also was a prominent solicitor. This information on occupations was drawn from an 1876 parliamentary return of the owners of land and an 1884 parliamentary return of the names of persons holding the commission of peace in Queen's County (see bibliography), U.H. Hussey De Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland*, *Slater's Directory* for 1880 and 1881, advertisements in the *Leinster Express*, 1878-81, and book containing the subscription lists, accounts and transactions of the Queen's County Hunt, 1854-86 (Walsh papers).

2. *L.E.*, 29 Oct. 81.

3. *Ibid.*, 31 Dec. 81.

4. 1881 Land Law (Ireland) Act, 44 & 45 Vict., c.49, 22 Aug.

5. Above, pp 183-7.

6. Moody, *Davitt*, pp 483-5; Donnelly, *The land and the people of nineteenth-century Cork*, pp 286-8.

large farmers,¹ the Roman catholic bishops,² most of the Roman catholic clergy,³ most of the parliamentary party,⁴ and the widely-read *Freeman's Journal*.⁵ It was denounced by hard-line land-leaguers because it did not abolish landlordism and excluded leaseholders and tenants in arrears from its benefits,⁶ and by a large body of Irish-American opinion with their all-important financial resources who wanted the agitation to continue until an independent Ireland was won.⁷

Parnell, whose ultimate objective was home-rule, and for whom land reform was only a secondary consideration, tried to keep the splitting land movement together by acting the consummate politician. He helped to shepherd the land bill through parliament while, at the same time, pointing out its inadequacies he appeared to oppose the bill.⁸ When he was criticised by Archbishop Croke of Cashel for not supporting the

1. The prospect of rents being lowered by land courts was of immediate interest to the larger farmers who were not hopelessly in arrears. Such large farmers were probably discretely silent or publicly adopted the kind of stance taken by William Fitzpatrick, president of the Castletown branch of the land league, on 1 Aug. 81 at a convention in Maryborough town hall, which was attended by delegates and supporters from each branch of the land league in Queen's County. The convention was to consider Gladstone's land bill, which had reached its third reading in parliament, but, probably because Richard Lalor M.P., the chairman, impressed on the speakers the necessity of their confining themselves to no more than fifteen minutes 'to give everyone an opportunity of delivering his ideas, at least in outline', no speaker analysed the bill in any detail. Nonetheless, there seemed to be broad agreement with Fitzpatrick when he said that he would accept the bill for what it was worth, that it 'knocked off a few branches of the upas tree', but that it was their duty to 'destroy forever that old trunk of landlordism', which had 'paralysed the soil of the country' (*L.E.*, 6 Aug. 81).

2. Statements on 26 Apr. and 28 Sept. 81 reported in the *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Apr. and 29 Sept. 81 (cited in Moody, *Davitt*, p. 485).

3. For example, at a 'large land league demonstration' on 14 Aug. 81 in Galmoy (a village on the Kilkenny side of its boundary with Queen's County) Fr Matthew Keefe, president of the Aghaboe branch, described the land bill as 'very fine', and thought it had those 'principles' which they had been fighting for 'for the past thirty years', and which 'could not come in a better shape' (supplement to *L.E.*, 20 Aug. 81).

4. Lyons, *Parnell*, pp 158-62.

5. *Ibid.*

6. For example, Fr Thomas Feehan's speech at the Galmoy meeting on 14 Aug. 81 (*L.E.*, 20 Aug. 81).

7. Moody, *Davitt*, pp 493-5.

8. Lyons, *Parnell*, pp 158-62.

bill, his response marked him as favouring the bill.' When hard-line land-leaguers suspected him of moderation, they were appeased by the violent language of his newly launched newspaper, *United Ireland*.² Finally, at a national convention on the land act, held at the Rotunda, Dublin on 15-17 September 1881, Parnell prevailed upon the delegates to adopt his plan of 'testing the act'.³

On 26 September 1881 Parnell showed his anxiety to keep the movement going, and to have his plan of 'testing the act' adopted by tenants when he attended a land league convention in Maryborough.⁴ According to Parnell's response to an address given to him by the town commissioners when he arrived in Maryborough railway station, the object of the convention was to adopt a 'practical programme', which would 'secure the interests of the farmers and labourers of the county', and ensure the 'principles of the Irish National Land League' would be 'firmly abided by'.⁵

After some opening remarks by the convention's chairman, Fr Matthew Keeffe, Richard Lalor proposed the following pre-arranged resolutions *in globo* :

(1) We approve of and adopt the resolutions arrived at by the national convention of the land league on the 17th inst.

(2) We regard the land act as quite inadequate even as a settlement of the question between landlord and tenant in Ireland.

(3) We shall never consider any settlement of the land question as final until the cultivators of the soil shall be made the owners thereof.

1. Tierney, *Croke*, pp 120-8.

2 The first issue of *United Ireland* was published on 13 Aug. 81 by the Irish National Newspaper and Publishing Company Ltd, formed by Parnell, Patrick Egan, Joseph Biggar, Justin McCarthy, Dr Joseph E. Kenny, William O'Brien, its editor, and Richard Lalor, the M.P. for Queen's County (Moody, *Davitt*, p.485).

3. *Nation*, 24 Sept.81.

4. *L.E.*, 1 Oct.81.

5. *Ibid*.

(4) Previous to the final sale of the landlords' interest in the soil, it will be useful and convenient to make a fair settlement of the rents.

(5) We regard no person to be properly qualified to estimate a fair rent for a farm unless he has had long experience of the cultivation and profits of that farm.

(6) Under the sanction and guidance of the local branch of the land league, the tenant farmers of Queen's County, who are members of the land league, shall immediately appoint three of their intelligent neighbours as assessors to estimate a fair rent in accordance with Healy's clause of the land act, viz no rent shall be allowed when made payable in any proceedings under this act in respect of improvements made by the tenant or his predecessors in title for which the tenant or his predecessors in title shall not have been paid or otherwise compensated by the landlord or his predecessors in title.

(7) In estimating a fair rent, strict regard also must be had to the necessity of a more improved mode of living, better food, better clothing, and better houses than the people hitherto have been accustomed to in Ireland.

(8) When the assessors shall have estimated the fair rent of each farm with the approval of the local branch of the land league, the same shall be registered in a book to be used for that purpose alone, and carefully preserved by said branch of the land league; said book to be ruled in columns under proper headings showing the name of the townland, the name of the tenant, the name of the landlord, the old rent, valuation and the new rent.

(9) When the fair rent shall have been so estimated and so registered, and until such time as the tenants in occupation shall have become the owners of their farms, no higher rent shall be paid by any member of the land league unless with the consent of the branch.

(10) In order to ascertain if the land act is of any service to the tenant farmers for the purpose of fixing a fair rent and in conformity with the fourth resolution of the national convention, a limited number of test cases shall be presented by the local branch of the land league with the approval of the central executive before the land commission for adjudication.

(11) Test cases for the land commission shall not be the most rack-rented tenants, but rather tenants whose rents hitherto have not been considered cruel and exorbitant.

(12) Where labourers hold cottages and land under tenant farmers or landlords, their holdings shall have fair rents fixed, and otherwise they shall be made as independent of the tenant farmers as the tenant farmers shall be of the landlords.

(13) We regard the coercion act as cruel and unconstitutional, and enacted solely for the purpose of compelling the people of Ireland to accept a defective and unsatisfactory land bill.

(14) We could have no confidence in a government which has arrested as suspects, and continues to detain in prison many of our most valuable and respected citizens, and who are making use of the army and the police force to aid the landlords in the extermination of the Irish people.

(15) We have heard with surprise and anger that the police authorities have been taking measures to boycott some of the most respectable publicans in Ireland by trying to prevent them from renewing their licences during the coming year because those publicans refused to supply cars to the constabulary on their mission to exterminate the people, and we regard such action on the part of the police as illegal and unjust, and as likely to provoke the people to boycott in return.'

Though the *Leinster Express* does not mention it, if R. Barry O'Brien is correct in his *The life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, then 'some hours' before the convention assembled in Maryborough Parnell attended 'a private meeting of organisers' where he made a significant amendment to resolution 11.¹ When proofs of the fifteen resolutions were being handed around at the private meeting Parnell 'fixed his attention at once on no. 11', and wrote on the back of the proof:

After the eleventh resolution

That, pending the result of the test cases selected by the executive, no member of the league should apply to the court to fix his rent without previous consultation with, and obtaining the consent of, the branch of the league to which he belongs.²

At the convention, after Lalor's speech supporting his resolutions, there were at least ten other speeches, along with questions and comments from the floor. But it was Parnell's speech which predictably commanded most attention from the delegates. They were not 'to rush in, each man only mindful of his little huxtering bargain...trying to make terms individually with the landlord or the court', for to do so would demoralise the ranks of the land league, and would saddle themselves with a rent for fifteen years, which, because they were 'at the commencement of a new system of American competition in corn and meat', they might not be able to pay after five or six years. They were to stand together, and await the result of the test cases, which the land league would present to the land courts. It was to be the duty of local branches to select the test cases which, he said, were to be of 'an average character' where rents

1, O'Brien, *The life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, pp 306-7.

2, Ibid. Enigmatically, Parnell described his amendment as 'business' (ibid.).

were 'neither high nor very low'. He stressed that the test cases were not to be rack-rented cases, because the courts 'would be able to give a considerable apparent reduction without in reality reducing the rent...to a fair standard', and, having reduced rack-rents by a high percentage, they could call upon the tenant farmers and say 'See what fine fellows we are, and how much we are reducing your rents.' In order to 'thoroughly test the operations of the rent-fixing clauses' of the act they were to select two classes of test cases: (1) test cases from a 'very small class of tenants' whose holdings had recent improvements which the tenants could 'prove' they had made; in these cases, if the act was 'fairly administered', he believed the reduction of rent would be 'very large under Mr Healy's clause'; (2) test cases from a 'much larger class' of tenants whose holdings had improvements 'made a long time ago', but where no 'evidence' indicated that the tenants had made them, although it was 'a matter of public notoriety' that they or their fathers had made them; these cases, he predicted, would not produce the rent reductions which the 'time' required.²

Parnell concluded his speech by considering the evicted tenants whose six month period of redemption had not expired, and the agricultural labourers. The land courts were to be asked to 'stay' the 'proceedings in ejectment' until the land league could judge from the results of the test cases whether it was worthwhile to apply for

1. Healy's clause provided that a tenant's improvements were not to be taken into account where fair rent was being assessed,

2. L.E., 1 Oct. 81.

'the fixing of a fair rent' for such evicted tenants. The condition of the agricultural labourers (which was obscured by that of the tenant farmers throughout the land war in Queen's County)' was going to be improved 'so very little' by Gladstone's land act, and the land league was 'able to do so very little for them': however, it was the 'duty' of the farmers to take care of the labourers by borrowing money from the board of works to improve their holdings, and thereby give 'employment and better wages' to the labourers.²

All over the country test cases were selected by branches of the land league, and forwarded to the central executive in Dublin for eventual presentation to the land commission. For example, the Raheen branch forwarded the 'cases' of six tenants who farmed six holdings in six different townlands, and paid six different landlords a total rent of £139.6s.3d. for 130a.1r.2p. valued at £116.10s.0d.³ At the same time, tenant farmers were having 'fair rents' on their holdings

1. If resolutions relating to the condition of agricultural labourers were proposed at land league meetings or demonstrations, invariably they came at the end (report of a meeting in Knockaroe on 22 Feb.80 in *L.E.*, 28 Feb.80; report of a meeting in Clough on 3 Apr.81 in *ibid.*, 9 Apr.81); this is a clear, if simple, indication of the low priority given to the condition of the agricultural labourers by the leadership of the land league in Queen's County. At a land league meeting in Newtown on 13 June 80 the labourers were told by a tenant farmer on the platform that if the farmers were 'let live' then the labourers would 'get work' (*ibid.*, 19 June 80). On 7 Dec.80 when a deputation, representing about one hundred and fifty labourers and weekly tenants, waited on the committee of the Stradbally branch to request their assistance in obtaining a reduction of their rents they were informed that the primary objective of the land league was to deal with the 'farmers' question', which would have to be settled before labourers' demands could be attended to (*ibid.*, 11 Dec.80).

2. *Ibid.*, 1 Oct. 81.

3. N.L.I., Lalor papers, MS 8574<4>. The Raheen committee 'ordered' six additional test cases on 2 Oct. 81, though it is not known if these were forwarded to the central executive of the land league. These cases similarly consisted of the holdings of six tenants of six landlords living in six different townlands: they paid their landlords a total rent of £264.3s.8d. for 209a.3r.5p. valued at £192.15s.0d. (*ibid.*).

estimated for them by neighbours. In a long letter 'to the editor', published on the front page of *United Ireland* on 8 October 1881, Richard Lalor described 'the way we proceed in our Raheen branch' where every townland in the district was represented on the branch committee. Lalor wrote:

The committee man of the place goes to his neighbours, and calls them together on some fine evening, and they appoint two or three intelligent men who are their neighbours and in whom they have full confidence; these two or three honest men value each farm as if there was no house or fence or road or any drain on it...[Where] the landlord has made or paid for any...improvements the assessors give him credit for them, and estimate the fair rent in proportion to the additional value of these things.

...if the assessors...keep in view the necessity for an improved mode of living on the part of the Irish working people, the decrease in the amount of produce and in the price of produce, and the increased cost of production in connection with such land, the poor law valuation may serve as a slight guide or check in estimating a fair rent.

One example of the valuation of neighbours' farms by such 'honest men' in Queen's County was discovered by the author.¹ Three tenants, who were members of the Raheen branch of the land league, valued their own holdings and those of twenty-six other tenants of James Cole Sheane in the townland of Cappanaclogh:² assessing the quality of the soil (generally 'poor and sandy'), the quantity of 'waste', and the amount of flooding on each holding, they decided the annual 'fair rent' of the twenty-nine tenants (including themselves) who paid a total rent of £500.5s.0d. for 319a.2r.25p. valued at £336.5s.0d.

1. Two pages showing the 'no of acers [sic] Irish measure' held by each of the twenty-eight tenants, what 'old rent or present' each tenant paid, 'Grifets' (sic) valuation on each holding, 'the rent per acre' (acre spelled correctly), rent per holding as valued by the tenants (this column on the second page is headed 'new rent to be fixt [sic] or the present valuation'), and observations on each holding (N.L.I., Lalor papers, MS 8574<4>).

2. The three tenants - Denis Dillon, James Dillon and Joseph Borrowes - farmed 73a.2r., 17a.3r.4p. and 5a, respectively (ibid.).

should be £293.8s.6d. or 41.3 per cent less than their 'old rent'.¹

Such valuation of farms by 'intelligent' and 'honest' men appointed by their neighbours, and the selection of test cases, to see what sort of reduction in rents Gladstone's land act would produce, came to nothing. The provocative language of Parnell on public platforms denouncing the government and the 'hollowness' of its land act, which was designed by Parnell to mollify hard-line land-leaguers, led Forster and Gladstone to believe that his objective was to defeat the land act.² On 13 October 1881 Parnell was arrested in Morrison's Hotel, Dublin, and then imprisoned in Kilmainham gaol. While the policemen were waiting for him in the hotel lobby Parnell scribbled a private letter to Katharine O'Shea stating that 'politically' it was fortunate for him to be arrested then as the land league movement was 'breaking fast'.³ On 14 October Thomas Sexton and J.P. Quinn, and on 15 October John Dillon, William O'Brien and James J. O'Kelly were arrested also and lodged in Kilmainham gaol. Arthur O'Connor, who had succeeded Thomas Sexton as head of the land league organisation on 10 October 1881,⁴ and for whom there was a warrant for his arrest, managed to escape from the Imperial Hotel in Dublin, catch a train at Amiens Street, travel via Belfast to Larne where he took the boat to

1. N.L.I. Lalor papers, MS 8574 (4); they decided the annual 'fair rent' on 1 holding should be 4s. per acre (this was 'all water, of no value only on a dry summer'), on 3 holdings 14s per acre, 1 holding 15s. per acre, 2 holdings 16s. per acre, 10 holdings 17s. per acre, 5 holdings 18s. per acre, and 7 holdings £1 per acre (ibid.).

2. For Parnell's speeches in Dublin on 25 Sept., in Cork on 2 Oct., and in Wexford on 9 Oct. see Lyons, *Parnell*, pp 166-9; Donnelly, *The Land and the People*, p.290; Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society*, p.86; Kee, *The Bold Fenian Men*, p.84.

3. Lyons, *Parnell*, pp 174-5.

4. Writing from Galway gaol on 12 Oct. 81, Timothy Harrington stated that he had 'great faith' in O'Connor, and thought that he would 'do the needful for the office if anyone can' (N.L.I., Harrington papers, MS 8578).

Stranraer, and then make his way to what *United Ireland* described as the new headquarters of the land league in Holyhead.' Then on 18 October when the 'no-rent manifesto' was issued from Kilmainham gaol, over the names of Parnell and six other land league leaders, it gave Forster, the chief secretary, what he described as an 'excellent excuse' to proclaim the land league 'an unlawful and criminal organisation' on 20 October 1881.²

The last twenty-four weeks of the land league's legal existence was the most disordered phase of the land war in Queen's County. By the time it was proclaimed, the land league, never at any time solidly united, was in disarray. Tenants in large numbers, who were not disqualified from the benefits of the land act of 1881 by arrears in rent, effectively were detaching themselves from the land league by resorting to the land court, which had started its operations on the same day the land league was proclaimed. (Within the first week of the land court's operations Gerald E. Corcoran, solicitor, lodged ninety-seven applications for a revision of rents on behalf of tenants in the county.)³ Most of the national leaders of the land league were in gaol. Coercion had gaoled local leaders as suspects. (By 1 November 1881 twelve suspects from the county had been gaoled.)⁴ The number of RIC in Ireland had increased annually from 11,167 on 31 December 1878 to 12,850 on 31 December 1881,⁵ and along with the military were an

1, *United Ireland*, 22 Oct, 81.

2, *Proclamation by the lord lieutenant of Ireland dated 20 October 1881* [C3125], H.C. 1882, lv, 275-7.

3, *L.E.*, 29 Oct, 81

4, Appendix 38, below, p. 437.

5, *Return of the number and cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary in each year, 1872-3 to 1881-2 with the annual increase or decrease under each head*, H.C. 1882 (161), liv, 495.

increasing presence throughout the country. (When a land league meeting, to be held in Abbeylisle on 23 October 1881, was banned by Dublin Castle 150 RIC, 100 men of the 84th Regiment and 60 of the 21st Hussars, all commanded by Henry A. Blake R.M., were dispatched to the town to prevent any disorder: no disturbances occurred, and the military and the RIC left the town by the 3 p.m. train.)¹ Landlords in Queen's County, buttressed by the coercion act, and galled by Gladstone's denunciations,² had galvanised themselves into more militant collective action against land-leaguers by establishing local branches of the Property Defence Association.³ Yet, despite all these factors, and though the land league effectively was broken by October 1881, the six months which followed the suppression of the land league was the most violent six months of the land war.

1. *L.E.*, 29 Oct. 81.

2. Above, pp 285-8.

3. Above, pp 289-92.

V

THE LAND WAR IN QUEEN'S COUNTY, OCT. 1881 - MAY 1882

With the arrest of the land league leaders, the issuing of the no-rent manifesto and the proclamation of the land league as an unlawful and criminal association, the ladies' land league was left on its own in an impossible position. The costly and essentially fraudulent policy of resistance to rent known as 'paying rent at the point of the bayonet'¹ was now replaced by the no-rent manifesto which Anna Parnell described as 'the only cover under which they [the land league] could withdraw from the impossible position they had created for themselves, and at the same time keep up some semblance of a continuous policy.'² As Professor T.W. Moody states, Anna and her colleagues 'took the logical but perilous step of attempting themselves to carry out the land league's own principle of resistance to rent in defiance of the league's own policy'.³ But the no-rent manifesto, though welcomed by die-hard land-leaguers, was rejected by most tenant farmers, and was a conspicuous failure. On the other hand, most landlords probably were pessimistic about the implications of the land act of 1881 and the no-rent manifesto, but belying Richard Lalor's statement in January 1882 that 'landlordism in every shape' was 'dead',⁴ even 'good' landlords,

1. Cf. above, pp 258-60.

2. Anna Parnell, *The Land League; Tale of a Great Sham*, p.151 (N.L.I., MS 12144); Anna Parnell, *The Tale of a Great Sham*, edited with introduction by Dana Hearne, p.104.

3. T.W. Moody, 'Anna Parnell and the Land League' in *Hermathena*, summer 1974, p.14.

4. Richard Lalor's letter to John Bright M.P. (L.E., 14 Jan. 82).

after October 1881, seemed less willing to bargain with their tenants, and increasingly instituted legal proceedings against the recalcitrant and, if anything, the land act of 1881 along with the arrears act of 1882 left the landlords in Queen's County better off than they were at the outset of the land war. Nevertheless, after October 1881 the county endured its most violently disturbed period until the understanding, known as the Kilmainham treaty,¹ was reached between Parnell and Gladstone on 2 May 1882, and the Phoenix Park murders² four days later - which discredited the extreme revolutionary element in the national movement³ - effectively signalled the end of the land war in the county and in Ireland as a whole.

This chapter is divided into four parts. (I) analyses the struggle for rents in Queen's County after the no-rent manifesto was issued from Kilmainham gaol. (II) describes a neglected aspect of the land war: the campaign which caused the suspension of fox hunting, the favourite sport of the landlords in the county. (III) which focuses on agrarian crime and the enforcement of the law in the county, is divided into four sub-sections: (1) weighs the preparedness of the magistrates and the police to combat agrarian crime in Queen's County; (2) explains why John Redington (who probably caused Dublin Castle more anxiety than any of the other suspects from the county who were interned) was gaoled for the second time on 18 February 1882 under the provisions of the Act for the Better Protection of Person and Property in Ireland, 1881; (3) examines the prosecution of Fr Thomas Feehan, the curate from Rathdowney, who was the only priest in the county to

1. Lyons, *Parnell*, pp 196-204.

2. Tom Corfe, *The Phoenix Park Murders*, pp 184-227; cf. below, p.396, n.1.

3. Moody, *Davitt*, p.538.

be gaoled during the land war; (4) analyses agrarian crime in the county with particular reference to the period from October 1881 to May 1882. (IV) investigates the activities of the ladies' land league in the county after October 1881 until Parnell forced their dissolutions.

(I) The Struggle for Rents in Queen's County after the No-Rent Manifesto.

Though welcomed by die-hard land-leaguers,¹ the no-rent manifesto was largely unpopular in Queen's County, as it was in all Ireland. Foremost in denouncing it were the Roman catholic clergy led by Archbishop Thomas William Croke of Cashel:² on 20 October 1881 the *Freeman's Journal* published a letter from Croke, which expressed his 'solemn protest' against 'the committal of the people...to the doctrine of the non-payment of rent', which was endorsed by 'most' of the Roman catholic bishops.³ Then on 29 October the *Leinster Express*

1. For example, the police reported that on 5 Nov. 81 Michael Whittaker (cf. below, p.344) 'held a private meeting at his house at which the no-rent manifesto was fully adopted' (S.P.O., C.S.O., Arrests under the Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881-2, vol.iii, p.512); Mark J. Codd 'accompanied a lady land-leaguer, Miss Kirk, who got tenants to sign a paper promising to pay no rent until the suspects are released' (ibid., vol.ii, p.382); other such die-hard land-leaguers would include those suspects gaoled for 'intimidation against payment of rent' listed in Appendix 38 (below, p.434); also see *United Ireland*, 19 Nov.81 for Richard Lalor's letter in which he asked a rhetorical question about, what he called, the 'rent system': Lalor asked, are the people of Ireland 'morally bound to continue that system which is ruining their country any longer than mere force will condemn them to do so?'

2. Tierney, *Croke*, p.130; another like-minded archbishop was John MacEvilly, archbishop of Tuam, who on 30 Oct.81 in Tuam cathedral denounced the no-rent manifesto as being 'contrary to every principle of religion, every dictate of morality, and a breach of that law which says, 'Thou shalt not steal' (*Irish Times*, 2 Nov. 81).

3. Tierney, *Croke*, p.130; the exception was Thomas Nulty, the bishop of Meath.

reported a meeting of forty-four priests of the diocese of Kildare & Leighlin, which unanimously adopted the following resolution:

That the bishops and clergy of Kildare & Leighlin, deeply impressed with the responsibilities which the sacred office of the priesthood imposes on them, especially at this time, take occasion to acknowledge the great service to his religion and country rendered by His Grace, the most reverend Dr Croke, archbishop of Cashel, and also to declare their assent and adhesion to the sentiments expressed by His Grace in the letter to the *Freeman's Journal* on Thursday last.

The majority of the Church of Ireland clergy and their parishioners also must have condemned the no-rent manifesto. Though it was on 23 March 1886 when the audience at the general synod of the Church of Ireland in Dublin approvingly listened to a speech made by William Pakenham Walsh, bishop of Ossory, it is not likely that their opinions about the no-rent manifesto had changed. Bishop Pakenham Walsh described the no-rent manifesto exhortation 'Stand together in the face of the brutal and cowardly enemies of your race. Pay no rents under any pretext.' as 'the gospel of communism', 'repeal of the eighth commandment', 'the very essence of socialism', and which, not since the 'days of Wat Tyler', had there been 'anything that struck more at the roots of social order and religion'.²

At the same time, the no-rent manifesto initially inspired alarm and pessimism among some landlords and their agents. For example, on 2 November 1881 Edward S.R. Smyth from Mount Henry, near Ballybrittas, wrote to his father-in-law, Lord Castletown, the lieutenant of Queen's County, 'matters financial look very bad - there is a strong

1. For the full text of the no-rent manifesto see Davitt, *Fall*, pp 335-7.

2. *The Church of Ireland and the present crisis: report of the special meeting of the general Synod held at Dublin, 23 March 1886* (Dublin, 1886), p. 39.

determination to pay no rent, and what line to take is difficult to imagine'.¹ Two days later the land agent, Matthew H. Franks, wrote to Castletown, his employer, that, after speaking to tenants in the south-west of the county, he believed the 'prospect' was 'not cheering'. 'Although', Franks continued, the tenants were very 'civil and apparently glad' to see him, when he discussed the 'rent question' with them there was an 'uneasiness' about them, which did 'not promise well', and though many tenants said that they would pay their rents, Franks did not believe them.²

However, as will be shown, despite the best efforts of die-hard land-leaguers³ and the ladies' land league⁴ tenants in Queen's County largely ignored the no-rent manifesto. Of course, tenants continued to demand abatements of rent (perhaps hopeful that the threat of the no-rent manifesto would sway landlords into making concessions) but these demands were not what the no-rent manifesto envisaged. At the same time, after the autumn gale of 1881 it is clear that most landlords in the county - even 'good' landlords like Robert A.R. Pigott - were less willing to make concessions, and increasingly instituted legal proceedings against recalcitrant tenants. In the week before Christmas 1881 Pigott, whose 4,932 acres centred on Capard House⁵ (four miles west of Mountmellick) responded in a letter to his tenants who had demanded a 25 per cent abatement on the half-year's rent, which was due in March 1881. He reminded his tenants that their rents had not changed since 1861, he had 'laid out very large sums,

1. N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752 (8).

3. Above, p.305, n.1.

5. *Return of owners of land*,...[C1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

2. Ibid., (11).

4. Below, pp 387-97.

and given allowances without any charge', over the previous four years he had allowed 'totally unsolicited, very large concessions and reductions in rent', and if he yielded to their demands he would have to 'break up' his 'establishment' at Capard causing 'great pain' to himself, and 'poverty' to his labourers and others who were 'equally dependant' on him. 'It is to be regretted', Pigott continued,

that, in accordance with the demands of the land league, you have, by a demand preposterous and uncalled-for, broken the golden links that have hitherto bound us together. As a good and patriotic landlord is placed on the same footing in Ireland with the harsh and unyielding, I have directed Mr Reeves [Robert E. Reeves, Pigott's agent] to place his books in the hands of my solicitors, and I will lay out no more money or give no more allowances than those the law compel me.'

Other examples of landlords in Queen's County who, after the autumn gale of 1881, were less willing to bargain with their tenants, were Captain Robert A.G. Cosby, Rochford Edwards, Lord Castletown, and the Commissioners of Education. On Captain Cosby's estate 'at the November rent collections' his tenants, 'in a body, not separately', demanded a 'reduction of 30 per cent' on their rents then due, and when this was refused they paid nothing.² Cosby then accepted the advice of his agent, Thomas W. Webber, that under 'the circumstances' he should 'face the difficulty by first going thoroughly into the rights and wrongs of each tenant's case', and then presenting each tenant with 'an offer of what seemed fair, with an alternative of law procedure'.³ (Webber also cautioned Cosby against 'incurring law costs in the very numerous cases where the tenants had no assets, and were already on the verge of bankruptcy'.)⁴ When the tenants of Rochford Edwards

1. L.E., 24 Dec. 81.

2. Cosby papers; Webber's report for the year ending 31 Dec. 81.

3. Ibid.; cf. above, p. 136.

4. The 'cases' of Cosby's tenants, who were 'most in arrears', were 'given' to the Dublin solicitors, Messrs Meade & Colles (ibid.).

refused to pay their rents, having been refused an abatement of 20 per cent, he had two of them 'served with writs and the rest, about fifteen in number, with letters to pay at once or writs'.¹ According to Lord Castletown's agent, Matthew H. Franks, during the first week of 1882 'about thirty writs' (civil-bill processes) were served on his tenants in the Lisduff, Grantstown and Maryborough districts, and then on 8 January, when Franks had had no 'intimation' that the tenants were going to pay their rents, he reported to Castletown that if the thirty civil-bill processes did 'not bring them to their senses' he would 'have to proceed against the others'.² On the Cappaloughlin part of the estate of the Commissioners of Education (they owned 1,771 acres in the county)³ landlord-tenant relations had been bad 'for some time' because the tenants had refused to pay their rents;⁴ then, 'shortly before' Christmas 1881 the court house in Maryborough was 'literally festooned' with twenty-seven ejectment decrees obtained at the suit of the commissioners.⁵ (The ejectment decrees were effective. On 5 January 1882 twenty-five of the twenty-seven tenants 'settled' their cases through the commissioners' solicitors, T. & H. Turpin: in every case where there was a year's rent due the tenant paid a half year's rent with costs, and where one and a half year's rent was due the tenant was to pay a year's rent and costs; in each case, time was allowed for the balance to be paid. Also on 5 January eleven of the

1. Edmund Nolan (farmer and president of the Ballybrittas branch of the land league) to Virginia Lynch (in the central office of the ladies' land league) on 15 Nov. 81 (N.L.I., ladies' land league papers, MS 17699<5>).

2. Franks to Castletown on 8 Jan. 82 (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752<12>); cf above, p.276, n.4.

3. *Return of owners of land*,...[C1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

4. *L.E.*, 7 Jan.82.

5. *Ibid.*

commissioners' tenants in the county, against whom 'writs from the superior court were issued some time ago', called on the commissioners' solicitors, and 'paid the full amount with costs'.)'

A reliable indication of relations between landlords and their tenants is the official returns for evictions. Of course, it has already been shown that some landlords and their agents used threats of eviction as an effective aid to estate management, yet normally they were unwilling to evict their tenants.² However, it is clear that landlords in Queen's County were more aggressive by the end of the winter of 1881-2 than at any time during the land war: during six months ending 30 September 1882 landlords in the county evicted 49 families consisting of 263 persons who were not readmitted to their holdings as either tenants or caretakers³ - more than the total number evicted in the county in any year since 1862.⁴ (It is possible to contend that generally it was the tenants of the smaller uneconomic holdings who were evicted, while the more solvent tenants of larger holdings avoided eviction by paying their rents.⁵ For example, during the Hilary and Easter sessions in 1882 the courts in Queen's County granted landlords 187 ejectment decrees for £3,835 arrears⁶ - an average of £20.10s. per ejectment decree, while at the same time courts in Ireland as a whole granted landlords 7,334 ejectment decrees for £198,719 arrears⁷ - an average of £27 per ejectment decree.

1. L.E., 7 Jan. 82.

2. Above, pp 21-3.

3. *Return of cases of eviction in Ireland...* 1882... [C3465], H.C. 1883, lvi, 101-5.

4. Appendix 18, below, p. 422.

5. Cf. above, pp 258-60.

6. *Return of judgements for the recovery of land... and of ejectment decrees granted...* Hilary sessions 1882, H.C. 1882 (217), lv, 481; ... at Easter sessions 1882, [C3287], H.C. 1882, lv, 485.

7. Ibid.

Further weight is added to the contention when it is noted that in 1881 in Queen's County and in Ireland as a whole almost 44 per cent of the occupiers of holdings over one acre lived in holdings of less than fifteen acres.¹⁾

Such eviction statistics clearly challenge the statement made in early January 1882 by the Queen's County M.P., Richard Lalor, to John Bright, the English Liberal M.P., that 'landlordism in Ireland in every shape' was 'dead', and even if a company of soldiers was placed on 'every farm in the country', the 'people' would not be forced 'to submit' to landlordism.² Certainly William Whelan, who had been the secretary of the Maryborough branch of the land league while Patrick A. Meehan was in Naas gaol as a suspect, disagreed with Lalor. On 20 January 1882, doubtless provoked by the assertive action of landlords such as Pigott, Cosby, Edwards, Castletown, and the Commissioners of Education, an anxious Whelan wrote to Lalor that the landlords in Queen's County seemed 'determined to fight out the battle to the bitter end'. 'At the present moment', Whelan continued, 'most of the police barracks are garnished with copies of writs flying on their outsides, and the air is thick with rumours of evictions and puttings-out on the estates of Lord Castletown, Lord De Vesci, Captain Cosby, John George Adair, Warburton etc., etc., Sir Charles Coote seeming the honourable exception amongst the infernal crew.'³ At the same time, while Whelan hoped the 'farmers' of the county would do their 'duty', he feared there would be 'waverers', and believed some were 'not at

1. *Agricultural statistics for the year 1881*, [C3332], H.C. 1882, lxxiv.

2. Lalor to Bright published in *L.E.*, 14 Jan. 82.

3. N.L.I., Lalor papers, MS 8566(1).

all what an Irishman would wish'.'

It is likely that the 'waverers' Whelan had in mind were those moderate land-leaguers throughout the county who would have agreed with the three resolutions which were adopted 'almost' unanimously by a meeting of the Mountrath branch of the land league, which was chaired by its president, the local curate, Fr William Byrne, and which was held on 21 October 1881, the day after the land league was proclaimed. The resolutions were:

(1) We decline the responsibility of recommending the tenants of this branch to adopt the manifesto lately issued by the executive of the central league in which the principle 'pay no rent' was put forth.

(2) We recommend the tenants of the branch to offer their respective landlords what they and their neighbouring assessors consider a fair rent. In case this offer be refused we recommend them to ask the land court to fix a fair rent for them.

(3) In case the rents fixed by the land court correspond with the rent fixed by local assessors or approximate closely to it we recommend its acceptance. In case they be notably high we advise the rejection of the land act as useless, and then urge a contest with landlordism on the original lines of the land league.²

If a 'contest with landlordism on the original lines of the land league' meant 'paying rent at the point of the bayonet' then, as has been shown, such resistance was a sham.³ In any case, in their efforts to recover their rents landlords in the county continued to use the sheriff supported by the military, the police, and employees of the Property Defence Association and the Orange Emergency Committee, while solvent tenants, who resisted in fewer numbers, continued to pay their rents 'at the point of the bayonet'.⁴ Also, if

1. N.L.I., Lalor papers, MS 8566(1) (op.cit.).

2. L.E., 29 Oct. 81.

3. Above, pp 258-60.

4. For examples of tenants 'paying rent at the point of the bayonet' during the time-span of this chapter see the following: L.E., 21 Jan. 82, report of sheriff's auction in Portarlinton; reports of sheriff's auctions in Maryborough in *ibid.*, 11 Feb., 25 Feb., 8 Apr., 29 Apr., 3 June, 24 June 82; report of sheriff's auction in Abbeylisk in *ibid.*, 25 Feb. 82; report of sheriff's auction in a farm at Coolkerry, near Rathdowney, in *ibid.*, 11 Mar. 82.

reports in the *Leinster Express* are anything to go by, then during the winter of 1881-2 there seemed to be a waning of public interest in even such token resistance.' For example, on 13 January 1882 when the sheriff's bailiff, protected by the RIC and a 'party' of the 52nd Regiment, was seizing livestock and a mowing machine belonging to tenants in Fisherstown at the suit of their landlord, Rochford Edwards,² the local chapel bell was rung, but 'was not responded to by any considerable assemblage':³ then at the sheriff's auction in Portarlinton on 18 January the 'services' of the RIC and a company of the 52nd Regiment were not called upon to keep the peace:⁴ when a sheriff's auction of the interest in the holdings of tenants of Richard Warburton, the earl of Orkney, Dr Charles Holmes and Edward Cassan took place in Maryborough on 4 February the 'proceedings' were 'dreary..., not enlivened by [the] chaff who used to characterise sales of this kind'.⁵

Of course, on many estates in the county the autumn gale in 1881 produced its, by now predictable, wrangling over rents. When tenants met their landlords or their agents (in some cases the tenants avoided such meetings)⁶ they demanded rent reductions, and when none was given they left without paying anything.⁷ Then, when some conciliatory

1. There were, of course, some exceptions such as at Derrykearn where a 'large obstreperous crowd assembled and gave considerable annoyance' to the sub-sheriff and his escort who seized twelve cattle belonging to James Phelan (*L.E.*, 25 Feb. 82). Phelan subsequently bought back the cattle for the £56 rent he owed to his landlord, Sir Erasmus D. Borrowes (*ibid.*).

2. Above, pp 308-9.

3. *L.E.*, 14 Jan. 82.

4. *Ibid.*, 21 Jan. 82.

5. *Ibid.*, 11 Feb. 82.

6. For example, on 3 and 4 Nov. 81 when Sir Anthony C. Weldon's agent was in Ballylynan to collect rents 'no tenants appeared' (*ibid.*, 5 Nov. 81). On 3 Nov. 81 the tenants of the Commissioners of Education stayed away from Kilbricken railway station when Robert Owen was there to collect their rents (*ibid.*).

7. For example, the tenants of Lord Ashbrook in Durrow on 31 Oct. 81 (*ibid.*, 5 Nov. 81), and the tenants of John H. Roe at Boley on 18 Nov. 81 (*ibid.*, 19 Nov. 81).

landlords - possibly prompted by the rent reductions decided by the land courts' and the mounting arrears owed to them² - offered rent reductions averaging about 20 per cent,³ most solvent tenants, despite some cases of intimidation,⁴ paid their rents.⁵

Official statistics clearly show that, though the no-rent manifesto was extensively posted in Queen's County,⁶ many tenants who were not leaseholders or were disqualified from the benefits of the land act of 1881 by being in arrears ignored it, and attempting to take advantage of the 'fair rent' provisions of the land act⁷ effectively detached themselves from the land league. For example, during the first seventeen weeks of its operation the Irish Land Commission received 578 applications from tenants in the county to have 'fair rents' fixed

1. Table 9, below, p.315.

2. For example, on the estate of Captain Cosby in the end of 1881, with only £4,127 collected in rents, arrears owed by the tenants totalled £8,552, about 11 per cent more than the annual rental on the estate (Cosby papers; rentals for 1881). At the same time, Lord Castletown, who was owed about £15,600 by his tenants, was so 'in want of money' that he had his agent, Matthew H. Franks obtain the agreement of the Church Representative Body for him to postpone his 'half-yearly mortgage payment' from 28 Dec.81 to 28 Mar.82 (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MSS 13752 (8-9)).

3. For example, Lord Ashbrook allowed his tenants an abatement 20 per cent (L.E., 12 Nov.81) as did Richard Hackett (ibid., 3 Dec.81), William Duckett allowed 15 per cent (ibid., 3 Dec.81), John Carter allowed a 'reduction' of 25 per cent (ibid., 26 Nov.81, and Viscount Gough gave an 'abatement' of 12½ to 30 per cent 'according to the circumstances' of each of his tenants (ibid., 3 Dec.81).

4. For example, ibid., 5 Nov.81 reported that on Sir Anthony C. Weldon's estate in Barrowhouse there were 'notices' offering £50 reward to anyone who would give information on any of Weldon's tenants paying their rents; ibid., 26 Nov.81 reported that it 'understood' that 'intimidation' was used to stop John Carter's tenants paying their rents.

5. For examples of tenants paying their rents after being granted abatements see reports on the tenants of Eyre Coote and Lord Ashbrook ('nearly all') in ibid., 12 Nov.81; report on John Carter's tenants in ibid., 26 Nov.81; report on Richard Hackett's tenants ('with few exceptions') in ibid., 3 Dec.81, and 'almost every case' of the tenants of Evans minors in ibid., 11 Feb.82.

6. For example, ibid., 24 Dec.81 reported the RIC tearing down copies of the no-rent manifesto in Mountmellick on 17 Dec.81; ibid., 5 Nov.81 reported that at Grangemellon (near Carlow town) 'notices were posted telling people to pay no rent'; at Ballickmoyler petty sessions on 20 Jan.82 a tenant named Patrick Procter was returned for trial at the assizes for posting 'a no-rent manifesto' near Killeslin chapel (ibid., 21 Jan.82).

7. For a summary (seven typed pages) of the land act of 1881 see *Land Act (Ireland) Act, 1881, Benefits conferred on the Irish tenant farmers by the Land Act (Ireland) Act, 1881*, (Alex Thom & Co, Dublin).

on their holdings.' (At the same time, there were 64,750 such applications from tenants in Ireland as a whole.)² Though it took years for the land commission courts to fix judicial rents on some holdings - during the year ending 21 August 1882 the Irish Land Commission managed to arbitrate on 271 or just over one third of the 782 applications from Queen's County³ - yet the 'judicial' rents fixed by the courts must have been tempting for many tenants.

While the majority of 'fair rents' fixed under the provisions of the land act were fixed by the sub-commissioners of the Irish Land Commission, 'fair rents' also were fixed by county court judges in the civil-bill courts, by specially appointed valuers of the Irish Land Commission, and by agreements reached between landlords and their tenants. Table 9, following, shows the results of the different methods of fixing 'fair rents' in Queen's County in the period from 20 October 1881 to 22 August 1882.⁴

Table 9 Cases in Queen's County in which judicial rents were fixed under the 1881 land act, 20 October 1881 - 22 August 1882.

method	no. of cases	old rent			judicial rent			% reduction
		£	s	d	£	s	d	
sub-commissioners	197	7,365	4	4	5,619	6	2	23.7
civil-bill courts and valuers	3	16	15	0	9	5	0	44.8
agreements	97	2,728	6	2	2,186	6	11	19.9
total	297	10,110	5	6	7,814	18	1	22.7

1. Return... of originating notices lodged in the court of the Irish Land Commission and in the civil bill courts of the counties, up to and including 28 January 1882 [C3123], H.C. 1882, lv, 366,

2. Ibid.

3. Report of the Irish Land Commissioners for the period from 22 August 1881 to 22 August 1882 [C3413], H.C. 1882, xx, 8-13.

4. Ibid.

Despite the apparently generous concessions made to tenants by judicial rents, it is clear that the land act of 1881 did not kill off landlordism in Queen's County. Certainly its vigour is reflected in the official statistics for evictions: during the years 1882-4 landlords in the county evicted 176 families consisting of 786 persons who were not readmitted to their holdings - more evictions than for any triennial period since the great clearances of the early 1850s.¹ Also, the land act of 1881 had little effect on the incomes of the landlords in the county: up to 22 August 1885, even after the Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Act of 1882,² which enabled tenants in arrears to benefit from the fair rent clause in the land act of 1881, judicial rents affected only 17.5 per cent of the holdings over one acre³ consisting of 18.5 per cent of the farmed land in the county,⁴ and reduced the total annual rental income of the landlords by less than 3 per cent.⁵ (Here it must be noted that at the same time throughout the country judicial rents were fixed on 168,638 holdings - almost 33 per cent of all the holdings over one acre.⁶ However, while this statistic indicates that, compared to the country as a whole, a smaller proportion of the tenants in Queen's County claimed judicial rents on their holdings, it also supports the argument that the majority of the tenants in the county were not rack-rented.⁷)

1. Appendix 18, below, p.422.

2. 45 & 46 Vict., c.47 (18 Aug.82).

3. Appendix 15, below, p.421; *Agricultural statistics for 1881*, [C3332], H.C. 1882, lxxiv.

4. Reports of Irish land commissioners Aug.81-Aug.85 listed in bibliography; *Census of Ireland, 1881*, pt i, vol i, *Leinster* [C3042], H.C. 1881, xcvi, 777.

5. A figure reached by relating the reduction in rents (Appendix 15, below, p.421) to the estimated rental in the county (calculated by adjusting upwards £259,055 - the tenement valuation of the county).

6. Appendix 16, below, p.421; *Agricultural statistics for 1881*, [C3332], H.C. 1882, lxxiv.

7. Above, pp 11-15.

Also, it must be noted that under the Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Act, 1882, even by 27 October 1883, while £30,050 arrears on 1,643 holdings in Queen's County were 'extinguished by order of the land commission', at the same time the land commission paid £12,651 to 182 landlords in the county, 'which went some way towards compensating them for any reduction in their incomes from rents. (Thomas Webber, Captain Cosby's agent, described the arrears act as an 'advantage to the tenants in arrears, but none to those who had honestly paid', and a 'loss to the landlord of half the arrears, but a gain in cases where the tenants really could never have paid up'. By 31 December 1882 the 'arrears court' had 'wiped out' £1,712 owed to Cosby, but at the same time the land commission paid him £1,394, which together with the rents collected by Webber totalled £12,970 - almost 70 per cent more than the annual rent due on the estate - to be put on 'the debit side of the books' for 1882.)²

By the end of 1882, based on official statistics and on the references made to the landlords who together owned one sixth of the land in Queen's County,³ it is clear Richard Lalor was wrong in January 1882 when he claimed landlordism was 'dead'.⁴ On the contrary, at the end of the land war landlordism was alive and kicking.

1. Appendix 17, below, p.421.

2. Cosby papers; Webber's report on the Cosby estate for the year ending 31 Dec. 82.

3. Robert A Pigott, Captain Robert A.G. Cosby, Rochford Edwards, Lord Castletown, the Commissioners of Education, Viscount De Vesci, John George Adair, Richard Warburton, the earl of Orkney, Edward Cassan, and Dr Charles Holmes.

4. Above, p.303.

(II) Disrupting the Hunt in Queen's County

As L.P. Curtis Jr has rightly asserted in his article 'Stopping the Hunt 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War', 'the campaign to stop landlords and magistrates from hunting across tenanted land' is a 'neglected aspect of the land war'.¹ In this necessarily brief study of the Queen's County Hunt - one of about twenty-one such hunts in Ireland² - the author goes a little way towards rectifying this neglect.

Until the season of 1881-2 the Queen's County Hunt hunted about forty-four times each season (weather permitting, at least twice a week) mainly in an area about fifteen miles wide, which bisected the county in a north-east south-west direction.³ In the ten years 1866-75 there were on average fifty-five members, and total annual subscriptions averaged just over £600.⁴ Then during 1876-80 there seemed to be a general improvement in the fortunes of the hunt when, on average, seventy-seven members subscribed almost £800 per annum.⁵

Doubtless, the economy of Queen's County benefited from the hunt. At the end of the 1877-8 season Robert Hamilton Stubber, the master huntsman, complained that after two years, during which he built kennels, and bought hounds and saddles, he was £1,000 'out of pocket',

1. L.P. Curtis Jr, 'Stopping the Hunt, 1881-1882: An Aspect of the Irish Land War' in C.H.E. Philpin (ed.), *Nationalism and Popular Protest in Ireland*, p.350.

2. According to Curtis, the number of hunts in Ireland vary from one source to another. He estimated that in Ireland before the land war there were 18 to 21 packs of foxhounds, 5 packs of staghounds and 52 to 54 harrier packs (ibid., pp 352-3).

3. Walsh papers: a haphazardly paginated book labelled 'Subscription lists, accounts and transactions of the Queen's County Hunt from 1854' (hereafter designated Hunt MS); envelopes containing balance sheets of the Queen's County Hunt, 1870-87.

4. Ibid.

5. Appendix 49, below, p.444.

and added 'anyone who tried to keep hounds' (he kept twenty-five couples) would find his hand was 'constantly in his pocket'.¹ As it was, according to the financial records of the hunt, in the ten years 1870-9 the hunt spent a total of £8,679 on such items as the payment of the master huntsman, the purchase of fox cubs, the purchase of horses for the servants of the hunt, fencing, renting and planting coverts, and compensation to farmers for damage to sheep caused by hounds and for damage to fowl caused by foxes.² Of course, each member of the hunt also would have spent money on such items as the stabling of his horse, farriers' fees, personal accoutrements and entertainments:³ the amount each member spent probably depended on his wealth, his enthusiasm for the hunt, and perhaps even his marital status. The *Leinster Express* on 10 November 1883 commented on men who had a 'taste' for fox hunting: such men, the newspaper stated:

can be weaned from their favourite pastime only by two causes; failing health and failing finances. A considerable number of those who hunt in early life no doubt desert the hunting field when they attain middle-age - but these are almost invariably men who hunt not so much for hunting's sake as for the attending circumstances of the sport. They hunt because it is the correct thing to do - because it gave them something to talk about, and put them on equal terms with their associates. They liked the pleasant social interchanges of the hunting field, and they were not indifferent to the glories of pink and leathers. The men, who were attracted to the hunting field by such considerations as these, most commonly tail off when matrimony has brought the responsibilities which usually attend it.

Even if the contribution made by the hunt to the economy of the county cannot be dismissed lightly, how popular was the hunt before the land war? Probably influenced by the evidence of landlords evicting tenants during and after the land war, Richard Lalor in

1. Walsh papers; hunt MS, minute of the meeting of the hunt on 18 Apr. 81.
2. Walsh papers; hunt MS; envelopes of balances sheets of the hunt, 1870-87.
3. For Richard Lalor's views on how little the consumption of Irish whiskey by huntsmen would affect the lives of 'poor people' see his letter in the *Freeman's Journal* on 27 Jan. 85.

January 1884 described the Queen's County huntsmen as 'scoundrels' and 'Cromwells-in-miniature', while at the same time the parish priest of Arles, Fr Fintan Phelan, labelled 'the hunting gentry' as a 'class' who were the 'oppressors, the calumniators and the plunderers of the people'.² It is understandable that the huntsmen should have been perceived as a 'class' apart from the majority of the 'people' in the county: in the late 1870s thirty-three members of the hunt were magistrates;³ twenty-seven were members of the grand jury;⁴ members owned over 44 per cent of the land in the county;⁵ forty-one were members of branches of the Property Defence Association in the county;⁶ and, as a further indication of the probable *esprit de corps* among members of the hunt, twenty-two were freemasons.⁷ Yet, it is clear that some of the more substantial tenant farmers and merchants, who became prominent land-leaguers in the county, were attracted to the hunt and became members:⁸ for example, David Campion, Denis Kilbride and John Moore, large tenant farmers and respectively members

1. Lalor's letter to Fr Fintan Phelan, the parish priest of Arles, (L.E., 26 Jan. 84). Almost a year later Lalor's flawed historical thinking was reflected again in a letter in the *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Dec. 84 in which he wrote of 'the hunting of our people which commenced in earnest about four hundred years ago' when there was the 'same award' for the head of a priest and the head of a wolf, and then pointedly he asked the rhetorical questions, 'Who were the huntsmen then?' and 'Who are the huntsmen now?' Lalor continued, 'When the people were hunted to Connacht or Hell, and their homes seized by their pursuers - who were the huntsmen then? Who are the huntsmen now? The last hundred years down to the present hour, who were the huntsmen who to gratify their mean, avaricious and tyrannical dispositions continue to hunt the people of Ireland from their homes...' (This letter also was published in L.E., and L.L., 3 Jan. 85.)

2. Fr Phelan to editor, L.L., 19 Jan. 84.

3. Subscription lists in Hunt MS; *Thom's*, 1876-9.

4. Ibid.; reports of meetings of grand juries of the county in L.E., 1877-81.

5. Hunt MS; *Return of owners of land*, ..., [c1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81. [20 April 1876].

6. Reports of the meetings of the Abbeyleix, Stradbally, and Mountmellick branches of the Property Defence Association in L.E., 15 Oct., 29 Oct., 31 Dec., 81.

7. Lists of freemasons in Queen's County, 1860-90 (Freemasons' Hall, 17 Molesworth St., Dublin 2.)

8. At a meeting of the hunt in Maryborough on 10 Feb. 80 Stubber said 'Some of the best riders in this country are farmers, and they compose the great bulk of my fields.' Later, at the same meeting, Bernard E.B. Fitzpatrick, M.P. commented 'There are a great many shopkeepers who ride hard' (Hunt MS, p. 126).

of the committees of the Knock, Ballyadams, and Maryborough branches of the land league, were members of the hunt until the land war, while Patrick F. Fletcher, a merchant from Durrow, subscribed £5 to the hunt for the 1881-2 season while, at the same time, acting as the treasurer of the Durrow & Cullahill branch of the land league.¹

On 10 February 1880, at a meeting of the hunt in the grand jury room in the court house in Maryborough, Captain Cosby (master huntsman from 1868 to 1876, when Robert Hamilton Stubber succeeded him)² declared fox hunting existed 'only on sufferance', and the 'landlords and tenants must pull together in the matter or fox hunting must fall to the ground'.³ But it is clear from a reading of the minutes of the hunt meetings during the 1870s that the tenant farmers and the landlords did not always 'pull together in the matter': each year a recurring problem for the hunt was the scarcity of foxes, which by the late 1870s was blamed mainly on the farmers. Foxes, of course, preyed on lambs and fowl, and therefore, in Stubber's words, there were 'a great many farmers' who did not 'care for foxes',⁴ and secretly might try to exterminate them. Then by 1880 such was the demand for rabbits that trapping them proliferated, and resulted, if unintentionally, in an increasing number of foxes falling foul of traps. At the meeting of the hunt on 10 February 1880 Stubber described rabbit trapping as 'a common practice', and added:

1. Lists of members of branches of the land league culled from reports in *L.E.*, and *L.L.*; William Whelan's list of officers of land league branches in the county (*N.L.I.*, Lalor papers, MS 8566(11)); subscription lists in Hunt MS. In Feb. 80 Fletcher told Charles Moore, secretary of the hunt, that he thought he could 'get other subscriptions' (Hunt MS, p.126).

2. Cosby resigned because his wife was seriously ill, and he intended to spend a 'few winters in a drier climate' for her sake (Hunt MS).

3. Hunt MS, pp 125-6.

4. *Ibid.*, p.126.

I know that the game dealers are driving such a roaring trade that it pays them to send round a cart to a man's very hall-door, and the money is paid down into the hands of the sellers. Tons of game are sent from one station on the Great Southern and Western line, and there is not a hardware shop in the country in which you cannot purchase that detestable engine, the snaptrap.'

Notwithstanding earnings from trapping rabbits, and compensation for losses to their sheep and fowl - in the twelve years 1870-81 the hunt paid an average £99 per annum for such losses² - such earnings and compensation, despite the opportunities to lodge dubious claims for losses, hardly appeased farmers who at the same time had early crops, pastures, fences and gates damaged by the hunt. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of any physical attempt, organised on any scale, to stop the hunt, until the season of 1881-2. Yet, because of statements made by Stubber to meetings of the hunt, it is necessary to disagree with Curtis's statement that 'the first physical blow against hunting' occurred in County Waterford³ and that 'up to the beginning of October [1881] in Curraghmore [in County Waterford], Kilkenny, Kildare, and Queen's County, hunts had encountered only friendly gestures from local farmers while cub-hunting, and no one had yet tried to interfere with their sport.'⁴ At a meeting of members and supporters of the Queen's County Hunt, which was held in the court house in Maryborough on 11 March 1879, Stubber commented on 'disagreeable work' at Moyadd (about three miles east of Ballinakill) earlier in the season when two tenants 'threatened that if the hounds went there again they would be poisoned'.⁵ (It is likely that losses

1. Hunt MS, p.127.

2. Walsh papers: envelopes of balance sheets of the hunt, 1870-81.

3. Curtis, 'Stopping the Hunt', p.363.

4. Ibid., p.365.

5. Ibid., p.119.

to farmers' fowl caused by foxes partly explains the altercation: a disproportionate share of the money in the hunt's fowl account was spent compensating farmers in the environs of Moyadd and nearby Lennon's coverts. Of course, these farmers also might have been more active in lodging claims, whether dubious or not.)' Then at a meeting on 10 February 1880 Stubber described 'an unfortunate affair at Orchard'² (three miles south of Stradbally) when tenants of Captain Cosby and Lord Lansdowne 'threatened openly' that 'they would put a stop' to hunting over their lands, and showed how 'earnest they were in the threat' by not even 'going to the trouble of taking up the traps in the daylight'.³ While, admittedly, the clashes with tenants at Moyadd and Orchard probably were exceptions, nonetheless, they certainly suggest that before October 1881 the Queen's County hunt received unfriendly 'gestures', and there was some interference with 'their sport' from disgruntled tenants.

The earliest evidence of a concerted effort by land-leaguers to 'stop' the Queen's County hunt found by the author were the letters written between 13 and 19 August 1881, which passed between Stubber and the Durrow curate, Fr Edward Rowan. Fr Rowan was acting as the secretary of the Durrow & Cullahill branch of the land league, and sent copies of the letters to the other branches of the land league in

1. For example, during the season ending 1 May 77 of the £63,3s,0d, paid to farmers in thirty-one districts for losses to fowl £10,13s,6d., or almost 17 per cent, went to farmers living near Moyadd and Lennon's coverts; during the following two seasons these farmers received 13 per cent of the total (Walsh papers; envelopes of balance sheets of the Queen's County Hunt).

2. Hunt MS., p.125.

3. Ibid. At the same meeting on 10 Feb.80 Captain Cosby said that after he investigated the 'occurrence' at Orchard where 'a fox was caught in a trap in front of the hounds' he believed that his tenants had 'nothing to do with the trapping, but that it [the trap] was set by an outsider'(ibid.).

the county to enlist their active co-operation before the start of the fox hunting season.¹

The first letter, which was written on 13 August 1881 by Fr Rowan to Stubber, listed four resolutions, which had been 'unanimously passed' by the members of 'our local branch of the land league in Ireland' because of 'the hostile position maintained towards the tenantry by some in this country'. The four resolutions by which, in Rowan's words, the members would 'unalterably abide' were:

- (1) They withdraw in perpetuity the privilege of hunting over their lands from any gentleman who sits on the bench with [Robert] Owen of Belmont.²
- (2) They temporarily suspend all hunting (were it even for a decade of years) till the Ballykealy tenancy³ is fully and satisfactorily settled.
- (3) They will urgently and effectively enlist the active co-operation of every league branch in this county to unite with them in strictly enforcing this prohibition.
- (4) Their resolutions and measures to carry out this purpose will continue to appear in the public press.

The following morning Stubber replied to the letter stating that he could not understand why the resolutions had been passed, and could not see what 'possible good' they could effect. Stubber continued:

The first resolution threatens any magistrate who sits on the bench with Mr Owen of Belmont with the penalty of not being allowed to hunt... I shall continue to sit on the bench at Durrow if the necessity for my doing so arises, no matter who sits; and I think that you yourself and everyone else would consider me unfit for the office I hold if I neglected my duty for this or any other reason.

The second resolution implies that hunting will be stopped unless the disputes in Ballykealy are amicably settled. In other words, the general public who hunt are to be punished for the private disputes of one individual who does not hunt, and who does not even subscribe to the Queen's County hounds.⁴ I do not even know the cause of the

1. Three letters published in *L.E.*, 27 Aug. 81; Xerox copies of cuttings from unidentified newspapers in the Whitestone papers (see bibliography) in the author's possession.

2. For Owen's relations with local land-leaguers, his tenants and the tenants of his brother-in-law, Revd George Ayres, see above, pp 216-20.

3. Tenants of Ayres who were in conflict with Owen who was acting as his agent (above, p. 218).

4. Owen was not a subscribing member of the hunt in 1881, but he subscribed £5 for the season ending 1 May 76, and £10 for each of the seasons ending 1 May 77 and 1 May 78 (Hunt MS).

Ballykealy disputes, and I have not the slightest influence in the matter. But as I am paid...for performing a certain office, my duty to the hunting men of the county, to the farmers and others is evident. I shall begin to hunt as usual. The moment that any opposition takes place I shall seek elsewhere the sport that has been denied me at home...'

On 19 August, in a long letter, Fr Rowan derisively answered on behalf of the 'council' of the Durrow & Cullahill branch of the land league. According to Rowan, the council recognised the 'perfect accord' between Stubber's 'principle of action' and their own, in that both Stubber and the council retained their 'independence', and would be 'wanting in loyalty' to their respective supporters if they did less, and that each claimed the 'free exercise' of rights - he to sit upon the bench with an objectionable magistrate, and the council to withdraw the privilege of hunting over their lands from anyone who did so. What Stubber designated as the 'general public who hunt' the council regarded as an isolated and very small section of the community - 'an infinitesimal proportion' of the population of the county² 'that might well be placed, like Bob Sawyer's profits, under a gooseberry leaf in a wine glass.' The readiness with which Stubber could leave Ireland 'in search of sport' was irreconcilable with his fitness for magisterial office whose 'duty', Stubber had said, could not be neglected 'for any reason'. Anyway, the council had no faith in petty sessions as then constituted and administered if 'a gentleman

1. L.E., 27 Aug. 81.

2. Rowan suggested that even given 200 hunting men in the county population of 79,771, Stubber's 'general public' dwindled to 'less than the all but imperceptible fraction of the 1/398th of the people' (ibid.); of course, given that there were only 63 members of the hunt in the 1881-2 season, and the population of the county in 1881, according to the census (which Rowan would not have known in August 1881) was 73,124, then Rowan's fraction should have been even smaller - 1/1,161th 'of the people'.

could absent himself' from acting as a magistrate 'without sinning against a duty'. If Stubber went into 'voluntary exile' in 'search of sport', his plight would be in contrast to the millions - 'the rightful owners of the soil' - who, 'by the extortions of strangers guarded in the inflictions of wrong by a foreign legislature', were:

forced from the roof-trees of their fathers, in search, not of 'sport', but of the bare crust of existence, to whiten the shores of Rhode Island with their blanched bones, and die, far away from their kith and kin, in the woods and swamps of the far west. What a contrast between the manner of your travel in search of enjoyment, and their ocean journey, penniless and in rags, for the right to live, denied them in their own land? Who has the right to complain - you or the people - the child or the stranger?'

In the following weeks the number of resolutions against fox hunting which were passed by branches of the land league in counties such as Kildare, Kilkenny, King's County, Waterford and Armagh,² indicate a marshalling of opposition to fox hunting throughout the country. When the *Leinster Express* on 3 September 1881 reported that Parnell intended to hunt with the Queen's County Hunt in the coming season³ Fr Rowan sent a letter to each of the land league branches in the county denying the report, and declaring, probably disingenuously,⁴ that Parnell had asked him to publish his opposition to fox hunting by a 'dominant, worthless, insulting class'.⁵

1. *L.E.*, 27 Aug. 81

2. *Irish Times*, 3, 13, 21 Sept., 3 Oct. 81; *Freeman's Journal*, 5, 23 Sept. 81.

3. The brief report stated: 'On dit that Mr Parnell will, when the season opens, spend a couple of days in the Queen's County for the purpose of enjoying a few spins with the hounds. The Durrow resolutions have met with very scanty support from the several land league branches, and a strong feeling, growing daily, prevails against the attempt to put an end to the most popular of our national sports. The hon. member for Cork [city] has been invited for the purpose of showing the people that the attempt finds no favour with the leaders of the land league.'

4. Parnell was unwilling to offer 'public or official approval' of the campaign against fox hunting (Curtis, 'Stopping the Hunt', pp 360-1); Rowan was liable to attribute remarks to Parnell 'when the need arose' (*ibid.*, p. 360, n.30).

5. *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Sept. 81; *Weekly News*, 1 Oct. 81; Curtis, 'Stopping the Hunt', p.360.

Fr Rowan's efforts seemed to succeed, because after only four meetings in November 1881 the Queen's County Hunt suspended fox hunting for the rest of the 1881-2 season. The opening meeting of the season, which was held in Timahoe on 15 November, 'had a big turn out: the field money amounted to £2.15s.0d.,² and the 'sport' was deemed 'satisfactory'.³ But when the hunt met at Aghaboe on 19 November their 'sport' was spoiled. According to the *Leinster Express*, on the previous evening, 18 November, the Aghaboe curate, Fr James Cosgrave, and Patrick F. Fletcher, the fox hunting merchant from Durrow, 'made a round of visits in the locality'⁴ - presumably to organise opposition to the hunt. (Fr Cosgrave had been the secretary of the Aghaboe branch of the land league,⁵ and Fletcher, who had been the treasurer of the Durrow & Cullahill branch of the land league, was still in November 1881 a member of the hunt.⁶) Then the next day, when the hunt reached Cashin's Gorse (a covert on Stubber's estate, which always was the first draw when the hunt met at Aghaboe) they encountered a 'mob' of between 150 and 500 persons⁷ who were ranged in groups on all sides of the covert. Nothing happened until the hounds streamed out of the covert after a breaking fox. Then the crowd began to shout, the hounds 'were assailed with stones and other missiles', greyhounds and

1. Hunt MS.

2. Ibid.

3. *L.E.*, 3 Dec. 81.

4. Ibid., 26 Nov. 81; according to the police, Thomas Dunphy, a tenant farmer from Oldglass and a committee member of the Aghaboe branch of the land league, 'organised the opposition to hunting about Aghaboe' (S.P.O., C.S.O., Arrests under Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881-2, vol. iii, p. 511).

5. *L.E.*, 4 Dec. 80. (Michael Whittaker succeeded Fr Cosgrave as secretary of the branch.)

6. Hunt MS.

7. *L.E.*, 26 Nov. 81 reported a 'mob numbering 150'; *L.L.*, 26 Nov. 81 reported 500 'assembled'.

mongrels were loosed on the hounds, the huntsmen 'were saluted with opprobrious epithets', and when the whip returned to the covert to find two hounds some of the crowd prevented him from searching by 'belabouring his horse in a brutal manner'.. In the meantime, a heavy shower of rain necessitated the abandonment of the line, and though the hounds found again it is clear 'sport' was spoiled for the day.

There is no record of any incident or opposition to the hunt when it met at Derryfore (two miles east of Abbeylaxey) on 22 November 1881, but when two hounds were poisoned on 26 November at Sheffield² (about two miles south-east of Maryborough) Stubber had had enough. On 30 November, when a 'largely attended meeting' of the members of the hunt was held in Maryborough court house, it was decided to suspend hunting for the season.³ The brief minutes of the meeting were:

The master announced his resignation in consequence of the opposition that hunting has met with in some parts of the county and particularly at Sheffield covert where some of the hounds had been poisoned. The meeting, whilst feeling that, under the circumstances, there was no course open to them but to accept Mr Stubber's resignation with deep regret, tendered him their hearty thanks for the first class sport that he had shown in the county during his mastership, and requested him to allow the hounds to remain at Moyne [Stubber's home] until the close of the season on 1 April 1882.⁴

(The Queen's County Hunt was not alone in being compelled to suspend fox hunting for part or all of the season of 1881-2: in the country as a whole at least nineteen hunts stopped hunting between 11 October 1881 and 4 January 1882.)⁵

1. *L.E.*, 26 Nov. 81.

2. Obviously, the poison was laid in the covert at Sheffield; one of the hounds dropped dead on the line of the fox which broke from Sheffield, and then after the rest of the pack were whipped off the line, another collapsed and might have died had it not been dosed with an emetic of salt and water. Analyses of the dead dog's stomach revealed the presence of 'large quantities of strychnine' (*ibid.*, 3 Dec. 81).

3. *Ibid.*

4. Hunt MS.

5. Curtis, 'Stopping the Hunt', p.363.

On 14 April 1882, when the season of 1881-2 was over, Viscount De Vesci chaired a meeting of fifteen devoted members of the Queen's County Hunt in the court house in Maryborough.¹ The meeting decided hunting was to be stopped 'for the present' - because of 'the impossibility of keeping up the Queen's County hounds', which was 'so very apparent owing to the feeling in the county entertained regarding it', and because of their 'financial difficulties' due to many members cancelling or reducing their subscriptions 'in consequence of that feeling';² the thirteen and a half couples of hounds belonging to the hunt were to be sold;³ and a 'covert fund' (which amounted to £20) was to be started to finance 'the keeping up of the gorse coverts' in the 'hope of hunting being revived in the county after a short time'.⁴

While the Queen's County Hunt was inactive during most of the season of 1881-2, hunting of a different kind - variously called 'land league hunts', 'league hunts' and 'peoples' hunts' - was organised by land league supporters at different venues throughout the county. For example, on 6 January 1882 about three hundred people with dogs and wielding sticks assembled near Borris-in-Ossory, and then sweeping through Curraghmore and Curragheen townlands managed to kill 'not less than thirty hares':⁵ then the next day a 'peoples' hunt', which according to *United Ireland* was 'established under the name of the National Hunting Association', was held at the Heath (about two miles

1. Hunt MS, pp 136-9.

2. Proposal by Edward S.R. Smyth and seconded by Colonel Henry D. Carden (ibid., p.136).

3. Ibid.

4. Proposal by George Edge and seconded by Charles Corcoran (ibid., p.137).

5. *L.E.*, 14 Jan. 81. Curtis states that the game caught during such hunts was supposed to go to the families of imprisoned suspects (Curtis, 'Stopping the Hunt', pp 381-2). However, the author has not found any evidence of this happening in Queen's County.

north-east of Maryborough) when over one hundred horsemen, accompanied by dogs wearing on their collars such names as Buckshot, Revolver, Dynamite and Rack-rent, destroyed 'an immense amount of game'.¹

Such 'peoples' hunts' - which, in some cases, may have amounted to little more than poaching² - continued intermittently through the winter of 1881-2. Designed, at least in part, to taunt the landlords who hunted, they probably also provided some 'sport' for the participants. However, by early spring 1882 - as suggested by the lack of newspaper reports - there seemed to be a general waning of interest in peoples' hunts, and they seemed to peter out. On the other hand, the Queen's County Hunt did not resume fox hunting until 7 November 1883 when they met at Derryfore.³ John Hawksworth (a farmer living in Forest House near Mountrath who owned 402 acres in the county)⁴ acted as master huntman⁵ until Stubber returned from America where he had gone on 8 September 1883 'for big game hunting'.⁶

Yet, though the Queen's County Hunt resumed hunting in November 1883, it was only a shadow of its former self. For example, a clear contrast may be drawn between the four seasons from November 1883 to May 1887 and the twelve seasons from November 1869 to May 1881: average membership fell from sixty-five to twenty-six, average individual annual subscription fell from more than £10 to less than

1. *United Ireland*, 14 Jan. 82. For other newspaper references to such 'peoples' hunts in Queen's County, see *Irish Times*, 9 Jan. 82, *L.L.*, 14 Jan. 82, *L.E.*, 7 Jan, 11 Feb. 82.

2. The right to hunt 'ground game' to 'prevent injury to their crops' normally belonged to the tenants unless specifically reserved by the landlord (Constantine Molloy, *The Justice of the Peace for Ireland: a treatise on the powers and duties of magistrates in Ireland*, ... pp 760-3, 978-81).

3. Hunt MS., p. 139.

4. *Return of owners of land*, [C1492], H.C., 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

5. *L.E.*, 10 Nov. 83.

6. *Ibid.*, 8 Sept. 83.

£5, average total annual subscription fell from £674 to £123,¹ and the average number of times they hunted each season fell from forty-five to eighteen.² At the same time, during the rest of the 1880s the Queen's County Hunt continued to be the subject of hostile comments³ and resolutions by land league supporters,⁴ sometimes game was destroyed,⁵ and on at least one occasion some hounds were poisoned.⁶

In conclusion, the campaign by land league supporters did succeed in stopping the Queen's County Hunt for almost two seasons. But too much weight should not be given to this success. Fox hunting was a sport, and given the reduced incomes of its landowning participants and the hostile atmosphere of the land war perhaps it was predictable that there would have been at least a decrease in hunting, whatever the disposition of the tenant farmers or the land-leaguers. Then after Parnell turned his back on the land agitation, and established the Irish National League, it is significant that the hunt was revived, even though it had fewer members, hunted less, and had to suffer the hostile 'feeling' towards some of its 'hunting gentry'.

1. Appendix 49, below, p. 444.

2. Hunt MS.

3. For example, see Michael Dunne's letter in *L.L.*, 22 Dec. 83, and Fr Fintan Phelan's letters in *ibid.*, 19, 26 Jan. 84.

4. For resolution adopted by the Queen's County Irish national league meeting on 18 Jan. 84 see *L.E.*, 19 Jan. 84; *ibid.*, 11 Oct. 84 for resolution adopted by the 'nationalist demonstration' in Maryborough; *ibid.*, 2, 9 Feb. 84 for reports on 'stormy' proceedings in the Borris-in-Ossory branch of the Irish national league during which fox hunting was considered.

5. On 28 Oct. 84 four dead dog foxes were suspended in the goose green in Timahoe village (*L.L.*, 1 Nov. 84).

6. When the hunt met at Timogue on 30 Dec. 84 two hounds were poisoned after running upon a dragged scent (*L.E.*, 5 Jan. 85).

(III) Agrarian Crime and the Enforcement of the Law in Queen's County, October 1881 - May 1882

(1) The Magistrates and the Police in Queen's County

Faced with the prospect of an 1881-2 winter of discontent, and doubtless goaded by Gladstone's speech at Leeds on 7 October 1881¹ and the no-rent manifesto,² and heartened by the arrest of the land league leaders³ and the outlawing of the land league,⁴ the magistrates in Queen's County were determined to uphold the law. At the same time, the RIC in the county, who were discontented over their pay and conditions, were stretched to discharge their duties. By early 1882, primarily at the instigation of Henry A. Blake R.M. and the county inspector, Thomas Whelan, the county had three new police barracks and its police were increased by 20 per cent.

The largest and most public⁵ demonstration of solidarity with Gladstone's government made by the magistrates in the county was on 31

1. Above, pp 285-8; during the meeting of the magistrates on 31 Oct. 81 it was suggested that a resolution be adopted thanking Robert Staples for his 'manly and well-timed defence of the landlords of the country', but the chairman, Edward S.R. Smyth, ruled against the suggestion (*Dublin Evening Mail*, 1 Nov. 81).

2. For example, Captain William Gibson, who lived at Rockforest near Roscrea and was the auditor of each of the three poor law unions in Queen's County, commented at the meeting of the magistrates on 31 Oct. 81 that the land league's 'teaching', which became 'more and more pronounced', culminated in the no-rent manifesto, and 'spurred the government to suppress the land league'; that government, he said, by its action 'had entitled themselves to the sympathy and support of all law-abiding men in this country' (*ibid.*).

3. Above, p. 300.

4. Above, p. 301.

5. In Lord Castletown's words, the meeting was to have been 'private in character' (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13572(11)) and the public were, of course, excluded from the meeting. Nevertheless, the meeting's proceedings and resolutions were widely published, and possibly helped to provoke some of the attempts to stop the Queen's County Hunt. (Fr Fintan Phelan, the parish priest of Arles, wrote in his letter in *L.E.*, 19 Jan. 84 'We all remember the magistrates' famous meeting... To resist these infamous attacks, it was recommended to the people that the stopping of hunting by legitimate means would be a very efficient weapon...')

October 1881 when thirty-eight of them met in the grand jury room in Maryborough court house to express their determination 'to uphold the government, as far as it is in their power, in the suppressing of crime in this country, and in restoring law and order where lawlessness and disorder prevailed'.¹ Chaired by Edward S.R. Smyth, the magistrates discussed and adopted seven resolutions which were sent to Forster, the chief secretary, who in turn submitted them to Earl Cowper, the lord lieutenant.² The resolutions were:

(1) We, the magistrates of the Queen's County now assembled, desire to testify our approbation of the measures recently taken by the government to re-establish law and order, and we pledge ourselves in every way that in our power lies to assist the government individually and collectively in maintaining such.

(2) We call upon all the law-abiding portion of the community to do their utmost to oppose violence and outrage, and that policy of intimidation so dangerous to the interests of the country.

(3) While heartily approving of the recent decided action of the government, we further recommend that the provisions of the life and property act, 1870, should be re-enacted.³

(4) Some alteration in the jury laws is absolutely necessary to secure the punishment of crime, the protection of life and property, and the administration of justice in Ireland.⁴

(5) We call the attention of the government to the lawless and revolutionary character of several newspapers circulated widely throughout this country, and the pernicious influence which such have on a susceptible and misguided people.

(6) We take this opportunity of stating that the loyal classes in Ireland were never by any party known to be wanting in moral or active support to a government engaged in maintaining law and order, and the rights of property, and the peace, security and liberty of its subjects.

(7) We hereby record our hearty approbation of the manner in which the police force have discharged their duties, and of the admirable temper and forbearance they have shown.⁵

1. *Dublin Evening Mail*, 1 Nov. 81; *L.E.*, 5 Nov. 81.

2. Forster's letter to Castletown acknowledging the receipt of the resolutions (*L.E.*, 12 Nov. 81).

3. This was an amended form of a resolution proposed by Robert Staples, which, as Staples admitted in the discussion, 'had been misunderstood' (*ibid.*, 5 Nov. 81). However, it is clear Staples wanted harsh measures taken against land league sympathisers.

4. Cf. below, pp 362-3.

5. The resolutions reproduced by the author come from the *Dublin Evening Mail*, 1 Nov. 81, which are the same as those on slips of blue paper in S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/38140. Smyth informed Lord Castletown on 2 Nov. 81 that the reporters, who were 'all so hurried', had written down the resolutions 'not quite' correctly (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, M.S 13752(8)); some of the resolutions published in *L.E.*, 5 Nov. 81 differ slightly in their wording from those reproduced above.

Regarding the 'temper' of the RIC in Queen's County, it is likely that, as in the rest of Ireland, there was discontent over their pay and conditions, which had resulted, as Townshend stated, from 'years of grinding Treasury meanness'.¹ Some indication of their discontent over pay may be had from the proceedings at the petty sessions in Maryborough on 22 April 1881 when an application was made by the sessional crown solicitor, Jeremiah Mara, that 'portions' of the fines for drunkenness imposed by the court should be granted to the RIC. The application was 'resisted' by John Roe on behalf of Maryborough town commissioners, and by William Fitzsimmons on behalf of John H. Atkinson, the petty sessions court clerk. After hearing the arguments the chairman of the court, Colonel Henry D. Carden, refused the application. This decision drew the response from Sub-Inspector William D. Grene that 'that being so' the RIC would not go on with the cases entered on the books. However, Carden was not baulked: the bench, he said, would not adjourn the cases before the court, the summonses were properly filled, and the 'people' had been put to very great inconvenience. All the cases were then called and dealt with by the bench according to the usual practice, but in each case with Mara making a formal application to have 'portions' of the fines allocated to the RIC, and the bench refusing.² (There is no evidence that the RIC were any more successful in any other court: according to the *Leinster Leader*, the RIC considered making 'similar applications' in other petty sessions in the county, 'but found the magistrates just as

1. Townshend, *Political violence in Ireland*, p.176. At the same time as there was agitation in the RIC throughout the rest of the country over their pay and conditions, the RIC in Queen's County forwarded a memorial to their officers setting out their grievances (L.E., 12 Aug. 82).

2. L.L., 23 Apr. 81.

firm as they were in Maryborough'.)'

How well were the RIC in Queen's County discharging their duties? Simple statistics suggest that during 1881 - the worst year for agrarian crime in Ireland since the Great Famine² - the RIC in the county were stretched, and apparently at a disadvantage compared to the RIC in the country as a whole. For example, in the five financial years 1877-82 when the total number of RIC in the country increased from 11,186 to 12,850³ (an increase of almost 15 per cent) the numbers of RIC in the county remained virtually unchanged.⁴ (Though it was cold comfort to the magistrates in the county, this apparent neglect of the policing of the county by Dublin Castle is explained by the relatively greater demand for police in counties such as Galway, Mayo, Cork, and Kerry⁵ where agrarian crimes were more prevalent than in the midland counties such as Carlow, Kildare, King's County, Kilkenny, and Queen's County.)⁶

On 8 November 1881 twelve anxious magistrates, including their chairman, Edward S.R. Smyth, and Henry A. Blake R.M., met Gilbert Kelly, the deputy clerk of the peace, and Thomas Whelan, the RIC county inspector, in the grand jury room in Maryborough court house.⁷ This meeting, which had a decisive bearing on the future policing of the county, was held to receive 'a communication' from Whelan

1. *L.L.*, 23 Apr. 81.

2. Returns of agrarian outrages, 1849-81, listed in the bibliography.

3. *Return of the number and cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary in each year 1872-73 to 1881-82.*, H.C. 1882 (161), liv, 495.

4. County Inspector Whelan's statements to a meeting of the Queen's County magistrates in Maryborough on 8 Nov. 81 (*L.E.*, 12 Nov. 81).

5. Cf. above, p.220, for Andrew Reed's comment on 31 July 81.

6. Appendix 46, below, p.442; Appendix 47, below, p.443; Returns of outrages listed in bibliography.

7. *L.E.*, 12 Nov. 81.

'relative to the strength of the constabulary force in the county and to consider the advisability of making [an] application to the lord lieutenant to have the force increased'.¹ According to Whelan, 'the force of Queen's County' had been 'set down' at 200 men by 'order of council' on 27 July 1877.² On 8 November 1881 the county had 196 RIC (there were 2 vacancies, and 2 were on duty outside the county), and of these the disorder emanating from the land war required the special employment of 12 'affording personal protection',³ 10 protecting labourers, and 11 'affording protection by means of special patrols'.⁴ (For the number of protection posts established in Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow, and Queen's County, 1879-88, see Appendix 48, below, p. 443.)

Of the fourteen men present at that meeting in Maryborough, Henry A. Blake R.M. and County Inspector Whelan probably knew most about the police in Queen's County, and consequently their views must have impressed the meeting. They were very dissatisfied. According to Whelan, 'during the fenian outbreak' in 1867 there were more police (220 men) in the county: but the demands on the police were greater in 1881, because in 1867 the disorder was 'relatively concentrated',⁵ whereas in 1881 the disorder was 'diffused' throughout the county.⁶

1, *L.E.*, 12 Nov. 81.

2, Whelan's answer to Captain Cosby (*ibid.*); Whelan meant the Treasury would bear the cost of the 200, but half the cost of any over 200 would be levied off the cess payers in the county.

3, *Ibid.* For a description of the 'personal protection' given to Rt Hon. Bernard E.B. Fitzpatrick by 'two stalwart northerners' whom he had hired, see Lord Castletown of Upper Ossory, *Ego, Sport, Travel and Adventure*, pp 66-7. For almost a year, Fitzpatrick and his wife were protected: 'It was weary work', said Fitzpatrick, 'and got a little on one's nerves, as the shadows always appeared near one - even in the garden or outside taking a walk.'

4, As in n.2, above.

5, For a discussion on the strength of the fenians in Ireland see R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, pp 124-6, 208, 213.

6, *L.E.*, 12 Nov. 81.

Blake, who placed great reliance on police patrols 'to prevent the committal of crime', particularly during long winter nights, believed patrol duty might 'be said to have ceased' during the previous two months (September and October 1881) because the police were 'perpetually employed in attending meetings and making reports' - duties he described as 'comparatively worthless'.

After lengthy discussion, the magistrates decided to apply to the lord lieutenant for forty extra police for Queen's County.² Their decision was not made easily. Of course, there was the urgency created by the increasing incidence of agrarian crimes.³ But now, because of their decision, each year £1,376.10s.0d.⁴ - half the cost of the extra forty police - would have to be paid by cess payers in the county. This sum contrasted with the £112.15s.2d., which the cess payers paid towards the cost of the extra police drafted in to the county during the year ending 30 September 1881.⁵

By early 1882 the requested forty police were posted to the county. Consequently, three new police stations - Ballybrophy, Cullahill, and Ballickmoyler⁶ - were established, and the policing of the county was intensified generally.

1. *L.E.*, 12 Nov. 81.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Almost two-thirds of the agrarian crimes in the county in 1881 - its worst year for such crimes since the Great Famine - were committed during the last four months of the year (Appendix 45, below, p. 441; *S.P.O., C.S.O., Returns of agrarian outrages...*, vol. iv).

4. According to Whelan, at the meeting of the magistrates on 8 Nov. 81, the cess payers in the county would have to pay £34.8s.3d. for each extra policeman (*L.E.*, 12 Nov. 81).

5. Report on the county-at-large presentment sessions in Queen's County in *ibid.*, 26 Nov. 81.

6. Ballybrophy and Cullahill were obvious centres of disorder; Ballickmoyler, which had a police barrack up to 1875, was chosen because it was, in Whelan's words, in 'too great an area of the county without a police barrack' (report on the meeting of Queen's County magistrates in the grand jury room in Maryborough court house on 2 July 83 in *ibid.*, 7 July 83).

(2) Gaoling John Redington for the Second Time

Arrests in Queen's County under the Act for the Better Protection of Person and Property in Ireland, 1881¹ offer a clear, if simple, indication of increased police action after the outlawing of the land league on 20 October 1881: in the 163 days before 20 October 1881 there were ten arrests, while in the 127 days after 20 October 1881 there were thirteen arrests.² Suspects in gaol after 20 October 1881 continued to be sustained by land league sympathisers, and this, of course, attracted the attention of the police: suspects in gaol had their lands ploughed and tilled, their crops harvested and sown,³ receptions were organised for them on their release from gaol,⁴ and later some received presentations.⁵ But of the twenty-two men from the county who were gaoled as suspects during the land war⁶ John Redington probably caused Dublin Castle most anxiety.

As the son of Thomas Redington, the septuagenarian farmer who was a tenant of the Queen's County coroner, William Clarke, John was prominent in the much publicised dispute between Clarke and his

1. 44 & 45 Vict., c.5 (21 Mar.).

2. Appendix 38, below, p.437.

3. For example, on 7 Nov.81 one thousand people assembled on a farm near Mountmellick to complete the tilling and sowing of 26 acres of oats and 20 acres of barley for Patrick Murphy who had been arrested on 15 Oct.81 (*L.E.*, 12 Nov.81; *L.L.*, 12 Nov.81). On 17 Nov.81 four hundred people sowed 20 acres of corn on William Henry Cobbe's (he was arrested on 19 Oct.81) land in Ballykillane near Emo, and then picked and stored 5 acres of turnips in Morette where he had conacre (*L.E.*, 19 Nov.81).

4. For a report on the reception given to John Delaney, the Abbeylisk suspect who was gaoled on 17 Oct.81, and released on 1 Apr.82, see *ibid.*, 8 Apr.82. A week after the reception given to William Henry Cobbe in Maryborough on 30 Jan.82 ten people were arrested for forming a portion of a riotous and disorderly crowd on the occasion of the reception: one had his case dismissed, while the other nine were bound to the peace on their own security of £12.10s.0d. each and two independent sureties of £25 each or in default to be imprisoned for three months (*ibid.*, 4, 11 Feb.82).

5. On 4 June 82 a deputation headed by Fr Matthew Keefe, the parish priest of Aghaboe, went to Whitepark, the home of Thomas Murphy, and there presented Dunphy and the other Aghaboe suspect, Michael Whittaker, with a gold watch, a gold Albert chain and an illuminated address each 'on their triumphal release from Clonmel gaol' (*ibid.*, 10 June 82).

6. Appendix 38, below, p.437.

tenants in Pallas.¹ He became an active chairman of committees in the Maryborough branch of the land league,² and on 14 May 1881 he, Patrick Doran and Patrick A. Meehan (fellow committee members) were arrested for inciting a riot, and lodged in Naas gaol.³ On 21 September 1881 (thirty-three days after the release of Doran, and thirteen days after the release of Meehan)⁴ he was released from Kilmainham gaol⁵ - against the advice of William D. Grene, the RIC sub-inspector in Maryborough,⁶ and Henry A. Blake R.M.⁷ (At his own request, he had been transferred from Naas gaol to Kilmainham gaol on 24 August 1881.)⁸ However, he was not unnerved by his gaol sentence, and soon Grene's and Blake's anxiety about him seemed to be justified.

Five days after Parnell's imprisonment in Kilmainham gaol, Dublin Castle was informed of the arrival of Joseph Biggar⁹ and Arthur O'Connor¹⁰ in Holyhead where, in the opinion of the local police, along with Patrick J. Sheridan, the hard-line land-leaguer from Tubbercurry, County Sligo,¹¹ and Parnell's secretary, Henry Campbell, they were going 'to carry on the business of the land league at the

1. Cf. above, pp 95-100, 123; *L.E.*, 12 Nov. 81; *L.L.*, 12 Nov. 81.

2. Above, p. 156.

3. Above, pp 202-3.

4. Appendix 38, below, p. 437.

5. Above, pp 238-9.

6. In his report on 3 Sept. 81, Grene described Redington as 'a dangerous man' (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1882/29627).

7. Blake 'would not advise' Redington's release 'except on [the] grounds of ill health' (S.P.O., C.S.O., Arrests under Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881-2, vol. iv, p. 77).

8. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1882/29627.

9. Biggar arrived in Holyhead from Kingstown at 11.40 p.m. on 16 Oct. 81 (ibid., Constable Matthew Henderson's report on 17 Oct. 81).

10. Ibid.; O'Connor arrived about three hours after Biggar on the Irish mail train from Carlisle. (For O'Connor's flight from Dublin, see above, pp 300-1.)

11. Lyons, *Parnell*, pp 202, 206, 212, 430; Moody, *Davitt*, pp 312, 361. Redington and Sheridan were fellow prisoners in Kilmainham gaol, and together were patients in its infirmary (the description of the conditions in Kilmainham gaol in the *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Sept. 81).

Marine Hotel'.¹ However, this was not to be. On 20 October O'Connor, Sheridan and Campbell left for Liverpool, and Biggar caught the London-bound Irish mail train.² Then, on the same day, Redington arrived on the express boat from the North Wall, Dublin, and lodged in the George Hotel in Holyhead: there 'all letters addressed to any of the above named' were delivered to him and, in the opinion of Constable Matthew Henderson of Holyhead, he seemed 'to be acting as their agent or messenger'.³

When Burke, the under-secretary, asked Henry A. Blake R.M. what Redington was 'supposed to be doing at Holyhead'⁴ he received what must have been a disturbing reply. Blake answered:

Redington has been for some time a paid agent of the land league. He is now supposed to be attached to A. O'Connor M.P. as private secretary, and to have been left by him at Holyhead to assist persons escaping from this country. It is rumoured that he is engaged in a plan to assist the escape of Mr Parnell.⁵

But there is no evidence to suggest that Redington was involved in a 'plan to assist the escape' of anyone. In any case, on 4 November 1881 Constable Henderson (under orders from Dublin Castle to 'watch Redington closely')⁶ hid in a guard's van, and 'observed' Redington carrying a rug and wearing a sealskin cap furtively board the mail boat for Kingstown.⁷ Henderson's report was passed on to the 'celebrated' detective superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan

1. Constable Henderson's report on 17 Oct. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1882/29627).

2. Henderson's report on 26 Oct. 81 (ibid.).

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Blake's report on 30 Oct. 81 (ibid.).

6. Note appended to Blake's report (ibid.).

7. In his 'secret' report on 4 Nov. 81 Henderson stated that Redington, who boarded while the mail was being carried on board, also 'looked around several times as if to get away unobserved' (ibid.).

Police, John Mallon,¹ and under his orders Redington was watched as he arrived in Kingstown, and drove directly to the Imperial Hotel in Sackville Street where he registered under the name O'Reilly.² Two hours later he left the hotel with an unnamed 'prominent' land-leaguer, and did not return.³

On 8 November 1881 Constable Henderson reported Redington was 'still' in Holyhead.⁴ But from this date his movements are unclear. Though it was reported he boarded the *S.S. Lily* for Kingstown on 9 November,⁵ and the detective branch of the Dublin Metropolitan police was alerted,⁶ he predicted correctly there would be a warrant for his arrest,⁷ and somehow managed to escape. According to the *Leinster Leader*⁸ and Sub-Inspector Grene of Maryborough,⁹ he assumed the name Wilson,¹⁰ became 'a very active agent' of the land league, and 'organised' the counties of Galway and Clare. In any case, though a warrant was issued for his arrest on 14 November,¹¹ and the police were on the look out for him, and at least twice visited his home in Pallas,¹² he managed to elude them until 18 February 1882 when he was

1. He arrested Parnell on 13 Oct. 81 (Lyons, *Parnell*, pp 168-9); the description is Lyons's (ibid., p. 169)

2. Mallon's report on 8 Nov. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1882/29627).

3. Ibid.

4. Henderson's report on 8 Nov. 81 (ibid.).

5. Henderson's report on 9 Nov. 81 (ibid.).

6. Ibid.

7. In his report on 8 Nov. 81 Henderson stated Redington 'told my [Henderson's] informant he thought there was a warrant out for his arrest' (ibid.). John Nash Q.C., the law adviser in Dublin Castle, suggested Redington could be arrested for 'his complicity in the land league' (ibid., note appended to Henderson's report on 9 Nov. 81).

8. *L.L.*, 25 Feb. 82.

9. Grene's report on 5 Mar. 82 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1882/29627).

10. Grene believed Redington 'went under that name' because 'lost luggage addressed to that name was claimed by him here [Maryborough]' (ibid.).

11. 'Memorandum of proceedings in the case of John Redington' (ibid.).

12. On 1 and 2 Dec. 81 the police visited his home; once on asking for John Redington they were shown into a room where his infant son, also named John, lay in a cradle (*L.E.*, 3 Dec. 81).

arrested at his home and lodged in Armagh gaol.'

Of all the terms in gaol served by suspects from Queen's County, Redington's second term was the only one interrupted by the suspect's being 'released on parole to attend [a] land court'.² (He was 'on parole' for ten days - from 12 March to 22 March 1882.)³ When he requested his release to attend the land court 'his having done so', according to Sub-Inspector Grene, 'brought him into disfavour with the leading persons of the land league here [Maryborough] who apparently consider that he acted too selfishly or that he only made an excuse of it to give up working for the league.'⁴ Whether Grene was correct or not, Redington was released from gaol on 1 June 1882, and on 5 July 1882 Grene reported that, since his release, he remained in Pallas, and did not 'make himself remarkable in any way'.⁵

In conclusion, Redington was one of the most militant land-leaguers in the county. Yet, because he must have known the police were watching his home, it is tempting to suggest he expected his arrest on 18 February 1882. Why he may have given himself up is impossible to state: that he had grown disenchanted with the land league, or was worried about his young family (his wife had recently given birth to another boy), his sickly old father and his farm is likely, but would be speculation. In any case, it is significant that, though he canvassed for Thomas F. O'Higgins who was elected on 17 July 1882 to succeed William Clarke (Redington's landlord who died in June 1882)⁶

1, L.L., 25 Feb, 82; L.E., 25 Feb, 82,

2, 'Memorandum of proceedings in the case of John Redington' (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1882/29627),

3, Ibid,

4, Grene's report on 5 Mar, 82 (ibid.),

5, Grene's report on 5 July 82 (ibid.),

6, L.E., 17 June 82,

as a coroner for the county,' after 1882 Redington seemed to distance himself from public notice and concentrated on farming.²

(3) The Prosecution of Fr Thomas Feehan

Fr Thomas Feehan, the Roman catholic curate from Rathdowney, was the only priest from Queen's County to be gaoled during the land war. Prominent throughout the land war as the president of the Rathdowney branch of the land league, he was among the most virulent of the land league priests in the county. In August 1881 the police considered arresting him, but instead, under orders from Forster, the chief secretary, opted for drawing the attention of his bishop, Patrick F. Moran, to one of his 'shocking' speeches.³ However, Feehan seemed unrestrained, and in March 1882 imprudently involved himself in the dispute between the lieutenant of the county, Lord Castletown, and his tenants. In consequence, he was summoned to appear at Rathdowney petty sessions on a charge of causing 'discontent in the minds' of tenants to 'incite' them not to pay their rent, and Bishop Moran dismissed him from his curacy. His prosecution and gaoling sparked off such disturbances, particularly in Rathdowney, that it was a wonder that no one was killed. Finally, on 7 June 1882, after serving

1. L.E., 22 July 82.

2. Redington's letters to Richard Lalor M.P. in 1882-3 suggest a concentration on farming. For example, on 12 September 1882 he wrote:

'A chance has just presented itself, which would be of great benefit to us. Mrs Pigott of Togher is about resigning business. She was in the habit of supplying the town's people with milk night and morning at the very remunerating price of 10d. per gallon, I have been long watching to get into the business and I can do so easily now, but in order to do so I would require a loan of £100 on the place. There is, I may tell you, little or nothing due on the place, but I would require some additional cows and also some preparations in the way of food.' (N.L.I., Lalor papers, MS 8566(11)). Other letters from Redington to Lalor in 1883 comment on meadows, harvests, and seasons (ibid.).

3. For the 'shocking' speeches of Fr Feehan and Fr Rowan, see above, pp 224-7.

less than two months of his six months' sentence, an unrepentant Fr Feehan emerged from Maryborough gaol to the acclaim of land-leaguers, and a generous testimonial.

It is necessary briefly to investigate the dispute between Lord Castletown and his tenants during the winter of 1881-2 so that the prosecution of Fr Feehan can be put in some sort of perspective. Relations, at least on the surface, between Castletown and his tenants seemed to worsen after the autumn gale of 1881 when, according to Castletown's agent, Matthew H. Franks, 'much mischief' was being done by Fr James Cosgrave, the Aghaboe curate, and by Michael Whittaker, a shopkeeper and farmer who was one of Castletown's tenants.¹ Supporting his claim that the 'people' were being 'tyrannised over',² Franks wrote a letter to Castletown on 4 November 1881 reporting that two tenants, who paid their rents to him 'on the roadside', said they dared not be seen paying him, and he was 'not to mention it'.³ He enclosed with his letter a note he had just received from Joseph D. Wilson, a merchant in Rathdowney, which read: 'Enclosed, you have a bank draft [for] £44.18s.2d. to pay Mr Robert Talbot's half year's rent to 1 May last. Please send me the receipt, which I will hand [to] him. He cannot take the rent to the office.'⁴

During November 1881 Castletown received two memorials from his tenants. The first memorial requested that their rents should be 10

1, Franks to Castletown on 4 Nov, 81 (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752 <11>).

2, Ibid.

3, Ibid. For some evidence of tenants in the north of Queen's County who, in the winter of 1881-2 secretly paid their rent, while at the same time declaring that they were afraid to pay openly, see *The Times-Parnell* commission, vol.iii, pp 582-3 for the evidence of Reginald Digby (the agent of Edward H.T. Digby, the 10th Baron Digby who owned 29,722 acres in King's County and 938 acres in Queen's county).

4, As in n.1 above.

per cent below Griffith's valuation' - a level of rents which was justified, according to Fr Cosgrave, because of the 'poverty of the tenants', the 'bad harvests, low prices and general depression', the 'light quality of the soil on which Griffith's valuation [was] regarded as too high', and because their rent was 'a violation of the law of the land, and in defiance of the Healy clause' because it included a rent on 'tenants' improvements'.² Franks's response to the memorial was that, while Castletown could not 'accede to the request', he would accept the valuation by 'an independent and competent valuator' on 'any farm held from year to year' whose tenant considered his land 'too dear', and whose rent was paid up to the previous May.³ This was unacceptable to the tenants,⁴ who then sent another memorial ('signed by all the tenants') proposing that their 'fair rent' should be fixed by arbitration between two valuers - one appointed by Castletown and the other appointed by the tenants.⁵

Though further correspondence ensued between Castletown and his tenants, it is clear that by the end of December 1881 an impasse was reached. On Franks's advice, Castletown (who was 'in want of money')⁶ probably eventually replied 'very shortly' to a memorial from his tenants that he could not 'entertain' their proposals, and regretted

1. Fr Cosgrave to editor, *L.L.*, 14 Jan, 82.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. According to Fr Cosgrave, 'in the opinion of the tenants' such a valuator would be 'an office valuator' whose independence and competence would be judged solely by Franks; also the tenants thought it neither 'fair' nor 'just' for Castletown to want to 'drag' them 'into the courts of exchequer and queen's bench' (*ibid.*). At the same time, Franks wrote to two valuers who were recommended to him by Sub-Inspector Grene of Maryborough (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752(9)).

5. *L.L.*, 14 Jan, 82.

6. In Oct, 81 Castletown, who had sought permission from his bank to overdraw his account, was advised by Franks that because he was 'in want of money', and if 'proceedings' had to be taken against his tenants there would be a 'delay in getting rents in' he should 'delay' paying allowances to his daughters in England, and 'retain any money' he had for his 'own necessities' until the rents were paid (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752(9)).

their determination to withhold their rents, which compelled him to take 'proceedings' against them.' In any case, as described above,² on 6 January 1882 Franks had 'about thirty writs' served on Castletown's tenants 'in the Lisduff, Grantstown, and Maryborough districts', and determined that if the writs did not bring the tenants 'to their senses' he would 'proceed against others'.³ Then at a sheriff's auction in Maryborough on 18 March 1882, before a 'small audience' which included a representative of the Property Defence Association,⁴ sixteen of Castletown's tenants paid a total of £1,478 for the interests in their holdings.⁵ Three days after the auction - when, according to John Roe, Castletown's solicitor, 'all passed off quietly, and a large sum of money was realised' - the tenants were 'making loud and angry complaints against the leaders, clerical and otherwise, who led them into collision with his lordship, and exposed them to unnecessary expenses without any profitable result.'⁶ Roe concluded that if, as Franks had informed him, the 'tenants on whom civil-bills [ordinary] for the next quarter sessions' had been served were 'coming in and settling the rents', then the 'dishonest

1, Franks's advice to Castletown on 27 Dec.81 (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752<12>). Neither the tenants' memorial nor Castletown's response to it was published in any newspaper.

2, Above, p.309.

3, L.L., 14 Jan.82; N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752<12>.

4, L.E., 25 Mar.82.

5, One other farm was purchased for £310 on behalf of a tenant by Patrick Murphy, the Rathdowney suspect (Appendix 38, below, p.437), who then tried to 'repudiate the liability'; however, the sub-sheriff determined to make Murphy pay. Two other farms to be auctioned were withdrawn because they were held 'by leases of lives'. Only one tenant's holding was 'purchased in trust' because, in the opinion of John Roe, Castletown's solicitor, Michael Davin, the tenant, was 'wholly unable to pay'. 'Other writs in the sheriff's hands' were 'postponed' in the hope that the tenants would pay their rents 'without a public sale' (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752<12>). For the sheriff's auction in Maryborough on 20 May 82 of the interest in the holdings of seven other tenants of Castletown, see L.E., 27 May 82; the holdings of the seven were bought in trust for Castletown by the representatives of the Property Defence Association.

6, Roe's letter dated 21 Mar.82 (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752<12>).

combination' of the tenants was 'being broken up'.

What was Fr Feehan's role in this dispute between Lord Castletown and his tenants? On 8 March 1882 (ten days before the sheriff's auction just mentioned)² in the company of his parish priest, Fr William Lynch, and Fr Matthew Keeffe, the parish priest of Aghaboe, he addressed a meeting of between two and three hundred of Castletown's tenants in the yard of Rathdowney national school. He said they should pay only a fair rent, which should be fixed by arbitration, and that only when the suspects were released from gaol - 'when the constitutional rights of our countrymen are restored.' Tenants who paid their rents 'behind the backs' of other tenants were sneaks. If any of Castletown's tenants was evicted, none was to pay a penny in rent until the evicted tenant was 'reinstated in his holding'. In any case, eviction now was not like eviction during the Great Famine: instead, it meant the 'ultimate breakdown of landlordism' because the tenants could 'stand the pulling down of the old roof tree, and the extinguishing of the fire on the old hearth stone' knowing that the ladies' land league had plenty of money to support and shelter them, and that 'the moral force of public opinion' was behind them.³

At least twice, Richard Tilson, the local head constable who was watching the meeting, interrupted Fr Feehan with the warning that he should not continue in the 'strain he was pursuing' or the meeting would be declared illegal. Eventually, when Tilson's 'safety was doubtful' because of the hostility of the crowd, the meeting moved

1, John Roe's letter on 21 Mar, 82 (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752(12)).

2, Above, p.346.

3, Report of the meeting in *L.E.*, 25 Mar, 82; report of Fr. Feehan's speech in *L.L.*, 18 Mar, 82; report of Tilson's evidence in court on 25 Mar, 82 in *L.E.*, 1 Apr, 82.

into the schoolhouse where the tenants signed a memorial requesting Castletown to have fair rents fixed by arbitration, but which they pledged to pay only when the suspects were released from gaol.¹

Nothing further was heard until 15 March 1882 when a summons, signed by Henry A. Blake R.M., was served on Fr Feehan. The summons read:

Whereas a complaint has been made to me that on 8 March you did, at Rathdowney in the Queen's County, endeavour to excite discontent in the minds of Her Majesty's subjects to incite them not to fulfil their lawful duties, and to combine together to injure and impoverish persons who would not obey the orders of an unlawful society called the land league; this is to command you to appear as a defendant on the hearing of the said complaint at Rathdowney petty sessions on 21 March 1882 at 12 o'clock noon before me to show cause why you should not be bound over in solvent securities to be of good behaviour towards Her Majesty.²

Soon posters, placards and handbills appeared throughout the county making the contents of the summons generally known, and calling on the 'people' to stand by Fr Feehan by appearing in their thousands in Rathdowney on the day of the hearing. One placard, in large type on a green surface, read:

Irishmen, another priest has been grossly outraged by the minions of Buckshot Forster. Fr Feehan will be placed in the dock at Rathdowney on Tuesday next to be tried like a common criminal by that vile upstart H.A. Blake R.M. for advising Lord Castletown's tenants to act like true Irishmen of the Queen's County. Watch these tenants and brand them as base traitors if they swerve from their duties to old Ireland and the patriotic soggarth aroon [sic].

Come in your thousands to the trial on Tuesday next.³

However, Fr Feehan did not appear in court on 21 March. On 20 March Head Constable Tilson called on Fr Feehan, told him the wrong date had been inserted in the summons, and served him with a fresh summons to appear in court on 25 March.⁴ Nonetheless, despite severe snow storms

1, As in above, p. 347, n. 3.

2, L.E., 25 Mar. 82.

3, Ibid.

4, Ibid; ibid., 1 Apr. 82.

and the broadcasting of the change of the date for the hearing, 'not less than five hundred' people, led by two bands, marched through Rathdowney and twice assembled outside Fr Feehan's house to cheer 'lustily' and to listen to the bands playing national airs.'

On 23 March 'there was scarcely a district' in the county in which the following placard did not appear:

Prosecution of Fr Feehan C.C.
Father has got notice from the police that his trial, which was postponed last Tuesday, will certainly take place on Saturday next 25th inst, at 12 o'clock in the courthouse, Rathdowney.

God save Ireland,²

Because Dublin Castle anticipated disturbances if a large crowd assembled in Rathdowney on 25 March, a proclamation was extensively posted throughout the county and adjoining counties prohibiting such an assemblage and threatening prosecution to anyone 'taking part in or inciting to the same'.³ At the same time, the authorities prudently laid on special trains to transport 200 of the 106th Regiment, 60 of the 5th Lancers, and 60 extra RIC to Rathdowney to keep the peace.⁴

In spite of the proclamation, 'at least' five thousand people

1. *L.E.*, 25 Mar. 82.

2. *Ibid.*, 1 Apr. 82.

3. The proclamation read: 'Whereas it has been represented to us that large crowds of people intend to assemble in the neighbourhood of the courthouse at Rathdowney in the Queen's County on or about the 25th day of March 1882, and whereas we have reason to believe that such assemblage would, if permitted, be unlawful as calculated to obstruct the execution of the law and to endanger the peace of our lady the queen; now we, the lord lieutenant and the general governor of Ireland, do hereby prohibit such assemblage and do strictly caution and forewarn all persons whomsoever that they do abstain from taking part in or encouraging or inciting to the same and we hereby give notice that if in defiance to our proclamation any such assemblage shall be attempted or take place the same will be prevented and all persons attempting to take part in or encouraging the same or inciting thereto will be proceeded against according to the law; and we hereby order and enjoin the justices of the peace and officers entrusted with the preservation of the peace and all others whom it may concern to aid and assist in the preservation of the law in obedience to same' (*Ibid.*, 25 Mar. 82).

4. *Ibid.*, 1 Apr. 82.

gathered in Rathdowney. They yelled and hissed at the police, particularly at Head Constable Tilson, and 'cheered vociferously' for Fr Feehan as he made his way to the courthouse accompanied by 'a few clerical friends', his counsel, John P. McCraith from Roscrea, Anna Parnell and a 'host' of women land-leaguers.¹

Seated on the bench before a crowded courtroom were the resident magistrates, Henry A. Blake and Vesey Fitzgerald, and Edward Mulhallen Marum, the Queen's County magistrate who was also home-rule M.P. for Kilkenny county. The hearing, which lasted for about two hours, concluded at about 2.50 p.m. when Blake announced the majority decision of the court. (Marum dissented.) In Blake's opinion, it was as illegal to advise persons to combine to withhold their rents as it was to advise them not to pay their rents: accepting Head Constable Tilson's evidence, he believed Fr Feehan advised Castletown's tenants to withhold their rents until 'they chose to pay', that is, until evicted tenants were reinstated in their holdings, and the suspects in prison were freed. Then, referring to the murder 'in cold blood' of the 'unfortunate' Martin Rogers on 3 December 1881 'outside' Rathdowney² 'for attempting to serve a writ for rent', he declared it was 'the imperative duty of the bench, if possible, to prevent a recurrence of this'. Therefore, Fr Feehan was 'to enter into securities himself in £200', and to provide two other 'sureties of £100 each to be of good behaviour for six months', or in default to be imprisoned for six months or until the sureties were 'entered in'.³

There was sensation in court. Then, when Fr Feehan refused to pay

1, L.E., 1 Apr. 82.

2, Below, pp 381-2

3, L.E., 1 Apr. 82.

any security and was sentenced to gaol, such was the 'violent excitement' among the crowd outside the court that the entreaties for peace from Fr Feehan's fellow curate, Fr John Doyle, were in vain. Pandemonium broke loose in the town. The cavalry charged, the infantry used fixed bayonets, and with the RIC bringing up the rear moving individuals from doorways and archways the lower part of the town was cleared of people. It was a wonder nobody was killed. In the meantime, Blake ordered the seizure of a brake which had transported the Thurles band to Rathdowney, two horses were yoked to it, Fr Feehan was placed inside guarded by 'a few' RIC and six soldiers, and then driven by an RIC sub-constable the 'whip was applied to the horses'. Following a circuitous route to Maryborough, the escort and its prisoner were met at Cullenagh by Sub-Inspector William D. Grene who escorted them into Maryborough via Meelick Cross and the New Road. Before any demonstration could be activated by Fr Feehan's sympathisers in Maryborough, he was lodged in gaol at about 7 p.m. 1

Meanwhile, back in Rathdowney the disorder continued. Unsuccessful attempts were made to force a way through the cordons of infantry placed across the entrances to the town, stones were thrown, and arrests were made. At about 6 p.m. most of the crowd dispersed, their ardour perhaps dampened by the incessant rain. Later that evening, the military left by a special train, but left behind a 'sufficient' number of extra RIC to keep the peace. 2

The next morning, nine RIC attending Sunday mass were jostled inside Rathdowney chapel, and later as they were leaving the chapel they were attacked by the congregation: 'stones and other missiles'

were thrown, one constable was hit by a bottle, and to defend themselves they had to draw their swords.' Another constable, Daniel Connell, who was on the beat at the time, ran to his comrades' assistance but was knocked out by such a severe blow to his head that 'he became unfit for further service, and had to leave the force on a small pension.'² Further serious injury was prevented by the timely arrival of RIC reinforcements commanded by Sub-Inspector James Somerville.³ Later that Sunday, members of the congregation vented their spleen when they dragged the seat, which the RIC used in the chapel, out into the yard and smashed it.⁴

The hostility towards the RIC in Rathdowney persisted. On 26 March three married constables, who lived away from their barracks, were attacked 'by about a dozen roughs'.⁵ On 27 March more RIC were stoned.⁶ Inhabitants in Rathdowney, who were perceived to be sympathetic to the RIC, were 'saluted with uncomplimentary epithets'.⁷ Then on 29 March, even though Head Constable Tilson and other RIC (against whom there was 'bitter feeling') were transferred,⁸ the hostility towards the RIC must have worsened when 'six persons' were arrested for assault and returned for trial to the summer assizes in Maryborough.⁹

The RIC did not attend mass in Rathdowney on the two Sundays following 26 March. Then on 15 April extra RIC were drafted into Rathdowney, and remained in their barrack during the following three

1. L.E., 1 Apr. 82.

3. Ibid.

5. L.E., 1 Apr. 82.

7. Ibid., 1 Apr. 82.

9. As in n.2 above; five of the six, four men and one woman, were sentenced to one month in gaol.

2. S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.L.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10.

4. Ibid.

6. Ibid.; ibid., 15 Apr. 82.

8. Ibid.; ibid., 15 Apr. 82.

Sundays ready for any emergency while their companions attended mass.¹ The RIC were not molested, but they must have been apprehensive, at least on Sunday morning, 16 April, when placards appeared throughout Rathdowney, which read:

Blake and Tilson, Buckshot's hirelings, has [sic] had their day,
Father Feehan is in gaol and is all right.

IRISHMEN

If you deserve the name, if there is one spark of manhood left in you, resent this dastardly insult offered to your priest and yourselves.

Boycott to the very grave.

Boycott unmercifully and unsparingly all that [sic] harbour, support or in any way connect themselves with the Peelers. The shopkeepers who do so in Rathdowney are well known, and if you do not treat them as they deserve you will be forever trampled on, and that you may go to work then at once with a will. Tumble to the ground the stronghold of Orange ascendancy and Freemason lodges too long allowed [sic] to live in Rathdowney.

Ireland expects every man to do his duty.²

(Of course, the 'antagonistic feeling' toward the RIC in Rathdowney 'subsequently subsided'. But, according to the RIC themselves, after the events attending the prosecution of Fr Feehan their relations with the 'people' were 'never...on the same terms as before the inauguration of the land league'.)³

Meanwhile, in the days after Fr Feehan's imprisonment support for him was expressed in the numerous letters he received,⁴ by the shopkeepers throughout the county who put up the shutters on their shops,⁵ and by the branches of the ladies' land league who passed resolutions expressing their horror at the 'tyranny' that 'could drive a priest from the altar' and leave the 'people without their pastor'.⁶

But whether Fr Feehan was gaoled or not, in any event he was to be

1, L.E., 22 Apr. 82.

3, Ibid.

5, L.E., 1 Apr. 82.

2, S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.L.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10.

4, Fr Feehan's letter to the *Freeman's Journal* in L.E., 8 Apr. 82.

6, L.L., 8 Apr. 82.

driven from the altar. In a letter to the editor of the *Leinster Leader*, which he wrote on 25 March 1882 - the day of his hearing in court - but which the public did not read until 1 April, Fr Feehan enclosed a letter he had received from his bishop, Patrick F. Moran. The letter - which Fr Feehan claimed Bishop Moran would never have written 'if he had not been grossly deceived and misled',¹ and which had caused him 'deeper pain' than the 'police prosecution' or 'any imprisonment'² - read as follows:

My dear Father Feehan,

Under the peculiar circumstances that have arisen in the parish of Rathdowney I deem it expedient that you should cease to exercise faculties until further arrangements may be made. It is with regret that I therefore hereby withdraw from you the faculties which you hold in this diocese, excepting the faculty of offering the Holy Sacrifice. And from the receipt of this note your connection with the parish of Rathdowney shall cease.³

(A patently disapproving *United Ireland* on 8 April 1882 commented that Fr Feehan had been found guilty by the resident magistrate, Henry A. Blake, 'after hearing the evidence of two policemen', but 'was found guilty and sentenced the previous day by his own bishop without hearing any evidence at all'. The editorial in the *Leinster Express* on 1 April 1882 was more perceptive: it commented 'the dignitaries of the catholic church exercise the power of suspending their subordinate clergy with the utmost caution', and in the case of Fr Feehan it was 'in the highest degree improbable that the bishop [Moran] acted...with precipitancy'.)

Fr Feehan did not accept his sentence meekly. On 17 April 1882, in

1. In August 1881 Forster, the chief secretary, had Bishop Moran's attention drawn to Fr Feehan's imprudent behaviour (above, p.227).

2. *L.L.*, 1 Apr. 82.

3. *Ibid.*; *L.E.*, 1 Apr. 82.

the queen's bench division of the high court, he was granted a conditional writ of habeas corpus and a writ of *certiorari* 'with a view to bring up and quash' the conviction in Rathdowney petty sessions. His grounds were that the court had received illegal evidence and rejected legal evidence, his summons was confused, and the warrant was defective in not stating what gaol he was to be sent to.¹ However, on 8 May the lord chief justice refused to set aside the order of the magistrates in Rathdowney, and he was returned to Maryborough gaol.²

His term in gaol was made as pleasant as possible. He said he had 'no grounds whatever of complaint' about 'the courtesy of the governor and the officials of the gaol'.³ His cell was made comfortable by the ladies' land league.⁴ His meals were provided by a caterer from outside the gaol.⁵ He was serenaded periodically by bands playing within earshot of the gaol.⁶ His morale was boosted by regular visits from sympathisers.⁷

On 7 June 1882 he was released, after serving less than two months. (Probably reflecting the views of most landlords, a chagrined *Leinster Express* on 10 June described his release as 'one of the many acts of weakness or mistaken clemency by which the government has discredited every attempt to administer the law in Ireland with firmness.') He walked out of Maryborough gaol to the cheers of a large crowd, and was

1. *United Ireland*, 22 Apr. 82; *L.E.*, 22 Apr. 82.

2. *United Ireland*, 13 May 82; *L.E.*, 13 May 82.

3. Fr Feehan's letter to the *Freeman's Journal* in *L.E.*, 8 Apr. 82.

4. Below, p.389.

5. Reports of meetings of branches of the ladies' land league in Queen's County (*L.L.*, 20 May 82).

6. *L.L.*, 15 Apr. 82; *L.E.*, 15 Apr. 82. During the night after Parnell's release from Kilmainham gaol three bands serenaded Fr Feehan (*L.L.*, 6 May 82).

7. For example, see *L.L.*, 15 Apr. 82 for report on the visit by women land-leaguers from Castletown.

seated in a carriage with three catholic curates from Maryborough, and John Redington, Patrick A. Meehan and Patrick Doran, the three land-leaguers from Maryborough who had been gaoled as suspects. Then, to 'incessant' cheering, and following the band of the Catholic Young Men's Association in a brake, a triumphal procession made its way around the town to the residence of the catholic curates where he was presented with an address. After his speech of appreciation, he caught the 3 p.m. train to Ballybrophy in the company of Fr Peter Dunne, a curate from Maryborough, Fr Edward Walsh, his fellow curate from Rathdowney, and ten prominent land-leaguers from Maryborough.'

At Ballybrophy railway station, he was welcomed by a cheering crowd of about two hundred. He was presented with a bouquet, and an address was read by Nora Campion, the president of the Rathdowney branch of the ladies' land league. His answer to the address showed him to be unrepentant, though perhaps mindful of the possible consequences of breaking the law. Doubtless aware of the new coercion bill then going through parliament,² and because for the next three years their 'enemies' had 'every means of crushing' them, he told the crowd not to give their 'enemies' an opportunity of injuring them: they were to keep within the law, and to see that their 'enemies' did the same. If they went back to the 'protestant shoneen ascendancy' that had for so many years destroyed Rathdowney, they would be crushed even more than before.³ Therefore, at every opportunity they were to elect 'good catholic' poor law guardians, because when it came to the election of

1, L.L., 10 June 82; L.E., 10 June 82,

2, Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Act, 45 & 46 Vict., c.25, 12 July,

3, L.E., 10 June 82,

a poor law guardian, a dispensary doctor,¹ or even a street scavenger, they (the 'protestant shoneen ascendancy') were against them.² Later that evening, Fr Feehan drove to Durrow where he was greeted by 'a large number of persons', and that night bonfires were lit throughout the county in celebration of his release.³

Thus ended perhaps the most traumatic episode in the life of Fr Thomas Feehan, one of the most prominent and acerbic clerical leaders of the land league in the county. Afterwards he fared well. A committee chaired by Michael Corcoran, a merchant from Maryborough,⁴ collected a generous testimonial of about £500 for him.⁵ In 1884 he was transferred to Thomastown parish in County Kilkenny as a curate.⁶ From December 1889 until he died in February 1900 (aged fifty-four 'after a lingering illness') he was the parish priest in Castletown, Queen's County.⁷

(4) Agrarian Crime in Queen's County, October 1881 - May 1882

When Parnell prophesied in Wexford on 9 October 1881 that if he was arrested Captain Moonlight (a synonym for secret societies identified with agrarian crimes) would take his place,⁸ the official statistics for agrarian crimes suggest he was correct. In Ireland as a whole

1. In nearby Borris-in-Ossory, Roman catholic patients refused to attend the protestant dispensary doctor, Adam Mitchell, who had been appointed contrary to the wishes of the local Roman catholic residents who had requested the appointment of a Roman catholic doctor (L.E., 11 Feb, 82).

2. Ibid., 10 June 82. 3. Ibid. 4. Ibid.

5. Indicating the success of the testimonial for Fr Feehan, L.L., 1 July 82 reported that £458 had so far been raised, while a week earlier the same newspaper reported the presentation of a testimonial worth only £33, 19s. 0d. to John Cantwell, the suspect from Athy.

6. *Thom's* 1884, p. 943.

7. William Carrigan, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. ii, p. 187.

8. Lyons, *Parnell*, pp 167-8.

3,498 agrarian crimes were reported by the RIC during the seven months from 1 October 1881 to 30 April 1882 - more than for any similar period during the land war, and more than any annual total during the years 1849-80.¹ In Queen's County 99 agrarian crimes were reported by the RIC in those seven months - more than any annual total for the county during the second half of the nineteenth-century.² (Interestingly, the rate of agrarian crimes in the county during these seven months - 10.2 agrarian crimes per 1,000 holdings above one acre - was 38 per cent higher than the rate for Leinster, and 53 per cent higher than the rate for the country as a whole.)³

However, while they are good indicators of the relative disorder in different periods, such statistics for agrarian crimes must be treated with caution, for the following reasons: (1) Agrarian crimes was a category of crimes in official returns of crimes which applied to Ireland only, and though it is very difficult to judge how carefully crimes were identified as 'agrarian' - because most of the individual returns made by the RIC are missing - as will be seen in the analyses of the homicides in Queen's County (below, pp 378-86) the RIC seemed prone to categorising any crime relating to land as agrarian, and therefore a product of the land war. (2) Statistics for agrarian crimes largely depend on police numbers and their duties. (In October

1. *Returns of the number of agrarian offences in each county...*, H.C., 1882, lv, 1-16, 29-59; Townshend, *Political violence in Ireland*, p.177, table iv.

2. Returns of agrarian offences, as in n.1 above.

3. The number of agrarian crimes in each county during the seven months from 1 October 1881 to 30 April 1882 were: Tipperary 386, Cork 384, Galway 370, Kerry 268, Clare 248, Limerick 186, Roscommon 144, Mayo 137, Westmeath 135, King's County 127, Sligo 110, Kilkenny 101, Queen's County 99, Leitrim 94, Donegal 85, Waterford 82, Longford 71, Cavan 61, Kildare 57, Tyrone 55, Wexford 54, Meath 46, Wicklow 37, Louth 27, Monaghan 26, Carlow 23, Fermanagh 21, Londonderry 20, Armagh 17, Down 10, Dublin 9, Antrim 8; the rate per 1,000 holdings above one acre in the four provinces and in the country as a whole were: Ulster 1.6, Connacht 7.1, Leinster 7.3, Munster 13.9, Ireland 6.6 (*ibid.*; *The agricultural statistics of Ireland for the year 1881* [C3332], H.C., 1882, lxxiv).

1881 when there were 196 RIC in the county, Henry A Blake R.M. complained that the patrol duty of his police was 'inadequately performed...owing to their being perpetually employed in attending meetings and making reports' - duties he later described as 'completely worthless'.²⁾ It must be conceded that during the winter of 1881-2 there was increased lawlessness throughout the country, which in turn prompted the authorities to recruit more RIC. (During the 1881-2 financial year there were 12,850 RIC in Ireland - an increase of 1,006 or 8.5 per cent on the previous financial year.³ During the winter of 1881-2 40 extra RIC were stationed in Queen's County.⁴⁾ Nonetheless, it is significant that the numbers of reported crimes and the numbers of RIC increased concurrently. (3) The annual totals of agrarian crimes can misleadingly connote a crime-ridden society. It is significant that during the sixteen years 1878-93, which include the years of the Plan of Campaign, 62.7 per cent of the 51,166 crimes in Ireland, and 61.1 per cent of the 813 crimes in Queen's County were not classified as agrarian.⁵ (4) It is reasonable to doubt the credibility of some cases in at least three categories of agrarian crimes. First, though nocturnal attacks were a common method of intimidation during the land war, and the victims may have betrayed fellow tenants, it is likely that some perpetrators of such agrarian crimes had motives which had nothing to do with the land war. For

1. Edward S.R. Smyth to Lady Castletown on 16 Oct, 81, written at the request of Blake, asking her 'to bring to his lordship's [Lord Castletown's] consideration the actual necessity of their being immediately a meeting of the magistrates' (N.L.I., Fitzpatrick papers, MS 13752(8)).

2. Report of the meeting of the Queen's County magistrates on 8 Nov, 81 (L.E., 12 Nov, 81).

3. *Return of the number and cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary in each year 1872-73 to 1881-82*, H.C. 1882 (161), liv, 495.

4. Above, p. 337.

5. Appendix 45, below, p. 441; Appendix 46, below, p. 442.

example, of the 211 persons arrested in fifteen counties (including Queen's County) for having taken part in nocturnal attacks between June 1880 and June 1882 97 or 46 per cent were either labourers or farmers' sons,¹ and of these some probably were driven by a sense of social inadequacy or a kind of *machismo* which made them join agrarian bands. Also, there may have been some unscrupulous opportunists like Thomas Flynn, whose behaviour was described by Henry A. Blake R.M. on 10 October 1882 in his letter to Daniel Kane, Coolahilly, Maryborough. Blake wrote:

I have had before me the particulars of the prosecution of Thomas Flynn at the last petty sessions of Clara. It appears that, on the night of 12 September, Thomas Flynn called at several houses and demanded money, which he obtained from some persons under the impression that he was accompanied by others. On his making a similar demand at your house, stating that he was one of a party out for an illegal purpose, you took your gun, rushed out, arrested him, and found on searching the vicinity that he was alone and drunk. But for your action the occurrence would have been accepted as a serious 'moonlight outrage'. I have felt it my duty to bring the case before the notice of His Excellency, and am authorised to convey to you His Excellency's appreciation of your most creditable conduct on this occasion.²

Second, because cess payers paid for malicious damage to property, it is tempting to suspect that some of the reported 'offences against property' were fraudulent. Third, threatening letters or notices - the preponderance of agrarian crimes - were not all genuine: it is likely more than Patrick Murphy, the publican from Rathdowney,³ sent themselves threatening letters to allay suspicions about themselves.

Notwithstanding such qualifications, agrarian crimes unquestionably increased after the arrest of Parnell and his fellow land league leaders in mid-October 1881 and the subsequent proclamation of the land league - an organisation which, in the opinion of its leaders,

1. Appendix 39, below, p.438.

2. L.E., 21 Oct. 82.

3. Above, pp 207.

helped to reduce violent agrarian crime. (For example, in his letter in *United Ireland* on 24 December 1881, Fr Thomas Feehan, the curate from Rathdowney, stated the government 'deprived an exasperated people of its strongest safeguards against crime' by suppressing the land league.)¹ On the other hand, there was the opinion of Alfred Webb - a man described by Davitt as 'of the highest moral bravery'² who became one of the treasurers of the Irish National League. Webb wrote:

There was doubtless violence in the policy of the land league; a rather deliberate shutting of eyes to violence without which it was felt...the movement could not succeed, and an inevitable outcome of rousing a people to the realisation of their wrongs.³

When the ladies' land league was left on its own after the suppression of the land league, it is possible that it too could be characterised by Webb's comments. Frank Hugh O'Donnell wrote of a current story that the customary reply of the women's central branch to requests for relief in every district, which had been unmarked by an outrage within a given time, went:

I am instructed to inform you that the records of your district having been carefully examined, no trace of manly opposition to tyranny can be detected for the past three months. Under these circumstances, we are forced to doubt the reality of the distress which you ask us to alleviate.⁴

While the story is unsubstantiated, and Frank Hugh O'Donnell is an unreliable source,⁵ if it is true then the incitement is clear.

At the same time, the authorities' success rate of detection and

1. Also, in *L.L.*, 17 Dec, 81.

2. Davitt, *Fall*, p.715.

3. Webb, *Autobiography*, p.401.

4. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, *A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, pp 52-3.

5. F.S.L. Lyons describes O'Donnell as an 'egomaniac of a particularly virulent kind' who 'published a so-called *History of the Irish parliamentary party*' (Lyons, *Parnell*, p.62).

punishment of agrarian offenders was poor. For example, offenders were convicted in only 141 or 4.1 per cent of the 3,433 'agrarian offences throughout Ireland reported to the inspector general' in 1882.¹ Of course, it must be admitted that the police 'still lacked a proper detective branch',² most agrarian crimes were particularly difficult to investigate,³ and fear of retribution probably prevented many from helping the police.

Then when such a high proportion of indicted agrarian offenders were not convicted by juries it must have been disheartening for the police, the magistrates, and the landlords. Certainly, as has been noted, at least thirty-eight magistrates in Queen's County on 31 October 1881 believed that 'some alteration in the jury laws' was 'absolutely necessary to secure the punishment of crime'.⁴ Based on the cases of 211 persons arrested in fourteen counties (including Queen's County) and the West Riding of Galway between June 1880 and June 1882, the magistrates probably had some reason to complain about the juries: of the 211 arrested, only 31 or less than 15 per cent were convicted.⁵ The editorial in the *Leinster Express* on 25 June 1881 probably reflected the thinking of the magistrates. According to the editorial, 'the business of obtaining a conviction in a case of an agrarian character, even on the clearest evidence, is one of the most

1. *Return by provinces, of agrarian offences... between the 1st day of January 1882 and the 31st day of December 1882...*, H.C. 1882 912), lvi, 1.

2. Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, p. 137.

3. For example, 2,821, or 82 per cent, of the 3,433 agrarian offences consisted of arson, maiming or killing cattle, threatening letters or notices, injury to property, and firing into dwellings (as in n.1 above).

4. Above, p. 333.

5. 169 were not convicted, 31 were convicted, the jury disagreed in the cases of 6, 4 cases were 'pending', and 1 on bail had 'absconded' (*Return... of all persons arrested for or convicted of having taken part in nocturnal attacks between... June 1880 and June 1882*, H.C. 1882 (403), lv, 609-13).

melancholy features in the state of the county'. Describing a jury as holding 'the balance fairly between the crown and the perpetrator of an agrarian crime', the editorial complained that the chances of obtaining such a 'reliable' jury at quarter sessions were 'as a rule not worth calculating'. Because in many counties, including Queen's County, 'a portion of the crown business' was 'disposed of in each division', there were a 'very limited number of jurors from which to select the good men and true who discharge the most important functions of the criminal court.' The editorial suggested a simple solution: 'if the crown business of quarter sessions were disposed of in a single town in each county', then 'the whole panel of the county would be placed at the disposal of the tribunal, and the chances of securing the services of jurors of intelligence and integrity would be immensely increased.'

Who committed the agrarian crimes? When asked this question before *The Times-Parnell Commission* on 10 July 1889, Patrick A. Meehan's unguarded answer was 'individuals' of the 'agricultural classes principally' whom he described as 'generally small farmers or farmers' sons'.¹ Though Meehan's performance in the witness box before the commission was inept,² and he was denounced by farmers from Queen's

1. *The Times-Parnell Commission*, vol.x, p.50.

2. Probably because he had floundered in the witness box before the commission (*The Times-Parnell Commission*, vol.x, pp 47-52, 59-71), and was 'stung by the rumours' that he had 'betrayed the interests of the national cause', Meehan sought support from Davitt and Arthur O'Connor. He read their responding letters to the meeting of the Maryborough branch of the Irish national league on 20 Apr. 90. Davitt wrote: 'You ask me for my opinion about the evidence you gave before the forgery commission. Your testimony appeared to me to be given in a manly independent way, while its character was such as would go to strongly disprove the accusations of *The Times* against the land league.' O'Connor wrote: 'I remember generally being well pleased at your evidence and congratulating you on leaving the box. My general recollection of your evidence is that it was clear, straightforward and manly, going to prove that all that was done in connection with the land league in the Queen's County was open and above-board; that there was nothing to be concealed or be ashamed of' (L.E., 26 Apr. 90; L.L., 26 Apr. 90).

County, ' he was broadly correct for the following reasons:

(1) While admittedly more than one person were required to commit some agrarian crimes (such as the threatening of James and Joseph Kelly in their home at Brockagh - two miles north of Clonaslee - on Sunday night 5 March 1882)² nevertheless the author has found no evidence of any secret society - that is any secret grouping bound by any sort of initiation ceremony and oath-taking - which was active in the county during the land war.

(2) The perpetrators of agrarian crimes were almost entirely male. Women were a noted presence at some of the most publicised events of the land war, such as public land league meetings, sheriffs' auctions, and evictions, but they rarely involved themselves in agrarian crimes on any scale. There were, of course, some unruly women: in August 1881 two women from near Ballickmoyler helped to tar 'from head to foot' an old man employed by Miss Florinda Hovenden, who had had her tenants served with civil-bill processes for rent:³ in May 1882 an old woman told four pig buyers in Maryborough that they were sitting in a boycotted car, and thereby caused such a row between the four and a driver that a crowd assembled and the RIC were required to keep the peace:⁴ some of the mob who assaulted the RIC in Rathdowney after mass on 26 March 1882 were women.⁵

(3) Two analyses support the contention that the great majority of those who committed agrarian crimes were men of the 'agricultural

1. Report of the meeting of 178 members of the Maryborough branch of the Irish National League on 20 Apr. 90 (L, E., 26 Apr. 90, L, L., 26 Apr. 90).

2. L, E., 11 Mar. 82; below, p. 377.

3. L, E., 27 Aug. 81. The two women were fined 5s. 0d. and costs at Ballickmoyler petty sessions on 2 Sept. 81 (ibid., 10 Sept. 81).

4. Ibid., 13 May 82.

5. Above, pp 351-2.

classes principally' who were aged forty years and under. First, of the 211 persons who were 'arrested for or convicted of having taken part in nocturnal attacks between the months of June 1880 and June 1882' in fourteen counties (including Queen's County) and the West Riding of Galway 183 or 86.7 per cent consisted of farmers, labourers, farmers' sons, one farmer's daughter, and one publican who also farmed.' Second, of the 100 persons arrested under the Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881, whose occupations were listed on confidential forms or recommendation for arrest forms stored in two cartons in the State Paper Office in Dublin Castle, 70 could be identified clearly with the 'agricultural classes', and of the 86 whose ages were given, 41 or 47.7 per cent were 30 years or under, and another 29 or 33.7 per cent were aged between 31 and 40 years.²

Based on surviving police reports and newspaper reports, it is possible to list the victims of agrarian crimes under two broad headings: (1) landlords who were evicting tenants or who were taking other legal proceedings against them for rent, their employees, and those who were considered by hard-line land-leaguers to be in sympathy with landlords; (2) farmers who were the victims of family disputes and disputes with their neighbours, and farmers who were perceived to have betrayed their fellow members of the land league.

As has been shown, landlords in Queen's County who were in conflict with their tenants had their lives severely disturbed by hard-line land-leaguers,³ yet it is possible to make too much of the hostility

1. Appendix 39, below, p.438

2. Appendices 43 and 44, below, p.440.

3. For example, Dr David Jacob (above, pp 188-95), Robert Hamilton Stubber (above, pp 208-11), Robert Owen (above, pp 216-20), Valentine Ryan (above, pp 279-81), Richard Warburton (above, pp 281-3),

directed against them. Such landlords probably were the principal victims of threatening letters and notices in the county,' but even considering that they were under police protection and surveillance it is significant that none of the threats of personal violence was carried out on them. One alleged conspiracy to kill a landlord - Colonel Henry D. Carden of Knightstown (almost three miles east of Mountmellick) - was based on information given to the police by Patrick Scully, a sixty year-old labourer and former soldier. In February 1882 Scully, who expected a reward for his information, callously trumped up a charge against two tenants from near Mountmellick - John Williams and his neighbour, John Larkin, a tenant of Carden's who also had been Scully's employer. According to Scully, on several occasions since November 1881 Larkin asked him to shoot Carden, and on one occasion gave him a parcel of lead pellets with the promise of a gun with a cap and powder. As payment for the murder Larkin offered Scully £15, which subsequently Williams offered to supplement by £5. 'Every preparation' was made, but on the day appointed for the murder Scully did not turn up. Later, when he refused to commit the murder, Scully was 'obliged' to swear that he would not reveal the plot. However, because he was afraid of being murdered by Larkin and Williams, Scully broke his oath, and told the police. On 9 February Larkin and Williams were arrested, brought before Vesey Fitzgerald R.M. in Maryborough courthouse, and remanded

1. For examples see above, pp 218, 280. In Apr. 82 an unidentified lady residing in Queen's County received a letter 'warning her having regard to the fate of Mrs Smythe' (L.E., 29 Apr. 82). Earlier on Passion Sunday, 2 April, the wife of Henry M. Smythe from 33 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin was shot dead at Barbavilla, near Mullingar, County Westmeath (*Daily Express*, 4, 5 Apr. 82; L.E., 13 May 82); Smythe was awarded £800 under the Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Act, 1882 as compensation for the loss of his wife who was considered the victim of an agrarian outrage (L.E., 18 Aug. 83).

in custody.' But they were not brought to trial. While Scully was in Dublin under police protection, Head Constable James Walsh, from Maryborough, searched Scully's house and the house of his new employer, and discovered vital evidence: in the pocket of a waistcoat belonging to Scully he found the bowl of a lead spoon - 'apparently corresponding with the portion which had been converted into the pellets given by Scully to the police' - which was wrapped in paper similar to the paper in which the pellets were wrapped: also found amongst Scully's clothes was a letter from William D'Alton, the clerk of the crown for King's County, apparently in reply to a letter from Scully about a reward he hoped to get for information. As a result of these discoveries Larkin and Williams were released from custody, and on 14 March 1882 Scully pleaded guilty to a charge of 'wilful and corrupt perjury in an information', and was gaoled for seven years.²

The employees of landlords who were in conflict with their tenants were usually threatened, with the probable result that some gave up their jobs.³ One infamous outrage, which occurred at Coolaghy - between Coolbanagher and Portarlinton - at 7.30 p.m. on 15 October 1881, may have frightened some employees. Six men and five boys who had been sent by Thomas Hutchinson, a boycotted protestant farmer from Coolbanagher, to help another boycotted protestant farmer, David Cunningham from nearby Tierhogan, were returning from a threshing when they were fired at by an unidentified person using a blunderbuss from behind a hedge. Six were wounded.⁴ Henry Byrne, one of the wounded

1. *L.E.*, 11 Feb. 82.

2. *Ibid.*, 18 Mar. 82.

3. For the example of Valentine Ryan's employees, see above, p.281.

4. *L.E.*, 22 Oct. 81.

men, lost an eye, and a year later was given £200 compensation by the county grand jury.' (No one was ever convicted of the outrage. On the evening of the shooting, Andrew and Patrick Gallagher, brothers and the respective secretaries of the Ballybrittas and Killinard branches of the land league, were arrested 'on suspicion'. They were kept on remand until 31 October, when they were released because no evidence was offered against them. However, when they were leaving Maryborough gaol they were re-arrested under the Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881, and brought to Naas gaol where they served 222 days.)²

When landlords in the county were forced to use emergency men - workers supplied by the Property Defence Association and the Orange Emergency Committee - this must have infuriated hard-line land-leaguers. But such employees were less vulnerable than the ordinary employees of landlords: usually they came from outside the county,³ were often armed,⁴ were under constant police or military protection until at least 20 February 1882, and thereafter were under the surveillance of police patrols.⁵

1. *L.E.*, 4 Nov. 82.

2. Appendix 38, below, p. 437; *L.E.*, 5 Nov. 81; S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.L.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10; *ibid.*, Arrests under Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881-2, vol. ii, pp 321-2.

3. For example, on 13 Sept. 81, twenty-five labourers travelled from New Ross, County Wexford to Tinvier Lodge, near Durrow, to cut one hundred acres of meadow for John George Swan (*L.E.*, 17 Sept. 81).

4. According to George Vanston, an auctioneer in Maryborough, when eight emergency labourers and their ganger arrived in Maryborough railway station on 11 Sept. 81 'two or three pulled out revolvers... just to let the decent people know that they were armed' (Vanston's speech at a land league meeting near Oak school house in *L.E.*, 17 Sept. 81). *Ibid.*, 8 Apr. 82 reported that fifteen 'well-armed' employees of the Property Defence Association were left 'in charge' of six houses at Ballykealy - between Cullahill and Durrow - from which tenants had been evicted.

5. The solicitor, Arthur F. Moffett of 24 South Frederick Street, Dublin wrote to the *Daily Express* (letter also published in *L.E.*, 25 Feb. 82) complaining about the withdrawing of four RIC from Raheenduff, near Attanagh, where they had been protecting emergency men. The order withdrawing the RIC was given by Henry A. Blake R.M. who suggested to Moffett that he should place 'a sufficient number of caretakers on the premises to protect themselves from sudden attack'; Blake also promised that the caretakers would be protected by 'frequent police patrols' (*ibid.*).

The police and the military predictably were abused verbally, and sometimes were stoned when they were required to keep the peace at the major events of the land war in the county.¹ Of the two forces the police suffered more - perhaps because they were a constant presence in an area, and therefore individually recognizable: they were burned in effigy,² were the objects of boycotting notices,³ were assaulted by mobs on at least two occasions,⁴ and women in the district of Camross (about four miles west of Mountrath) were warned against 'accepting the attentions of the police'.⁵

As has been shown, protestants seemed to have been subjected to explicit sectarian violence during the land war - at least in the south-west of the county where they were perceived to be allied with the landlords.⁶ However, it would be incorrect to suggest that such sectarianism was prevalent in the county. The *Leinster Express* in particular, which probably publicised almost every attack on protestants during the land war and thereby suggested a sectarian crisis or epidemic, may have instilled a fear among protestants where none should have existed. Two cases in the police files in Dublin Castle suggest that some protestants in the county had a siege-mentality.

The first involved James Maurice, a forty year-old protestant farmer from Watercastle (two and a half miles west of Ballinakill) who

1. Above, p.228-9.

2. Above, p.206, n.6.

3. Above, p.353.

4. Above, pp.230.

5. The women were warned in notices found by the police near Camross chapel on 15 Jan,82 (*L.E.*, 21 Jan,82).

6. Above, pp 226-7, 270-3.

rented 105 acres from Viscount De Vesci for £65 per annum.' In November 1880 Maurice paid two shillings to join the Ballinakill branch of the land league. However, according to himself, he never attended a meeting of the branch until 3 October 1881, and only did so then after his branch secretary, John Jackman, sent him a letter threatening boycotting if he did not attend.² In any case, Maurice was the only protestant among the 'thirty or forty' who attended that 'private' meeting in 'Kenna's house' (probably the residence of the Ballinakill grocer, Martin Kenna)³ on 3 October, which was chaired by Fr Andrew Dempsey, the parish priest of Ballinakill. According to Maurice, 'after the transaction of the business connected with the land league' was over, and the meeting was 'dissolved by the chairman',

I left the room and, missing my way, got into a dark passage outside where I overheard the following observations addressed by the Revd Andrew Dempsey to those who remained behind me in the room: 'Is Maurice gone out?' He was informed he was. 'Let ye all stand together better than they did in '98, and have no mistake about it, and use the old style - the pike - and have it done in one night, and get rid of all the protestants throughout all Ireland...'⁴

When Maurice heard these words he was so afraid he might be killed there and then that he rushed out of Kenna's house, mounted his horse, and went home. Then after the meeting which, he said, taught him what the land-leaguers 'were at', he joined the 'defence association' when it was 'got up'.⁵

It was not until 27 October 1881 that Dublin Castle was told about that 'private' meeting of the Ballinakill branch of the land league in

1, Report of Henry A. Blake R.M. on 30 Oct. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/38589).

2, Maurice's statement to Blake included in Blake's report on 30 Oct. 81 (ibid.).

3, *Slater's Directory* 1881, p. 321.

4, Maurice's information to Staples and Fitzherbert on 30 Oct 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P. ibid.).

5, As in n.1, above.

Kenna's house. Apparently, Maurice in confidence told his story to a protestant 'miller named Lee' (probably Samuel Leigh of Abbeyleix)' who in turn told the two local magistrates, Henry C. Fitzherbert and Robert Staples. Then on 23 October in Dunmore (Staples's home) a 'very reluctant' Maurice 'was ultimately induced to swear the information on a promise of the strictest secrecy'.² The sworn statement then was delivered to Dublin Castle by Viscount De Vesci.³

Based on the results of the 'careful and discreet' investigations which were ordered by Under-Secretary Burke,⁴ it is reasonable to disbelieve Maurice. Of course, it must be conceded that there is some evidence to support Maurice's story. Robert Staples thought Maurice's 'character' was 'very good'.⁵ Henry A. Blake R.M. reported that Maurice's 'manner impressed me with the idea that he was telling the truth', he was 'solvent', and was 'not seeking for any other farm or any favour that might possibly induce him to invent the story for the purpose of seeking a recompense'.⁶ Sub-Inspector James Somerville of Abbeyleix confirmed the accuracy of the detailed description of Kenna's premises, which Maurice had given to Blake.⁷

On the other hand, there is the weighty evidence against Maurice's story. As Sub-Inspector Somerville stated, 'The manner, bearing, and the outward course of conduct of the Revd Mr Dempsey during the land league agitation' was against the information of Maurice.⁸ Fr

1. Slater's Directory 1881, p.321.

2. Blake's report on 30 Oct. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/38589).

3. Note appended to Maurice's sworn statement (ibid.).

4. Ibid.

5. As in n.2, above.

6. Maurice told Blake that he had been married twice and 'got £600 fortune each time', and had £1,000 in the bank; also, Blake 'went over' Maurice's farm which, he said, showed 'every symptom of prosperity' (as in n.2, above).

7. Somerville's report on 3 Nov. 81.

8. Ibid.

Dempsey never was an officer in the Ballinakill branch of the land league' He rarely attended branch meetings, though when he did attend he acted as chairman.² He 'never allowed a monster land league meeting to be held in his parish, nor...attended any'.³ 'At all times' he 'preached peace and submission to the law', and as recently as 30 October 1881 he 'exhorted his people off the altar to abstain from any violation of the law or interference with the constituted authorities of the country'.⁴

Then there are the reasons for suspecting Maurice was a drunken liar. First, as Head Constable Bernard King from Abbeylax observed shrewdly, it was 'strange' that Maurice 'allowed' twenty days 'to elapse without mentioning a matter of such grave importance to himself and his co-religionists'.⁵ Second, Maurice admitted to Blake 'that there were no pikes being manufactured to his knowledge, and that he never saw one'.⁶ Third, though Robert Staples said Maurice 'was not a habitual drunkard, but he drank sometimes',⁷ it is possible that because he may have been under the threat of boycotting, and was twenty minutes late for the meeting on 30 October 1881, he was somewhat inebriated and, as Sub-Inspector Somerville opined, 'if remarks were made about '98 Maurice, without intending, may have put his own construction on some expression he overheard'.⁸

The second case involved Mrs George Whittaker, a 'poor' protestant from Abbeylax. On 24 October 1881 Mrs Whittaker 'was making some

1. Report of Head Constable Bernard King on 31 Oct, 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/38589),

2. Ibid,

3. Ibid,

4. Ibid,

5. Ibid,

6. Blake's report on 30 Oct, 81 (ibid.),

7. Blake's report on 1 Nov, 81 (ibid.),

8. Somerville's report on 3 Nov, 81 (ibid.),

purchases' in Morrissey's grocery shop' on the main street of Abbeylax when an old man came into the shop and made some remarks, which frightened her. Apparently, 'on hearing that she was one of themselves' the old man said to the shop assistant 'Mr Bowe, we are going to have great changes in this country soon..., and we don't know what night the burst will come.' When the shop assistant failed to silence the old man with a 'look', he stepped from behind the counter and led him away saying 'Pat, my poor man, you look cold. Come and have some drink.' 'In much alarm' Mrs Whittaker went to consult her clergyman, Brabazon T. Disney, but his wife, Sarah, 'saw her for him' as 'he was busy.'² Then on 2 November Mrs Disney sent a letter to Robert Staples in which she recounted what Mrs Whittaker had told her: Staples in turn sent the letter to Henry A. Blake R.M. with the request that it should be forwarded to Dublin Castle because its contents pertained to 'the matter of Maurice's information'.³

On 7 November 1881 Dublin Castle decided there was no 'necessity to take any further steps' in the cases of Mrs Whittaker and James Maurice.⁴ 'The matter', as Blake noted, was 'difficult to inquire about', and in any case, as far as he could 'learn' in early November 1881, there was 'no indication in any other part of the county of any movement against protestants as a sectarian measure'.⁵ However, notwithstanding Blake's report and the possibility that Mrs Whittaker

1. William J. Morrissey was a wholesale and family grocer and spirit dealer, a baker, a corn and seed merchant, a timber and slate merchant, and a shipping agent (*Slater's Directory* 1881, pp 320-1).

2. Sarah Disney to Robert Staples on 2 Nov. 81 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/38589).

3. Blake's note dated 6 Nov. 81, which he enclosed with Sarah Disney's letter (*ibid.*).

4. A decision based on the advice of John Nash Q.C., Dublin Castle's law adviser (*ibid.*).

5. *Ibid.*

was neurotic,' and Maurice was either or both a drunkard and a liar, it is reasonable to suggest that there was a siege-mentality among some protestants in Queen's County. Both Maurice and Mrs Whittaker were influenced by the conviction, which probably was shared by at least Staples, Fitzherbert, Leigh the miller, and the 'old fox hunter',² that protestants *per se* were threatened by land-leaguers.

It is likely that hard-line land-leaguers, particularly during the winter of 1881-2, directed most of their hostility at farmers who had betrayed the land league. Of course, as has been shown, most solvent tenants paid their rents whatever the dictates of the land league, and even when they paid 'at the point of the bayonet' their resistance was a sham.³ Then, in spite of the no-rent manifesto, a large number of tenant farmers effectively detached themselves from the land league by taking advantage of the fair rent provisions of the land act of 1881. That such tenant farmers were resented by at least one hard-line land-leaguer is evident from Martin Delaney's letter in the *Leinster Leader* on 12 November 1881. (Delaney, who was described by Thomas Hamilton R.M. as 'one of the most dangerous men' he knew,⁴ was a farmer and publican from Borris-in-Ossory, married with six children, the secretary of the Borris-in-Ossory branch of the land league, and had been gaoled for ninety-one days as a suspect under the Protection of Person and Property (Ireland) Act, 1881.⁵) Alluding to the land

1. According to Sarah Disney, Mrs Whittaker suffered 'much annoyance' from 'her unruly neighbours', but did not 'wish to make it public' (Sarah Disney's letter, op.cit.).

2. Above, p.283.

3. Above, pp 258-60.

4. 'Grounds of suspicion' written by Hamilton on 8 June 81 in a 'memorandum of proceedings' in the case of Delaney (S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.L.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 2).

5. Ibid.; Appendix 38, below, p.437.

league convention held in Maryborough on 26 September 1881,¹ after which Parnell and a 'crowd' of the delegates were photographed in a field by 'Mr Laurence of Dublin',² Delaney sarcastically wrote:

Would it not now be well and wisely done to have the first fifty of the tenant farmers of Queen's County, who are going into the land court, photographed? They could be grouped in the Ridge field at Maryborough, where Mr Parnell and the delegates were photographed on the day of the Queen's County convention, and centre figures of the group might stand in some attitude that would be expressive of a no-rent manifesto... I am sure the people of the Queen's County will hasten to buy copies of the photograph if it were only to testify their respect for the noble stand these heroes are about to make... Their consistency and courage deserve to be commemorated in a more permanent form than that of a fading photograph.³

While doubtless some tenants were harassed by hard-line land-leaguers because they applied to the land courts to have 'fair rents' fixed on their holdings, it is probable that tenants who were considered land-grabbers or who were believed to have paid their rents behind the backs of other tenants suffered most from agrarian crimes:

(1) Their names were publicised in posters which threatened their lives or called on 'the people' to boycott them. For example, on 15 March 1882 Patrick Kelly, one of Viscount De Vesci's tenants,⁴ and John Norris, a porter in Abbeylax railway station, were gaoled for five years for posting notices on telegraph poles in Abbeylax on 20 January 1882: the notices named thirty farmers from the district of Abbeylax, described their 'conduct' as treacherously betraying 'the cause', demanded that they be shunned as 'traitors', and threatened their lives.⁵

1. Above, pp 294-8.

2. *L.E.*, 1 Oct. 81. Possibly a misprint in the newspaper; 'Laurence' may have been William Lawrence whose collection of plates has been in the National Library, Dublin since 1942.

3. *United Ireland*, 19 Nov. 81; *L.L.*, 12 Nov. 81.

4. His family were evicted in July 82 (*L.E.*, 29 July 82).

5. *Ibid.*, 18 Mar. 82.

(2) They were boycotted. For example, Andrew Briggs, who 'took' a farm in Grangebeg (near Carlow town) in 1882, 'surrendered the farm' on 1 February 1888 because of the 'severity with which the boycotting was carried on against him'.¹

(3) Their stock suffered. While only six cases of the mutilation of cattle were reported by the police in 1881-2,² it is likely that previous tenants or their supporters interfered with fences and gates, and drove off stock.³

(4) Their crops were damaged. For example, on 29 September 1881 in a field near Ballickmoyler, from which a tenant had been evicted the previous year by Sir Anthony C. Weldon, work came to a grinding halt when workmen using 'a machine to reap barley' discovered that the field was studded with iron spikes eighteen to twenty-four inches long.⁴ Also, there is the example of Richard S. Smith who on 26 May 1881 took over a farm in Doonane from which James Kavanagh was evicted by Benjamin B. Edge: on 2 September 1881 Smith was so worried about having 'his crops gathered and properly secured' that he requested the establishment of a police protection post on his farm.⁵

(5) Their outhouses and ricks of hay and straw were set on fire.⁶

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.L.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10.

2. Appendix 45, below, p.441.

3. For example, in February 1882 Henry Porter became the tenant of a farm at Ballygormhill (two miles north of Timahoe) from which James Byrne had been evicted; the Byrne family and their friends frightened off Porter's workers and drove his stock out of his fields until they were prosecuted at Timahoe petty sessions on 23 June 1882 (L.E., 25 Feb., 4 Mar., 1 July 82).

4. Ibid., 1 Oct. 81.

5. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/32074. Until 1884 Smith was boycotted, and from 14 Aug. 81 until 14 Feb. 82 there were two constables billeted in his house for his 'personal protection' (ibid., I.N.L.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10).

6. For example, when Andrew Delaney from Roskeen paid his rent on 31 June 81 after his fellow tenants 'had sacrificed their interest' he suffered from arson as a result (L.E., 11 Mar. 82); at the Tinnahinch presentment sessions on 16 May 82 he was awarded £30 compensation (ibid., 20 May 82).

(6) Shots were fired through the windows of their homes. For example, at 11 p.m. on 16 May 1882 in Ballinlough near Ballyroan a shot was fired through Peter Holohan's kitchen window.' (On 3 May 1882 Holohan rented part of a neighbouring farm which had been 'surrendered' by Michael Walsh two months earlier.)²

(7) Their homes were broken into at night, and they were abused and threatened by men who were armed sometimes, and who usually had their faces blackened. For example, in the vicinity of Clonaslee on 5 March 1882 'shortly after' 9 p.m. an 'armed party disguised with blackened faces' shot a dog, fired shots, and threatened the occupants of the houses of James and Joseph Kelly, John Stanley and James Connolly.³ Also, at 11.30 p.m. 10 December 1881 John Whelan's house at Oughaval, Stradbally was broken into by two men who, using abusive and menacing language, called Whelan a land-grabber, and warned him not to rent a field which was formerly held by the recently deceased parish priest, Fr John McGee.⁴

Doubtless, such agrarian crimes sometimes had their desired effect⁵ - particularly on small tenants: boycotted tenants tended to be isolated, and did not have the same social or economic resources as landlords or their agents to survive. Also, whether or not agrarian crimes were actually committed against them - two-thirds of the agrarian crimes committed in Queen's County 1878-93 were threatening letters or notices⁶ - the simple prospect of themselves or their

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.L.L & I.N.L. papers, carton 10.

2. Ibid.

3. L.E., 11 Mar. 82.

4. Ibid., 17 Dec. 81.

5. For example, see William Kelly's letter in L.L., 28 Jan. 82 in which he apologised for taking possession of a small farm near Abbeyfeix and the consequent 'injury' he had 'done to others'.

6. Appendix 45, below, p.441.

property being assailed in some way was enough to keep some tenants amenable to the dictates of hard-line land-leaguers.

As already stated, official statistics for agrarian crimes, whatever reservations one might have about their accuracy, are good indicators of the relative disorder in different periods. For example, only one agrarian crime was reported by the RIC in Queen's County in 1878, 5 in 1879, 18 in 1880, and 93 in 1881.¹ At the same time, the statistics for agrarian crimes indicate the increasing disorder in the country as a whole: 301 agrarian crimes were reported in 1878, 863 in 1879, 2,585 in 1880, and 4,439 in 1881.²

The returns of 'agrarian outrages specially reported to the constabulary' for the years 1878-93 record three homicides in Queen's County:³ two murders were committed in December 1881, and one manslaughter was committed in January 1882. These three crimes are worth investigating, not only because they indicate a definite increase in violent agrarian outrages in the county during the winter of 1881-2, but also because they permit some judgement on the accuracy with which the police categorised crimes as agrarian.

The manslaughter happened near Chapel Lane in Maryborough on the evening of 16 January 1882. The victim was Daniel Hennessy, a married man with nine children who was employed as a car driver by the boycotted auctioneer, John Gaze, and who 'was in the habit of driving the police to evictions etc.'⁴ Apparently, Hennessy was 'often drunk', and was only 'middling sober' when he received his fatal

1. Appendix 45, below, p.441.

2. Appendix 46, below, p.442.

3. Appendix 45, op.cit.

4 S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.N.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10.

injury. According to Kate and Michael Joseph Hennessy - two of his children, aged ten and eight years respectively, who were sent by their mother 'to bring him home' - he was standing with them talking to two men when a 'somewhat notorious character named Pat Dunne' (an unemployed labourer who was then drunk) 'came up' and struck him on his shoulder saying 'To hell with all emergency men! I will pass by no emergency men.' Hennessy was caught so unawares that, 'throwing out his arms', he fell awkwardly, hit his skull off the ground, and was knocked unconscious. On 21 January he died in Maryborough infirmary.²

Dunne, who had run away from the scene of the crime,³ surrendered to the police on the day after Hennessy's death, and at the following spring assizes he was tried for manslaughter. However, he was acquitted because the case for the prosecution largely depended on the statements of Hennessy's two young children. Dunne's defence counsel showed that there were two men named Patrick Dunne near Chapel Lane at the time of the manslaughter, and convinced the court that neither child could identify confidently the guilty party. Also, Pat Lawlor and John Hurley contradicted the children's statement that they were the two men standing beside Hennessy when he was knocked in a 'heap in the gutter': suggesting that Hennessy was making a nuisance of himself when he 'offered' them 'drink', they asserted that they 'went away up the archway [opposite Chapel Lane] to get shut [sic] of him', and consequently they knew nothing about the crime.⁴

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.N.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10; L.E., 21, 28 Jan. 82.

2. S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.N.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10.

3. L.E., 21 Jan. 82.

4. Ibid., 18 Mar. 82; S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.N.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10.

To link Hennessy's death with the land war is problematical. Certainly, Hennessy might not have been knocked over had he not been a car driver for Gaze who was boycotted, but there is a case to be made for stating that he was drunk, and his death was simply the tragic consequence of a jostle from a man driven not by any sense of idealism or grievance but simply by alcohol.

Patrick Dunne also was the name of the sixty-eight year-old small farmer from Boley Upper (three miles west of Abbeylisle) who was found dead lying on his bed on 18 December 1881. He was dressed in his working clothes. An examination of the body showed that he had died from wounds about his head, which probably were inflicted by a hammer and a chisel. It was supposed that the murder was committed on 10 December 1881 outside Dunne's house, after which the body was carried inside and placed on the bed where it remained until the door was broken in on 18 December.

The prime suspect was Patrick's brother Timothy, also a bachelor, who had been living with him in the same house for about three years. In 1878 or 1879 Timothy returned from America where he had lived for about nineteen years, and paid some debt that was due by Patrick on his ten acres. Apparently, Timothy expected to get at least a share in the farm, but when the debt was cleared Patrick refused to cede anything. Consequently, the two brothers 'lived on very bad terms with each other': Timothy, a 'man of reckless disposition' who was 'in the habit of taking a sup of whiskey', 'endeavoured in every way to destroy Patrick's means' by vindictive acts such as burning a small stack of oats which Patrick had bought, and tying Patrick's donkey to

a beehive where it was stung to death.¹ Timothy was missing when Patrick's body was discovered. Then three months later (ironically on St Patrick's day) when Timothy's body was pulled out of the Barrow river near Mountmellick the case was closed. Apparently, Timothy had drowned himself.²

On the face of it, there was a clear agrarian element in the murder of Patrick Dunne, but it could hardly be regarded as the direct result of the prevailing land agitation during that winter of 1881-2.

Of the three homicides in the county during the winter of 1881-2 the murder of Martin Rogers on 3 December 1881 in Graigueagarran (south-east of Rathdowney) is the one most clearly linked to the land war. Rogers, an 'attorney's clerk', was aged about twenty-eight, had no relatives, had lost his right forearm in an accident, and at the time of his murder 'was wasted by a prolonged and severe illness': he was 'in many respects calculated to excite commiseration rather than animosity'.³

On the evening of 2 December 1881 Rogers arrived in Rathdowney to serve four civil processes on tenants on the Aghmacart and Graigueagarran parts of Richard T. Whitty's estate. (Whitty lived in Whitechurch, Dublin, and owned 863 acres in Queen's County.)⁴ Before finding lodgings for the night Rogers left his papers with Head Constable Richard Tilson in Rathdowney police station. The following morning, as on the previous evening, Tilson offered Rogers a police

1, S.P.O., C.S.O., Return of outrages, vol. iv, p. 6; L.E., 24 Dec. 81.

2, Local opinion was that Timothy had drowned himself (L.E., 31 Dec. 81); report on the discovery of Timothy's body, and the inquest the next day in *ibid.*, 25 Mar. 82.

3, *Ibid.*, 10 Dec. 81.

4, *Return of owners of land*, [C1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876].

escort because, he said, the locality in which the processes were to be served was 'in a disturbed condition'.¹ Rogers refused the offer, and 'set out alone on his fatal errand'. He was murdered some time between 12.30 p.m. and 1 p.m. on a breen called Srahlane, about three miles south-east of Rathdowney.² Near his body were a stone weighing about fourteen pounds which was covered in blood, several smaller stones also bloodied, and a piece of an iron hoop;³ the stump of his right arm was broken, the fingers on his left hand were 'smashed', and his skull was 'beaten in'.⁴

Within hours of arriving at the scene of the murder the police arrested James Holland and Timothy Bergin 'on suspicion'. (Holland and Bergin were two of Whitty's tenants who lived on Srahlane.)⁵ On 5 December 1881 Sub-Inspector William D. Grene - described by the *Leinster Express* as 'one of the most active and efficient officers in the constabulary force'⁶ - was transferred temporarily from Maryborough to Rathdowney to investigate the murder,⁷ and on the same day Dublin Castle directed Jeremiah Mara, the sessional crown solicitor, to Rathdowney 'to assist the police'.⁸ Nevertheless, and despite the authorities offering a reward of £200 for information that would lead to the conviction of the murderers,⁹ evidence was hard to

1. S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.N.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10; *L.E.*, 10 Dec.81.

2. *L.E.*, 10 Dec.81.

3. Report on the trial of Timothy Bergin (*ibid.*, 15 July 82).

4. *Ibid.*, 10 Dec.81.

5. *Ibid.*; *ibid.*, 15 July 82. A third man, James Dillon, also was arrested, but within hours was released from custody (*ibid.*, 10 Dec.81; S.P.O., C.S.O., Return of outrages, vol. iv).

6. *L.E.*, 10 Dec.81.

7. *Ibid.*

8. S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/43139.

9. *L.E.*, 10 Dec.81; Fr Thomas Feehan's letter in *L.L.*, 17 Dec.81 and in *United Ireland*, 24 Dec.81.

come by. Eventually, along with Holland and Bergin three other farmers - James McGrath from Graigueagarran, Michael Whelan from Srahleagh and Michael Ryan from Srahbaun - were charged with murdering Rogers.¹

However, it is evident that the police continued to be dissatisfied with their case against the five accused. They were remanded in custody at least four times between 17 December 1881 and 12 January 1882.² Their trial, which was to have taken place during the assizes in March 1882, was postponed until the assizes in July 1882.³ On 10 July 1882 the police vainly tried to have the trial postponed again.⁴ Finally on 11 July 1882, when faced with the prospect of allowing the five to be discharged or proceeding with a trial, the prosecution chose the latter.⁵

Bergin was the first to be tried. The case for the prosecution depended on the evidence of Andrew Whelan, 'a tailor by trade' from Freshford, County Kilkenny, who claimed to have witnessed Bergin and others murder Rogers. According to himself, Whelan was in Roscrea on 2 December 1881 vainly looking for employment. Then the following day, after spending the night in a boarding house in Roscrea, he travelled by train to Ballybrophy, walked to Rathdowney where he had a drink in Henry G. Perry's public house, and then set out to walk to Freshford. When he was taking a short cut through fields he was alarmed to see men running towards him, and concealed himself behind a ditch from which point he witnessed the murder in Srahlane.⁶

1, L.E., 24 Dec.81, 15 July 82.

2, Ibid., 24 Dec.81, 31 Dec.81, 7 Jan.82; L.L., 14 Jan.82.

3, Report on Timothy Bergin's trial (L.E., 15 July 82).

4, Ibid. 5, Ibid. 6, Ibid.

Bergin's defence counsel had no difficulty in exposing Whelan as a shiftless character who was willing to perjure himself for the £200 reward. (He described himself as a tailor, but also had been a soldier, a water bailiff, a summons-server for the petty sessions court in Freshford, had 'travelled' under different aliases, and as Alexander Henry Walsh had been dismissed from his job as a process-server for being drunk and disorderly.)¹ Four pieces of evidence exposed Whelan's story as a tissue of lies: (1) William Ryan, a tailor from Freshford, swore that Whelan was working for him from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. on the day of the murder; (2) Ann Phelan, who owned the lodging house in Roscrea in which Whelan claimed he stayed on 2 December 1881, stated that that night she had no lodgers; (3) a railway time-table showed that the only train by which Whelan could have travelled from Roscrea to Ballybrophy on 3 December 1881 did not arrive in Ballybrophy until 2.15 p.m. - perhaps an hour after the murder was committed; (4) because the ditch behind which Whelan claimed he had concealed himself was 240 yards away from the scene of the murder, it would have been virtually impossible for him either to hear Rogers's moans or to witness clearly the actual murder.²

The verdict of the jury was predictable: after retiring for only three minutes they returned a verdict of not guilty. The prosecution then decided not to proceed in the cases of the other four farmers accused of murdering Rogers, and they were discharged on the understanding that at any future time they could be indicted again.³

1, Report on Timothy Bergin's trial (L.E., 15 July 82),

2, Ibid,

3, Ibid,

But nobody was tried ever again for the murder of Rogers. (Also, the author did not find any record of a locality paying compensation for the murder. Because Rogers was described as having no relatives' it is probable none was paid.)

It would be incorrect to suggest that the trial of Bergin resulted in a miscarriage of justice: the jury had no alternative but to acquit him on the evidence presented to them. Nonetheless, it is likely that in the neighbourhood of Srahlane the murderers of Rogers were known and there was a conspiracy of silence, for the following reasons: (1) At the time of the murder, and near its scene, 'a party of men and women were engaged attending a threshing machine.'² (2) The house of Timothy Bergin, the last tenant on whom Rogers had served a process, stood within two hundred yards and within sight of the scene of the murder.³ (3) While the discovery of Rogers's corpse was not reported to the police until about 3 p.m. (perhaps two hours after the murder) it is likely that local people saw the corpse before a local farmer, Michael Cassin, and his servant, James Murphy, passed by with a cart load of straw.⁴ As Christopher Palles, the lord chief baron, stated at Bergin's trial, it was 'very difficult to believe that some of the parties in the townland were not privy to the murder'.⁵ (4) The 'people in the neighbourhood' probably demonstrated their attitude towards Rogers and the suspected murderers by

1. L.E., 10 Dec. 81.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 15 July 82.

5. Ibid.; S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.N.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 10.

following, and 'hooting and yelling' at the police when they were removing Rogers's corpse to Rathdowney.¹ Then on 20 and 21 January 1882 a 'large crowd' with horses, ploughs, and carts assembled in Rathdowney, and led by the Clonmeen and Rathdowney bands playing 'national airs' they went to plough the farms of the five accused farmers.²

In conclusion, whatever reservations one might have about the official returns for agrarian crimes, it is clear that October 1881 - May 1882 was the most violently disordered period of the land war in Queen's County. Significantly, the murder of Rogers - the most serious of crimes, and the one homicide in the county most evidently resulting from the land war - was committed during this period.

1, *L.E.*, 15 July 82.

2, *Ibid.*, 28 Jan. 82.

(IV) The Struggle of the Ladies' Land League to Nurture the Land War in Queen's County after October 1881.

As already stated, the ladies' land league co-existed with the land league to October 1881,¹ and then with the arrest of the league leaders, the no-rent manifesto, and the proclamation of the league as an unlawful and criminal association, it was left on its own in an impossible position. The women were lumbered with the no-rent manifesto, which Anna Parnell described as 'the only cover under which they [the land league] could withdraw from the impossible position they had created for themselves, and at the same time keep up some semblance of a continuous policy.'²

No evidence suggests that any of the leaders of the ladies' land league in Queen's County had Anna Parnell's insight into the apparent cynical machinations of the men. If any had, it was concealed. In any case, there was an immediate influx of emissaries from the central branch encouraging resistance and promoting branches. The *Leinster Express* on 5 November 1881 reported that a 'mysterious female recently made a tour of some midland counties on business concerned with the ladies' land league, visiting Maryborough and Mountrath last week, and staying in the latter town two or three days.' Other identified visitors from the central branch were Miss Yates, Mrs Moore and a frequent Miss Kepple. Not only women toured the county on behalf of the ladies' land league: a wary Fr Thomas Feehan on 9 November 1881 wrote from Rathdowney to Miss Kennedy, Central Branch, Dublin that:

1. Above, p.164.

2. Anna Parnell, *The Land League: Tale of a Great Sham* (N.L.I., MS 12144, p.151).

A young man who gives his name as O'Dwyer called here this evening, and met some of the principal men of our branch with a view to encouraging them in land league work etc. He said he had also called on some other branches in this neighbourhood, and that he was commissioned by the central ladies' league to do so. As he had not one line of introduction from anyone I know or heard of to corroborate his statement I declined having anything to say to him. He mentioned your name in particular as one of the ladies' league who gave him a list of the principal friends of the cause in this locality. Kindly say by return whether he is an imposter or detective (I strongly suspect all such unaccredited agents in this crisis of Irish politics), or whether he may be trusted. If he is to be trusted, I think a little note from Miss Parnell or yourself, or some authorised and known friend of the tenants would be of use to him. It certainly would have saved him from a rather decided expression of distrust from me tonight.

P.S. Since writing the above I have had a visit from Miss Kepple who appears to think Mr O'Dwyer is all right. Miss Kepple has been in Urlingford etc, on ladies' land league business. I suppose she is all right. Is she? If you could, without inconvenience, telegraph on receipt of this I would be thankful. You could write afterwards. The telegram might be 'You are wrong in your suspicion or You are right etc.'

To help prisoners and their families a political prisoners aid society was established within the ladies' land league, and throughout the country money was collected especially for a prisoners fund.² (During the year after 26 December 1881 the ladies' land league spent £29,814 'providing for' 'coercion' and 'ordinary law' prisoners and their families.)³ Moral support along with legal costs were provided

1. N.L.I., land league papers, MS 17705<2>.

2. Prisoners funds in local branches of the ladies' land league were variously named; the Camross ladies had a prisoners aid society, the Mountmellick ladies described their fund as the coercion prisoners maintenance fund, and the ladies in Courtwood and Emo subscribed to a political prisoners sustentation fund (L.L., 26 Nov.81, 17 Dec.81, 21 Jan.82, 28 Jan.82).

3. Anna Parnell reported (*The Times-Parnell commission*, vol.x, p.608) the expenditure of the ladies' land league during the year after 26 Dec.81 as follows:

	£	s.	d.
Evicted tenants	20,849	19	4
Families of coercion prisoners	5,123	2	0
Families of ordinary law prisoners	1,449	11	11
Building	9,469	3	5
Providing for coercion prisoners and ordinary law prisoners from 26 Dec.81	21,637	16	4
Ordinary law prisoners, catering from 26 Dec.81	1,603	12	2
Legal costs by the ladies' land league	1,508	17	7
Miscellaneous grants	187	7	0
Grants made by the land league since its suppression	7,542	16	2
Total	£69,372	5	10

for indicted agrarian offenders. (Anna Parnell with Miss Yates of the executive of the ladies' land league journeyed to Rathdowney to be present at the trial of Fr Thomas Feehan in April 1882.)¹ Reading material, regular visits and catering from outside were provided for those in gaol. Yet, succour was dispensed unevenly. For Fr Feehan in Maryborough gaol the caterer was impressed 'to spare no pains or trouble in looking after his comforts':² from 24 April 1882 to 21 May 1882 he was catered for at the cost of £1 per week³ - 52 per cent more than the weekly allocation for each of the nine prisoners in the same gaol from 20 January 1882 to 14 March 1882⁴ - and also he was provided with a cloak, a rug, stationery and window curtains.⁵

The proclamation of the land league made no reference to the ladies' land league. However, soon the police began to harass the women: a woman who gave her parlour in Rathdowney as a committee room was told 'not to allow any ladies to assemble there for the purpose of holding a land league meeting':⁶ women were questioned before and after meetings: meetings were interrupted by police who sometimes read the proclamation suppressing the land league suggesting that the women's organisation was included in the order: attempts were made to take names, implying pending prosecution.⁷ Nationalist newspapers reported women refusing to co-operate and acidly berating the police. Some priests supported the women: *United Ireland* on 5 November 1881

1. Above, p. 348.

2. Maryborough ladies minute book, minute for 26 Mar. 82 (N.L.I., MS 9221).

3. Ibid., entries in the 'Prisoners' Wives and Evicted Families Relief [sic] Acct.' and in the 'Relief [sic] Account'.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. *United Ireland*, 5 Nov. 81.

7. *L.L.*, 26 Nov. 81, 21 Jan. 82, 25 Feb. 82; *L.E.*, 4 Feb. 82; *United Ireland*, 3 Dec. 81; Rathdowney ladies to Miss Lynch of the central executive (N.L.I., ladies' land league papers, MS 17699).

published a long account of a confrontation between the Rathdowney women and the police, which resulted in Fr Thomas Feehan allowing the women to use his house for their meeting while a crowd of men kept guard outside: Fr Patrick Phelan of Cullahill acted similarly, informing the police that a 'ladies' meeting' was a devotional one.¹

On 16 December 1881 Inspector-General George E. Hillier issued a circular stating that he 'is advised that the proclamation of the lord lieutenant dated 20 October 1881, which declared the Irish National Land League to be an unlawful and criminal association, includes female as well as male persons.'² The ladies' central executive reacted by sending a long circular to the secretaries of the local branches calling for courage, and stating that 'the inspector-general has not declared the ladies' land league an illegal society, and if he had done so he could not have made it illegal. That can only be done by an act of parliament.'³ To secure prosecution and conviction a statute of Edward III, originally directed against prostitutes, was resurrected, and women were gaoled. (No woman from Queen's County was gaoled under this statute.) The nationalist press lauded the resistance of the women, and especially the heroism of those gaoled.⁴

Yet, the police must have had a disorienting and effectively repressive influence over the ladies' land league throughout the country. From a collation of the references to the police in the minute book of Maryborough branch of the ladies' land league⁵ with

1, James O'Shea, *Priest, Politics and Society in post-famine Ireland*, p.77.

2, Marie O'Neill, *The Ladies' Land League*, in *Dublin Historical Record*, vol. xxxv, no.4, p.128.

3, *United Ireland*, 31 Dec.81; *L.E.*, 31 Dec.81.

4, *L.L.*, 21 Jan., 29 Apr.82.

5, N.L.I., MS 9221.

tables recording the attendance of those most active at committee meetings police effectiveness may be credibly inferred in one district at least. The total number of women who attended any meeting was twenty-six. Tables 10 and 11, following, are confined to fourteen ladies who attended ten or more of the thirty meetings held, assuming those to have been the most active in the branch. (One woman is ignored as she was ill, and died on 25 February 1882. Of the remaining eleven women, each attended seven or fewer meetings.)

Table 10 Attendance at meetings of the Maryborough branch of the ladies' land league, 1 March 1881 - 30 June 1882.

	1 Mar.- 30 Apr. 81	1 May- 30 June 81	1 Jul.- 31 Aug. 81	1 Sep.- 31 Oct. 81	1 Nov.- 31 Dec. 81	1 Jan.- 28 Feb. 82	1 Mar.- 30 Apr. 82	1 May- 30 June 82	total
total meetings	6	4	3	2	6	3	2	4	30
Mrs Aldritt	4	3	3	1	5	1	1	0	18
Miss Julia Condran	5	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	18
Mrs Corcoran	2	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	10
Mrs Mary Doran	3	1	1	1	3	0	0	1	10
Miss Duff	3	4	3	1	5	1	0	0	17
Miss M. Dunne	3	2	1	2	4	3	0	0	15
Miss K. Fitzpatrick	6	4	3	1	4	2	2	4	26
Mrs N. Fitzpatrick	6	4	3	2	6	3	2	4	30
Miss Julia Gowing	5	4	2	2	2	3	1	0	19
Miss Mary Gowing	5	3	3	1	1	1	0	0	14
Mrs P. Kelly	3	2	1	1	4	2	0	0	13
Mrs Nora Meehan	5	2	0	0	3	0	2	2	14
Mrs Mary Redington	5	3	0	1	5	2	1	2	19
Mrs Mary Tynan	3	3	3	1	6	3	2	4	25
total attendance	58	40	28	17	50	25	12	18	
average per meeting	9.7	10	9.3	8.5	8.3	8.3	6	4.5	

The minutes down to 16 December 1881 disappoint in that they reveal very little of the deliberations at each meeting. The brief entries

typically record attendance, resolutions passed, reports of contemplated or actual evictions, and statements on money forwarded to or received from the central branch in Dublin. Then from 16 December 1881 to 10 February 1882 references to the police predominate. On 16 December 1881 the women were proceeding to the rooms of the Catholic Young Men's Society when they got notice that the police were there before them: then only four resolutely met in the home of Mary Tynan. Two weeks later six women held a meeting in Mary Redington's home in the townland of Pallas outside Maryborough. After their meeting on 1 January 1882, once more at a new place, the women 'found themselves hemmed in on all sides by the menials of her majesty's government'. On 27 January 1882 'it was considered judicious to adjourn the meeting' in consequence of the non-appearance of some of the members of the committee and the appearance of the police. Though the entry for 10 February 1882 informs us that the police withdrew 'after addressing some impertinent remarks to the president who answered them too much to the point to give them satisfaction', the minute for 26 March 1882 admitted that the 'attendance during the last three months was very bad indeed with few exceptions.' Further, to emphasise the impact of the police we are told that along with the meeting for 27 January 1882 meetings planned for 17 February, 31 March, 5 April, and 16 June 1882 were postponed - probably at the last moment. Without anyone being named we are told that four turned up for the meeting planned for 17 February 1882, a 'few only' on 31 March 1882, and three on 16 June 1882.' Now assuming that on average four women turned up for each of the five postponed meetings, table 10 adjusted would read

as follows:

Table 11 Attendance at meetings of the Maryborough branch of the ladies' land league, 1 March 1881 - 30 June 1882.

	1 Mar.- 30 Apr. 81	1 May- 30 June 81	1 Jul.- 31 Aug. 81	1 Sep.- 31 Oct. 81	1 Nov.- 31 Dec. 81	1 Jan.- 28 Feb. 82	1 Mar.- 30 Apr. 82	1 May- 30 June 82
total number of anticipated meetings	6	4	3	2	6	5	4	5
total attendance	58	40	28	17	50	33	20	22
average attendance at each meeting	9.7	10	9.3	8.5	8.3	6.6	5	4.4

It is significant that table 11 shows there was a considerable reduction in the average attendance of women at meetings of the Maryborough branch of the ladies' land league from 1 January 1882 to 30 April 1882. This coincides with the intensification of police attention. Clearly, the police were successful in thwarting the women - despite their seeming defiance.

The hounding by the police accounted only in part for the demise of the ladies' land league. As stated, the no-rent manifesto, with which the women had been lumbered, was a conspicuous failure. On 19 October 1881 the Maryborough branch resolved 'to use all our efforts to influence the tenants not to pay any rent while the suspects remain in gaol'.¹ Some steps, more direct than mere encouragement, were made to defy the government, and to put the no-rent manifesto into practice. The *Leinster Express* on 12 November 1881 declared that some 'prominent members of the ladies' land league in Queen's County

1. Maryborough ladies minute book (op.cit.)

recently induced several tenants to sign a document declaring their determination to pay no rent until the suspects were released': it went on to state that one assurance given to the tenants was that the land league would compensate them if they were evicted. Yet in the same newspaper, and also in the *Leinster Leader* of the same date, Mrs Nannie Fitzpatrick, the president of the Maryborough branch of the ladies' land league, was reported as the central figure in settling matters amicably in the much publicised dispute between William Clarke and his tenants on a nearby estate in the townland of Pallas.'

The great majority of the tenants in the county were uninterested in complying with the no-rent manifesto. The Rathdowney women at their meeting on 27 November 1881 expressed their 'amazement and indignation that some of the Queen's County, who hitherto have been in the van of patriotism and Parnellism, have suddenly become enamoured with the land act.'² Expressing the outlook of many quondam leaders of the tenants, Fr Edward Rowan wrote on 3 February 1882 from Castletown, Queen's County, to Mrs Nannie Fitzpatrick, the president of the Maryborough branch of the ladies' land league,

...in no instance would I again³ encourage a tenant to allow the interest in his farm to pass away...individual sacrifices of that nature could not and did not move the country to that universality of sacrifices which they looked to...nothing could compensate the wrong thus inflicted upon a wife and her children when the husband in some vain hope of helping the country lost his home forever, and took them to wooden huts and a weekly pittance.

1. Above, pp 95-100, 123. On 6 Nov. 81 Mrs Fitzpatrick and her father, Richard Lalor M.P., went to Messrs McGough & Fowler, the land league solicitors in 33 Upper Ormond Quay, Dublin, and procured from them a guarantee for £100 out of the land league funds, which enabled the tenants to defray the legal expenses incurred in their dispute with William Clarke (*L.L.*, 12 Nov. 81; *L.E.*, 12 Nov. 81).

2. *United Ireland*, 3 Dec. 81; *L.E.*, 3 Dec. 81.

3. Fr Rowan underlined again.

In a postscript Fr Rowan revealed:

...the three priests of Durrow are now urging the tenants of Cullahill' - the most determined men in the whole agitation - to go in against their own will and judgement and accept 10 per cent. They know little in Dublin of how matters really are in the country.²

In Kilmainham in May 1882 Parnell came to terms with Gladstone,³ and by so doing clearly drew back from the agrarian agitation. The Kilmainham treaty was viewed by many, including Davitt, Dillon and Anna Parnell, as a surrender to Gladstone.⁴ For others the resultant resignation of Forster and Cowper⁵ signalled the treaty as a victory for the land league. The *Leinster Express* on 6 May 1882 printed a scornful congratulations from the Maryborough branch of the ladies' land League to Forster 'on the fact that he left our country ruined and disgraced in reputation as a statesman.'

The ladies' land league had become an embarrassment to Parnell, and he resolved on its dissolution - a resolution made more imperative by

1. Another good example of such a priest was Fr Martin Howley, a former curate in St Canice's parish, County Kilkenny, who was appointed the parish priest of Borris-in-Ossory in Sept. 81. On 6 Dec. 81 Henry A. Blake R.M. wrote that Fr Howley had 'done everything in his power to induce the people of his parish to abandon the agitation' (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1881/44928). Blake's report must have encouraged Under-Secretary Burke to look favourably on Fr Howley's petition to the chief secretary for 'an act of grace' in the case of nineteen of his parishioners who were arrested after rioting in Borris-in-Ossory on 19 July 81 when James McDonald and his family were evicted by their landlord, Dr Charles Holmes; on 16 Dec. 81 Burke decided 'if the men conduct themselves properly in future they will not be called up for judgement, but if they transgress they certainly will' (ibid.).

2. Letter found among the pages of the minute book of the Maryborough branch of the ladies' land league (N.L.I., MS 9221). (There was no identifying mark on the letter, but on the author's recommendation the letter is now securely fixed to the minute book.)

3. For reports on the celebrations, bonfires, illuminations, and parades resulting from the release of Parnell see *L.E.*, 6 May 82, and *L.L.*, 6 May 82.

4. Moody, *Davitt*, pp 537-40.

5. Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, pp 166-9.

the Phoenix Park murders.¹ The ladies' central executive were manoeuvred into a position where by 1882 they had an overdraft of £5,000, which would only be discharged on their agreeing to disband but continue their work of considering applications for relief. After 20 July 1882 on the death of her sister Fanny, Anna Parnell, already exhausted, suffered such a physical and mental breakdown that she withdrew from public life. The ladies' central executive, without Anna, managed secretly to alter the wording of the document which, when signed, left them responsible only for the ladies' land league tenants - a responsibility they discharged out of money set aside for this purpose. The central organisation disbanded quietly, leaving the decision to dissolve to each individual branch. The last published reference to a functioning branch of the ladies' land league in Queen's County was in *United Ireland* on 9 September 1882, which reported the dissolution of the Graigue & Killeishin branch.

Any conclusions about the ladies' land league in Queen's County have to be prefaced by admitting the paucity of information on the women, and hence the narrowness of base for making generalised deductions. The more overtly active branches of the ladies' land league in the county were in towns.² These branches - based essentially on the analysis of the Maryborough branch - probably were

1. Typical of the public responses by all parties in Queen's County to the Phoenix Park murders was the proposal by Patrick A. Meehan, which was 'resolved unanimously' by a meeting of the Mountmellick board of guardians on 13 May 82: 'That we hereby put on record our horror and detestation of the atrocious murders committed in the Phoenix Park, and respectfully tender our sympathy to the families of the murdered gentlemen' (Laois County Library, 1882 minute book of the Mountmellick board of guardians).

2. Cf., above, p.171.

undemocratic, with a middle-class leadership directly related to the men's branches.' The petty jealousies and rivalries which plagued the men's branches in the county seemed not to beset the women. Predictably, given the male chauvinistic, conservative, mainly rural, male face of Victorian Queen's County, the women functioned under the watchful eyes of men. Uneasily accepting women unconventionally forming an organisation of their own, the men, while grateful for the succour, did not and could not permit them to direct the course of the land war in the county.

Though a minority of the women attempted a policy of 'positive action', they were afloat on a torrent of events over which they had no control. The no-rent manifesto was an impossible goal for them, and the police were an effective deterrent. The achievement of the women in Queen's County lay, on the whole, in being 'telephones'² for the central executive, calling attention to grievances by voice and pen, and carefully, if unevenly, dispensing relief to those who acted 'manfully' in the land war.

When the proclivities of the leaders of the Irish National Land League in Dublin led to the ending of the ladies' land league in Queen's County their role in the land struggle ceased - not to be resurrected.

1, Cf, above, pp 169-73.

2, Cf, Anna Parnell's speech in Rathdowney, above, pp 168-9.

VI

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to add to the knowledge about Queen's County during the land war of 1879-82, and in so doing also demolishes some of the myths about the land war propagated by nationalists within the county. While each of the chapters and its sections has its own detailed conclusions, which need not be repeated here, nevertheless it is worthwhile affirming the broad picture of the land war in the county, and the main conclusions which emerge from this study.

It is clear that before the late 1870s the county was not in a ferment of discontent ready to explode into a land war: the mass of its population experienced a marked increase in their standards of living, while at the same time landlord and tenant relations generally were good. That there was depression, debt, and discontent in the county at the end of the 1870s is incontrovertible. But, while the checking of their 'rising expectations' might explain the disposition of some farmers, in a county where livestock and livestock products accounted for 75 per cent of its income from agriculture conditions were not so extreme as to impel the tenant farmers into a widespread land war orchestrated by the land league.

Of course, all the farmers in the county were not affected in the same way by the bearable 13 per cent drop in gross farm income from the triennial period 1874-6 to the triennial period 1877-9. It is clear from the author's analysis of distress and its relief in the

county (with its possibly mischievous suggestion that the apparitions in Knock in August 1879 resembled those in Ballyfin in May 1880)' that the hardest hit were the broken small farmers, the habitually distressed, the unemployed tradesmen and labourers, and their dependants - perhaps 15 per cent of the population of the county. But these paupers did not have the experience, social status or ability necessary to organise any cohesive action. In any case, because there was a perceptible gathering of momentum in agrarian agitation as privation receded after the autumn of 1880 it is reasonable to suggest that there was no simple connection between the land war and distress in the county.

It was mainly due to the impressively effective and dominant leadership of Parnell and Davitt, and their inspiration of middle-class local leaders that a radical transformation was effected in the county's parliamentary representation with the election of the two Parnellites, Arthur O'Connor and Richard Lalor, and then the majority of the farmers and labourers were organised into branches of the land league. While some of these local leaders may have been altruistic, and others were stimulated only by the desire for power, it is likely that many - particularly the shopkeepers, publicans, and large tenant farmers - were simply mercenary opportunists who appropriated a land movement which had started more than a year earlier among the small tenant farmers in Connacht.

Until the winter of 1880, while noise, rhetoric, and some incidents

1. Above, pp 54-5.

accompanied the election of Lalor and O'Connor and the establishment of some branches of the land league in the county, its population generally was still law-abiding - agrarian crime was still rare. Nevertheless, the county was regressing steadily into disorder. Lawyers engaged by the land league were increasingly active in defending tenants' interests in court: predictably, this galvanised landlords and agents into a more vigilant handling of estate legal matters. At the same time, although there were noted exceptions, most landlords in the county probably granted selective abatements in rents - which had little effect on either landlords' or tenants' incomes - or accepted tenants' promises to pay rent at the autumn gale of 1880.

Then as the summer of 1880 closed and the autumn gale neared relations between landlords and their tenants worsened perceptively. Landlords, who believed they had been generous in their response to the flood of demands for rent reductions to Griffith's valuation by permitting abatements, and the growth of arrears (in some cases, to as much as half their annual income from rent) felt they were entitled at least to the rent due: they were also showing a greater willingness to evict than any time since 1863.¹ On the other hand, tenants viewed the autumn gale of 1880 with predictable trepidation: though less likely to starve because of the bumper potato crop, most were heavily in debt to a variety of pressing creditors including their landlords, and since the total annual value of agricultural output in the county in 1880 increased by less than 3 per cent their ability to pay their

1. There were more evictions in Queen's County in 1863 than in any other year from 1856 to 1879 (Appendix 18, below, p. 422).

rents improved negligibly.

As demands for rent reductions multiplied, accompanied by resolutions for tenant solidarity and against land grabbers, there was an understandably enthusiastic response from most tenants. Landlordism *per se* was execrated by tenant leaders as they appealed to the spurious historic rights of the 'people', and set clearer lines of demarcation between the tenants and their landlords. (Significantly, there is no evidence that shopkeepers in the county like Matthew Dunne from Ballyfin and Mark J. Codd from Mountrath - both officers in branches of the land league, and to whom tenants were as deeply in debt as they were to landlords - were subjected to any opprobrium.) From December 1880 newspaper reports show an appreciable increase in incidents, from which one might deduce that tenants in the county were growing more confidently and menacingly militant. These incidents might be taken to signal the start of the land war in the county - perhaps twenty months after it had started in Connacht.

On the surface, at least, Queen's County seemed to support Davitt's claim in 1903 that the land league leaders had lost a 'great opportunity' through their failure to launch a no-rent strike in that spring of 1881 when 'landlordism would have been easily smashed..., disciplined and prepared as the country was then.'¹ However, in April 1881 when Richard Lalor proposed 'a strike against the payment of all rent'² there is no evidence that it elicited any widespread enthusiastic response in land league branches in the county, and in

1. Above, p. 160.

2. Above, p. 183.

the central office in Dublin Anna Parnell's was the only concurring voice. In any case, it is clear that at no time during the land war were most land-leaguers in the county either 'disciplined' or 'prepared'. Indignation meetings and demonstrations with their bands, banners, cavalcades, and bombast from caparisoned platforms created the impression of tenant solidarity, but it was an illusion.

Of course, almost half of the farming population over twenty years of age in the county were not land-leaguers. Even so, discord and disunity were prevalent in the land league branches, and were worsening as details of Gladstone's land bill became more widely known. At the same time, the much publicised and costly policy of tenants paying rent 'at the point of the bayonet' was fundamentally fraudulent. Tenants who could pay their rent did so for fear of being evicted, isolating their less solvent fellow tenants, and perversely breaking the 'rule' of the land league with the sanction of the land league.

It was perhaps predictable that by the autumn of 1881 the land league in the county should be *in extremis* - a condition precipitated by Gladstone's second land act, which became law on 22 August 1881. Even Parnell's attempts to keep the splitting land league together - his masterly performance at the land league convention in Maryborough on 26 September 1881 was an important instance' - were hopeless.

On the other hand, the 'action' of many of the landlords in the

1. Above, pp 294-8.

county was demonstrably 'weak, defenceless and disunited'¹. Of course, by the late 1870s landlords' incomes had been drastically reduced. This narrowed the margin of their possible response to tenants' demands for reductions in rents, and self-reliance and pride dictated that they should act independently when managing their estates. Nevertheless, given their resources and small number it should not have been too difficult for them to mount some sort of collective action against the land league. As it was, when landlords evicted or threatened eviction they intensified the insecurity of tenants, and when they gave concessions to their tenants they indicated weakness. Both forms of landlord response encouraged the tenants to join the land league, which was opposed to landlords remaining in existence at all, and - ironically - helped to spawn and spread the land war in the county.

While it must be conceded that after March 1881 with the passing of the Act for the Better Protection of Person and Property in Ireland and the Peace Preservation Act, and the first appearance in Queen's County of agents of the Property Defence Association many landlords in the county were steeled in their determination to collect their rents, and appeared more ruthless in their dealings with recalcitrant tenants. When habeas corpus was suspended in the county on 6 May 1881 it seemed to herald a more clamorous and combative phase of the land war. It is clear that most landlords perceived the county as increasingly in the grip of terror and outrage fermented by the

1. Description by the 'old fox hunter' in *L.E.*, 22 Oct. 81; cf. above, p. 283.

spreading land league, and still seemed intimidated by the apparent strength of their organised tenantry.

The evidence from Queen's County supports Gladstone's speech in Leeds on 7 October 1881 when he castigated 'all the classes who possess property' for their 'general cowardice', and complained that the government was 'expected to preserve the peace with no moral force behind it'.¹ Though both the Property Defence Association and the Orange Emergency Committee were founded in December 1880, it was more than ten months later - when the land league was in disarray - that three branches of the Property Defence Association were established in the county. 'Very few' of the magistrates, who were landlords, had 'the courage [publicly] to back their opinions'², while at the same time, though they were in a strong position to penalise publicans who supported the land league, they faint-heartedly signed all the certificates of renewal of publicans' licences. Despite their lack of confidence in Gladstone's government - especially since Forster's unsuccessful compensation for disturbance bill in July 1880 - landlords turned to the government for protection, and demanded draconian measures to restore law and order in the county. It is notable that after October 1881 the magistrates seemed more determined to uphold the law, and even 'good' landlords were less willing to bargain with their tenants.

The no-rent manifesto initially inspired alarm and pessimism among

1. Cf. above, pp 285.

2. Smyth to Castletown on 2 Nov. 81; cf. above, p. 288.

some landlords and their agents in Queen's County. But, despite the best efforts of die-hard land-leaguers and the ladies' land league, the manifesto was rejected by most tenant farmers, and was a conspicuous failure. Of course, on many estates in the county the autumn gale of 1881 produced the usual wrangling over rents, but this was not what the manifesto envisaged. During the winter of 1881-2 there seemed to be a waning of public interest even in such token resistance as paying rent 'at the point of the bayonet'. The ladies' land league was left on its own in an impossible position: the police were clearly an effective deterrent, but what was more telling was that the men, while grateful for succour, could not and would not permit the women to direct the course of the land war.

Whatever reservations one might have about the official statistics for agrarian crime, it is clear that after October 1881 the county endured its most violently disturbed period. Significantly, during this period Martin Rogers was murdered; John Redington, who was suspected of being involved in a plot to rescue Parnell from Kilmainham, was gaoled - the only suspect from the county to be gaoled for the second time; a campaign by land-leaguers succeeded in forcing the Queen's County Hunt to suspend fox hunting in November 1881 for almost two years; Fr Thomas Feehan, the vitriolic catholic curate from Rathdowney, was prosecuted and gaoled.

It is worth observing here that, while agreeing with Bew that 'it is a mistake to inflate the purely Catholic determination of the land war', it would be wrong to ignore the sectarian dimension. In Queen's

County, most protestants stayed aloof from the land league, though there were notable exceptions - thereby inviting censure from land league leaders - and some had a siege-mentality. Nor should one ignore the explicit sectarian violence in the environs of Rathdowney and Mountmellick where the actions and pronouncements of acerbic catholic curates seemed to legitimise attacks on protestants.

It must be conceded that with Gladstone's land act of 1881, followed by the arrears act of 1882, a radical change had been made in the land law of Ireland in the interests of the tenants. Nonetheless, it would be an exaggeration to describe the land war as a triumph for the land league and the tenants in Queen's County for several reasons:

First, though after the success of Richard Lalor and Arthur O'Connor in the 1880 general election two lukewarm home-rulers were supplanted, and the county's parliamentary voice was identified not with the landed interest but with Parnell and the land league, nevertheless, this new voice was rarely heard speaking in parliament for the county. Because of ill-health, and to his great embarrassment, Lalor was frequently absent from the House of Commons. Although he was popular with most of his constituents, and commonly described on public platforms as 'honest', throughout most of the

1. L.E. 18 Sept. 80, drawing public attention to Lalor's attendance at only 38 of the 169 divisions in the first session of the new parliament, commented gloatingly 'Some of Mr Lalor's constituents may, perhaps, recollect that the principal count in the indictment he framed against Messrs Digby and Dease was that they were irregular in their attendance in the House of Commons.'

1880s he seriously contemplated resigning his seat.¹ O'Connor was described by William O'Brien, the M.P. for Mallow, as one who 'to the terror and dismay' of the House of Commons 'fights them [the government] with their own forms, and...stews them in their own gravy'. But although he may have been an effective advocate of the 'national cause',² nevertheless, on his own admission he had little correspondence from his constituents,³ and was an infrequent visitor to the county.

Second, judicial rents, which were of special interest to most tenants, meant a reduction of less than 19 per cent - a level described by the veteran tenant-rights leader, Fr Matthew Keeffe, the parish priest of Aghaboe, as a 'cruel mockery',⁴ and fell far short of the reductions expected by most tenants' leaders. Moreover, judicial rents were fixed on only about one sixth of the holdings over one acre in the county. On the other hand, it is arguable that the landlords were financially better off in 1882 than they were in 1879, even though their legal powers were restricted by the land act of 1881, and then under the arrears act of 1882 the Irish land commissioners

1. N.L.I., Lalor papers, MS 8566 (12). On 26 Jan, 87 Lalor asked Joseph Biggar to forward his application for the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds to the home secretary, Rt Hon. Henry Matthews, whenever might 'be considered [by Parnell and Biggar] safest and best for the party' (Lalor to Biggar, 26 Jan, 87 <ibid.>). The next day Biggar informed him that Parnell 'wishes to know how long your forced absence from the House [of Commons] is likely to continue. He says if your absence is not expected to extend beyond five or six weeks he wishes you not to retire. If, on the other hand, your absence is to be for the whole session the case might be different' (Biggar to Lalor, 27 Jan, 87 <ibid.>).

2. O'Brien speaking to a public meeting in Rathdowney on 25 Nov, 83 (*Weekly Freeman*, 1 Dec, 83).

3. O'Connor's speech to a public meeting in Maryborough on 28 May 82 (*L.E.*, 3 June 82).

4. Letter from Fr O'Keefe in *L.E.*, 28 Oct, 82.

'extinguished' more than £30,000 arrears of rent for the tenants on more than 1,600 holdings in the county. At the same time, rents were stabilised under the land act of 1881, and when 'fixed' they were at a level higher than they might have been had they been index-linked to the falling gross income from agriculture in the county during the 1880s.

Third, although during the land war dismayed landlords in the county were confronted for the first time with what appeared to be the collective strength of defiant tenants, it is clear that confrontation provoked many landlords into a more vigorous and collective response to their tenants' demands. By Christmas 1881 three branches of the Property Defence Association had been belatedly established in the county. And when Arthur MacMurrough Kavanagh, the landlord and magistrate from Borris, County Carlow, proposed the formation of the Land Corporation 'to meet the difficulty of cultivating boycotted farms from which tenants have been evicted' landlords in Queen's County were early and generous supporters.'

Fourth, as a result of the land war the policing of the county intensified at substantial cost to its cess payers. There was an impressive fall in the number of reported agrarian crimes in the county from the summer of 1882, yet its cess payers still had to pay an extra £1,376.10s.0d. that year - half the cost of forty extra police.

1, L.E., 24 June 82 citing the *Freeman's Journal* published particulars relating to the projected land corporation, and listed the early purchasers of shares: landlords from Queen's County invested more than £9,000.

Fifth, while doubtless the many instances of discord and disunity in branches of the land league left a residue of recrimination among its members, the land war must have left many tenants in the county discontented and disillusioned for several reasons: (1) The leaseholders - more than a fifth of the tenants in the county - could not enjoy the benefits of the land act of 1881 until 1887. (2) Die-hard land-leaguers, who would have been satisfied with nothing less than the destruction of landlordism and the total transfer of the 'land to the people', must have been galled to see resilient landlords in the county evicting more tenants in 1882 and 1883 - predominantly tenants of small holdings - than at any time since the great clearances of the early 1850s. (3) Agricultural labourers, the poorest of the rural population who had been fobbed off by land-leaguers with assurances that their demands would be attended to when the 'farmers's question' was settled, were incensed when the land war ended: as Parnell admitted in Maryborough on 26 September 1881, they had gained nothing but the remote possibility that farmers - whom they distrusted - would do their 'duty' and give them 'employment and better wages'.¹ More than a year after the labourers act of 1883² the police were noting the 'smouldering discontent' and 'ill-feeling' among labourers 'caused by the manner in which they have been treated by the farmers'.³

1. Above, p. 298.

2. 46 & 47 Vict., c.60, 25 Aug.

3. Papers recording the 'progress' of the Irish National League (S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.L.L. & I.N.L. papers, cartons 6, 7, 9).

Finally, there were indications that, despite the public triumphalism of some tenant leaders after the land war, the tenants were less enthusiastic. When the Irish National League was inaugurated by Parnell in October 1882 - with 'land law reform' second to 'national self-government' in its list of five main aims' - the response in the county, and indeed throughout Ireland, was apathetic. By 12 June 1883 it was in such straitened financial circumstances that a clerk in Dublin Castle noted 'were the league not supplied with funds from sources outside of Ireland, the contributions "for the cause" sent from the branches in this country would not pay the office expenses.'² By the end of 1883, despite the best efforts of many leading land-leaguers - whom the police described as 'ex-suspects, bankrupts and desperadoes'³ - it still had only 243 branches in the country, while in Queen's County there were only ten branches⁴ - a vivid contrast to the twenty-four branches of the land league which had existed in the county. (Not until January 1886 with 1,261 branches in the country as a whole - of which twenty-nine were in Queen's County⁵ - did the branches of the Irish National League outnumber the branches of the land league.)

1. According to its constitution, it was 'formed to attain for the Irish people the following objects': (1) national self-government, (2) land law reform, (3) local self-government, (4) extension of the parliamentary and municipal franchises, (5) the development and encouragement of the labour and industrial interests of Ireland (S.P.O., C.S.O., I.N.L.L. & I.N.L. papers, carton 6).

2. Comment appended by R.E. Beckerson (a clerk of the lower division in the chief secretary's office) on 12 June 1883 to progress report on I.N.L. from 1 Mar. to 31 May 83 (ibid.).

3. Progress report on I.N.L. dated 26 Jan. 83 (ibid., carton 9).

4. List of branches 'established and collapsed' between 1 Oct. and 31 Dec. 83 (ibid., carton 6).

5. Lists of branches 'existing' (ibid., carton 7).

In 1900 when Patrick A. Meehan¹ was speaking about the land league and the land war he claimed that 'the tenants were at the mercy of the landlords, but the people banded themselves together and the power of the landlords melted away like snow in the midday sun.'² As Meehan must have known, this was simply make-believe. Landlordism may have been undermined by 1882, but it was far from destroyed by 1882: throughout the remainder of the nineteenth-century landlords continued to play an important role in the affairs of the county. On 28 August 1887 Captain Robert A.G. Cosby, bemoaning the 'state of affairs as regards landlords' in a letter he intended to send to the *Dublin Evening Mail* and the *Morning Mail*, wrote: 'I do not intend to die without a struggle.'³ In a land war which had still to be won in 1882 many landlords in Queen's County would certainly have voiced a like determination.

1. The ex-secretary of the Maryborough branch of the land league (Appendix 38, below, p. 434), and M.P. for Queen's County from 1906 until his death in 1913 (B.M. Walker, *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, p.371).

2. The poems and writings of P. A. Meehan (N.L.I., MS 19159, vol.1, p.38).

3. Cosby papers.

Appendix 1

Percentage of total acreage under crops in certain counties, 1881

county	crops(incl.) meadow and clover	grass	fallow or uncropped arable land	barren mountains	woods, bogs, plantations	total acreage (statute)
Queen's County	32.91	49.97	0.05	4.47	12.6	424,854
Carlow	34.78	52.73	0.04	4.93	7.52	221,294
Kildare	28.9	56.2	0.2	0.3	14.4	418,497
Kilkenny	31.4	57.3	0.4	2.4	8.5	507,254
King's County	24.3	47.0	0.1	0.8	27.8	493,019
Tipperary	25.34	57.48	0.06	6.49	10.63	1,048,969

Source: *Agricultural statistics*, 1881 [C3332], H.C. 1882, lxxiv.

Appendix 2

Extent under crops in Queen's County, 1878

crop	acreage (statute)	percentage of total acreage under crops
meadow & clover	55,991	40.53
barley	29,831	21.59
oats	18,831	13.67
potatoes	15,011	10.87
turnips	13,468	9.75
mangels & beetroot	2,116	1.53
other evergreen crops	1,699	1.23
wheat	1,132	0.82
bere	15	0.01
rye	9	0.007
total acreage under crops	138,163	

Source: *Agricultural statistics*, 1878 [C2347], H.C. 1878-9, lxxv

Appendix 3

Value of total agricultural output in Queen's County, 1871-92

year	value of total agricultural output £ thousands	year	value of total agricultural output £ thousands
1871	833	1882	881
1872	875	1883	759
1873	828	1884	654
1874	998	1885	564
1875	947	1886	529
1876	893	1887	520
1877	833	1888	549
1878	864	1889	586
1879	773	1890	616
1880	793	1891	638
1881	805	1892	572

Sources: Irish agricultural statistics for each of the years 1871-92 (see bibliography); series of agricultural prices prepared by T.W. Grinshaw, registrar general, for the Cowper commission (H.C. 1887, xxvi, 960-67); agricultural prices in Ireland, 1881-1920 (H.C. 1921, xli). The method of calculating agricultural output is the one used by Dr W.E. Vaughan in his Ph.D. thesis, 'A study of landlord and tenant relations between the famine and the land war, 1850-78' (University of Dublin, 1973), pp. 336-58. The figures for tillage are an estimate of the value of barley, oats and wheat sold by farmers; fodder crops realising their value through the increase in the value of livestock are not included. Livestock includes cattle (2+ years old, 1-2 years old and calves), all sheep except breeding ewes, and pigs. Livestock products are wool, eggs, and butter.

The figures above should be considered only as an index of the changes in the total value of agricultural output in the county

Appendix 4

Sources of farming income, and percentage of income earned by each source in Queen's County, 1878

source	percentage of income earned
cattle (including calves)	30.7
barley	19.1
pigs	16.6
sheep	12.5
butter	9.4
eggs	4.6
oats	3.8
wool	2.4
wheat	0.9
	100

Sources: as in Appendix 3, above, p.413.

Appendix 5

Crop yields per statute acre in Queen's County, 1874-83

year	wheat	oats	barley	potatoes	turnips	mangel wurzel & beetroot	hay
	cwts	cwts	cwts	tons	tons	tons	tons
1874	18.1	15.1	21.3	4.6	15.3	15.6	1.5
1875	14.4	16.5	19.6	4.9	17.3	17.3	1.8
1876	17.5	14.0	17.4	4.6	11.6	13.9	1.5
1877	14.9	13.4	15.3	2.5	12.8	13.6	2.2
1878	18.3	15.1	16.5	3.2	16.8	17.6	2.1
1879	13.8	14.1	13.9	2.1	7.2	8.4	1.7
1880	15.8	15.4	15.6	5.1	16.2	14.2	1.8
1881	18.1	16.6	17.0	5.1	14.3	14.5	1.8
1882	14.9	14.8	14.6	3.5	13.5	13.2	1.9
1883	15.2	15.5	14.9	5.4	14.8	14.1	2.0
average	16.1	15.05	16.61	4.1	13.98	14.24	1.83

Source: *Agricultural statistics*, 1883 [C4069], H.C. 1884, lxxv, 38.

Appendix 6

Livestock numbers in Queen's County, 1874-83

year	cattle (all ages) hundreds	sheep (all ages) hundreds	pigs (all ages) hundreds	poultry hundreds
1874	784	1,084	274	2,543
1875	774	1,008	292	2,571
1876	755	919	326	2,688
1877	731	921	315	2,630
1878	749	987	270	2,666
1879	768	930	254	2,594
1880	744	840	211	2,572
1881	743	743	280	2,563
1882	775	687	366	2,559
1883	785	705	338	2,490

Source: *Agricultural statistics*, 1883 [C4069], H.C. 1884, lxxv, 53.

Appendix 7

Index numbers of Irish agricultural prices, 1874-83

(base 1840 = 100, except store cattle, base 1845 = 100)

year	wheat	oats	barley	butter	eggs	wool	pork	mutton	store cattle 1-2 yrs. 2-3 yrs.	
1874	76	144	132	153	178	143	147	175	214	280
1875	77	131	126	150	181	145	151	160	229	220
1876	79	119	122	155	193	119	133	186	243	260
1877	87	129	131	126	148	115	142	190	214	250
1878	72	136	122	121	164	106	136	185	243	250
1879	90	137	118	113	183	83	132	160	214	230
1880	76	120	114	129	176	122	146	160	239	245
1881	83	127	113	114	217	100	141	160	221	240
1882	76	124	115	114	215	93	137	166	233	247
1883	70	125	111	110	215	86	133	173	240	240

Source: T. Barrington, 'A review of Irish agricultural prices' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, pt. ci, xv (1927), 252

Appendix 8

Amount of rain and the number of wet days per month at Blandsfort, Queen's County, 1874-80

month	1874		1875		1876		1877		1878		1879		1880	
	rain	wet	rain	wet	rain	wet	rain	wet	rain	wet	rain	wet	rain	wet
	(inches)	days	(inches)	days	(inches)	days	(inches)	days	(inches)	days	(inches)	days	(inches)	days
Jan.	3.18	19	5.71	27	0.77	12	4.81	28	2.55	20	2.40	12	0.71	9
Feb.	2.21	19	1.45	14	4.45	24	2.22	21	2.00	14	3.90	23	3.30	21
Mar.	1.70	15	1.20	14	3.44	22	3.60	20	1.09	17	1.74	15	4.54	16
Apr.	2.20	15	0.69	6	2.15	17	3.48	23	1.48	16	2.20	19	3.34	20
May	1.82	16	2.14	20	0.43	5	1.88	14	4.50	23	2.55	20	0.99	14
June	1.16	9	2.61	20	1.51	13	2.82	15	5.48	19	4.95	22	1.44	18
July	2.84	17	2.73	16	1.25	8	2.19	20	1.38	12	3.35	23	5.33	24
Aug.	3.96	17	2.73	12	4.21	18	4.40	25	4.84	21	3.80	21	2.51	12
Sept.	3.95	20	5.29	19	2.87	21	2.37	10	2.31	20	4.40	18	1.83	15
Oct.	4.04	20	4.44	22	3.79	19	3.54	18	3.06	21	1.10	12	4.31	12
Nov.	2.66	19	3.03	16	3.06	16	4.87	25	1.83	11	0.85	9	4.00	20
Dec.	3.84	16	2.29	13	7.40	23	3.15	20	1.45	12	1.89	11	3.39	19
total	33.56	202	34.31	199	35.33	198	39.33	239	31.97	206	33.13	205	35.69	200

Sources: Annual rainfall registered on a gauge by Captain John Loftus Bland J.P. at his home at Blandsfort (three miles north-east of Abbeyleigh), Queen's County. Almost every January 1874-90 his recordings were published in the *Leinster Express*. On 10 Jan. 80 the newspaper summarised his recordings for the years 1874-9, and on 29 Jan. 81 published his recordings for 1880.

Appendix 9

Annual rainfall and the number of wet days per annum at Blandsfort, Queen's County, 1874-90

year	rainfall (inches)	number of wet days	year	rainfall (inches)	number of wet days
1874	33.56	202	1883	38.37	202
1875	34.31	199	1884	30.85	196
1876	35.33	198	1885	33.83	197
1877	39.33	239	1886	37.71	212
1878	31.97	206	1887	24.59	167
1879	33.13	205	1888	33.94	206
1880	35.69	200	1889	31.26	205
1881	33.81	192	1890	35.20	221
1882	40.71	236			
average for 1874-90				34.33	205

Source: Captain Bland's recordings in the *Leinster Express*, 9 Jan. 92 (See source for Appendix 8, above, p. 416.).

Appendix 10

Percentage of total tenants in holdings over one acre in Ireland, Queen's County and certain other counties, 1876

	above 1 and not exceeding 15	above 15 and not exceeding 30	above 30 and not exceeding 100	above 100	total number of occupiers
Ireland	43.5	25.7	24.2	6.6	481,663
Queen's County	46.5	20.4	23.9	9.2	9,035
Carlow	33.0	19.7	36.0	11.3	4,152
Kildare	48.0	15.1	21.7	15.2	6,996
Kilkenny	33.6	19.4	36.7	10.3	10,380
King's County	45.2	21.0	24.9	8.9	8,588
Tipperary	34.0	21.4	33.9	10.7	18,703

Source: 'Approximate return of the number of occupiers resident in each county and province in 1871, classified according to the total extent of land they held, without any reference to the townland, barony, county, or province in which the portions of land are situated' in *Agricultural statistics*, 1876 [C1749], H.C., 1877, lxxxv.

Appendix 11

Tenure of holdings in Queen's County, Leinster and Ireland, 1870

	A leasehold and other fixed tenancies	B tenancies from year to year and at will	C total holdings	B as % of C
Queen's County	2,854	10,180	13,034	78
Leinster	39,342	100,744	140,086	72
Ireland	155,698	526,539	682,237	77

Tenancies in column A for Queen's County comprise: leaseholds for years, 985; leaseholds for lives, 1,415; perpetuities, 172; holdings in occupation of proprietors, 244; undescribed, 38.

Source: *Returns showing the number of agricultural holdings in Ireland and the tenure by which they are held by the occupiers* [C32], H.C. 1870, lvi, 737-56

Appendix 12

Owners of land of one acre and upwards classified according to the valuation of the land they owned in Queen's County, 1876

valuation £	number of owners	percentage of owners
1 - 99	316	50.7
100 - 499	208	33.4
500 - 999	51	8.2
1,000 - 1,999	24	3.8
2,000 - 2,999	12	1.9
3,000 - 3,999	3	0.5
4,000 - 4,999	1	0.2
5,000 +	8	1.3
	623	100

Source: *Return of owners of land of one acre and upwards in the several counties, counties of cities, and counties of towns in Ireland*, [C1492], H.C. 1876, lxxx, 75-81, [20 April 1876]

Appendix 13

Absenteeism of landed proprietors in Queen's County, 1870

classification of proprietors	% of proprietors	% of land owned	% of valuation
resident on or near the property	44.9	46.4	49.6
resident usually elsewhere in Ireland and occasionally on the property	1.0	0.5	0.5
resident elsewhere in Ireland	40.2	28.2	27.4
total resident in Ireland	86.1	75.1	77.5
resident usually out of Ireland, but occasionally on the property	1.0	14.6	10.8
rarely or never resident in Ireland	11.6	9.5	11.0
total resident out of Ireland	12.6	24.1	21.8
public or charitable institutions or public companies	1.3	0.8	0.7
total number	301	414,025 acres	£220,983

Note: The above data, collected by poor-law inspectors, excludes proprietors owning less than 100 acres, all land in cities, towns, and townships, and all properties not ascertained. Though there is a discrepancy in the number of proprietors in table 1 (above, p.9) and Appendix 13 (the return for 1876, on which table 1 is based, is more complete than the return for 1870) this does not invalidate the broad conclusions of Appendix 13.

Source: *Return for... 1870 of... landed proprietors in each county...*, H.C. 1870 (167), xlvii, 775-84, (23 Apr. 72).

Appendix 14

Movement of rent on six estates in Queen's County

estate owner	situation of estate in Queen's County	size of estate (acres)	years of rental	% change
John Roe	Ballylynan (seven miles south-east of Stradbally)	682	1870-80	no change
Henry D. Carden	Knightstown (five miles south-east of Portarlinton)	2,225	1870-79	+ 0.6
Sir Allen Walsh	Ballykilcavan (three miles east of Stradbally)	3,131	1855-76	+ 0.9
Robert Pigott	Capard (four miles west of Mountmellick)	4,932	1861-81	no change
Marquis of Lansdowne	Luggacurren (eleven miles north-west of Carlow)	8,981	1862-81	+ 9.2
Robert A.G. Cosby	Stradbally and its environs, Timahoe, and Kilminchy	10,110	1861-76	+ 28.3

Sources: For the Roe estate: report in *Leinster Express*, 4 Dec. 80; for the Carden estate: P.R.O.I., Franks and Carter papers, Ref. 1025/1/7; for the Walsh estate: rent books in the possession of Peter and Ann Walsh-Kennis, Ballykilcavan, Stradbally, Co. Laois; for the Pigott estate: from a letter written by Robert Pigott to his tenants in Limerick and Queen's County, which was published in the *Leinster Express*, 24 Dec. 81 (Pigott wrote about his Capard estate: 'I have never increased a rent on the estate...the present rents have been the same for the past twenty years.');

for the Lansdowne estate: statement made by the estate agent John T. Trench before the Bessborough commission, *Report of her majesty's commissioners of inquiry into the working of the Landlord and tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870 and the acts amending the same*, vol. iii; *Minutes of evidence*, part II [C2779-11], H.C. 1881, xix, 454; for the Cosby estate: rent books in the possession of Adrian Cosby, Stradbally Hall, Co. Laois.

Appendix 15

Cases in Queen's County in which judicial rents were fixed under the land act of 1881, October 1881 - August 1885

method	no. of cases	old rent £	judicial rent £	% reduction
sub-commissioners	870	28,052	22,119	21.1
civil bill courts & valuers	9	253	194	23.3
agreements between landlords & tenants	827	22,167	18,810	15.1
total	1,706	50,472	41,123	18.5

Sources: Reports of the Irish land commissioners listed in the bibliography.

Appendix 16

Cases in all Ireland in which judicial rents were fixed under the land act of 1881, October 1881 - August 1885

method	no. of cases	old rent £	judicial rent £	% reduction
sub-commissioners	77,320	1,535,763	1,237,344	19.4
civil bill courts & valuers	7,088	107,124	84,888	20.8
agreements between landlords & tenants	84,230	1,419,988	1,182,731	16.7
total	168,638	3,062,876	2,504,963	18.2

Sources: As for Appendix 15, above.

Appendix 17

Holdings in Queen's County and in all Ireland dealt with by the Irish land commissioners under the Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Act, 1882

	number of holdings	annual rental of holdings £	arrears extinguished by the commissioners £	amount paid to or for the benefit of the landlords £
Queen's County	1,643	20,026	30,050	12,651
Ireland	125,890	1,111,952	1,760,824	767,585

Sources: *Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Act, 1882*; return of payments made to landlords by the Irish land commission...; and also a return of rent charges cancelled...[C4059], H.C. 1884, lxiv, 97-405.

Appendix 18

Evictions in Queen's County, 1849-85

year	families evicted			persons evicted			evictions per 1,000 holdings above one acre
	gross total	net readmitted	total	gross total	net readmitted	total	
1849	592	227	365	3,171	1,220	1,951	26.6
1850	360	68	292	1,912	384	1,528	21.3
1851	337	94	243	1,713	514	1,199	17.7
1852	250	91	159	1,216	453	763	14.5
1853	90	31	59	381	153	228	5.4
1854	37	2	35	188	7	181	3.2
1855	75	5	70	393	31	362	6.4
1856	12	0	12	61	0	61	1.1
1857	16	10	6	78	54	24	0.6
1858	15	1	14	57	5	52	1.3
1859	27	19	8	132	94	38	0.7
1860	22	1	21	110	5	105	1.9
1861	25	4	21	122	21	101	2.0
1862	50	0	50	269	0	269	4.7
1863	85	46	39	374	164	210	3.7
1864	18	6	12	79	15	64	1.1
1865	14	0	14	40	0	40	1.3
1866	22	8	14	100	39	61	1.3
1867	12	2	10	67	10	57	1.0
1868	3	0	3	12	0	12	0.3
1869	8	1	7	35	2	33	0.7
1870	9	0	9	39	0	39	0.9
1871	1	0	1	4	0	4	0.1
1872	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1873	9	1	8	40	1	39	0.8
1874	9	0	9	39	0	39	0.9
1875	6	0	6	26	0	26	0.6
1876	2	0	2	9	0	9	0.2
1877	8	0	8	31	0	31	0.8
1878	10	2	8	70	18	52	0.8
1879	33	4	31	166	25	141	3.1
1880	76	54	22	366	258	108	2.3
1881	47	30	17	194	136	58	1.8
1882	96	37	59	468	167	301	6.2
1883	75	17	58	290	69	221	6.1
1884	86	27	59	402	138	264	6.2
1885	48	24	24	189	101	88	2.5

Sources: Returns of cases of evictions listed in the bibliography.

Appendix 19

Number of dwellings in each category of housing in Queen's County, 1871-91

year	first- class	second- class	third- class	fourth- class	total in rural districts	total in civic districts	total
1871	973	5,956	6,493	2,097	13,851	1,668	15,519
1881	1,011	6,217	6,365	618	12,558	1,653	14,211
1891	1,044	6,577	5,181	333	11,588	1,547	13,135
% change							
1871-91	+6.8	+10.4	-20.2	-84.1	-16.3	-7.25	-15.4

Note: The figure for fourth-class houses in 1871 must be treated with caution. Census takers made a special effort to record mud cabins in that year and their methods of classification may have been different from the time of the 1861 census. The increase shown in the number of fourth-class houses from 1861 to 1871 is unlikely, and hence the apparently dramatic reduction in fourth-class house numbers from 1871 to 1881 is improbable. A more realistic impression of the shift away from poorer class houses in the decade 1871-81 may be had from a comparison of the combined total of third-class and fourth-class houses for each of 1871 and 1881.

Sources: *Census of Ireland, 1871*, pt i, *Leinster*, H.C. 1872, lxvii, 810-11;
Census of Ireland, 1881, pt i, vol. i, *Leinster*, H.C. 1881, xcvi, 810-11
Census of Ireland, 1891, pt i, vol. i, *Leinster*, H.C. 1890-91, xcv, 810-11.

Appendix 20

Number and percentage of families occupying each category of housing in Queen's County, 1871-91

year	first- class	second- class	third- class	fourth- class	total in rural districts	total in civic districts	total
1871	899	5,864	6,810	2,625	14,307	1,891	16,198
% of total	[5.6]	[36.2]	[42.0]	[16.3]	[88.3]	[11.7]	
1881	962	6,184	6,579	784	12,793	1,716	14,509
% of total	[6.6]	[42.6]	[45.3]	[5.4]	[88.2]	[11.8]	
1891	1,003	6,564	5,362	397	11,732	1,594	13,326
% of total	[7.5]	[49.3]	[40.2]	[3.0]	[88.0]	[11.0]	

Sources: As in Appendix 19, above.

Appendix 21

**Number of accounts open, and amount of deposits on 31 December
in post office savings banks in Queen's County and Ireland, 1873-88**

year	Queen's County		Ireland	
	number of accounts	amount on deposit £	number of accounts	amount on deposit £
1873	469	8,713	51,029	854,550
1874	503	9,807	54,846	913,747
1875	585	12,410	58,956	1,003,304
1876	645	13,543	60,670	1,123,717
1877	650	15,173	65,107	1,256,724
1878	631	14,282	68,639	1,325,806
1879	677	15,718	72,378	1,417,389
1880	785	17,765	82,131	1,555,894
1881	914	19,413	97,100	1,723,395
1882	991	21,498	106,490	1,925,460
1883	1,070	23,002	114,976	2,052,056
1884	1,121	23,964	124,973	2,224,347
1885	1,212	26,362	135,771	2,438,172
1886	1,356	29,742	147,193	2,703,075
1887	1,502	32,209	158,848	2,933,032
1888	1,632	36,083	172,305	3,233,722

Sources: *Return arranged according to counties, showing the number of accounts of depositors in post office savings banks remaining open on 31 Dec. in each year 1873-78 with the amount, inclusive of interest, standing to the credit of these accounts*; H.C. 1878-79(255), xlii, 126-50; - for 1879; H.C. 1881(24), lvii, 46; - for 1880; H.C. 1881(362), lvii, 48; - for 1881; H.C. 1882(347), xxxvii, 121; - for 1882 and 1883 H.C. 1884(203), xlvii, 135; - for 1884; H.C. 1886(19-Sess.1), xxxviii, 60; - for 1885; H.C. 1886(149), xxxviii, 62; - for 1886; H.C. 1887(197), xlix, 66; - for 1887; H.C. 1888(201), lxxv, 69; - for 1888; H.C. 1889(177), xlvii,

Appendix 22

Number of accounts, amount on deposit, and average amount per account in each of the fifteen post offices in Queen's County, 1882

place of post office	number of accounts	total amount on deposit £	average amount per account £
Abbeyleix	126	1,803	14
Ballacolla	7	146	21
Ballinakill	13	311	24
Ballybrittas	10	78	8
Ballybrophy	20	416	21
Borris-in-Ossory	17	652	38
Clonaslee	9	33	4
Crettyard	7	255	36
Durrow	60	877	15
Maryborough	117	2,637	23
Mountmellick	105	3,365	32
Mountrath	131	2,469	19
Portarlinton	228	6,123	27
Rathdowney	59	761	13
Stradbally	82	1,572	19
total 991		21,498	county average 22

Source: *Return arranged according to counties, showing the number of accounts of depositors in post office savings savings banks, . . . H.C., 1884(203), xlvii, 125.*

Appendix 23

Quantity of and profit on each of the leading sixteen goods sold in
Matthew Dunne's shop in Ballyfin, Queen's County, 1 Feb. 76 - 29 Jan. 77

good	quantity sold	total profit		
		£	s	d
bread	no quantity given	30	0	0
tea	870 lbs	26	5	7
Indian meal	146 sacks	13	7	8
flour	53 sacks	10	12	0
bran	256 cwts	8	10	8
sugar	80 cwts	8	0	0
bacon	30½ cwts	7	2	4
tobacco	300 lbs	5	0	0
soap	7 cwts	3	15	6
pollard	88 cwts	1	16	8
candles	47 dozen lbs	1	15	3
biscuits	198 lbs	1	13	0
snuff	18 lbs	1	7	0
boot laces	13 gross	0	19	6
starch	140 lbs	0	10	0
oatmeal	3 cwts	0	6	0
total		£121	15	2

Note: Because Dunne delivered bread in and sold bread from a cart, his profit from bread must include 'cart' profits. The weights of the sacks of Indian meal and flour are not given in Dunne's accounts.

The goods listed above are not an exhaustive list of the goods sold by Matthew Dunne. Other items noted in his account books included paraffin, turnip seeds, currants, raisins, cocoa, butter, potatoes, stamps, coppy (sic) books, pins, blacking, salt, soda, sweets and paper. Dunne was also an agent for manures; unfortunately his manure account book for 1876-7 is missing.

Source: A record assumed to be in Dunne's writing in a manure 'agents' stock account and day book'; shop account books. The MSS are in the possession of Michael and Miriam Mooney, Ballyfin, Portlaoise, Laois.

Appendix 24

Number of illiterate persons, five years and upwards, in Queen's County in 1861, 1871, 1881, and 1891

year	number of illiterate persons	population of Queen's County	illiterate persons as a percentage of population
1861	24,742	90,650	27.3
1871	18,820	79,771	23.6
1881	13,420	73,124	18.4
1891	8,307	64,883	12.8

Sources: For population see W.E. Vaughan & A.J. Fitzpatrick (eds.), *Irish historical statistics: population, 1821-1927*, p.7; for numbers of illiterates in Queen's County see *Census of Ireland, 1891*, pt i, vol. i, *Leinster*, H.C. 1890-91, xcv, 854.

Appendix 25

Number and percentage of the population receiving instruction in educational establishments in Queen's County in 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891

year	number of persons receiving instruction	population of Queen's County	percentage of population receiving instruction
1861	6,979	90,650	7.7
1871	8,371	79,771	10.5
1881	9,606	73,124	13.1
1891	9,171	64,883	14.1

Sources: For population, as in sources for Appendix 24; for number of persons receiving instruction in educational establishments see *Census of Ireland, 1891*, pt i, vol. i, *Leinster*, H.C. 1890-91, xcv, 858.

Appendix 26

Number of agricultural labourers in Queen's County, 1871

classification of labourers (all ages)	male	female	total number
general labourers	4,487	959	5,446
agricultural labourers (outdoor)	3,465	348	3,813
farm servant (indoor)	4,193	755	4,948
total	12,145	2,062	14,207

Note: The majority of 'general labourers' may be assumed to be agricultural labourers.

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1871*, pt i, vol. i, *Leinster*, H.C. 1872, lxvii, 818-27.

Appendix 27

Labourers' wages on Ballykilcavan estate, Queen's County, 1850-74

male labourers		female labourers	
years	wages	years	wages
1850-3	10d. per day	1850-3	4d. per day
1854-5	1s.0d. per day	1854-63	6d. per day
1856-60	1s.2d. per day	1864-7	7d. per day
1861-7	1s.4d. per day	1868-70	8d. per day
1868-72	1s.6d. per day	1871-2	9d. per day
1873-4	1s.8d. per day	1873-4	10d. per day

Note: The wages earned by male labourers were for ploughing, carting, harrowing, and stall-feeding. The female labourers earned their wages by thinning turnips, and planting, weeding and picking potatoes.

Source: Labourers wage books in the possession of Peter and Ann Walsh Kennis, Ballykilcavan, Stradbally, Laois.

Appendix 28

**Cases of distress in the Queen's County districts of Stradbally,
Timahoe and Vicarstown stated to be in need of relief in March 1880**

<u>males</u>	<u>number</u>
males employed on small wages	13
males sometimes/rarely/occasionally employed	45
males unemployed	16
males dying, sickly, infirm, old, unemployable, unable to work	24
	98
 <u>females</u>	
females employed outside the home	1
females sometimes employed	10
females unemployed	18
widows	10
women alone without visible means of support	5
old maids, old sisters, old mothers, dying mothers/wife, sickly daughters/wives - all unable to work	14
 wives	53
	111
 <u>children</u> under working age	249
	<u>total</u> <u>458</u>

Note: Thirteen people had their means of livelihood specified. These were: five small farmers, three tailors, two cobblers, a lime burner, a 'lame' cooper, and a dressmaker.

One family included in the lists forwarded to the Mansion House committee was not considered in the above analysis as no details were given about the children.

Source: Mansion House relief committee minute book, statement to committee for 18 August 1880.

Source: Stradbally file (Archives division, City Hall, Records of the Mansion House committee for the Relief of Distress in Ireland, 1880, CH 1/52/750).

Appendix 29

Sources of the £179,577 raised by the Mansion House relief committee

source	'rough total' contributed £	percentage of total sum contributed
Australia	83,242	46.4
individuals in Ireland and elsewhere	21,741	12.1
India	16,657	9.3
United States	11,111	6.2
England and Wales	10,619	5.9
New Zealand	10,345	5.7
Canada	8,014	4.4
France	4,279	2.4
South America	4,263	2.4
Scotland	2,483	1.4
China	2,108	1.2
Newfoundland	1,800	1.0
Africa	1,489	0.8
Fiji islands	315	0.2
'special contributions' for seed grants	855	0.5
National Bank interest	160	0.1

Note: The largest individual subscription was £1,000, which came from the maharajah of Vizianagram; the archbishop of Tuam forwarded £3,000 to the committee out of 'funds entrusted to him for the relief of distress'; the smallest contribution was 1s - described in the minutes (see source below) as 'a widow's mite'.

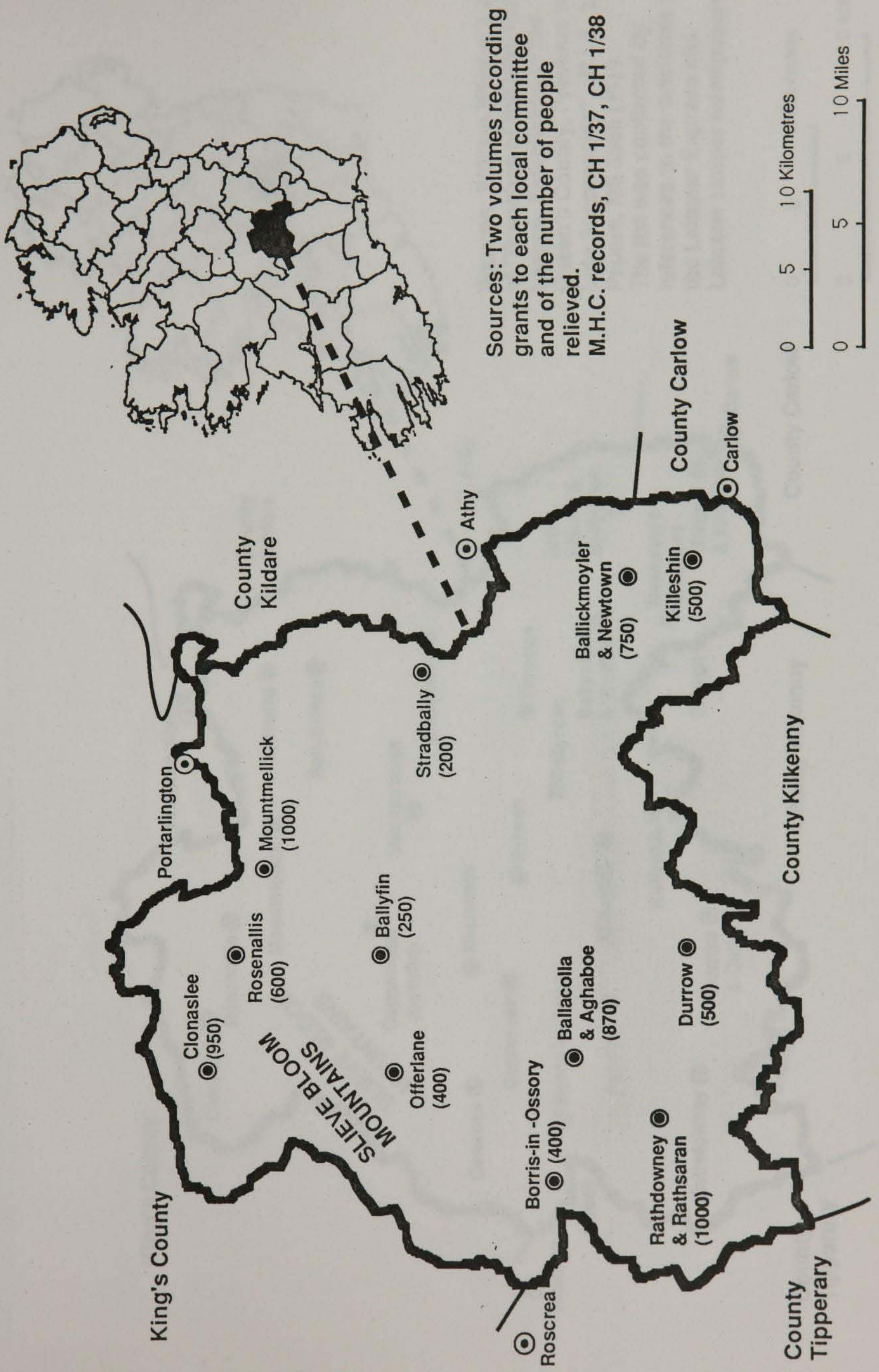
On 14 August 1880, only £2,825 was left in the committee's funds.

The contributed sums do not exactly total £179,577 (they total £96 less) because they are 'rough' totals according to the records of the Mansion House relief committee.

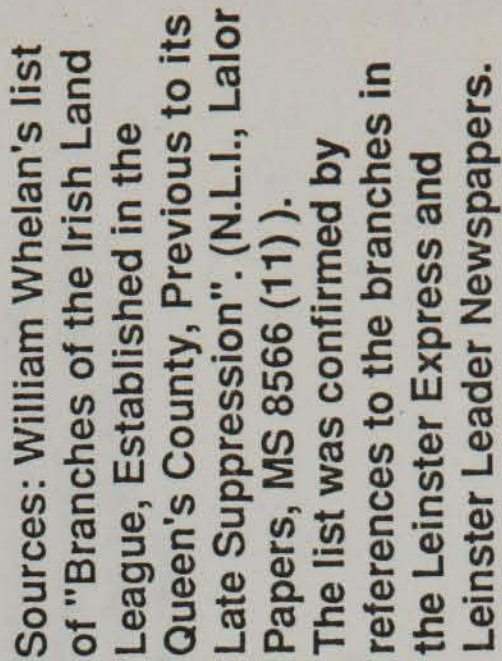
Source: Mansion House relief committee minute book, statement in minutes for 14 August 1880 (Archives division, City Hall, Dublin, Records of the Mansion House Committee for the Relief of Distress in Ireland, 1880, CH 1/4).

APPENDIX 30

Mansion House Local Committees In Queen's County And Numbers In Need Of Relief.

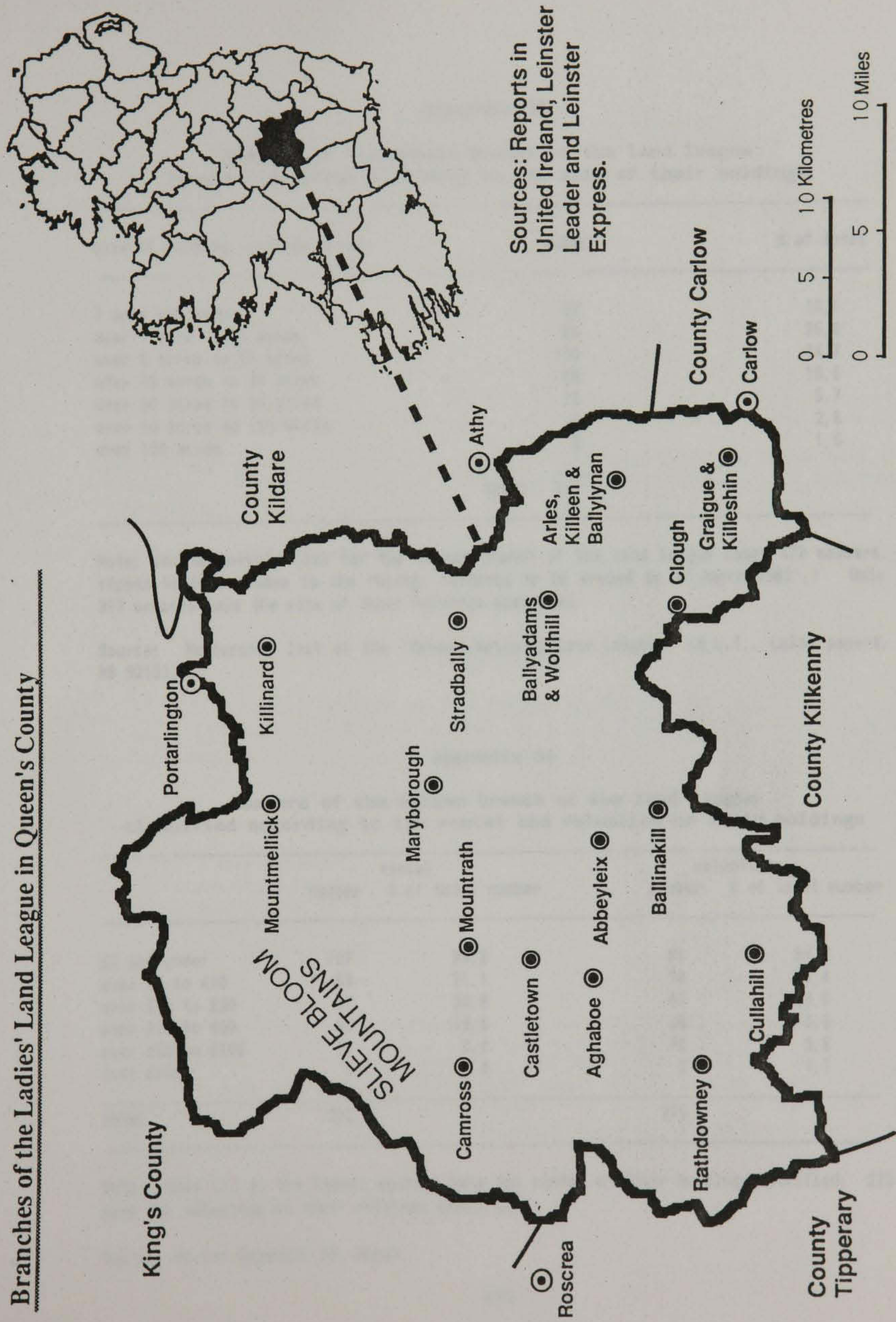


Branches Of The Land League In Queen's County



APPENDIX 32

Branches of the Ladies' Land League in Queen's County



Appendix 33

Members of the Raheen branch of the land league league classified according to the size of their holdings

size of holding (statute acres)	number	% of total
1 acre and under	32	10.1
over 1 acre to 5 acres	85	26.8
over 5 acres to 15 acres	110	34.7
over 15 acres to 30 acres	59	18.6
over 30 acres to 50 acres	18	5.7
over 50 acres to 100 acres	8	2.5
over 100 acres	5	1.6
total	317	

Note: The membership list for the Raheen branch of the land league names 472 members. (Opposite three names is the ruling: 'Ordered to be erased on 27 March 1882'.) Only 317 members have the size of their holdings specified.

Source: Membership list of the 'Raheen National Land League', (N.L.I., Lalor papers, MS 9219).

Appendix 34

Members of the Raheen branch of the land league classified according to the rental and valuation on their holdings

	rental		valuation	
	number	% of total number	number	% of total number
£5 and under	107	33.2	81	29.5
over £5 to £10	68	21.1	78	28.4
over £10 to £20	67	20.8	65	23.6
over £20 to £50	63	19.6	38	13.8
over £50 to £100	11	3.4	10	3.6
over £100	6	1.9	3	1.1
total	322		275	

Note: Only 322 of the Raheen members have the rental on their holdings specified. 275 have the valuation on their holdings specified

Source: As for Appendix 33, above.

Appendix 35

Members of the Raheen branch of the land league classified according to their subscriptions

subscription (shillings)	number	% of total number
1	325	69.6
over 1 to 5	126	27.0
over 5 to 10	13	2.8
over 10	3	0.6
total	467	

Note: Of the 472 listed members of the Raheen branch, 3 are entered as having 'paid in Maryborough', and no subscription is entered after two names, hence the total number of subscriptions is 467 instead of 472

Source: As for Appendix 33, above, p. 434.

Appendix 36

Female members of the Raheen branch of the land league classified according to their subscriptions

size of holding (in statute acres)	number
1 acre and under	4
over 1 acre to 5 acres	13
over 5 acres to 15 acres	9
over 15 acres to 30 acres	6
over 30 acres to 50 acres	1
total	33

Note: 45 females are listed as members of the Raheen branch, 10 are described as widows, 11 have the title 'Mrs' before their names, 33 rented land; 10 had no land, and 2 are described as having only a 'house'. 36 subscribed 1s to the branch, 8 subscribed sums ranging from 1s.6d. to 4s, while one widow renting twenty-five acres subscribed nothing.

Source: As for Appendix 33, above, p. 434.

Appendix 37

Holdings, subscriptions, and attendance at branch committee meetings from November 1880 to October 1881 of fourteen committee members of the Raheen branch of the land league

name	acreage	holdings		sub. paid s	meetings attended
		rental £	valuation £		
John W. Mulhall	240	241	196	10	25
Richard Lalor	219	213	236	22	11
Michael Gorman	108	155	100	10	21
Patrick Mortimer	84	60	48	5	7
Pat Dillon	73	128	81	8	18
William Parkinson	70	80	58	6	26
Michael Dunne	44	34	23	2	15
Luke Fitzpatrick	41	70	37	10	33
Pat Seale	22	29	16	2	13
Daniel Devoy	21	21	19	2	1
John Finlay	20	27	23	3	24
Thomas Delaney	19	17	15	2	21
William Goss	17	16	15	2	31
Michael McDonnell	8	9	8	2	28

Note: The figures for acreage are rounded off to the nearest acre, and the figures for rental and valuation are rounded off to the nearest pound sterling.

22 names are recorded as attending committee meetings (33 meetings were held). Two pages attached to the membership lists record sums of cash collected by members in named townlands from 28 November to 6 February 1881. As committee members were the main collecting agents for the branch, and probably hailed from or near their areas of collection, by checking the names of men who collected cash against the membership lists it is possible, with reasonable confidence, to link fourteen members with holdings.

Mainly because of the frequency with which their surnames appear in the membership lists, it is not possible, with reasonable confidence, to identify the following committee members: Pat Phelan, Fintan Phelan, Edward Phelan, William Phelan, James Lalor, and Edward Dunne. A Brian Kavanagh was probably the son of James Kavanagh, who farmed fifty-five acres, but could possibly have the son of either of two other Kavanaghs listed. A committee member named Keyran Phelan is ignored as he is stated in the minute book to have 'left the country' in May 1881.

Sources: Minute book and membership list of the Raheen branch of the Land League as for Appendix 33, above, p. 434.

Appendix 38

Suspects from Queen's County gaoled, May 1881 - June 1882

name	occupation	position in land league branch	branch	date of arrest	days in gaol
James Lalor	farmer	committee member	Raheen	10 May '81	133
Patrick Doran	publican & grocer	vice-president	Maryborough	14 May '81	97
Patrick A. Meehan	publican & farmer	secretary	Maryborough	14 May '81	117
John Redington	farmer	chairman of committees	Maryborough	14 May '81 18 Feb. '82	130 93
Martin Delaney	publican & farmer	secretary	Borris-in-Ossory	25 June '81	91
John Campion	farmer's son	committee member	Rathdowney	2 Aug. '81	43
Patrick Murphy	publican & grocer	secretary	Rathdowney	2 Aug. '81	43
Patrick Murphy	farmer & agent for Grand Canal Company	committee member	Mountmellick	15 Oct. '81	95
John Delaney	shopkeeper	treasurer	Abbeyleix	17 Oct. '81	166
William H. Cobbe	auctioneer & farmer	treasurer	Portarlinton	19 Oct. '81	101
Andrew Gallagher	farmer	secretary	Ballybrittas	31 Oct. '81	222
Patrick Gallagher	farmer	secretary	Killinard	31 Oct. '81	222
Mark J. Codd	shopkeeper & farmer	secretary	Mountrath	11 Nov. '81	141
Francis Moran	printer	ordinary member	Mountmellick	7 Dec. '81	99
John Flanagan	farmer & lime burner	ordinary member	Ballybrittas	12 Dec. '81	99
Edmund Nolan	farmer	president	Ballybrittas	12 Dec. '81	100
Thomas Dunphy	farmer	committee member	Aghaboe	13 Dec. '81	123
Michael Whittaker	shopkeeper & farmer	secretary	Aghaboe	13 Dec. '81	141
Patrick Delaney	publican & farmer	treasurer	Arles, Killeen, & Ballylynan	15 Dec. '81	19
William Delaney	shopkeeper's son	secretary	Abbeyleix	15 Dec. '81	123
James Carey	farmer	president	Carlow & Graigue	1 Feb. '82	89
Patrick Cahill	farmer & editor	committee member	Naas	24 Feb. '82	83

Note: Redington, the only suspect from Queen's County to be gaoled twice, only served 93 days of his sentence from 18 Feb. 82 because he was 'on parole' from 12 Mar. to 22 Mar. to attend a land court (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., 1882/29627).

Cahill is included because, while residing in Naas, and was arrested in Naas, he rented a farm near Ballickmoyler, Queen's County, and was a supportive editor of the *Leinster Leader*.

The crimes the twenty-two 'suspects' above were suspected of committing were: arson; James Lalor; inciting a riot; Doran, Meehan, Redington (also gaoled on 18 Feb. 82 for 'complicity in the land league'), Cobbe, William & Andrew Gallagher; writing/procuring/posting threatening or boycotting notices/letters; Martin Delaney, Campion, both Patrick Murphys, Codd, Flanagan; printing and publishing threatening notices; Moran; intimidation against the payment of rent; Nolan, Dunphy, Whittaker, John, Patrick, and William Delaney, Carey, Cahill.

Sources: List of warrants issued under the Protection of Person and Property Act (Ireland) Act, 1881-2 (S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., carton 1); Arrests under the Protection of Person and Property Act (Ireland) Act (S.P.O., C.S.O., 5 vols.). Where occupations were not given in the State Paper Office records the occupations were noted from *Slater's Directory* for 1881 and 1882, and from issues of the *Leinster Express* and the *Leinster Leader*.

Appendix 39

Occupations of all persons arrested for taking part in nocturnal attacks in fifteen counties, June 1880 - June 1882

occupation	number	occupation	number
farmer	82	farmer's daughter	1
labourer	52	servant	1
farmer's son	45	car man	1
shoemaker	6	cooper	1
mason	3	shopkeeper	1
collier	3	shopkeeper's son	1
labourer & farmer	2	weaver	1
blacksmith	2	stone dresser	1
schoolmaster	2	clerk	1
publican	1	van driver	1
publican & farmer	1	road contractor	1
dairyman	1		
		total	211

Note: The one female, a farmer's daughter from East Riding in Cork, was arrested on 6 June 1882; her case was pending on 9 October 1882.

Source: *Return giving the names and occupations of all persons arrested for or convicted of having taken part in nocturnal attacks between the months of June 1880 and June 1882*, H.C. 1882 (403), lv, 609-13

Appendix 40

Position in Oct. 82 in the cases of the 211 persons arrested for taking part in nocturnal attacks in fifteen counties, June 1880 - June 1882

position	number	% of total
not convicted	169	80.1
convicted	31	14.7
jury disagreed	6	2.8
case pending	4	1.9
bailed for trial, but absconded	1	0.5
total	211	100

Source: As for Appendix 39, above.

Appendix 41

Quarterly numbers of all persons arrested for taking part
in nocturnal attacks in fifteen counties, June 1880 - June 1882

quarter	number arrested	quarter	number arrested
July - Sept, 1880	3	July - Sept, 1881	16
Oct. - Dec, 1880	1	Oct. - Dec, 1881	43
Jan. - Mar, 1881	19	Jan. - Mar, 1882	88
Apr. - June 1881	23	Apr. - June 1882	18
			211

Source: As for Appendix 39, above, p.438.

Appendix 42

Numbers of all persons arrested for taking part in
nocturnal attacks in each of fifteen counties, June 1880 - June 1882

county	number arrested	county	number arrested
Armagh	2	Mayo, North Riding	16
Cavan	6	Mayo, South Riding	16
Cork, East Riding	30	Queen's County	4
Cork, West Riding	26	Roscommon	14
Galway, West Riding	1	Sligo	2
Kerry	24	Tipperary, North Riding	4
Kilkenny	5	Tipperary, South Riding	18
Leitrim	31	Waterford	2
Limerick	1	Westmeath	2
Longford	7		
			total 211

source: As for Appendix 39, above, p.438.

Appendix 43

Occupations of one hundred persons from all Ireland who were arrested under the Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881

occupation	number	occupation	number
farmer	38	draper	1
farmer's son	20	draper's assistant	1
publican	7	shop assistant	1
labourer	4	shopkeeper	1
shopkeeper/farmer	2	shopkeeper/lodging-house keeper	1
shopkeeper's son	2	tailor	1
shoemaker 'with a few acres'	2	builder/slater	1
baker	2	carpenter	1
school teacher	2	whipcord manufacturer	1
publican	2	waiter	1
publican/farmer	2	telegraph clerk	1
publican/farmer's son	1	no occupation	3
herdsman	1		
gamekeeper/small farmer	1		
		total	100

Sources: S.P.O., C.S.O., R.P., Irish National Land League papers, memorandum of proceedings and confidential forms, and recommendation for arrest forms in cartons 1 and 2.

Appendix 44

Ages of eighty-six persons arrested under the Protection of Person and Property Act, 1881

age	number
20 years and under	5
over 20 years to 30 years	36
over 30 years to 40 years	29
over 40 years to 50 years	6
over 50 years to 60 years	8
over 60 years to 70 years	2
	86

Source: As for Appendix 43, above.

Appendix 45
Agrarian outrages and the total number
of all outrages in Queen's County, 1878-93

agrarian crime	year																
	'78	'79	'80	'81	'82	'83	'84	'85	'86	'87	'88	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	
<u>offences against the person</u>																	
murder				2													
manslaughter					1												
firing at person				3													
assault on police				1													
aggravated assault								1									
assault endangering life						1							1		1		
<u>offences against property</u>																	
incendiary fire & arson	1		3	3	3		1	2	2	3		2	1	1		2	
taking & holding forcible possession							1	1	1	1							
killing/cutting/maiming cattle				3	3	3	2	3		1	2		1	1			
<u>offences against public peace</u>																	
riots and affrays				2													
intimidation by threatening letters, notices or otherwise		4	14	66	58	14	21	10	5	5	1	4	2	3	1	2	
resistance to legal process				1		7			1								
injury to property				12	4		2	5	1	3	2			1		1	
firing into dwellings		1	1		1												
<u>other offences</u>																	
injury to or attempt to injure railway trains or highways											1						
injury to telegraph wires											1						
perjury							1										
total agrarian outrages	1	5	18	93	70	25	28	22	10	15	5	6	5	6	2	5	
total outrages	36	51	57	144	113	57	69	45	40	43	35	23	25	31	20	24	

Sources: Returns of outrages listed in the bibliography.

Appendix 46

Agrarian outrages and total crimes in Ireland, 1878-93

year	number of agrarian outrages	number of total crimes	agrarian outrages as a percentage of total crimes
1878	301	2,524	11.9
1879	863	3,500	24.7
1880	2,585	5,669	45.6
1881	4,439	7,788	57.0
1882	3,433	6,268	54.8
1883	870	2,535	34.3
1884	762	2,453	31.1
1885	944	2,683	35.2
1886	1,056	3,251	32.5
1887	883	2,720	32.5
1888	660	2,182	30.2
1889	534	1,895	28.2
1890	519	1,934	26.9
1891	472	1,879	25.1
1892	405	1,880	21.5
1893	380	2,005	19.0
total	19,106	51,166	37.3

Source: As for Appendix 45, above, p. 441.

Appendix 47

Numbers of outrages in certain counties, 1878-93

year	Carlow	Kildare	Kilkenny	King's County	Tipperary
1878	2	8	7	18	12
1879	3	12	8	34	28
1880	22	30	31	49	106
1881	34	46	113	154	331
1882	15	59	81	109	390
1883	3	7	35	21	62
1884	1	1	21	13	75
1885	6	7	9	26	94
1886	2	4	12	19	77
1887	1	4	16	22	71
1888	2	3	6	7	53
1889	0	4	6	3	41
1890	0	2	4	8	69
1891	5	5	2	17	65
1892	0	2	9	8	18
1893	0	2	4	9	19

Source: As for Appendix 45, above, p.441.

Appendix 48

Police protection posts in seven counties, 1878-88

county	'79	'80	'81	'82	'83	'84	'85	'86	'87	'88
Queen's County	0	2	5	5	0	0	0	3	14	0
Carlow	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Kilkenny	0	3	9	4	9	5	3	4	2	1
Tipperary, South Riding	0	0	5	28	20	11	11	13	9	10
Tipperary, North Riding	0	1	10	17	10	3	3	6	6	4
Waterford	0	3	10	13	5	3	0	4	2	1
Wexford	1	3	10	9	7	5	4	7	6	8
Wicklow	0	0	0	4	3	1	0	0	0	2
total	1	12	49	90	54	29	22	38	39	26

Note: The protection posts were not necessarily in the same place each year.

Source: Evidence given to *The Times* - Parnell commission on 23-24 January 1889 by Captain Owen R. Slacke, the special resident magistrate for the south-east division (*Special commission act, 1888; reprint of the shorthand notes...*, vol. iv, pp. 193-4).

Appendix 49

Numbers of subscribing members of the Queen's County Hunt, their subscriptions and field money, 1870-87

year ending 1 May in	number of subscribers	total subscription			average subscription per member			field money		
		£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
1870	54	571	0	0	10	11	6	131	10	0
1871	57	576	19	0	10	2	5	115	16	0
1872	60	604	0	0	10	1	4	145	7	6
1873	57	594	0	0	10	8	5	88	7	0
1874	56	616	0	0	11	0	0	85	5	0
1875	55	589	3	0	10	12	5	79	11	0
1876	75	658	5	0	8	15	6	83	19	6
1877	82	896	1	0	10	18	7	109	5	6
1878	77	888	1	0	11	10	8	90	0	6
1879	77	786	0	0	10	2	4	93	10	0
1880	72	732	1	0	10	3	4	114	0	0
1881	60	649	0	0	10	16	4	88	7	6
1882	63	603	2	0	9	11	6	6	2	6
1883										
1884	27	130	2	0	4	16	4	27	18	0
1885	22	105	0	0	4	15	4	18	12	6
1886	19	122	16	0	6	9	3	23	15	0
1887	35	133	0	0	3	16	0	16	0	6

Note: The numbers of subscribers include the master of the hunt. The totals for the subscriptions paid by members do not include the sums paid by guarantee committees to make up the sums guaranteed to the master. (In each of eight of the years, 1870-9, an average £64, 1s. 8d. was paid by such guarantee committees to the master. There is no record of anything being paid by a guarantee committee in either the year ending 1 May 1876 or the year ending 1 May 1877.)

Sources: Book containing subscription lists, accounts and transactions of the Queen's County Hunt, 1854-84; envelopes containing balance sheets of the Queen's County Hunt, 1870-87. All the MSS are in the possession of Peter and Ann Walsh-Kemmis, Ballykilcavan, Stradbally, Laois.

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and Miriam Mooney, Ballyfin Post Office, Portlaoise, County Laois.)

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Nuala Jordan, 18 Silchester Park, Glenageary, County Dublin.

Walsh papers: a voluminous collection, which the author has catalogued, is in the possession of Peter and Ann Walsh-Kemmis, Ballykilcavan, Stradbally, County Laois. It mainly relates to the activities of the Walsh family 1582-1952, their property in Queen's County 1639-1944, in Dublin 1750-1862, and in Prince Edward Island, Canada 1803-56, coal mining in Queen's County 1838-97, and the Church of Ireland church in Corclone, Queen's County 1789-29, 1844-7. The papers consist of legal documents, rentals, letters, maps (ordnance, outline, and water-coloured), photographs, diaries, note-books, receipts and disbursements, account books for the farm, house, kitchen, garden, and flour mill in Ballykilcavan, church and hunt minute books, sketch books, newspapers, press-cuttings, pamphlets and magazines.

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(m) PUBLIC HOUSES

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(2) RECORDS OF PARLIAMENT

(a) ACTS OF PARLIAMENT

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1864 Trespass in Pursuit of Game Act, 27 & 28 Vict., c. 67, 25 July.

1870 Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 33 & 34 Vict., c. 46, 1 Aug.

1880 Seed Supply (Ireland) Act, 43 Vict., c. 1, 1 Mar.

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1881 Land Law (Ireland) Act, 44 & 45 Vict., c.49, 22 Aug.

1882 Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Act, 45 & 46 Vict., c.25, 12 July.

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