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CHARLES STEWART PARNELL IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS FAMILY AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

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CHARLES STEWART PARNELL
IN THE CONTEXT OF
HIS FAMILY AND SOCIAL
BACKGROUND

R.F. FOSTER

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Dublin, 1974.

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This thesis has not previously been submitted as an exercise for a degree at the University of Dublin, or any other university. It is entirely my own work.

R. Foster

R.F. Foster

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R.F. Foster,
Birkbeck College,
London University.

December 1974.

Some notes on the text:

Citation of sources: Many of my references are to memorials in the Registry of Deeds. These are quoted (for dates up to 1831) thus: 'Reg. of Deeds, 386.207.444321' - meaning 'Memorial volume no. 386, page 207, memorial no. 444321'. After 1831, the memorials in the Registry of Deeds are listed by year: thus a reference reading 'Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1862, 9.191' means volume 9 for the year 1862, memorial no. 191. In the first part of this thesis, many of the manuscript references are to material which is not classified as belonging to a set of papers; such references read 'James Grattan's notebook for 1823 (N.L.I., MS 5779), whereas a reference to material in a collection reads according to I.H.S. convention ('Robert Chaloner's letter-book (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 3987)'.)

Three published memoirs are referred to in numerous footnotes: J.H. Parnell's C.S. Parnell: a memoir, E. Dickinson's A patriot's mistake, and K. O'Shea's Charles Stewart Parnell. I have referred to these simply by the author's name (with initial). There is no possibility of confusion, since none of these writers ever published anything else.

Manuscripts which are constantly referred to appear (after one full citation) in a condensed form.

Appendices: Since my work is sharply compartmentalised, spans a long period and covers many different facets, I have placed the relevant appendices at the end of each of the six main sections, instead of all together at the end: this seemed to make for a more coherent structure. These appendices, therefore, do not appear under a different system of page-numbering from the text; for easier cross-referencing, every page from the beginning to the last appendix is numbered consecutively, the bibliographical section alone being paged in roman numerals. Footnotes are separately numbered for each chapter.

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Thus Parnell, of the seventh generation of his family in Ireland, was the logical outcome of his ancestry, of his family traditions and environment, and of the political circumstances of his native Ireland alike in his own day and in the preceding century. That is the sole clue that is needed to what he himself was and to what he did and tried to do.

- Henry Harrison,
Parnell Vindicated
(London, 1931), p. 56.

Part 1

The Wicklow Gentry,

c. 1820-70

Introduction

It is by now a truism that Parnell's life and politics constitute an enigma. Why a Protestant landowner from the conservative middling gentry should have taken up the cause of nationalist politics and radical land reform is still debated; the picture is further distorted by the evidence that he disliked politics and the life he was constrained to lead, and the later years of his life were marked by a sporadic inclination to retire altogether into the obscure private life that he had fashioned for himself at Eltham. An understanding of this can only be achieved by considering what he left behind him when he entered politics - the social fabric from which he migrated[1], and could only return to occasionally throughout the remainder of his life and, at least as important, his extraordinary family and his relationship with it throughout his career. My first section will deal with an introduction to the first issue; it may be called 'The background to Parnell'.

For a consideration of Wicklow county life in the nineteenth century with reference to the Parnells I have taken the period 1820 to 1870; my principal sources have been estate records and family papers, and also agricultural and population statistics. Since these last have been mainly for comparative purposes I have not taken them to any absolute degree of accuracy; financial figures are given to the nearest pound, agricultural to the nearest acre, and so on. The best documented Wicklow family estates I found for this period were those of the Fitzwilliams, Powerscourts, Brabazons, Grattans, Tighes, Howards, Tottenhams, Loftuses and Probys; together with personal papers from the same families, it is possible to obtain a picture

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[1] See below, part 4, ch. 2.

of the life of the Wicklow gentry in the nineteenth century no less vivid for the restricted nature of the evidence to hand.

I intend to deal only briefly here with the Parnells and Wicklow, as their holdings there and their part in county affairs will find a place later in my survey. Parenthetically, then, Parnell's estate at Rathdrum, Avondale, was listed in the 1876 White Paper as comprising 4678 acres, which made it the fifteenth largest estate in the county (out of 1041 owners who had more than one acre); however, in Bateman's Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland, 1883, the Parnell lands are not mentioned although the index taken is that of estates over 3000 acres[2]. The discrepancy may be due to land sales in the intervening period; this will be a later part of my study. Charles Stewart Parnell's father John Henry Parnell, who died in 1859, owned land in Kildare and Carlow as well as the Avondale estate, and also rented land from Lord Fitzwilliam; the Rathdrum estate was bequeathed to Charles Stewart Parnell, his elder brother John Parnell inheriting family lands in Armagh, and the Carlow property going to his younger brother Henry.

Inheriting at the age of thirteen, Charles Stewart Parnell's estate was managed by guardians. One of these, his father's uncle Sir Ralph Howard, was one of the most prominent men in the county; he was Deputy Lieutenant and a Justice of the Peace for over thirty years and MP for the county from 1833 to 1852, with a London house as well as an estate near Enniskerry (Bushy Park). John Henry Parnell similarly held the offices of Deputy Lieutenant and JP from 1835 until his death and was Chairman of the Rathdrum Board of Governors; his father William Parnell-Hayes had been MP

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[2] J. Bateman, The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland, ed. D. Spring, (Leicester University Press, 1971).
The Parliamentary Paper mentioned is Returns of Owners of Land in Ireland, HC 1876, (422) vol. LXXX. Wicklow is dealt with in pp. 98-102.

for the county. Both John Henry Parnell and his uncle fairly typify the upper level of what can be called the JP class of county Wicklow in this period; though not of the landed nobility like the Brabazon, Powerscourt, Carysfort, Milltown, Rathdown and Wicklow families, they were the next social level: those who held more than one county office, owned moderately large estates, and maintained a house in Dublin - or sometimes London - as well as a Wicklow seat. During John Parnell's lifetime these qualifications applied only to a small number of his fellow-magistrates (discounting the landed nobility mentioned above)[3]; their names - Proby, Hodson, Wall, Synge, Cunningham, Hume, Acton, Tighe, Westby, Bailey, Grattan, Kemmis, Carroll, Truell - are those of the families who held the same sort of position and exercised the same influence as the Parnells. In many cases they owned land in Wicklow until very recently; in some cases they still do. These are the names that recur in the diaries and letters of the 'middling gentry' of the period; while on visiting terms with the landed nobility of the county they had deeper social roots in county life than a Carysfort or a Fitzwilliam who spent perhaps half the year there, and they formed a different social entity to the latter. It was the agent of the absentee landowning aristocrat whose position approximated more closely to the standing of the county gentry. Thus Robert Chaloner, who ran the Fitzwilliam estates in this period, held the offices of Deputy Lieutenant and Justice of the Peace, was involved in county politics, and had daughters married into Wicklow families; his invaluable letter-book and note-books provide as much insight into general county life as into the handling of the gigantic Coolattin

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[3] These were G.L. Proby, Glenart Castle; Sir Ralph Howard, Bushy Park; Sir G.F. Hodson, Hollybrook; J. Wall, Knockrigg; J. Synge, Glenmore; R.G. Cunningham, Newtownmountkennedy; W. Acton, Westaston; D. Tighe, Rossanna; W.F. Hume-Dick, Humewood; W.J. Westby, High Park; E.S. Bailey, Ballyarthur; W. Kemmis, Ballinacor; H. Carroll, Ballinure; R.H. Truell, Clonmannin.

estate.[4]

The Parnells were solidly fixed in this context. Like the Tighes of Rosanna and the Grattans of Tinnehinch, their ancestors had been the prominent figures of late eighteenth-century politics[5]; like Westaston, Humewood, Glenmore and Clonabraney their estate ran from four to five thousand acres and included a large house of some architectural merit. In influencing Charles Stewart Parnell's development the differences of his family from its neighbours were of course at least as important as the similarities; but I have chosen to deal with the latter aspect first. There are, as is well known, no Parnell papers as such; both Mrs. Katharine Parnell's relics and the family papers inherited by Captain Mateir from his stepfather John Howard Parnell were destroyed by fire. I am here going to attempt to discuss the Parnells by what can be called a process of negative definition; a survey of the life and fortunes of similar Wicklow county families from about 1820 to about 1870.

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[4] See Robert Chaloner's Letter Book 1842-1852 (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 3987): on p. 30, in a letter of 3 April 1843, Robert Chaloner asks the Earl of Wicklow: 'As I now hold the office of Lord Fitzwilliam's agent in this county I beg to recommend to your lordship my name for insertion in the commission of the peace'. This was done in a week. The office had previously been held by Chaloner's father. For a vivid picture of the position of agent of a great estate at this period, see W.S. Trench, Realities of Irish Life (London 1868; 2nd ed., 1966).

[5] The Tighes were descended from the Ponsonbys. Tinnehinch was presented to Henry Grattan (father of James Grattan of our period) by the nation. Charles Stewart Parnell's great-grandfather was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Dublin and was noted for his opposition to the Union.

Chapter 1

The Wicklow Gentry

I

Wicklow has increasingly today the position of being a dormitory for those with business interests in Dublin but an inclination towards country life; its attractiveness as well as its convenience have given it this character, and the process is not one of recent development. In 1827 the North Wicklow areas was described as being distinguished by 'the residences of its more favoured inhabitants - generally persons of consequence or high opulence from the metropolis'.[6] Thus of the Wicklow magistrates in the middle of the ineteenth century, besides a high proportion having houses elsewhere, ten actually had their principal residences outside the county;[7] this tendency for those with larger holdings (and most of their interests) elsewhere to maintain a connection with Wicklow, and often to prefer to live there, is further shown by Bateman's survey of Great Landowners. Twenty landowners of over three thousand acres lived in the county; nine of these had far larger estates elsewhere.[8] The discrepancy was not always as great as in the case of W.C. Domvile, who had his seat in Wicklow where he owned 1 acre, but possessed 9065 acres elsewhere; but to own, like W.R. Latouche, 1798 acres in Wicklow and to live there, while having 9561 acres elsewhere, was a common situation.[9] And though only twenty of Bateman's landowners

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[6] Dorothea Barker's Tour of Wicklow, 1827, (N.L.I., MS 2194 (Pages unnumbered)). Brassington and Gale's Valuation of Powerscourt in 1853 (N.L.I., Powerscourt Papers, MS 2740) p. 94, suggested re-planning Enniskerry village to attract 'superior' residents.

[7] Particulars from a survey of Wicklow magistrates, 1840-55, From Thom's Directory for the period.

[8] R.K. Boyd, W. Burton, W.C. Domvile, Sir G.F. Hodson, W.R. Latouche, the Misses Putland, C. Tottenham, Major Tottenham, Lady Hawkins-Whitshed.

[9] The tendency began long before. Mrs Caroline Hamilton's family memoirs (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 4814) recall how her ancestor William Tighe, when ordered to retire to the country for his health, chose to buy Rossanna though already possessing estates in Carlow, Westmeath and elsewhere. The Tighes became one of Wicklow's most prominent families.

lived in Wicklow, thirty-four had residences there; three of these lived in England[10], retaining small estates in Wicklow.

Thus the picture of Wicklow as a desirable place to live, or at least to have a base in, was as true of the nineteenth century as it is today. This obviously affected the social composition of the county; the 1876 survey of landowners over one acre shows that, though Wicklow was the sixteenth largest county in Ireland, only seven counties had a smaller total number of landowners, five of these counties being far smaller in area than Wicklow;[11] the average Wicklow holding was the comparatively high figure of 478.05 acres[12]. In 1849 only Louth, Fermanagh and Carlow had fewer holdings under £4 in Rateable Value; only Carlow had less property rated at £4 to £5, and only Kildare and Carlow had less at £5 to £7. However, only eleven counties had more properties worth over £25 on this scale, though in terms of total value Wicklow was only seventeenth and only seven counties had less arable land. By 1866 only Carlow had fewer farms worth under £4.[13]

The 1876 survey also demonstrates the tendency, mentioned above, for those with land in Wicklow to prefer to live there than elsewhere; of 507 owners only 95 lived outside the county, and most of these in Dublin. To take two random samples for comparison, Longford (closest to Wicklow in population) had 372 owners, of whom over 100 were absentee; and of the 785 owners in King's County (almost the same size as Wicklow) more than 200 were absentee. The nineteenth-century picture of Wicklow as a county of comfortably-off gentry, many with larger estates elsewhere, is reinforced by the high incidence of Protestants in the county; by the 1861 census only two

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[10] Lord Heytesbury, Lord Henniker, EJ Wingfield-Strafford.

[11] Summary of the Returns of Owners in Land in Ireland, HC 1876 (422) vol. LXXX. These were Westmeath, Clare, Waterford, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Roscommon and Sligo.

[12] (Counting, of course, only estates above one acre). The median size for estates also fell into the 100-500 acres range; there were 155 of these, the next largest number being 82 farms in the 50-100 acres range.

[13] 'Statistics of Ireland', Thom's Directory for 1850 and 1868.

other counties outside Ulster had a larger number of Established Church members resident in them, and they were special cases; Cork and Dublin. I will return later to the question of Wicklow farming; this discussion of the size of estates is simply to fix the framework for a consideration of other aspects of Wicklow society.

The financial fortunes of the Wicklow gentry can only be considered by samples from estate records; how Wicklow agriculture fared with reference to the famine will be considered later. The agricultural accounts that can be examined are generally those of very large holdings; in 1823 one under-tenant alone of the Brabazons held 2482 acres[14]. The rental of the Fitz-william estates in Wicklow throughout the early part of the period was often in excess of £34,000, and after the famine reached over £38,000[15]; their Wicklow lands were given by Bateman as 89,891 acres. The Powerscourt estate, though the rental was between six and seven thousand pounds, cost over £30,000 to maintain for 1862-3[16]; by 1883, after some further acquisitions, it consisted of 40,958 acres[17]. The Proby estate in the 1820 s was 7538 acres, with a rental of £6264[18]. But exact figures are not obtainable throughout the period for a number of other large estates; in 1883 the Carysfort, Cunningham, Downshire, Beresford and Wicklow holdings in the county were all over 10,000 acres, and several more were not much smaller.[19]

Those estates whose accounts <u>can</u> be charted are, almost by definition, the ones that were well managed; certainly their accounts are well balanced, rents are promptly collected and regularly paid, and wage levels are well up

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[14] Abraham Critchley. See Brabazon Estate Valuation for 1823, (N.L.I., MS 8742 (pages un-numbered)).

[15] £38,100 for the Wicklow lands in 1846. See Fitzwilliam rentals for 1846 and 1823. (N.L.I., MS n6 p201, and MS n19 p211).

[16] Powerscourt rentals, 1839, (N.L.I., MS 4893) and Accounts (N.L.I., MSS 4888-9).

[17] Bateman, <u>op. cit.</u>

[18] Rental for Proby Estate, 1826 (N.L.I., MS 3149 (pages un-numbered)).

[19] Bateman, <u>op. cit.</u>,

to national averages. The Crofton estate in the 1820's paid 1/1d a day labouring wage, and 1/2d in the 1830's[20], when the average for the period was 1/= a day; by the early 1850 s the Powerscourt estate often paid 1/6d, or sometimes 1/8d. This last was, moreover, a minimum wage, some gardeners getting up to 3/4d a day and other estate workers receiving as much as five or six shillings[21]. By 1862 the 24 workmen employed on the demesne were paid an average aggregate of thirty to forty pounds a week - never less than 1/4d a day, and generally much more[22]. By 1870 1/8d a day was the average wage on the estate for labourers, with many getting 1/10d[23]. In 1840 the Loftus family, who retained a country-house staff of 23, paid their butler £40 a year, and their cook £50[24]. The Fitzwilliam accounts for the same period show trends similarly well up to average, and it is not likely that other estates managed to pay their workers less. Though in 1823 James Grattan recorded many complaints of high rents from the Fitzwilliam tenantry, together with 'no planting and no improvements'[25] neither characteristic was true of the estate when under Robert Chaloner's efficient management at a later stage.

It is difficult to deal with the question of administration of estates separately from that of the effect on Wicklow of the famine, but a general picture for the period under review nonetheless emerges. Once again a break-down of the Powerscourt accounts is indicative. In 1862 to 1863, expenses ran to £30,147. Of this, £4197 was accounted for by family annuities due;

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[20] Wages on the Crofton Estate are taken from miscellaneous Crofton estate records (N.L.I., MS 2065).

[21] Abstract of expenditure for 1846 from Powerscourt ledgers for the period (N.L.I., MSS 4886, 4892).

[22] Powerscourt Accounts 1860-9 (N.L.I., MSS 3168-71,3173-4,3176).

[23] Particulars from Powerscourt ledgers (N.L.I., MSS 3170, 3173, 3174).

[24] Loftus Servant Roll, 1840 (N.L.I., MS 4329).

[25] See James Grattan's Notebook for 1823 (N.L.I., MS 5777 (pages un-numbered)).

expenditure on the house was an admittedly exceptional £5000; demesne expenditure was £2134. Estate costs were, however, only £580, pensions for tenants £329, and expenditure on villages £195[26]. Out of a total expenditure of 25 to 30 thousand pounds, the Wicklow estate rarely accounted for more than £1500. But this general picture does not argue for an estate badly, or even cursorily, managed; the accounts from 1850 to 1857 show a steady increase year by year in salaries paid out[27] and expenses on schools[28], while building expenses on the estate rise from £260 in 1850 to £1490 in 1855.[29] (The enormous expenses incurred by development of the house and park in this period are entered separately). In 1853 the appendix to Brassington's valuation of the estate stated 'we have seldom met with an estate in which good and judicious management is more strikingly displayed'[30], a judgement to which the surviving accounts bear witness.

Lord Powerscourt was famous for his plantations, putting in over 400,000 trees into one plantation alone over a period of ten years[31], and adding 1300 to 1400 acres of plantation to the estate.[32] This was not, at least in the early part of the period, a characteristic shared by many of his landowning neighbours and James Grattan of Tinnehinch complained bitterly that the Lord Fitzwilliam of his day 'does not plant, has not made any abatement; and /~the tenantry~/ seem to complain that he has done so in England but not here'[33]. This was in 1823. Grattan's notebooks and memoranda present a vivid picture of someone trying hard to be a 'godly squire' in a situation that did not allow such phenomena.[34] He was

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[26] Abstract from Powerscourt Accounts, 1863. (N.L.I., MS 4893).

[27] From £83 (1850-1) to £190 (1856-7) - Powerscourt Accounts (N.L.I. MS 1763).

[28] From £62 (1850-1) to £156 (1856-7). Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Brassington and Gale's Valuation, 1853 (N.L.I., MS 2194) p. 93.

[31] At Ballreagh. See Mervyn Wingfield, A Description and History of Powerscourt (Dublin, 1903), p. 108.

[32] Ibid.

[33] J. Grattan's Notebook for 1823 (N.L.I., MS 5777).

[34] See below, pp. 25-35.

preoccupied with planting, building ditches, and with new methods of fertilisation[35] and constantly decried the lack of such interest in his landowning neighbours. In 1827 he wrote:

> Early and other Gentlemen took no part in the tithe business and did not think of reducing their rents until I did, but they do not wait for any example in new Gaol building or in the new Constable Bill . . . [36];

in 1836 'the Stratford estate is in the hands of the Jews . . Lord Aldborough is getting money by fines on long leases and destroying the estate'[37]. The Fitzwilliam estate was equally restrictive on holdings; in 1830 an application for a sixty-year lease was answered 'No - never granted to any tenant'[38]. But Grattan, who had travelled widely in Europe[39], set himself and others high standards, considering the Irish situation; there is evidence that the Fitzwilliam estate did not continue to be badly run. The Chaloners, first father and then son, succeeded Mr. Haigh was steward in 1827[40]; the estate accounts from the eighteen-thirties are models of their kind and show an estate managed - for the period - fairly if not over-generously.[41] Over such questions as improvements a harder line was necessarily taken than that prevailing on smaller estates, a percentage invariably being added to the rent[42], even where by the agent's own admission 'the house is perhaps one of the oldest on the estate and on the point of

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[35] See J. Grattan's Notebook for 1834 (N.L.I., MS 3853 (pages un-numbered)).

[36] J. Grattan's Notebook for 1827 (N.L.I., MS 5779 (pages nn-numbered)).

[37] Grattan's notebook for 1836 (N.L.I., MS 3853).

[38] Fitzwilliam Estate Memo Book (N.L.I., MS 3983), entry for 7 May 1830.

[39] Some of his notebooks are, in fact, kept in French.

[40] Grattan records Haigh's unpopularity.

[41] Some Wicklow farm accounts of the period are a delight of scrupulousness - the Tottenham stockbooks (N.L.I., MSS 3836-44) detail every cow by name and yield over several years (and this for a sizeable farm of several hundred head); the large plantation records on the Grattan estate were kept literally tree by tree (N.L.I., MS 5515).

[42] Sometimes 2% of the outlay, more often 5%; sometimes only half the cost was borne by the estate. See Fitzwilliam Memo Book for 1838 (N.L.I., MS 3983).

falling down, and it really is miraculous that some most serious accident has not happened ere this'[43]. But the sizeable number of the improvements themselves is indicative, though few received large amounts on this account[44]; and in 1829 a large number of rents were abated on expiration of lease, with the result that from 1828 to 1829 the rent due from the Wicklow estate decreased by over £15,000[45]. And though the average holding was generally twenty to thirty acres, varying in rent from under ten shillings to over a pound an acre, some large farms were subcontracted and managed well as individual units. Mrs Symes held 788 acres at Coolboy and let out 761 acres of it to 49 subtenants; her refusal to demand the rent required of them to sustain the necessary profit margin for her holding was the cause of a long wrangle with Robert Chaloner[46]. Paternalism from Lord Fitzwilliam was generally dealt out in careful measure; a tenant's orphaned daughter, for instance, was refused aid in starting a boarding-school on the grounds that it would be in Dublin and not on the estate[47].

The question of ejectments on the Fitzwilliam estates is one I have chosen to deal with later, but it is worth remarking that such notices were served in large numbers long before the famine. In 1823 Grattan 'heard of some hundred ejectments served on Lord Fitzwilliam's tenants'[48]; though the Fitzwilliam ejectment record only starts with the year 1845 it records 93 notices for that year, which implies the continuation of a process rather than its inception. However, there was many a slip between serving a notice and actually completing the threat; this is a problem with special reference to the famine years, and I will deal with it in that context. It

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43 See Memo Book for 1837 (N.L.I., MS 3984), p. 18.

44 For improvements accounts, 1838-70, see N.L.I., MS 4966.

45 From £32,489 to £27,291. See Fitzwilliam Rental for 1829 (N.L.I., MS n19 p. 211).

46 See Fitzwilliam Tenants' Ledger, 1843 (N.L.I., MS 4967, p.60). Also Tenants' Ledger 1861 (N.L.I., MS 4989) for Mrs Symes' Arrears.

47 Fitzwilliam Estate Memoranda 1839-40 (N.L.I., MS 4965) pp 23-24.

48 Grattan's Notebook for 1823 (N.L.I., MS 5777).

is also perhaps significant that before the famine a letter from Lord Fitzwilliam's agent to the Land Committee angrily refutes evidence tendered to them that Lord Fitzwilliam had 'turned tenants upon the road'; evidence is produced that 'three of them emigrated of their own will and received ample allowances . . . and several were put into possession of good farms'.[49]

The arrears question is also better considered with reference to the famine; here it is enough to point out that in 1830 only 72 of the Fitzwilliam tenantry were badly in arrears, and in 1844, 126 - both figures including the Kildare and Wexford estates.[50]

II

In 1830 James Grattan wrote of a neighbouring landowner who was dying slowly:

> A bad instance of bad education and bad company. He is still menacing and brutal and regardless of all decency . . . it is an additional reason with me for keeping out of all that Irish Society . . the education is bad and society worse in Ireland: ignorant, prejudiced, vulgar, brutal . . Rathdown is of this kind, and others of my neighbours, and justify keeping aloof from them.[51]

He repeats the substance of this indictment over and over again; but whether it was a judgement true for the whole period, or even a balanced opinion, is worth discussing. Grattan's own class, whom he here attacks, held the administrative reins of the county; as I have mentioned, families like the Howards, Parnells, Actons and Tighes provided High Sheriffs, Deputy Lieutenants and JPs for Wicklow; were they such venal material as Grattan recorded them? The date of the extract above is significant (1830); for it is during the 1820s that he makes constant attacks on the gentry in their

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[49] Robert Chaloner's Letter-Book (N.L.I., MS 3987) p.66. Letter of 14 Jan 1845.

[50] Fitzwilliam Estate Memoranda 1830 and 1844 (N.L.I., MS 3993).

[51] Grattan's notebook for 1830 (N.L.I., MS 3853).

capacity of magistrates. With a friend he complains of 'the unsteadiness of the Gentry, at one time calling for and at another putting off their duties' in this sphere[52]; elsewhere he states 'they would keep down and abuse the people who feed and support them'[53]. But these complaints all antedate 1830, and Dr. McDowell has found that, following the Petty Sessions Act of 1827, 'from about 1830 when JPs were attacked it was usually not on the grounds of incompetence but for alleged displays of political bias'.[54] The record of a Resident Magistrate at Baltinglass for 1839-43 shows that the attendance of JPs at Petty Sessions was exceptionally good.[55] Similarly, Grattan's bitter complaints about the policing of the county[56] do not continue to occur after 1835, when the Irish Constabulary originated. He remained to a degree alienated from his neighbours, and critical of their conduct; but as will be seen later, he was aligned against them politically[57] and it is usually on this ground, not on that of the discharge of their functions, that he attacks them in his later notebooks.

While I am unprepared to argue that the Wicklow county gentry constituted anything like the backbone class in country life of their English counterparts, their relationship with their tenants seems not entirely to agree with Grattan's estimate of their worth. This will be considered later in the light of Wicklow's history during the Famine; but there is evidence for amicable relations both before and after the eighteen-forties. When Grattan records 'a vicious spirit abounding . . .

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[52] Grattan's notebook c. 1825 (N.L.I., MS 5775); also many references in N.L.I., MS 5776.

[53] Grattan's notebook (N.L.I., MS 5779).

[54] R.B. McDowell, The Irish Administration 1801-1914 (London, 1964), p.113.

[55] Diary of George M. Drought, RM., Baltinglass, 1839-43 (S.P.O., VII, Centre T/48); henceforth quoted as 'Drought's diary'. I am indebted to Kevin Mallon for knowledge of this absorbing and enlightening record.

[56] Grattan's Notebook, c. 1827 (N.L.I., MS 5776).

[57] See below.

houghing cattle, pounding with spades and digging out potatoes'[58] it is invariably with reference to Galway or Munster, and agrarian crime seems to have remained at a low level in Wicklow. George Drought's diary shows that property crimes accounted for by far the largest proportion of the cases before him; although an entry for 31 December 1840 recorded malicious arson at a landgrabber's farm, nearly all his cases were to do with theft, wages or trespass. The typical agrarian crime was stealing sheep or cattle: yet another index of Wicklow's prosperity at this time. But there is little evidence of the more violent agricultural depradations endemic in more depressed areas. Even faction fighting was rarely in evidence, and Drought generally found fairs to be exceptionally quiet; on 12 May 1841 he recorded the astounding fact that there was 'no-one drunk' at Baltinglass fair. The relationship between the Powerscourts and their tenantry may have been, as Lord Powerscourt held, exceptionally good[59]; certainly few others could claim 'there never was an eviction on the estate, in my father's time or mine'[60] and the favourable wage levels on the Powerscourt lands suggest a tenantry generally well treated. The lack of residence among landowners, of which Grattan also complained bitterly,[61] meant that relations between landlord and tenant very often depended upon a middleman. When a Lord Fitzwilliam could be, for instance, 'out of Ireland from 1811 to 1826 except for a few days in 1823 when he went over for his marriage',[62] it was onto his agent that such responsibility devolved. Robert Chaloner's

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[58] Grattan's Notebook, c. 1827 (N.L.I., MS 5776).

[59] M. Wingfield, History of Powerscourt, p.119.

[60] Ibid., p. 161.

[61] See Grattan's Notebooks for the late 1830 s (N.L.I., MS 3853) on 'want of residence'.

[62] Letter from Lord Fitzwilliam (referring to his father) to Rev. H. Moore; 9 November 1841, in a collection of correspondence about Carnew School controversy (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 8816); see below, pp 30-31.

memoranda books and letter-book[63] show that where a tenant's request was concerned Lord Fitzwilliam invariably agreed with his tenant's recommendation, and where a general question of estate management arose Chaloner's advice again usually carried the day. To a certain extent, the powers that Chaloner himself delegated could be in turn exercised within a wide sphere of discretion; it is interesting to compare the work-diaries of two wood-rangers on the Fitzwilliam estate in the latter part of this period.[64] From 1865 to 1868, Patrick Murphy patrolled a large area of the Fitzwilliam lands[65]; his diary reports tenants for sharing accommodation, subletting, selling hay, not manuring, and drawing away soil, many offenders recurring again and again. In 1868 Moses Mulally succeeded to the same post, covered the same area, and had a similar diary to fill; but he only records a fraction of such offences, usually confining himself to reporting poaching and extracting 'promises' against further disobedience[66]. At this level as well as that of agent, the way an estate was run depended essentially on the men running it. While one may agree with Grattan's unfavourable judgement of the status quo, it is unlikely that the Wicklow tenantry of the period felt more strongly about their exploiters than was the general rule; and bearing in mind the efficiency of the Fitzwilliam and Powerscourt administrations, and the large amount of the county that they accounted for, the relationships between landlords and tenants were probably less sharply polarised than elsewhere.

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[63] see Fitzwilliam Papers (N.L.I., MSS 3987, 3983-4, 4965, 4976, 4978, 4980-1, 4995-6, 4999, 3988, 8816).

[64] N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MSS 12,163.

[65] Mangans, Rosbawn, Coolafinchogue, Lugduff, Whitefield, Ballinamacanogue, Ballybegg, Ballycumber, Kyle, and the town of Tinahely.

[66] Alse see Fitzwilliam estate memoranda for 1862 (N.L.I., MS 4995) for this approach.

III

Men like James Grattan, who were exceptionally enlightened considering their class as well as the times they lived in, vilified their fellow-landowners; but a certain esprit de corps remained, and bound them all together. Grattan himself was affected by this; significantly, it was he and two friends who made the funeral arrangements for the neighbour on whom he passed the damning indictment quoted above. A great part of this common identity was founded on the feeling shared by all Irish landlords of the time with regard to the people who supported them; it was not unlike the kinship of a beleagured garrison. In 1822 Grattan wrote:

> The people in many places are still insufficiently civilised, pursued by Tythes, habituated to see a great military force and to think that the law depended on them [sic]; for the most part unacquainted with an active magistracy or a respectable clergy or an efficient police or kind and indulgent landlords. Unacquainted with all this, they are what they have been and will continue to be until a milder government and system changes their character and education changes their habits.[67]

Thus he could analyse the situation like very few others could; but though within twenty years the state of the magistracy and the police had been to some extent remedied, and the clergy been allowed achieve respectability, in the eighteen-forties he still complained of the country people as idle and dishonest as well as foolish and unreasonable[68]. He perceptively compared the general attitude to old Scottish history and traditions, 'read with interest and pleasure', to that which prevailed where Irish history was concerned,[69] and was interested in 'collecting specimens of the different Irish speakers, if it could be done'[70]; but with his friends

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[67] Grattan's notebook for 1822 (N.L.I., MS 5776).

[68] See notebook for 1840-1841 (N.L.I., MS 3853).

[69] Grattan's notebook, c. 1824 (N.L.I., MS 5778).

[70] Grattan's notebook, c. 1822 (N.L.I., MS 5777).

he contributed to the governing syndrome by collecting 'Irish Bulls' much as across the Atlantic Southern gentlemen of the same period swapped stories about their own obtuse, inscrutable dependents.

Within their own circle, the social life of the Wicklow gentry took the form of its time: the lengthy Victorian 'visit'. In the 'apathetic despair' that country life in winter produced, Lady Caroline Howard defined the purpose of visiting as 'cheering each other up'[71]; both at Shelton Abbey (her home near Arklow) and on holidays in Italy and France, her companions were Tighes, Hamiltons, Westbys, Howard relatives and Parnells[72]. The journal of her relative Reverend Francis Howard, vicar of Swords in the 1830 s[73], invokes the same names; journeys to Dublin were invariably marked by meeting old Wicklow friends, and he and his wife stayed at Bushy Park, Woodstock, Coolattin and Shelton. Though there is little place for gossip in James Grattan's notebooks he frequented the same society, visiting Latouches, Truells, Probys and Parnells. At Inchinappa the Croftons entertained continually[74]; and when Howards, Tighes, Croftons or Probys left Ireland they visited the same English watering-places - Bath, Harrogate, Leamington, Weymouth, Brighton - and there enountered each other yet again.

Wicklow was itself a place to be visited; contemporary tour guides eulogised it as prosperous, beautiful and convenient[75]. Gardens like

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[71] Caroline Howard's journal for 1852 (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 4792).

[72] See Lady Howard's diary for 1863-6 (N.L.I., MSS 3594-9) for her indefatigable travels in Europe, meeting Tighes, Hamiltons and Probys and visiting the Baileys, a well-known Wicklow family wintering in Nice.

[73] N.L.I., (Wicklow Papers), MSS 3577-8.

[74] See the many fulsome thank-you letters in the Crofton Papers (N.L.I., MSS n3318 p 2936).

[75] See Dorothea Barker's Tour of Wicklow, 1827, (N.L.I., MS 2194). Of North Wicklow she writes: 'Numberless fine mansions and handsome family residences . . a county not more distinguished for its native capabilities than for the improving and ornamental taste displayed around it and through it, still heightened by the spirited cultivation that pervades every corner of this favoured district from whence [sic] the city of Dublin derives so much of the necessaries and many of the luxuries that tempt the self-indulgent'. For another contemporary tour of Wicklow see that of Catharine Airey in 1819 (N.L.I., MS n 4905 p 4937).

Powerscourt and houses like Mount Kennedy were show-pieces for visitors[76]; in 1838 Robert Chaloner noted a plan to build an inn in Rathdrum - 'it being the thoroughfare for tourists visiting the scenery in the county of Wicklow, a great number of travellers in the summer season are obliged to proceed on to the Woodenbridge for want of accommodation'[77]. By 1861 there was a direct railway from Rathdrum to Dublin[78]. But, despite external traffic and its proximity to Dublin, Wicklow society seems to have remained a closed circuit where the resident gentry visited each other, travelled abroad with each other, and married each other. Their circumstances seem relatively comfortable, while not all sharing the grandeur of the Powerscourts who bought art treasures as far afield as St. Petersburg, commissioned ironwork in Italy and statuary in Germany, and lived among Breughels, Tintorettos, Titians and Caraveggios[79]. In the 1860s Lady Caroline Howard wrote:

> I wonder why others are all so prosperous - all except the Tighes, who certainly have more real trials than any of us . . It is very hard to be always struggling to live above our means and seem like other people when we actually have so far less than others.[80]

(Though some of the neighbours, whose prosperity she assumes, may have felt themselves in the same position, none can have been reduced to her desperate tactic of prolonging visits to Shelton interminably because she

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[76] See a letter of George Putland's in the Powerscourt ledgers (N.L.I., MS 4884) asking permission to show a guest the house and demesne - evidently a frequent request.

[77] Fitzwilliam Estate Memoranda, 1830 (N.L.I., MS 3983).

[78] Opened 13 August 1861. (Fitzwilliam Estate Memoranda, N.L.I., MS 4989).

[79] See Mervyn Wingfield, Description of Powerscourt.

[80] Caroline Howard's journal (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 4792).

had let her Dublin house and had literally nowhere else to go[81]).

Relevant to their relationships with the tenantry as well as to the way they spent their time is the involvement of people like the Parnells and their neighbours with education and charitable works in the county. At the end of his life James Grattan still complained that the gentry did not care about the poor[82]; if this was so it was not a situation exclusive to Wicklow, but it is nonetheless interesting to consider the problem briefly. The Fitzwilliam accounts show that the Coolattin Poor Shop was little patronised; few spent more than five shillings per annum there, and the number of entries was never more than a tiny fraction of the estate's population[83]. Though this could argue for a low level of neediness, it seems more likely that relief on a money basis, even at a cut-price level, was irrelevant to the tenants' wants. Such charitable efforts may often have been unrealistic; Grattan gives an amusing description of the gentry meeting over tea at Mrs Latouche's orphanage in Delgany.[84] Men like Daniel Tighe subscribed to a long list of charitable associations; at a later date many followed Lord Powerscourt's reasoning that 'the proximity of the place to Dublin gave me special opportunities of taking part in the management of some of the public institutions there'.[85] It is harder to find

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[81] She was infuriated when Dublin gossip assumed this was a tactic aimed at gaining possession of the house, which was rarely used by her uncle Lord Wicklow. 'Nothing but actual poverty drives us here and compels us to let our house'. Lord Wicklow's death in 1869 and a disputed succession created a crisis: 'We locked the doors and pulled down all the blinds and sat waiting to hear more, and dreading someone should arrive to claim the place for that child Mrs William Howard is ready to palm off on us'. However, a well-liked cousin inherited title and house, and Lady Caroline, her mother and her sister continued more or less permanent residence there (N.L.I., MS 4792). See Wicklow Newsletter, 2 April 1870, for details of succession case.

[82] Notebook for 1852 (N.L.I., MS 5382).

[83] Fitzwilliam Poor Shop accounts (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 4962). In 1838, when the estate population was between 35 and 40 thousand, there were only 189 entries.

[84] Notebook for 1822 (N.L.I., MS 5776).

[85] M. Wingfield, History of Powerscourt, p. 109. Besides holding such offices as Governor of the National Gallery and President of the R.D.S., he was Chairman of the Board of Dublin hospitals.

trace of charities that began at home; but a fair amount seems to have been done in the area of education. James Grattan believed fervently in the efficacy of national education as a universal panacea; he felt that 'schools should be built before gaols'[86] and dolefully quotes 'Robert Truell's table showing the number of people educated in the different parishes near him - 1 in 6 - in Baltinglass 1 in 16'[87]. In the later period things must have improved; the Fitzwilliam estate supported large schools at Shillelagh, Carnew and Ballard, and individuals who founded 'classical schools' were given assistance by them[88]. The Fitzwilliams took much more interest in education than in other aspects of the life of their Irish tenantry; the correspondence dealing with a long controversy between the Earl and the local Protestant clergyman about religion in the school at Carnew in 1840 shows a surprisingly close involvement.[89] The Powerscourt school expenses rose 150% over six years during the eighteen-fifties;[90] ladies like Caroline Howard taught classes in the local schools, albeit without much enjoyment[91]. The stress laid on education took, of course, a different form where the landlords' own children were concerned and the Tighes, Loftuses, Probys and the rest sent their children to Winchester, Harrow and other English schools: a routine that Mrs John Henry Parnell, for all her well-publicised patriotism, did not choose to break.

The standard of intellectual life among the gentry was not low; the Tighes at the very beginning of the century had a printing press at Rosanna,[92]

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[86] J. Grattan's notebook for 1821 (N.L.I., MS 5776).

[87] Grattan's notebook for 1823 (N.L.I., MS 5777). Truell lived at Clonmannin. Matters had improved by 1870. The number of children attending school in Wicklow increased from 7557 in 1860 to 12,347 in 1869; and in 1861 only 4 counties in Ireland had a smaller number of inhabitants unable to read or write. (Thom's directory, 1862 and 1868).

[88] Fitzwilliam Estate Memoranda for 1843 (N.L.I., MS 3988), p.41.

[89] See Correspondence relating to Carnew School, 1840-2, (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 8816).

[90] From £62 (1850-1) to £156 (1855-6) in 6 years. (N.L.I., Powerscourt Accounts, MS 1763).

[91] Caroline Howard's Journal (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 4792).

[92] See I.B.L., vol. IV pp 16,54.

and George Ball had another nearby at Roundwood.[93] Later in the century John Synge, of Glenmore Castle, Ashford, was known as 'Pestalozzi John' for his enthusiastic advocacy of that method of teaching. Mrs Mary Tighe, who died in 1810, wrote a long and successful poem called Cupid and Psyche and corresponded with Moore, Fox and other famous men of the day. Mrs Tighe lived at Woodstock, Co. Kilkenny, but her influence permeated the other Tighe stronghold at Rossana; her children and grandchildren wrote less publicised verse, and painstaking literary translations.[94] Grattan's diary shows an easy familiarity with anecdotes about Johnson, Byron and Goldsmith as well as with their published work; he had a sizeable library at Tinnehinch[95]. The intellectual life of such people in Wicklow was coloured as much as anywhere else by the revival of religious interest in the early part of the century, often taking a gloomy form of Methodism. Mrs Hamilton's family reminiscences recalled that when Mary Tighe died, after having mixed greatly in 'The World', she was steeped in a gloomy sense of sin, and of the evils of frivolity[96]. This was a feeling manifested by many Wicklow diarists of the later period, affecting even the worldly Lady Caroline Howard.[97] In 1839 Mrs Francis Howard wrote enthusiastically of 'the stride Religion has taken within the last thirty or forty years into the fashionable world'[98]; this may have accounted for the strong efforts made in 1840 by two clergymen of Lord Fitzwilliam's livings - the Reverends Moore and Dowse - to attempt to keep their flock apart from Roman Catholics in the schools of the area. The interesting thing is the firmness of the opposition they met with from the

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[93] From 1810 to 1820. See I.B.L., IV, 16,54.

[94] See Caroline Howard's family reminiscences (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 4814; also ibid, MS 4810 (A 'Memorial' of Mary Tighe)).

[95] See N.L.I. MS 4704 for a catalogue of Grattan's Library.

[96] See her 'Memorial of Mary Tighe', (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 4810) p.37.

[97] See also the diaries of the Reverend and Mrs Francis Howard of Swords (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MSS 3577-80 (1835-40)).

[98] Mrs Francis Howard's diary (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 3579).

Earl and his agent.[99] The previous Earl had founded the schools on non-sectarian lines, children of either religion attending and receiving instruction in their separate faiths at a set hour each day. The local Protestant clergy, acting at the instigation of the Church Education Society, attempted in 1840 first of all to withdraw their parishioners' children to the vestry for religious instruction and then to set up an exclusively Protestant school in the churchyard. Lord Fitzwilliam himself entered into a heated correspondence with them and sent out a circular upholding the principle of non-sectarian education;[100] the circulars and letters returned by the clergy are remarkable both for their vituperativeness and their animosity towards Roman Catholic fellow-tenants[101]. Advised by his solicitor that the clerical faction were with their legal rights both in calling meetings that excluded Roman Catholics and in building a school in the churchyard, the Earl could do little more; he did, however, succeed in ejecting the Reverend Moore from his living at Carnew. In any case the Reverend's circulars reminding 'loyal Protestants' of 'what your ancestors suffered' had their effect; by 1845 the Earl's Roman Catholic tenants were demanding their own schools too,[102] and though in the same year Chaloner dismissed a schoolmistress for 'introducing religious subjects during the hours of secular instruction'[103], the battle against sectarianism was lost.

However, it is the fact that it was fought at all that is interesting; and Chaloner's letters show a relationship with parish priests in most cases

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[99] See N.L.I., MS 8816 for the relevant correspondence; also entries in Robert Chaloner's letter-book (N.L.I., MS 3987).

[100] Dated 27 February 1841.

[101] N.B. the especially offensive tone of a letter from the Rev. Hayes to Lord Fitzwilliam of 21 March 1841 calling the Earl's school committee a 'set of wh-masters' and libertines (N.L.I., MS 8816).

[102] See a letter of 2 October 1845 to the parish priest of Rockingham in Robert Chaloner's letter-book (N.L.I., MS 3987, p. 80).

[103] See letter of 4 June 1845 in ibid., p. 73.

more friendly than with the clergy of his own and his employer's faith[104]. In 1848 he was complaining to the Protestant Bishop of Ossory about 'a recital of Roman Catholic atrocities' as subject-matter for a sermon[105]; in 1850 he wrote sharply to the Reverend Dowse about anti-Catholic bigotry[106]. While Protestant extremism entered county life, it was rarely on the part of the local gentry. When the Twelfth of July occurred, George Drought had to break up public meetings of 'the many Orange Lodges',[107] but in a way which implies that there were none of his social equals involved; the moving spirits were the type of bigoted clergy so detested by Fitzwilliam and his agent. James Grattan, though not a friend of Chaloner's, shared his non-sectarian outlook; the school on his own estate was 'open to all', and he felt 'sure it is of much more importance to attend in the first instance to their minds . . than to their religious education'[108]; thus he disapproved of the preponderance of Protestant teachers. Suspicious of clerical influence, he felt 'the violent Catholics and the violent Orangemen wish for

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[104] See, for instance, a letter of 22 May 1847 (ibid, p. 162). The same was true for Lord Fitzwilliam; in fact one of the few instances where he over-rode his agent was about the need to improve a priest's house, Chaloner pointing out 'he pays no rent whatever' but Fitzwilliam insisting 'something must be done to make the house comfortable' - not usually a consideration with him. See Fitzwilliam Estate Memoranda for 1839 (N.L.I., MS 4965), p.36.

[105] Letters of 13 and 20 November 1848- (N.L.I., MS 3987, pp 235-6).

[106] Letter of 23 April 1850 (ibid, p. 305). 'I look upon the Roman Catholic church as a branch of the church of Christ, though burthened with more error than ours, and think that a charitable mind would give the teacher of that religion credit for believing what he taught to be right. Therefore to look upon that person as unfit to return thanks to God for his blessing is what Scripture does not, in my opinion, warrant us doing . . if one was to wait for a perfect Christian to say grace I believe the ceremony would have to be omitted'. Chaloner steadily refused Dowse's exhortations to join missions to 'Christianse the Jews of Dublin' and the like .

[107] Drought's Diary, 12 July 1842.

[108] Grattan's notebook for 1823, N.L.I., MS 5777.

the same thing'[109]; but as Chaloner found, such a median view was hard to sustain in the polarised society of nineteenth-century Ireland. On the Powerscourt estate as well, however, amicable relations prevailed between the Viscount and his Catholic tenantry; both in 1798 and in an attempted local rising of 1867 the parish priest tried to prevent the rebels from storming the house [110] and in the eighteen-fifties the estate provided the Enniskerry parish with a new house for the priest and a two-acre graveyard as well[111]. The failure of the Fitzwilliam campaign for non-sectarian education and the disillusionment of James Grattan may have been inevitable, and the backbone of Wicklow Protestant opinion was evidently far more uncompromising than these examples; but the fact that men of the influence of Chaloner and Grattan subscribed to such opinions shows that one cannot generalise freely about religious bigotry among the local gentry in this period.

The question of religious attitudes among the influential men of the county leads inevitably to their politics. This is a topic which I intend to examine in depth with specific reference to the Parnell family; thus I will deal with it here only in so far as it is relevant to the aspects of Wicklow county life already discussed. As has been mentioned, there was a remarkably high number of Protestants in Wicklow; this implies a norm of political conservatism as well as material prosperity, One of the most interesting sections of James Grattan's absorbing journals deals with his election campaign of 1832[112]; though he was a Member for the county from 1827 to 1841 this is the only election described both legibly and in reasonable detail. Always preoccupied with Tithe Law reform, after Catholic Emancipation he campaigned with Catholic support although he slightly

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[109] Notebook for 1825, (N.L.I., MS 5778).

[110] Wingfield, op. cit., p. 117.

[111] Ibid., p. 74.

[112] See his notebook for this year (N.L.I., MS 3853).

distrusted O'Connell; but he had to face immense and fairly united opposition from neighbours of his own class. Of 1832 he recorded:

> None of the gentry acted well, Tighe worst of all; when the Catholics and priests took me up, all the Protestants went against me.[113]

Despite the powerful countering influence of Lord Fitzwilliam and Lord Wicklow, Grattan won the election; he saw it as being 'brought in by the people' in defiance of the opposition of the Chaloners, Beresfords and Actons of his own class. 'The county was illuminated on the night of my return in spite of them all, to me personally it was the greatest triumph.'[114]

Before this election Charles Tottenham of Ballycurry wrote to Major Eccles, agent on his Wexford estate, 'I hear all Mr. Acton's Roman Catholic tenantry will go against him - so much for reform and Catholic Emancipation';[115] and when he himself was up for election three years later he found considerable difficulty in getting the electoral support of his tenants[116]; but the influence of the landlords still remained powerful. The year after the election Grattan noted:

> Cullen tells me Lord Wicklow has turned out a farmer who had about 100 acres, and his father had been there before, because he did not vote as he wished. Another man, a Protestant, got it. It makes the country damnable to live in.[117]

This is not the only such action Grattan attributes to Lord Wicklow; and he wrote of Chaloner, Acton and others as being 'Wicklow's dupes' in political affairs. A decade later, when Lord Fitzwilliam's son Viscount Milton stood for Parliament in 1847, Chaloner's correspondence includes many letters to landlords like John Byrne and Michael Hudson asking them to exert their influence on his behalf; in 1848 he was organising similar

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113See ibid.

114Ibid (my italics).

115Letter of 24 Sept 1832 (N.L.I., Tottenham Papers, MS n4904 p 4937).

116See Tottenham Papers (N.L.I., MS n4905 p 4937).

117Grattan's notebook for 1833 (N.L.I., MS 3853).

support for Sir Ralph Howard[118]. After the election he wrote to Adam Symes to ascertain 'how many of Lord Wicklow's freeholders voted and for who /sic/'.[119] Nor were the Wicklow elections the only ones carefully supervised by Chaloner; in 1852 he wrote in similar terms to the agent on the small Fitzwilliam estate in Kildare.[120] In the face of this sort of pressure it is to be wondered at, not that Grattan's stand alienated his neighbours, but that with their opposition he managed to get elected at all.

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[118] See Chaloner's letter-book (N.L.I., MS 3987), pp 211-3.

[119] Letter of 6 May 1848 (Ibid., p. 220).

[120] Letter of 22 July 1852 to Mr. Donoghue of Borohard House. 'All the Jigginstown and Halverstown voters should pay the compliment that is asked of them and vote for Sir Edward Kennedy - please to show them this and I hope that you and they will do as I request' (Ibid., p. 413).

Chapter 2

Wicklow and the Famine

I

Any consideration of rural life in this period must take into account the Famine, which bisects it. While affected severely like everywhere else, Wicklow seems to have been considerably less hard hit than most other counties; and though this does not mean that the agriculture of the county did not fare badly at the time, recovery seems to have been at a fast and steady rate, as the accompanying tables show. In livestock figures over the famine period, for instance, only the numbers of horses and pigs decreased between 1841 and 1848; cattle increased by over 21,000 head, sheep by nearly 20,000 and the gross value of livestock from 1841 to 1851 by over £180,000[1]. Most crops, as will be seen from the accompanying table, increased steadily from the year 1848-9 which argues for a steady and speedy recovery[2]. (The drop in yield shown by the year 1847-8 - the first year for which I could find readily accessible figures - probably marks the culmination of the famine losses).

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[1]Table showing livestock on farms above one acre in Wicklow in 1841 and 1848:

Year	No. of farms	Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs	Poultry	Asses	Total Value
1841	9467	12,538	45,293	75,791	19,949	121,829	1955	£508014
1848	10025	11,844	66,585	95,036	13,544	127,735	2982	£688261(1851)

- Particulars from Thom's Directory, 1848 and 1852.

[2]See Appendix, a table showing crop acreages in Wicklow, 1847-70.

As late as November 1845 Chaloner was writing that 'the damage about here is not very great', though he ordered several tons of Indian rice for safety's sake.[3] Over the next two and a half years he was to order many more; but at the beginning of 1848 he wrote to William Newman in Yorkshire 'this part of the country is recovering fast from its heavy visitation'[4]. It was held after the famine that owing to its suitability for grazing Leinster was 'better consolidated' at the onset of the potato blight,[5] and certainly the accounts of a dairy farm like the Tottenhams' show little variance in the eighteen-forties[6]; it is worth noting that during the worst of the famine people migrated into Wicklow, even from usually prosperous Kildare, in search of a means of subsistence.[7]

Further information about how farming life in Wicklow was affected can be obtained by studying the rentals for the period. In 1846 the arrears of rent on the Fitzwilliam estate were considerably less than they had been during the eighteen-twenties[8]; though they rose quickly they still had not reached the level of the eighteen-twenties by 1849. The arrears problem on

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[3] See Chaloner's letters to Gladstone and Serjeantson of Liverpool on 12 and 18 November 1845, in his Letter-book. (N.L.I., MS 3987, pp 85-6).

[4] Letter of 4 January 1848 to William Newman, Barnsley, Yorkshire. (Ibid., p. 192).

[5] See newspaper cuttings on the Irish rural situation, 1866-7 (N.L.I., MS 8982), especially a letter in the Daily News signed 'Philocelt'.

[6] Tottenham Accounts (N.L.I., MSS 3836-44).

[7] See The great famine, R.D. Edwards and T.D. Williams (ed.) (Dublin, 1956), p.430. The Kildare emigrants settled at Knocknaskeagh, Co. Wicklow. Similar migrations took place into the more obviously prosperous counties of Tipperary and Cavan.

[8]

Period	Arrears	Total Rental
1829-30	£27,291	£34,336
1846-7	£14,171	£38,100
1847-8	£18,925	£39,160
1848-9	£23,136	-

- Table showing Arrears of Rent on Fitzwilliam Estate for the years 1829-30, 1846-7, 1847-8 and 1848-9 (N.L.I., MS 4973). This reference provides figures for arrears; the total rental figures come from other Fitzwilliam Rentals (N.L.I., MSS n19 p211 and n6 p201).

the Fitzwilliam estate did not reach really large proportions until the eighteen-fifties, for which decade figures are available showing the amount of arrears that had to be waived, often because those owing them had emigrated.[9] These figures dwindle rapidly after 1855, and by the early 1860s are usually reckoned in hundreds rather than thousands; in 1848 Chaloner wrote to an English acquaintance 'we have had no resistance to rents'[10] which, if unlikely to be strictly accurate, is nonetheless indicative. By 1854 James Grattan, though always sympathetic to the oppressed tenants, was writing 'all must pay . . I can listen to no allowances'[11]; he must have been convinced that circumstances justified this attitude. The Powerscourt accounts show the same progression; though the estate was far smaller than the Fitzwilliams', it is still striking that from 1844 to 1854 only four tenants went permanently into arrears.[12]

The size of the individual farms increased in Wicklow as everywhere else after the famine,[13] and this is reflected by rising rents. On the Powerscourt estate in the year 1852 many tenants had rents doubled, and while there were 24 abatements of rent from 1844 to 1854 only seven of these abatements took place before 1851.[14] Payment was kept up quite steadily;

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[9] The following figures from Fitzwilliam Memoranda (N.L.I., MS 3993) give irredeemable arrears for the period.

Year	Arrears Waived	No. of tenants responsible
1830	£8965	72
1844	£6669	126
1852	£17,548	268
1854	£15,172	236
1861	£607	27
1862	£6641	76
1863	£1283	41
1864	£813	34

[10] R. Chaloner to Wm. Newman, 8 February 1848 (N.L.I., MS 3987, p192).

[11] James Grattan's notebook for 1854 (N.L.I., MS 5382).

[12] Powerscourt Accounts (N.L.I., MS 3164).

[13] In 1847 10,392 farms were recorded for the purposes of crop statistics, with a total acreage of 119,197 acres; in 1849 9,385 farms extending 126,251 acres; in 1851 8,663 farms with over 127,727 acres. - Thom's Directory, 1849-52.

[14] Usually in 1848. See Powerscourt Accounts (N.L.I., MS 3164).

the Powerscourt policy of encouraging indigent tenants to emigrate from an early date probably helped contribute to the process.[15] As in other accounts, the Powerscourt financial records show a high degree of consistency from 1860 on[16] and the Grattan and Fitzwilliam records show no shortage of people ready, and evidently able, to take on the farms left vacant through the period.

As I have stated, the Powerscourts boasted of never having had an eviction on the estate[17], and there are no such records in their accounts; elsewhere ejectments were far more common. As early as the eighteen-thirties Grattan heard of 'some hundred ejectments served on Lord Fitzwilliam's tenants'[18] and the Fitzwilliam account books record an impressive list; but a close examination is necessary. A good proportion of notices is dismissed or postponed before being served; and recurrence of the same names year after year shows that a notice did not necessarily mean anything concrete. Nor did this apply only to those with large holdings; Mrs Symes or William Revell, with farms of hundreds of acres, may have been difficult to dislodge but James Byrne (and many others whose names occur with similar regularity) held only three acres. The accompanying table shows the dwindling number of those on whom notices were

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[15] See Wingfield, History of Powerscourt. Those who went, according to Lord Powerscourt 'left behind a smaller number at home so that at the time I write wages are 14/= and 15/= a week and at harvest-time a man commands a half-crown a day and the savings banks are full of money belonging not to the landlords but to the farmers and labourers'. (p. 101). This was in 1903.

[16] N.L.I., Powerscourt Accounts, MSS 3107-70, 3172-7.

[17] Wingfield, op. cit., p. 101.

[18] Notebook for 1839 (N.L.I., MS 5777).

effectively served.[19] Chabner's letters include several orders to bailiffs to 'proceed' with an ejectment[20] which indicate that when a notice was served it was customary to hang fire for a period. Another letter tells the English representative who recorded Coolattin for Bingley's valuation that 'an ejectment case is coming on at the assizes . . where if the parties force us to trial your attendance is necessary'[21]; it was by no means always a summary process, as testified to by Chaloner's long correspondences with the Revells and the Symes - both under sentence for several years, and both of whom stayed comfortably in possession.[22] As the table[23] shows, the

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Year	Notices entered	Postponed	Settled	Unexplained	Served
1845	93				
1846	128	18	5	13	92
1847	204	6	1	20	177
1848	260	11	15		156
1849	164				60
1850	145				94
1851	136				54
1852	225				57
1853	140				6
1854	93				-
1855	64				13
1856	145				18
1857	138				20
1858	147				25
1859	37				

From 1849 the method of entry changes, and I have calculated the number of notices served by the number heard at the Easter and June Sessions of the following year (notices were sent out in September) Particulars about postponement or settlement also cease to be recorded in 1849.

Particulars from Fitzwilliam Ejectment Book (N.L.I., MS 4972).

[20] See for instance Chaloner's letter-book (N.L.I., MS 3987) p.187.

[21] R. Chaloner to Wm. Newman, 8 February 1848 (Ibid., p.192). The estate was in the event 'forced to trial' and Newman had to journey over from Yorkshire.

[22] See Fitzwilliam Tentants' Ledger (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 6119).

[23] Table of ejectment cases on Fitzwilliam estate 1861-9:

Year	Total No. of Notices	No. of Non-payment cases	No. subsequently paid
1861	47		
1862	91	68	
1863	156	114	
1864	77	17	12
1865	95	24	7
1866	115	28	
1867	81	49	15
1868	81	43	32
1869	51		30

Figures are from Fitzwilliam Ejectment Book (N.L.I., MS 4992).

Again, as will be seen, there are gaps in the records, but an overall picture still emerges. In 1867 only 4 of the residue of cases were clearly marked 'eject'; in 1868, only 2. A letter of Lord Dufferin's to The Times of 28 January 1867 stated that the number of registered evictions for non-payment was 2/3 of the total - here the proportion was far less, arguing for a more prosperous tenantry than elsewhere.

of ejectment cases that were brought because of non-payment of rent fell quickly; in 1864 only 17 of the 77 notices served were for non-payment and twelve of these were subsequently paid. Of the 60 notices served for other reasons eleven were 'settled' and most of the others postponed. Thus ejectment in the later period seems to have been used as a paper tiger, on the Fitzwilliam estate at least; the tiny proportion of recalcitrants are significantly marked '<u>Try</u> ejectment' or 'Try to remove or come to terms'. On his own estate Grattan did not consider ejectment until 1852, and then as a last resort.[24] Other owners of small estates like Robert Truell were bringing ejectment cases to court in the early 1840 s[25]; but whether they went any further than this was not, as the Fitzwilliam records show, a foregone conclusion.

II

One guide to how severely Wicklow was affected by the famine is by studying population figures for the period. The table[26] shows that the percentage population decrease in Wicklow was well up to national averages; but figures for population density show a decrease over the 1841-1851 period of 34, compared to a national average of 49. Over the next decade the Wicklow population density decreased by 17, while the national average was 25.[27] The population of the only three Wicklow towns of any

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[24] See his notebook for this year (N.L.I., MS 5382).

[25] N.L.I., Truell papers, MS n4581 p4547.

[26] Population percentage increase/decrease 1821-61

Year	Wicklow	National Average
1821-31	10% (10,790)	9%
1831-41	3% (4,586)	3%
1841-51	-21% (-26,856)	-19.8%
1851-61	-13.02% (-12,886)	-12.0%

Census figures as quoted in <u>Thom's Directory</u>, 1842, 1852, 1862.

[27] See national census figures in <u>Thom's Directory</u> for 1852.

size (Arklow, Bray and Wicklow) rose steadily from 1841 to 1861[28]. Once again the Fitzwilliam accounts provide an opportunity to study a local sample.[29] These show a population (recorded in the years 1827, 1839, 1848, 1850, 1860, and 1868) dropping dramatically overall, but the proportionate decrease in numbers of adults is far smaller than in that of numbers of children. Thus the decline seems due more to emigration of young couples and to the later marrying age than to the direct depradations of the famine. Besides being favoured by the area's propensity for grazing agriculture, Wicklow was fortunate enough to escape famine fever until 1847[30]; neither her agriculture nor her resident population would seem to have been as badly affected as elsewhere.

Large numbers did, however, emigrate from the county; but the flight from Wicklow was arrested far sooner than in other counties. From 1851 to 1860 only three counties lost a smaller percentage of their original population than Wicklow did; only Carlow lost a smaller total number of emigrants, and in 1856 and 1857 no county lost a smaller number than Wicklow. For the following decade, Wicklow's percentage of emigrants was almost half the national average.[31]

As has been stated, the Powerscourts encouraged emigration from an early

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[28] Table showing numbers of people and of houses in Arklow, Bray and Wicklow in 1841, 1851 and 1861.

Year	Arklow		Bray		Wicklow	
	People	Houses	People	Houses	People	Houses
1841	3254	524	3169	540	2794	421
1851	3306	566	3156	565	3141	499
1861	4670	922	4273	724	3395	602

Figures as quoted in Thom's Directory 1842, 1852, 1862.

[29] Comprehensive population figures are given in the Fitzwilliam Tenants' ledger (N.L.I., MS 6082).

[30] As did Longford and Louth. See Edwards and Williams (ed.), The great famine, p. 273.

[31] See Thom's Directory, 1862. In the 1861-69 period Carlow was once again the only county to lose a smaller number, and this by a very narrow margin (15,290 to Wicklow's 15,725).

stage but the sums they spent on emigrants' passages after 1851 are insignificant.[32] On the Fitzwilliam estate an applicant for assistance to emigrate in 1830 was answered that 'Lord Fitzwilliam is not inclined to encourage emigration';[33] by 1842, however, such allowances were common entries in the accounts. They were usually on behalf of 'wretchedly poor' tenants unable to manage on their holdings;[34] in 1840 large numbers of such people had been given assisted passages.[35] During the famine the numbers soared; an interesting and comprehensive record for 1847[36] lists 312 families, with particulars about them. They were generally young couples with families of five or six children, owning farms under ten acres, or just cabins;their land was generally absorbed into that of an over-tenant or passed to a relative left behind. Later records of the same type demonstrate two trends: an increasing proportion of young and single emigrants, and also of those tenants holding only a cabin.[37] In 1848, 990 people emigrated

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[32] Powerscourt Emigration Expenses

Year	Amount
1849 &'50	£132
1851	£40
1852	£49
1853	£30
1854	£21
1855	£34

Figures from Powerscourt Accounts (N.L.I., MSS 4885, 1763).

[33] See Fitzwilliam Estate memoranda (N.L.I., MS 3983), entry for 4 May 1830.

[34] See Memoranda for 1842 (N.L.I., MS 3988), pp 17-18.

[35] See Memoranda 1839-40 (N.L.I., MS 4965); within a few weeks of each other one group of 37 and another of 24 had their applications approved.

[36] N.L.I., Fitzwilliam estate papers, MS 4974.

[37] And also of those who, like James Hughes in 1849, 'never had a house of their own'. The following table shows the estate's expenditure on emigration, and is abstracted from Fitzwilliam Accounts (N.L.I., MS 4973).

Year	1847-8	1848-9	1949-50	1850-1	1851-2	1852-3	1853-4
Amount	£6069	£5750	£1979	£1918	£373	£1052	£1147

Emigration figures from the Fitzwilliam Estate, 1842-56. (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MSS 4974-5 and n582 p934).

Year	1842	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856
No.of families	29	35	43	34	312	181	95	44	79	52	62	51	8	4

from the Fitzwilliam estate via New Ross on four ships;[38] but fewer and fewer after 1850 were assisted by Lord Fitzwilliam, and an increasing proportion of those entered did not, in the event, take ship. Chaloner's letters record several refusals of applications to emigrate after 1847; while only meaning refusal of assistance, the door was still effectively closed. However, in 1848 he wrote to a shipping agent in New Ross that 'it is Lord Fitzwilliam's intention to emigrate 100 families to New Brunswick'[39]; he later demanded a statement from the agent of the health of the passengers before and after the voyage 'and an account of any deaths that might take place'[40]. James Grattan similarly arranged passage for tenants who wanted it; and one only has to return to the population figures to see how many availed of the chance. But both the general figures for the county and the relevant records from the Fitzwilliam estate suggest that the peak of emigration was reached late in the famine years and was past by 1850.

III

Reviewing a tenant's request for an abatement of rent in 1850, Lord Fitzwilliam felt constrained to expand on his refusal, and produced what can be quoted as the landlords' justification of their position vis-a-vis the famine, and what they felt their commitments to be. He wrote (of the tenant's holding):

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[38] 'Star' (21 April), 'Jehu' (17 May), 'Aberfoyle' (14 April), 'Swan' (9 June) - Fitzwilliam Emigration Book (N.L.I., MS n582 p 934).

[39] R. Chaloner to William Graves, New Ross, 6 March 1848 (Chaloner's letter-book, N.L.I., MS 3987, p. 204). Most Fitzwilliam estate emigrants went to Canada, usually landing at Quebec or St. Andrew's.

[40] Letters of 20 April 1848 and 15 July 1848 (N.L.I., Robert Chaloner's Letter-book MS 3987, pp 216, 223).

> In the long period during which he has enjoyed it, the value of agricultural produce has occasionally far exceeded that upon which the rent could have originally been calculated, though at the present moment it may probably, and no doubt does, fall far short of it. These oscillations in the profit of farming are inseparable from the occupation of a farmer, especially when he holds by lease of long and uncertain duration. The system, which is on the whole beneficial to the occupier, precludes the landlord from profiting by circumstances favourable to the tenant, but if he is precluded from profiting by one class of events he ought also to be guaranteed against loss by another.[41]

Thus, as he wrote elsewhere, 'the losses occasioned by that calamity /the Famine/ ought to be shared by the landlord class and the tenant class'.[42] But how much of the brunt of the famine did the Wicklow landlords bear, and to what extent did they help their tenantry? As the extract above implies, few requests for abatements were granted on the Fitzwilliam estate.[43] The estate policy towards evictions and emigration has already been dealt with; Chaloner's attitude to direct aid seems to have been considered with similar care, but if it was not exceptionally generous, neither was it unreasonably harsh. From 1845, well before the foundation of the Wicklow Relief Commission, he was ordering large quantities of Indian rice;[44] his letters for June 1846 show him ordering 23 tons of corn and 23 tons of oatmeal for the Wicklow estates.[45] However, his attitude towards administration of the estate did not become any more flexible; in the summer of 1846 he was ordering unauthorised cabins to be pulled down.[46] He was capable of petitioning the Lord Lieutenant to expedite the passing of a drainage scheme as 'great distress exists in the barony of Shillelagh'

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[41] Fitzwilliam estate Memoranda for 1850 (N.L.I., MS 4967), p.59.

[42] Ibid.

[43] See Fitzwilliam estate Memoranda for 1843-50 (N.L.I., MS 4967).

[44] See Chaloner's letter-book (N.L.I., MS 3987), pp 85-6. The Wicklow Relief Commission was founded in May 1846.

[45] Ibid., pp.106, 108.

[46] Ibid., p. 115; cf. Grattan's policy, p.47, note 56, below.

and of serving a batch of ejectment letters the following day.[47] He remarks, as might be expected, when writing of Wicklow's fast and early recovery 'the country's ease and comfort mainly depends at present on the amount of wages paid by my Lord';[48] the assistance given to emigrants is dealt with above,[49] and Chaloner's letters certainly show that the estate retained an interest in their welfare even after their arrival in the New World.[50] He also organised many relief works, and brought pressure to bear on others to do the same.[51]

Chaloner was not, of course, an angel of mercy; it is significant that in the early 1850's some tenants appealed over his head to Lord Fitzwilliam about rent abatement, and yet more significant that they were listened to.[52] The public works organised by the Powerscourt estate were, in fact, far more extensive,[53] though they seem primarily inspired by the chance to achieve feats of landscaping at low labour costs;[54] and though emigration was encouraged sooner and aided more freely than at Coolattin, it dropped sooner. Of course, the estates whose records have not survived were probably the worst managed; 'The Crony Byrne', a large landowner, is known to have evicted without compassion at Knockananna, the homeless building a sort of shanty village on common ground nearly.[55] But even a landlord like James

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[47] 7 and 8 October 1846. (Practically all of the barony of Shillelagh was in the Fitzwilliam Estate).

[48] Ibid., p. 192; letter of 4 January 1848.

[49] See also table for note 37 on p. 43 above.

[50] See letters to J. Webster, a Canadian merchant to whom Chaloner sent money owing to emigrants.

[51] See letters of December 1848, ibid, p.240.

[52] Fitzwilliam estate memoranda for 1854 (N.L.I., MS 4981), p. 14.

[53] Mostly organised by Lord Powerscourt's guardians, the Hon. Rev. W. Wingfield and Lord Roden. See Wingfield, History of Powerscourt, also Powerscourt ledger (N.L.I., Powerscourt papers MS 4885).

[54] Building expenses continued to rise greatly in the 1850's (from £127 in 1851 to £1490 in 1855) as terraces and drives were laid out. See Powerscourt Accounts (N.L.I., MS 1763).

[55] See Edwards and Williams (ed.) The great famine, p. 430.

Grattan, whose sympathy cannot be questioned, eventually decided that local distress was being exaggerated by the people, and utilised by them as a lever to extract concessions. His record as a landlord during the famine had been as nearly exemplary as a landlord's could be; besides paying many tenants to pull down their cabins and rebuild new ones,[56] he provided Indian meal and wheaten meal as well as fine flour and meat soup, assisted emigrants, experimented with different types of potato, and diversified his estate's produce into wheat for its inhabitants.[57] Nor did he consider ejectment until 1852.[58] But by 1849 even he believed the tenants had recovered enough to use circumstances for their own ends. In this year he recorded:

> Two Haze girls called, handsome, fat and well-dressed: they asked for money to go to America, this after robbing me of £62 and who knows how much more. M. Brophy could not make up £15, though I saw plenty in his haggard. H. Harrison is playing the same sort of trick, and B. Nolan wants until January. Such men if they do not pay must give bills . . it looks like a combined move.[59]

As far as at least one acute observer was concerned, recovery was on the way.

IV

This feeling of Grattan's was shared by many; and the overwhelming impression given by a study of Wicklow and the famine is surprise at how quickly it recovered. I have discussed how statistics demonstrate this trend in population, agriculture, evictions and emigration.[60] Contemporary records illustrate it further, and show the tendency to have begun as early

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[56] Grattan's notebook for 1851 (N.L.I., MS 5382). CF. the Fitzwilliam policy (above, p. 45).

[57] Ibid., entries for 1846-7.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] See tables in notes 1, 8, 9, 19, 23, 26, 28, 32, 37 above, and also Appendix.

as 1848.[61] The tenants' ledgers for the 1860's show a situation well back to normal - excepting the heritage of the arrears problem, allowances for the discharge of which were being regularly made to tenants.[62] In the early 1850 s, indeed, James Grattan noted the return of normal living conditions and a concomitant scourge: 'Dunn and his wife drink, he must give up as bailiff. Drinking is returning, Mrs. Malone died of it'.[63] Life for the landlords had been little affected at any time; as has been mentioned, Lady Caroline Howard 'wondered why others are all so prosperous',[64] in the 1850 s and even in 1847, when Mrs. Airey wrote to her daughter Mrs. Charles Tottenham of Ashford that they would all have to emigrate as the crop had failed once more, she was anything but serious about it.[65]
But even for their unfortunate dependents, the holocaust was of comparatively short duration;[66] and of its inheritances, emigration continued only at an exceptionally low rate while the arrears situation became a new status quo and non-payment of rent, as James Grattan sensed, was the genesis of a later, deliberate, mode of agitation.

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[61] See Chaloner's letter of 4 Jan. 1848 quoted above, p. 37 .

[62] See Tenants' Ledger for Fitzwilliam Estate, 1863-79 (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam estate papers, MSS 3996-9). In the latter most cottages are described as 'newly thatched' or 'in good repair'.

[63] Grattan's Notebook for 1854 (N.L.I., MS 5382).

[64] See above, p. 27.

[65] Mrs Airey to Mrs Charles Tottenham (undated) (N.L.I., Tottenham Papers, n4905 p4937).

[66] The following table, of the amount on deposit in the three Wicklow savings banks of the period, reinforces the argument for a fairly rapid return to the status quo.

Year	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853
Amount (£)	35032	35160	31304	21020	18618	18663	19072	-	-

Year	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859
Amount (£)	23487	19890	20744	23699	24236	25627

Thom's Directory, 'Statistics of Ireland', 1850, 1852, 1858, 1860.

The life and career of Charles Stewart Parnell may seem far removed, in terms of relevance as well as of chronology, from the preceding survey. Nonetheless, I believe it is necessary ground-work for a study of how his family life and social background affected him. The Parnell family were worked closely into the fabric I have described; their fortunes were affected by the progress of agriculture in Wicklow, their attitudes were determined by the social milieu of Wicklow life, their opinions were affected by the lives of the people amongst whom they lived. Even in this preliminary, and of necessity superficial, study some suggestive connections emerge. Avondale was a regular attraction for those touring the Rathdrum area,[67] and the family was well known. Parnell's grandfather, William Parnell, was a friend of James Grattan's and Grattan's journals have many references to him; Mrs Mary Tighe dedicated a poem to him.[68] William's son John Henry was a frequent correspondent of Robert Chaloner. Parnell's father's uncle, Sir Ralph Howard lived at the hub of county life; his London house became the base of Delia Parnell and her children when they visited the city, and they retained a close connection with the Howards. Charles Stewart Parnell's great-uncle Thomas Parnell was the engineer who designed the roads at Powerscourt and oversaw the public works there during the famine.[69] At the end of the period I have surveyed, 'Charlie Parnell' is beginning to be a frequent figure in shooting-parties at Shelton Abbey;[70] he captained the Wicklow cricket team and partook fully in county

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[67] See Catharine Airey's tour in 1819 (N.L.I., Tottenham Papers MS n4905 p4937); she visited the house and the family. Dorothea Barker gives an approving mention to 'the fine seat of Avondale' in her tour of the county in 1827 (N.L.I., 'Journal of a tour of the County Wicklow, 1827', MS 2194).

[68] See below, section 2, p. 120, n. 96.

[69] See Wingfield, History of Powerscourt, p. 97. Lord Powerscourt refers to him as Parnell's uncle, but he must have been Thomas, the younger brother of Charles Stewart Parnell's grandfather, William Hayes Parnell.

[70] See Lady Alice Howard's diary for 1870, (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 3600).

socialising.[71] Wicklow meant a great deal to him on many levels, from his obsession with gold-mining in the mountainous part of the county to his fascination with the local folk-lore of the 1798 rebellion.

A survey of county life yields interesting associations on the hypothetical level as well; for instance, when Parnell was living at Rathdrum as a young man a prominent neighbour, W.W.F. Hume MP, was named as co-respondent in a celebrated divorce case. His defence was that husband and wife had not lived together for some years, and that the husband had encouraged and connived at the liaison in hopes of money payments from an impending inheritance and had in fact only brought the action in hopes of being bought off with a large sum. This case was presented by an advocate, neither co-respondent nor defendant troubling to appear in court; but they won the case with no difficulty.[72] Parnell must have followed the case, along with the rest of Wicklow society; and the circumstances presented by Hume's defence, which won the case, are exactly those on which a defence of the O'Shea divorce suit could have been fought, and probably won as well. When in 1891, Parnell initially brought similar counter-charges, but did not himself appear in court, he may have been influenced by the memory of this old Wicklow scandal. This association is a purely parenthetical conjecture; but the coincidence is interesting. The fabric of Parnell's background must include many influences more easily traced and facts more easily ascertained. In a sense Parnell migrated from his social background; Willie O'Shea told Sir E.T. Cook that for much of his career as Irish Leader 'he was a pariah, and none of his own class would have a word to say to him'[73] and in this

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[71] See J.H. Parnell, C.S. Parnell: a memoir (London 1916).

[72] See Limerick Chronicle, 31 January 1863, for a full account of the case (A.P. Gipps versus Helen Gipps and W.W.F. Hume, MP).

[73] J.S. Mills, Life of Sir E.T. Cook (London, 1921), p. 107.

case the rarely reliable Captain is corroborated by Henry Harrison. For this reason as well as because of the commitments of politics, he could rarely return to the social environment of his youth; when he did, such occasions have usually been briefly chronicled as yet another aspect of the enigma of his character. I believe that the roots he retained among home and family meant much more than that, and can be used to provide their own enlightenment; in this way a study of the texture of county life in Wicklow and the background to Parnell's development has an importance of its own.

APPENDIX: A SURVEY OF WICKLOW AGRICULTURE AFTER THE FAMINE

(Acreage of)

Year	Wheat	Oats	Barley Bere Rye	Peas Beans	Potatoes	Turnips	Other Greens	Flax	Meadow Clover	Total
1847	7821	43690	5547	70	5204	6313	783	35	49779	
1848	7305	43472	4962	102	12860	4194	691	6	54371	
1849	7817	44527	5201	71	11177	5303	1357	7	50793	
1850	7726	43756	5311	86	11451	4822	1150	8	53525	
1851	6889	43983	4812	75	11218	5373	1551	34	53792	
1852										
1853										
1854	6177	36746	4918		11176	4273	1339	5	53550	118184
1855	6622	36314	4600		11844	4523	1090	1	55037	120031
1856	9101	35230	3485		13438	4567	1265	2	53326	120396
1857	9047	34210	3481		15276	4103	1342	1	54454	121914
1858	9039	33106	2417		15036	4342	1496	1	56027	121464
1859	7987	33103	2506		16322	5842	1469	3	56712	129944
1860	7583	30960	2848		15714	3774	1470	0	60502	122851
1861	5363	32256	2943		14497	4456	1504	1	57982	119002
1862	5873	31290	2527		13769	5231	1456	0	58302	118548
1863	4841	31196	1921		14545	4642	1630	4	58727	117506
1864	4838	29545	2061	19	14508	4665	1456	6	60000	117098
1865	4550	29012	1828	17	15008	4341	1642	3	62951	119352
1866	5183	30656	1594	24	14935	4800	2055	7	56690	118944
1867	4954	30565	1498	15	14166	5280	1782	1	60701	118962
1868	5725	29896	1776	5	14656	4834	2032	6	59408	118338
1869	6247	30371	2179	13	15014	4942	2049	2	58455	119272
1870	6242	29263	2379	9	14836	5309	2055	0	59070	119113

LIVESTOCK
(Numbers of) ↘

Year	Fallow Arable (acres)	Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs
1855		11303	72158	160579	20025
1856		11331	73780	167918	14729
1857		11727	74864	160630	21436
1858	379	12137	78967	162401	24711
1859	574	12748	82781	161393	21728
1860	167	12783	77103	157198	22543
1861	388	13027	75929	168868	21419
1862	287	12995	73701	171086	22590
1863	579	12995	74702	178050	22475
1864	235	12822	74901	189539	22429
1865	226	12173	75959	188194	26821
1866	198	11599	80288	199503	30300
1867	140	11123	77095	211945	27987
1868	181	11316	76390	220528	19569
1869	548	11514	77680	214151	21197
1870	148	11627	76841	199657	25557

- Particulars from Thom's Directory for the period ('Statistics of Ireland' section).

Part 2

Sir John Parnell and

his Children

Introduction

> There was a vein of talent that ran through the entire family in their several generations - serviceable to their country in some - agreeable in others - singular and eccentric in all . . . on the whole they were a race that deserve notice in the history of Ireland .
>
> H. Grattan on the Parnell family in Memoirs of the life and times of the rt. hon. Henry Grattan, (London, 1839-46, 5 volumes) v, 145(n).

It may seem ironic to us that this remark was made in the year of the birth of Charles Stewart Parnell, who was to bring more fame to the family name than all the rest of his ancestors put together; but it raises a point essential to any consideration of the influences that shaped him as a man and as a politician: the distinguished history of the Parnell family in public life. They arrived in Ireland about the time of the Restoration; in the two hundred years until the rise to prominence of Charles Stewart Parnell the family produced several men of eminence, more than one public figure of great fame, and - what is more important to my subject - a considerable mystique. In this paper I intend to examine aspects of the Parnell family history, but not to deal exhaustively with every member of it. My selection has been determined by relevance, and to a lesser degree by availability of information. Thus I have not dealt with Parnell's ancestor the distinguished eighteenth-century poet Thomas Parnell; besides being too far removed in time from Charles Stewart to be accounted influential, he is well enough recorded in the copious memoirs and correspondences of the age of Swift and Pope (both of whom were intimate friends of his). Nor have I discussed the first baronet of Rathleague, father of 'the great' Sir John Parnell - this time for the double reason of paucity of information and his tenuous connection with the subject of my study. This section begins with a study of Sir John Parnell, Chancellor of the Exchequer during Grattan's Parliament, whose name

and reputation were so often invoked in philippics about his great-grandson. A more brief discussion of the Congleton branch of the family follows. Then, with reference to the Avondale estate, I have discussed the shadowy but interesting figure of Samuel Hayes. I conclude with a study of Parnell's grandfather William Parnell-Hayes, a neglected specimen of improving landlord and radical squire; I believe that the tradition of his thought was far more imminent and marked an influence on the young Parnell than the far more frequently invoked mystique of his celebrated great-grandfather.

A consideration of Parnell's father and mother, with his brothers and sisters, will form a later section of my work. Hence the aspects of Parnell's family background treated here can be described as 'Sir John Parnell and his Children'.

Chapter 1

Sir John Parnell

I

The family history of the first Parnells in Ireland has been condensed and served up many times in the early pages of numerous studies of Charles Stewart Parnell.[1] I pretend to offer nothing new: the following facts are presented merely as an introduction. Thomas Parnell, son of a mercer and mayor of Congleton in Cheshire, came to Ireland at the time of the Restoration. Johnston suggests that he was a Cromwellian who left England with his money in 1660,[2] O'Hara that the family was 'planted in Ireland by the great Protector';[3] both observations seem conjectural. Whatever his politics, his fortunes enabled him to purchase a house in Dawson Street and an estate called Rathleague in the Queen's County. He died in 1685;[4] his two sons were Thomas the poet, who died as vicar of Finglas in 1718 leaving only short-lived issue[5] and his brother John who thus in time inherited all the family property. A barrister, MP and judge, he married a sister of Lord Chief Justice Whitshed and died in 1727.[6] He had a son John who became MP for Bangor and was created first baronet of Rathleague in 1766; he died in 1782.

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[1] See R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp.1-12; T.S. Sherlock, Life of C.S. Parnell (Dublin, 1882) pp. 4-12; R. Johnston, Parnell and the Parnells (London, 1888) pp. 1-12; M.M. O'Hara, Chief and Tribune (Dublin, 1919) pp 1-4; T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian (London, 1929; 2 vols) i, pp. 96-7.

[2] Johnston, op. cit., p.1.

[3] O'Hara, op. cit., p.1.

[4] O'Brien, op. cit., p.2.

[5] T.S. Sherlock, op. cit., p.4; Johnston, op. cit., p.6.

[6] See Wm. Molesworth to Richard, Visct. Molesworth, 4 July 1727, in Clements MSS, H.M.C., Rep. on MSS in various coll., vol. viii, p. 398, for a reference to his death which mentions his 'interest in Swords'.

Sir John married Anne Ward, daughter of Michael Ward of Castleward, Co. Down, and sister of the first Lord Bangor. His only son, the second Sir John Parnell, became Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer, an influential Privy Councillor, and one of the most important men of his day. Dismissed from office for refusing to support the Union, Sir Jonah Barrington awarded Parnell the sobriquet of 'Incorruptible'. O'Hara saw him as 'one of /Grattan's Parliament's/ ornaments; one of that immortal band whose integrity and patriotism almost redeemed it from its sordid treachery'.[7] This sort of hagiographical language is characteristic of later observations on his career, especially when associated with a reference to his great-grandson; though this was already beginning at the time of his death, as a fulsome elegy in the Gentleman's Magazine bears witness.[8] However, the memoirs of those who knew him are more equivocal; Henry Grattan's son contented himself with saying 'he was honest, straightforward and independent . . . as Chancellor of the Exchequer he was not deficient';[9] Barrington, a close acquaintance, recalled in 1833 that 'as a financier, he was not perfect - as a statesman, he was not deep; as a courtier, he was not polished; but as an officer he was not corrupt',[10] and went on to eulogise his probity. However, in his Historic Memoirs he was less guarded, remarking:

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[7] O'Hara, op.cit., p.3.

[8] Gentleman's Magazine, December 1801, part ii, p. 1127.

[9] H. Grattan, Life and times of the rt. hon. Henry Grattan (London, 1839-46, 5 vols), v, 144.

[10] Sir Jonah Barrington, Rise and fall of the Irish nation (Dublin, 1833), p. 84.

> The external figure of Sir John Parnel /sic/ seemed an archetype of his character - his countenance, comely and benign, was less marked than animated; his full, penetrating but unsteady eye conveyed the impression of irregular wisdom and undisciplined ability; his person (far above the middle size) appeared at the same moment active and unwieldy and indicated a singular combination of awkwardness and dignity, indolence and vigour - a sloven and a gentleman.[11]

As can be expected, references to him in the correspondence of English politicians of the time are remarkable for their asperity;[12] these, no less than the posthumous adulation of latter-day patriots, of course represent only one side of the question, but an examination of his career and political history is itself instructive and can help to lay a few of the ghosts.

II

Sir John Parnell was born on 25 December 1744, the only son of John Parnell, later the first baronet, and his wife Anne. On 7 June 1766 he entered Lincoln's Inn; from 1776 to 1783 he represented Inistiogue in Parliament, sitting for the Queen's County after that. On 19 July 1774 he married Letitia Charlotte, daughter of Sir Arthur Brooke, bart., of Colebrooke in Co. Fermanagh. On 16 December 1780 he became a Commissioner for Customs and Excise; in April 1782 he succeeded to the baronetcy conferred on his father in 1766; on 22 September 1785 he became Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer; on 27 October 1786 he was sworn a member of the British Privy Council, and in February of the same year elected a bencher of King's Inns, Dublin though he was never called to either bar; in 1793 he

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[11] Sir Jonah Barrington, Historic memoirs of Ireland (London, 1835, 2 vols) i, p. 121. (The final 'l' was often omitted from 'Parnel' in this and the next generation). For a similar observation to the above, see Addington's tribute to Parnell: 'though careless of the deportment and impatient of the forms which to common observers make the whole of good-breeding, he never omitted that part of it which is the practice of good-nature' - Gentleman's Magazine, Dec. 1801, pt. ii, p. 1155.

[12] Cornwallis to Lord Portland, 9 March 1800; C. Ross (ed.), The correspondence of Charles, first Marquis Cornwallis (London 1859; 3 volumes), iii, p. 207.

was made a Commissioner of the Treasury. Dismissed from office for refusing to support the Union, he sat for the Queen's County in the first Parliament of the United Kingdon at Westminster in January 1801 and died on 5 December that year, aged 57.[13]

It is a remarkable career; a steady advancement in power and influence, honourable loss of office over a matter of principle, and a sudden death at the height of his exaltation. His history, however, is not without its anomalies. Barrington's picture of him is of a man pressed to success almost against himself: 'Cheerful and convivial, he generally preferred society to trouble and seemed to have rid himself of a weight when he had performed a duty'.[14] His father, according to the same source, was 'a crafty and prudent minor politician' who intended his son for diplomacy and educated him with a view to this pursuit;

> But on his return from the continent /he/ was found too deficient in the necessary attainments of evasion and duplicity to qualify him for the high departments of foreign diplomacy; his talents, therefore, became destined for home consumption and by the intrigues of his father and the forced exertion of his own abilities he was soon noticed in the Irish Parliament.[15]

Much of Barrington is gossip and this may be no exception; but whatever about the path he followed or was led along, the political principles that he embraced tended rather to reflect faithfully the line laid down by Government than to express the strongly independent opinion later attributed to him. This is especially true of his views on the Catholic question. Lecky pointed out that in 1792, on the introduction of a Catholic Relief Bill,

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[13] Information principally from the D.N.B., vol. XV, p. 347 et seq. It is, however, guilty of some inaccuracies: it was the first Sir John Parnell who sat as MP for Bangor, 1761-8, not the second.

[14] Sir J. Barrington, Rise and fall of the Irish nation, p. 83.

[15] Ibid.

> Parnell . . revealed the true sentiments of the Government when he lamented the necessity for introducing the measure but also expressed his belief that 'the liberality of the public mind would of itself alone have totally obliterated all distinctions in twenty years and Protestants and Roman Catholics would have coalesced by moderate and gradual concessions on one side and rational gratitude and affection on the other.[16]

O'Brien wrote, with some cynicism, that Parnell declined to follow Grattan's lead on the Catholic question, but was 'drawn into sympathy' with them when they were admitted to the parliamentary franchise in 1795.[17] Because of a much-quoted exchange with Pitt in 1794, when Parnell extolled the advantages of the union of Catholics and Protestants and Pitt countered with 'Very true, but the question is whose will they be?', Parnell has been seen as a champion of Catholic rights as well as a high-souled patriot; the first part of this judgement is as misconstrued as the second part is anachronistic. On the Catholic Relief question Froude judged Parnell 'one of such servants of the crown as the Viceroy could best depend on' (along with Fitzgibbon, Beresford, Wolfe, the Archbishop of Cashel, Agar, and Prime Serjeant Fitzgerald); and, again according to Froude, when Cashel claimed that 'in Ireland the private fortune of every Protestant was at stake', 'Parnell was scarcely less determined but considered that it might be prudent to give way in trifles till the 'Reform Frenzy had burnt itself out in France'.[18]

One does not, however, have to rely on secondary sources for Parnell's strongly Protestant viewpoint. Speaking in 1790 in defence of patronage (itself a significant stance) he stated:

> The Protestant interest of this country has received the most solid advantages from the influence of the Crown; what else has established and confirmed our property? Property not acquired under the most favourable circumstances; and what else protects it?[19]

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[16] W.E.H. Lecky, History of Ireland in the eighteenth century (London, 1892, 5 volumes), iii, 142. Also see Parl.reg.Ire., xiii, 330.

[17] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 7.

[18] The English in Ireland in the eighteenth century, iii, 47.

[19] 26 February 1790; Parl. reg. Ire., x, 330.

By the debate on Catholic Relief in 1792 he was far more outspoken:

> I rise to rescue the Protestants of Ireland from the calumnies which have been thrown upon them; I rise to rescue the memory of our forefathers from the unjust and unfounded aspersions that have been cast upon them. They have been described as cruel tyrants for enacting laws to which they were compelled by self-defence and the necessity of the times and which laws we, their posterity, relaxed in the most essential points the moment a favourable opportunity arrived. Was this tyranny in the Protestant gentlemen of Ireland? No, Sir, the Protestant gentlemen of Ireland are as liberal as they are brave. Sir, I cannot forget that I am a Protestant myself; that I am born of Protestant parents; and that I am a member of the Protestant establishment; and therefore I will not hear Protestants degraded under colour of an invective against laws that we have repealed . .
>
> To my constituents who sent me here I have my first duty; if they should say to me 'Give away our ascendancy, give away our elective franchise!' I should very reluctantly do it; but if they do not direct me to bestow these rights upon others, I call upon any man to say whether I am not a betrayer of my constituents' rights if I give them away unbidden.
>
> Gentlemen have spoken much of prejudice and bigotry as if Protestants were prejudiced bigots; is there no prejudice on the other side? Is nothing to be given up but by Protestants? Let the Catholics do away with their prejudice and it will be injustice indeed if we do not repeal our laws . . . The avowed object of this bill is to unite His Majesty's subjects and to promote concord among them, preserving at the same time the Protestant ascendancy; but the man who knowingly incites the Roman Catholics to demand what cannot be conceded is an incendiary and an enemy to his country.[20]

In the Parliamentary session of the next year, on the topic of constitutional rights for Catholics, Parnell stood strongly against 'speaking to the passions of the people'.[21] As before his speech was in favour of the measure, to vote with government, but was put in a way that implied strong personal disagreement with the principle. The reason for the change was simply, he stated, to keep in line with England. While supporting the bill, he believed time would have accomplished the same object: 'I would rather we remained as we were for some time, or proceeded with less precipitation . . I think the moment ill-chosen and the experiment

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[20] 18 Feb. 1792; Parl. reg. Ire., xii, 180.

[21] 25 Feb. 1793; ibid, xiii, 320.

dangerous, to do away at once the principle of a century'.[22] Though supporting this measure, when in the session of 1797 Fox requested 'healing and lenient' measures from the Crown about the Catholic position Parnell opposed at length on the rather obscure and tendentious ground that this 'contravened the fundamental principles of Parliament.'[23]

Nor was Sir John's reputation among his contemporaries that of a supporter of Catholic claims, but rather that of someone who had a dispassionate interest in their political potential and little else. In 17191 Henry Dundas wrote of Parnell's views to Lord Grenville:

> He seems to think that nothing mischievous is to be dreaded from the Catholics, in consequence of the principles resulting from the French revolution, for that they are in general bigoted and are, of course, sensibly affected by the outrages committed against the clergy of France.[24]

Writing again a month later, Dundas remarked, a propos of the Catholics that 'Sir John Parnell is the only person I have met with from Ireland who appears to me to talk soundly and dispassionately on the subject'.[25] So dispassionate indeed was Parnell that he could abandon even his equivocal support of the Catholics when there were bigger fish to fry; in 1799 a letter of Buckingham's to Grenville describing the machinations of opponents to the Union stated:

> By a negotiation in which I was requested by Lord Castlereagh to assist, the principal Catholics had been induced to hold off the petition [against the idea of a Union] and to urge the adjournment of it till Mr. Pitt's plans and ideas could be ascertained and understood by the public. In consequence of this, a meeting of opposition was held on Tuesday at the Speaker's, where Ponsonby at length yielded to the earnest solicitations of Parnell and Foster and engaged to abandon the Catholics and support the Orange Party in a resolution . . . "to advise that immediate steps shall be taken for the suppression of the rebellion by the most

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[22] 25 Feb. 1793; Parl.reg.Ire., xiii, 321.

[23] 23 March 1797; ibid, xvii, 209.

[24] Dundas to Lord Grenville, 4 September 1791; Fortescue MSS, vol. i, H.M.C. (1894), rep. 14, app. 5. p.229.

[25] Dundas to Lord Grenville, 17 Oct. 1791; Fortescue MSS vol. i (1894), H.M.C., rep. 14, app. 5, p. 213.

> active exertions of the army and by giving to the Protestant ascendancy that decided and efficient support which alone can secure the constitutional connexion with Great Britain and the establishments in church and state".[26]

The consciousness of being part of the Protestant ascendancy which he emphasised so strongly even when nominally supporting the recognition of Catholic rights, was a guiding principle of Parnell's politics; when the organ of the Protestant ascendancy - their Parliament - was threatened, the Irish Catholics were seen by Parnell purely in terms of their political usefulness and when they were cast as potential opponents on this issue he had no hesitation whatsoever in attempting to play the Orange card.

The Catholic question was not the only sphere of reform to which Sir John Parnell showed himself at best a fair-weather friend and more often a whole-hearted enemy. Social reform was an issue that occurred to few of the legislators at College Green; but one attempted instance was Grattan's suggestion in 1792 that owing to the national prosperity proudly declared by Parnell as chancellor, cottagers could be exempted from the hearth tax. This was opposed firmly by Parnell 'until the unfunded debt accrued in previous years was paid off'.[27] On his attitude to the question an undated and unsigned state paper of the period is more explicit:

> No revenue which has been drawn from houses with single hearths can be considered as compensating in any degree for the misery and discouragement of the poor. The state is a loser by it, in point of immediate profit. I had occasion to talk on this subject with Sir John Parnell, who admitted the distress occasioned by the tax and that nothing would contribute more effectively to the relief of the people than its repeal or modification; but justified it by this extra-ordinary position, that it was necessary to make them feel there was a government over them. No other object can be answered by its continuance for Sir John Parnell and every other person acquainted with the revenue of Ireland is fully sensible that houses with single hearths might be exempted and a larger revenue than the present obtained by increasing the tax upon houses of a higher class.[28]

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[26] Buckingham to Grenville, 1 Feb. 1799; Fortescue MSS, Vol ii, H.M.C (1905), p. 462.

[27] See Lecky, History of Ireland in XVIIth century, iii, 76.

[28] Fortescue MSS, Vol. iii, H.M.C. (1899), p. 549.

He was, however, constrained to accept exemption of cottagers from this tax in 1795;[29] but similar measures like Flood's motion to reduce taxation in 1786 received his uncompromising opposition.[30] This attitude extended to practically every suggestion from Grattan and Flood that the parliamentary franchise be extended beyond the present limits. The increase in the country's prosperity under the prevailing system and the absence of reforming legislation in England were the justifications repeated by him again and again;[31] nor did they ever appear to have seemed to him inadequate grounds. Despite his own involvement with the Maryborough Volunteers (he held the rank of Colonel) Flood's bill 'for more equal representation of the people' in 1784 called forth a bitter denunciation by Parnell of parliamentary dictation by the Volunteers.[32] Opposing a similar motion in 1793 he stated that it was intended to make the House 'come to a general resolution implying abuses without any proof that they existed.'[32] When the bill for amendment of representation was debated in 1794, Parnell's speech against it was a statement of the classic conservative case: the plan would 'open the door to innovation . . countenancing French principles in action while reprobating them in words'. Temporising experiments were dangerous; 'it was wisdom either to grant everything to the people at once or to keep things as they were.[34] In the condition of parliament as in the system of taxation, Sir John Parnell was a man who liked things as they were and wanted them kept that way.[35]

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[29] Parl. reg. Ire., xv, 103.

[30] 19 January 1786; see ibid, vi.

[31] See for instance Lecky, op. cit., vi, 521.

[32] Parl. reg. Ire., ii, 248. He accused them of attempting 'to overturn the constitution of the country'.

[33] 14 Jan. 1793; ibid, xiii, 35.

[34] 4 March 1794; ibid, xiv, 106.

[35] See also his speech of 26 March 1791 opposing a bill to'effect a responsibility in the servants of the Crown in the different departments of the executive government'. Parl. reg. Ire., xi, 375.

Nowhere did Parnell show this bias more clearly than in the question of government sinecures and pensions, which occasioned a long drawn-out controversy that again shows him as consistently aligned against Grattan, Forbes,Flood and the comparatively progressive element in the Irish parliament. (In all the impassioned philippics of 1782 there is not a word from Parnell; he seeems to have been 'waiting to see'). The constant attacks on abuse of the Pension List that occurred in almost every session came from the old guard of the 'Patriot' party; and every attack was repulsed by Parnell with the assertion that Parliament itself had desired any increases that had taken place, and that accusations of corruption must be specific and substantiated.[36] Such substantiations were in fact often furnished; a typical answer of Parnell's stated:

> Of the £7500 this year added to the list, £3000 was for the noble peer who formerly with so much honour to himself and advantage to the public filled that chair /of Chancellor of the Exchequer/; a considerable proportion of the remainder is for the support of the ancient and illustrious noble families of this country, whose dignity the nation cannot allow to sink without a loss of her own.[37]

An equally weak defence offered by the Chancellor in this session was that 'if the Pension list has existed from the year 1726 and has continued to increase from that time to the present, why should it be reserved to this day to vote the accumulated acts of so many successive ministers a grievance and to impute that grievance to the present government of the country?'.[38] In 1788 he opposed a motion calling for the reduction of the Pension List, defending those awarded pensions as worthy recipients in any case;[39] in 1790 he defended the increase in the number of revenue

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[36] Parl. reg.Ire., vi, 239, 6 March 1786.

[37] Ibid, vi, 239.

[38] Ibid. Forbes, who had introduced the question, pointed out the insufficiency of these arguments.

[39] 29 Feb. 1788; ibid, viii, 365.

commissioners (attacked as a proliferation of sinecures) and turned the question neatly to his own advantage by claiming that the increase in prosperity under his chancellorship made these appointments necessary.[40] In the same session Grattan launched a long and violent attack on the sale of peerages, accusing ministers of 'impeachable offences' and of 'exemplifying the jobbing spirit'. They tried to buy the services of the country gentlemen, claimed Grattan, and failed miserably; he called for a committee to investigate the sale of peerages.[41] Significantly, it was Parnell who rose to answer the charges. This he did with several arguments, none of them particularly cogent; he blamed the excesses of 'common fame' and rumour, accused Grattan of 'attempting to take illustrious personages by surprise' in his speech, and finally asked Grattan if he thought he could do the job of Chancellor better than himself.

> For myself I can only presume to lay claim to some industry and great good will to the country, and I have the satisfaction to see the country thriving to my utmost wish . . I will ask them /his critics/ whether there is not some little merit in preserving the country in a thriving state until the arrival of those halcyon days when they shall assume the reins of government?[42]

As often before, he shifted the ground adroitly to the achievements of the government and went on to eulogise its suppression of Whiteboys.

Later in the same session Parnell strongly opposed a bill 'to secure responsibility of the servants of the Crown in different departments of the executive government of Ireland to the parliament thereof';[43] he also attacked the Opposition's bill for a fixed Pension List. The long campaign against corruption continued, with Grattan, Forbes and others repeatedly summing up a case directly against Parnell, who defended himself strenuously; at the end of the session Sir Hercules Langrishe deplored 'the peculiar

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[40] 1 Feb. 1790; Parl. reg. Ire., vi, 239.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] 5 March 1790; ibid, x, 383.

severity which accompanied every debate on the subject this winter' and the view of the government by the opposition as 'a common enemy . . of such unusual malignity as justified the unusual violence of their attack'.[44] The next session found Parnell still being called upon to defend the administration from what he called 'the gross insinuation' of corruption;[45] in this session also an attack was mounted on another administrative sphere for which he was answerable: the government expenses sheet.[46] In answer to Forbes' proposed bill for 'effecting a responsibility in the servants of the crown in the different departments of the executive government' Parnell again presented a line of argument conservative to the point of reaction. He claimed this was 'destroying the rights of the monarch':

> Why destroy the whole of the ancient system? Why wrest the power and patronage from the hands of the crown? Why alter the established form of the state? Does any man envy the rage of experiment which has involved so great a part of Europe in misery? And if not, why should this country, going rapidly forward to prosperity, enjoying her rights and liberties, prospering in commerce and increasing in wealth, risk the possession of peace, wealth and happiness to indulge the crude schemes of speculative innovators?[47]

Next year he answered both sharply and shortly a particularly violent attack by Grattan on 'an administration which has but two principles of promotion for church, or law, or any thing: English Recommendation and Irish Corruption'; the few resolutions for reform that were passed in this period, in government administration as in society at large, found no friend in the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

On the subject of Parnell's politics, an important instance of the way he was able to frame a policy to which he was committed so as to make it seem inspired by the wishes of the house was his approach to public works.

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[44] 5 March 1790; Parl. reg. Ire., x, 383.

[45] 3 Feb. 1791; ibid, xi, 91.

[46] 7 Feb. 1791; ibid.

[47] 26 March 1791; ibid, 375.

His resolutions on this subject were indexed in the Parliamentary Register as 'sweeping resolutions against jobbing parliamentary grants', and he did his best to present them as such; in reality they were merely the expression of the government policy of retrenchment by refusing expenditure on 'any pier, harbour, key, canal, navigation, colliery, road, bridge, mill, mill-work, nor for rebuilding any particular church or cathedral or for any hospital or charity which has not usually and regularly received parliamentary support'.[48] The opportunities for 'jobbery' in this sphere were far less than the potential for corruption in the Pension List Parnell so ardently defended, and this was pointed out to him; but he spoke strongl- against 'the profuse spending of public money', and refused requests for exceptions as 'opening the door to Innovation'.[49] In the following session his continuing the retrenchment policy provoked much criticism, which he urbanely replied 'arose rather from a disposition to blame administration rather than any existing cause'.[50] At the same time as cutting back heavily on public works he was extolling the wealth of Ireland - 'it would be difficult in the history of the world to show a nation rising faster in prosperity';[51] an anomaly that was again pointed out to him.

III

A consideration of Parnell's politics raises the question of his ability as Chancellor: a topic I do not pretend to deal with more than superficially, since I am neither qualified as an economist nor required

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[48] 2 Feb. 1787; Parl. reg. Ire., vii, 80.

[49] Ibid, p. 82.

[50] 28 March 1787; ibid, p. 423.

[51] See Lecky, op. cit., vi, 437.

by the exigencies of this paper to do so.[52] Ireland in the late eighteenth century is generally considered to have been enjoying an economic - especially a commercial - boom; Parnell's statements in Parliament bolster this up,[53] and he repeatedly told the House of a steady reduction in the National Debt. These statements, however, were not necessarily the last word. In an exchange of letters between Castlereagh and Pitt at the end of Parnell's administration, Castlereagh explains 'why the demands from hence /on the English Treasury/ are so much beyond what you have been taught to expect by Sir John Parnell'; the reasons given are Parnell's miscalculation of quit-rent proceeds, his under-estimation of government costs, his forgetting deficiencies of the previous year, and his ignoring the extraordinary charge required for the British militia after the rebellion.[54] This implicit criticism of Parnell's efficiency was often expressed openly by the Opposition during his term in office, frequently by Isaac Corry, who was to succeed him in office after his fall. On financial questions in parliament the debate often took the form of a duel between the two, coloured by barely concealed personal animosity.[55] Corry's attacks were often founded on hair-splitting; but the same opposition, led by Grattan and Forbes, which campaigned against Parnell about corruption consistently

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[52] Some background details may nonetheless be useful. Parnell was one of the first Chancellors of the Exchequer in Ireland to be an Irishman. Before 1782, the practice was to appoint an Englishman from London who sometimes delegated his office to a deputy. The Irish revenue was divided into two parts, Hereditary and Additional: the Hereditary revenue (outside Parliament's control) was inadequate and loans were raised from 1715 on, resulting in an increasing National Debt and the occasional embarassment of government by parliament's threatening a short money bill. Despite reorganisation in 1793, national finances were chaotic by 1800.

[53] Quoted fully by Lecky, op. cit., vi, 437, 515, 521, etc.

[54] Castlereagh to Pitt, 29 March 1799; Castlereagh Correspondence, ii, 243.

[55] See Parl. reg. Ire., vi, 30,40,47,73,82,83,156; vii, 44, 83, 98, 117, 294,252,286,390; viii, 14,22,77,95,237.

attacked his financial policies. He was accused of overspending,[56] ignorance about trade,[57] and evasiveness[58] by Griffith, Connolly and others; such accusations may be occupational hazards for any finance minister, but merely by studying the parliamentary records for his administration the truth can easily be seen of an accusation levelled at Parnell: 'He boasted of a redundancy till some plan was proposed to apply it usefully and then explained away all the boasts he had made'.[59] The continual grievance of Opposition was that the expenditure remained grossly in excess of revenue, while at the same time no public works were being undertaken and taxation on trade increased. Parnell's answer on one occasion was:

> It is not by the expenses of your government but by the growing prosperity of your country, by the increase of your agriculture and the consequent increase of drawbacks and bounties, that your revenue is swallowed up.[60]

As a means for raising government income, however, he repeatedly introduced the unpopular measure of state lotteries.[61] Finally, Parnell's administration provoked a violent attack from Grattan: 'The nation was running a race of ruin'; he said he did not believe the favourable figures for 1789-90 produced by the Chancellor,[62] and stigmatised the increased allowances for stamp-office and revenue salaries as 'the fund of prodigality and corruption.'

> Gentlemen might say he acted unfairly in not stating Lord Buckingham's savings but he held such savings despicable: a few bushels of coal deducted from the allowance of the brave soldier that had fought for his country, and the money arising from these bestowed upon the sycophant that preys upon his country.

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[56] Parl. reg. Ire., vi, 97.

[57] 1 April 1786; ibid, p. 418.

[58] 25 Jan. 1787; ibid, vii, 44.

[59] Ibid, xii, 73.

[60] 31 Jan. 1788; ibid, viii, 31. See ibid, x, 22, for a similar argument.

[61] See ibid., viii, 88, 237.

[62] Parnell's speech incorporating these figures is quoted at length in Lecky, vi, 437, 515, 521). 8 Feb. 1790; ibid, x, 143.

The figures that Parnell produced in refutation were unsubstantiated and Grattan did not withdraw his accusations, going on to accuse him of 'self-complacency' on the subject of national finance and saying that the House often let financial motions pass not because they approved of them, but because the Administration made it useless for them to do otherwise.

> Notwithstanding the increase of revenue, the expenditure of Ministers still far exceeded it; and it was only the lottery of the rt. hon. gentleman /Parnell/ that supported the administration . . . and for his ingenuity in finance of that kind he allowed him every praise at the same time of the mode of finance itself he totally disapproved.[63]

In the following year (1793) Parnell had to explain a large deficit, which he did by referring to a sudden drop in trade 'owing to the disturbed state of the public mind which has been agitated by inflammatory writings' and to over-high taxes on foreign imports. His remedies were tax modifications, a large loan, a special lottery, and - if necessary - a special vote of credit; he rejected completely the suggestion of a tax on absentee landowners.[64] Grattan and others attacked with predictable vigour; Parnell rebuked their 'captious and splenetic objections to the pilots whilst the national vessel was in danger'. Though Grattan later included some praise of Parnell's personal qualities, his criticisms remained unabated.[65] At the end of the session Parnell introduced a bill to regulate the issue of all public money and introduce a specific civil list for pensions, which silenced some of his opponents;[66] and by 1795 he claimed that national prosperity was advancing again: 'Amid the calamity of Europe we have risen'[67] - a contention that was once more disagreed with by several opposition voices.

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[63] Parl. reg. Ire., xii, 84.

[64] 1 Feb. 1793; ibid., pp 13, 84.

[65] 4 June 1793; ibid., xiii, 421.

[66] 10 June 1793; ibid., p. 431.

[67] Ibid., xv, 82.

Parnell was obviously a Chancellor of adroitness and some imagination; his correspondence with William Knox of Georgia, where he mentions some of his financial theories (including an idea of 'following the example of the Roman State where the government act the part of pawnbrokers and lend money on pledges at a reasonable interest') is an interesting instance of this.[68] He was also, however, a servant of the Administration and this duty came first. A significant letter from Westmoreland to Grenville in 1791 describes the sort of measure Parnell was required to put through; the import tax on Irish beer in England was to remain unaltered, and Westmoreland hoped this would slip by without notice. He wrote:

> By our silence perhaps the present duty may be continued without observation whereas . . if we should reduce the duty the proportionate third we should draw the attention of Opposition to that point. You must, I am convinced, see that in argument it would be impossible to resist them; and perhaps the clamour upon the injustice and absurdity of giving English beer a preference at the time that our pretext is to encourage the Irish brewery /may/ make such a preference more unpopular and difficult . . . I am in great hopes, as there is some difficulty in understanding the duties, that patriotism will be silent . . should it be warmly contested it will be too unreasonable to desire Parnell or Beresford to expose themselves and to be abused, with the argument so plain against them.[69]

This cynical message shows exactly where Parnell stood in relation to the 'Patriots' in whose company posterity has included him; his position on the Union may have associated him with Grattan and others, but nothing in his career before that shows anything like a common interest.[70]

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[68] Sir John Parnell to Wm. Knox (undated), in Knox MSS; Report on MSS in various coll., vol vi, H.M.C., (1909), pp. 243-4.

[69] Westmoreland to Grenville, 8 Feb. 1791. Fortescue MSS., ii, H.M.C. (1894) rep. 14, app. 5, p.30.

[70] A report from Dublin Castle of April 1784 described the discovery of an assassination plot to murder 'the Attorney-General, Foster, Parnel, Langrishe, Mason, and several others of the most active members in the part of government' - the malcontents responsible being a group in favour of protective tariffs and probably Catholic agitators as well. Mornington to Temple, 10 April 1784, Fortescue MSS., i, H.M.C., (1892), rep. 13, app. 3, p. 229.

Nonetheless, tradition holds that Grattan and Parnell were close friends and intimates; it is difficult to reconcile this with such a constant record of political opposition. The notion that they were closely associated is presented by Lecky, who wrote that, during the negotiations before Fitzwilliam's appointment in 1794,

> as far as now can be gathered Grattan does not appear to have at all desired the removal of all who held office under Lord Westmoreland's administration. . . with Sir John Parnell at least he was on terms of the most intimate friendship and he insisted, in opposition to some of his own friends, that Parnell should continue in office.[71]

It was true that Grattan pleaded for Parnell's retention. What Lecky omits is that his reason for doing so was because Denis Daly and others wished Grattan himself to become Chancellor in the new administration, travelling to Tinnehinch to tell him so in August 1794; and he realised that this office was - in his son's words - 'not the best suited either to his habits or his disposition'.[72] While Henry Grattan goes on to mention that the incumbent Chancellor was a friend of his father's, he also recounts that Grattan 'wrote anonymously to Sir John Parnell, apprising him that his place was in danger, and recommended him to look to it'[73] - hardly the action of an 'intimate' of Parnell's. An additional reason for Grattan's reluctance to put himself in line for the post, and therefore to keep Parnell in office, was because 'he was not as sanguine in his hopes as some of the party and doubted the realisation of their wishes.'[74]

Certainly, the political alienation between Parnell and Grattan in the early 'nineties was complete; occasionally Parnell was even driven to abandon his habitual courtesy. In 1790 he said of Grattan:

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[71] History of Ireland in the eighteenth century, iii, 247.
[72] H. Grattan, Life of Henry Grattan, iv, 123.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

> The gentleman who has bespattered us with so much foul language puts me in mind of a bird that I once saw hanging in a case in Covent Garden; on everyone who passed by it cast the most bitter reproaches and the most opprobrious names, but nobody felt the abuse; they knew it was the bird's custom.[75]

The question at issue here was, as so often, corruption; in his memoir of his father Grattan's son lists Parnell as one of the 'placemen' who 'showed the influence of the crown in parliament and the necessity of Mr. Forbes' bill /limiting the Pension List/'.[76] Elsewhere the same author accuses Parnell and his colleagues of evading this question and having 'no intention, much less any desire, to reform the glaring and acknowledged abuses'.[77] The constancy of Grattan's attacks on Parnell's policies and actions has been indicated above; but by 1794 there is evidence that he 'promised Parnell that if the place and pension bills were conceded he would make no further "vexatious opposition"'[78] and he seems largely to have stood by this, although they clashed over questions of tariffs and duties in 1795 and 1796.[79] Grattan outlived Parnell by many years, and probably recalled him as a friend and ally at the time of the great fight over the Union; but the evidence points to a relationship before that which, at least in the political sphere, was remarkable for its animosity.

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[75] 20 Feb. 1790; Parl. reg. Ire., x, 277.

[76] Grattan, op. cit., iv, 142.

[77] Ibid, 123.

[78] J.A. Froude, The English in Ireland in the eighteenth century, iii, 102. Froude here quotes E. Cooke to Evan Nepean, 7 Feb. 1794,

[79] See Parl. reg.Ire., xv, 205, and xvi, 70.

IV

Grattan would not have been alone in seeing Parnell's opposition to the Union as the most significant action of his career; it is principally for this that he is remembered. Nonetheless, his policy up to 1799 was, in a sense, firmly Unionist. Time and again he proclaimed the identity of economic and political interest between the two countries:

> We are connected with England by blood, by affection and by interest . . . the safety of /our/ constitution in church and state depends upon that connection . . England certainly is our best friend and the connection we have with her will support the constitution of this country against every clamorous incendiary that would attempt to shake it . . England is not only our best friend politically, but she is our best friend commercially.[80]

Twelve years before he had argued for 'supporting England in her distress . . for if we are the willing companions of her misfortune, her gratitude will make us the companions of her prosperity'.[81] His unionism went no less deep for being strongly based in an opportunistic recognition of the advantages of a close identification with England. Yet he became one of the most fervent opponents of legislative Union. In 1798 Pitt personally informed him of his intention, and Parnell after an interval declared his opposition. In January 1799 he was removed from office; on the 22nd of that month he announced his stand in Parliament. He supported Parsons' amendment in the debate of January 1800, attacked the Union in a speech of 5 February 1800, and attempted to move a general referendum on the question on 13 March. 26 May 1800 found him defending his old opponent, Grattan, against Castlereagh, his old colleague, and the wheel had come full circle.

He had not, however, opposed the idea unequivocally from the beginning. In November 1798 Elliot write to Castlereagh: 'He /Pitt/ has also seen

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[80] Parl. reg. Ire., xii, 88. (Speech on East India Trade Bill).

[81] 5 Dec. 1781; ibid., i, 131.

Parnell, but I understand their conversation was not at all conclusive. Parnell, I should guess, is certainly to be gained; and I wish Pitt had begun to treat with him sooner'.[82] However by Christmas Parnell's attitude, though still undefined,inspired Portland to write to Cornwallis:

> The report which Lord Castlereagh will make you of the conversation which he has had with Sir John Parnell will prove to your excellency our concurrence in your opinion respecting the propriety of bringing the leading members of Administration and Sir John Parnell in particular, to a clear and distinct avowal of their sentiments and intentions with regard to the Union.[83]

Parnell's expressed reasons for opposing the Union always revolved round the unconstitutional nature of the measure, and round its potential dangers to security; he never appealed to the high-souled patriotic fervour of Grattan and his associates. Thus Cooke wrote to Auckland in January 1799, just after Parnell's expressed opposition to the Union:

> Parnell has this day declared off in a handsome manner. I had much confidential correspondence with him. He says he could not take a forward part if he did not suffer himself to be considered as an adviser of the measure, and that his judgement is against it as being very dangerous and not necessary and that a measure of the greatest danger can only be justified by necessity.[84]

Of his first speech against the measure, Cornwallis wrote to Portland: 'Parnell opposed in a fair and candid manner, without entering into topics of violence, the principle and measure of a Union in general'.[85] From this date (January 1799) Parnell, Speaker Foster and John Ponsonby attempted to form a cohesive opposition on the issue, their efforts being unfailingly reported back to Portland.[86] A letter from Cook in April, stating how Parnell 'spoke in a rage but without effect' against the Union, adds

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[82] Elliot to Castlereagh, 28 Nov. 1798; Castlereagh Correspondence, ii,29.

[83] Portland to Cornwallis, 24 December 1798; ibid, ii, 53.

[84] Cooke to Auckland, 15 Jan. 1799; Auckland Correspondence, iv, 77.

[85] Cornwallis to Portland, 23 Jan. 1799; Cornwallis Correspondence, iii, 42.

[86] Ibid., pp. 45,69,86.

suggestively: 'The Protestants think it will diminish their power, however it may secure their property'.[87] This sentiment was certainly applicable to Parnell, Foster and Ponsonby, the three most influential men against the measure. Their large fortunes were safe enough, but the abolition of Parliament affected them greatly; Lecky records that, together with Thomas Conolly, Sir Richard Deane and Mr. Clements, Parnell controlled twenty parliamentary votes in 1780.[88] Castlereagh told Portland in January 'the opposition, exclusive of the Speaker,Sir John Parnell, and the Ponsonbys, is composed of country gentlemen who are alarmed at a measure so new to them and which interferes with their election politics'.[89] The three excepted here had even more than elective and parliamentary influence to lose: the sort of administrative influence that no Union peerage and sinecure could make up for. It is significant that Parnell retained his equivocal attitude as late as possible; on 18 January 1799 Cook wrote to Lord Auckland:

> Parnell means to be very moderate. He says he shall give the reasons for his conduct but shall not oppose in general. He seems to me much chagrined at what has taken place. He says he supposes the conduct of removing him to be necessary for carrying the measure.[90]

Even in July of that year Castlereagh wrote to Portland 'I have heard of no hostile proceedings at any of the Assizes that have been held in the Queen's County. Sir John Parnell and Mr. Pitt stated their strong disapprobation of the measure but declined disturbing the county with any meeting upon it'.[91] The motives of the other two members of the opposition

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[87] E. Cook to Wm. Wickham, 12 April 1799; Cornwallis Correspondence, iii,86.

[88] Lecky, op.cit., ii, 249.

[89] Castlereagh Correspondence, ii, 133.

[90] Auckland Correspondence, iv, 77.

[91] Castlereagh to Portland, 20 July 1799; Castlereagh Correspondence, ii, 354.

trio were detailed thus by Castlereagh to Luke Fox in October:

> The Protestant knows that by yielding to a Union he descends from the state of a Ruler, with all its high and profitable appurtenances, to the level of a simple citizen. Does any man think that Mr Foster or Mr Ponsonby are actuated by such motives /as fear of Catholic aggrandisement under the Union/? Religion is a mere pretence - the true bone of contention is the monopoly of Irish power and patronage. The family of the latter have been Irish undertakers; the former aspires to a similar distinction; religion and independence are but words used to cajole and delude the multitude.[92]

These last catch-cries were not even appealed to nominally by Parnell; his speech of 5 February 1800 against the Union is notably restrained and more or less restricted to a treatment of the commercial disadvantages of the measure. In January his speech on Parson's Amendment and been even more subdued; he stated that it was to prevent separation from Great Britain that he took the stand he now did:

> Being attached to his sovereign and to the British connexion he would oppose all measures tending to alter the Constitution . . /the Union was/ discountenancing loyalty and banishing the landlord from his residence . . . /and removing/ the control which hitherto had suppressed rebellion . . the measure threatened the prosperity, the connexions, and the constitutions of Great Britain and Ireland.[93]

The priorities are worth noting: Parnell's alienation from government did not mean a re-direction towards the philosophy of the opposite camp.[94]

Further light can be cast upon his restraint in opposition, as well as on the reason for his enemity to the measure in the first place, by reference

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[92] Castlereagh to Fox, 7 Oct. 1799; ibid., ii, 408.

[93] 15 Jan. 1800; Parl.reg.Ire. xx, 80-82.

[94] His reputation for supporting a close identification was of long standing. In 1788, apropos of the Regency Question, Buck wrote to Grenville: 'You should know he /Parnell/ is very determined to run any risk for the preservation of the constitutional connexion which is involved in such a question' - 8 Dec. 1788. Fortescue MSS, i, 383. H.M.C., Rep. 13, App. 3 (1892).

to the diplomatic correspondence of the time. In December 1798, when his opposition became evident, Buckingham wrote furiously to Grenville of 'Parnell's Duplicity',[95] implying that the latter had previously offered his support; and in January 1799 he amplified the charge:

> You will at least have the advantage of a very able and active man /as Chancellor - Isaac Corry/ in the place of a most pig-headed and treacherous fool. I know for certain that he was convinced as late as yesterday morning that Government would not dare to remove him; and consequently he is completely duped into his patriotism by the Speaker, who has thrown away his scabbard.[96]

This could well be true, and would account for Parnell's behaviour at the time; a week later Carysfort wrote to Grenville 'Parnell is manoeuvring to regain his post and did it so grossly in the debate as to cover himself with ridicule'.[97] This view was repeated by Buckingham the next month:

> Under the impression which is now prevalent on both sides that this measure will be carried, it is plain that many of these honest patriots are looking for a bridge on which to get back. Parnell said yesterday that Mr. Pitt and Foster were at issue who should be minister of Ireland; from which wise observation it is clear that this mock-monarch has promised him 'th'earldom of Hereford' in the shape of his old office, for which he is languishing .[98]

The concensus of government opinion was added to by Cook, writing in the same month to Grenville: 'Parnell's /conduct/ has been timidity; he is, I know, disgusted with opposition; but so pledged he dare not retreat'.[99]

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[95] 25 Dec. 1798. Fortescue MSS, iv, H.M.C. (1905), p.423.

[96] Same to same 16 January 1799; ibid., 442.

[97] 23 January 1799; ibid., 449.

[98] Buckingham to Grenville, 14 February 1799; ibid., 472.

[99] Cf. (according to Cook) Foster, who was implacably hostile, and Downshire, whose conduct was dictated by 'pique'. Letter of 10 Feb. 1800, Fortescue MSS., vi, H.M.C. (1908), p.122.

It seems not unlikely that Parnell overplayed his hand with the administration, was consequently seduced into open opposition by Foster, and once there was unhappy with such a position; certainly the Union was against his personal interests, but the political principles appealed to by its opponents - with whom he now stood - were anathema to all he had ever advocated, and he could only support them equivocally. The dearth of any correspondence of Parnell himself makes this hypothesis only a conjecture; but it is strange that in his stand against the Union he did not make more political capital out of the sacrifice of his high office, for which he was so long remembered. He may well have been, as Buckingham claimed, surprised by his dismissal; it is perhaps significant that he was replaced by Isaac Corry, who made so consistent a practice of attacking Parnell and his policies throughout his long office, and it is tempting to infer an additional intrigue here. It would have been interesting to see what course his career took after 1800, and whether he would have regained influence; but he barely outlived his parliament, dying rather suddenly in December 1801.[100] An unkind comment from Cornwallis on one of his last appearances in the House stated that 'he was apparently so much intoxicated that it is impossible to say whether he was serious in the declarations he made' (about taking the sense of the people upon the subject of the Union);[101] but whatever the view of the government on his political position, his stand had already made him something of a popular hero. Addresses praising his integrity had been presented by his constituents and by the merchants of Dublin, to whom he modestly replied that 'the regards of the most respectable and most honourable members of the

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[100] 'He had for some time been somewhat ailing but was going about as usual when he became suddenly faint while conversing with some of his family and died almost instantaneously'. Gentlemen's Magazine, Dec. 1801, pt. ii, 1155.

[101] Cornwallis to Portland, 9 March 1800. Cornwallis Correspondence, iv,207.

community are a better foundation of honest pride than rank and emolument'; the Maryborough Volunteers also presented him with a tribute and a sword of honour;[102] and in the last few months of his life his health was proposed at so many dinner tables that it was remarked (by Joseph Atkinson, Treasurer of the Ordance for Ireland) that if he had lost his bread and butter by the Union, it has been amply made up to him 'in toast'.[103]

V

Whatever about the integrity of Parnell's reasons for breaking with the government, his reputation for probity does not stem from this issue alone; Barrington wrote of him that he

> preserved his friends without exercising his patronage . . though many years in possession of high office and extensive patronage he showed a disinterestedness almost unparalleled and the name of a relative or dependent of his own scarcely in a single instance increased the place or the pension lists of Ireland.[104]

And Addington's tribute to his memory in the House of Commons stated 'he served Government for more than eighteen years without ever having solicited a job or provided for one of his family'.[105] This leads to the interesting and relevant question of what exactly his fortunes were.

To begin with, he was an only son, and thus inherited the estate of Rathleague in the Queen's County. Lecky describes him on this account as 'a prominent Irish landowner'[106] and maps of his property show that in 1789 the family estates comprised 3683 acres in the Queen's County and 173

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[102] T. Sherlock, Parnell, p.8.

[103] Anecdote in Sir John Carr's The Stranger in Ireland (London 1806), p.160.

[104] Sir Jonah Barrington, Rise and fall of the Irish nation, p.83.

[105] Gentleman's Magazine, Dec. 1801, pt.ii, 1155.

[106] Lecky, op. cit., iii, 53.

acres in Cheshire, as well as lands in Bangor and Down.[107] The records of the Registry of Deeds, however, show him (in co-ownership with his father, and by himself) letting out lands in Tipperary, Armagh and the Queen's County totalling 671 acres.[108] There is also mention of estates in Armagh, collectively called Collure, which were held on a long lease from Trinity College; these were assigned in trust to Lord Bangor and Lord Knapton by Sir John Parnell senior as part of the settlement on his son's marriage to Letitia Charlotte Brooke.[109] Later in life Sir John Parnell (junior) is recorded as possessing 186 acres in Kildare,[110] 105 acres in the King's County,[111] and an undefined holding at Killincarrick, Co. Wicklow,[112] as well as several houses in Maryborough. The rents for these lands are all high, sometimes as much as £2 an acre; they were certainly worth at least £1000 a year.

Also significant is the large amount of Dublin property owned by the the first baronet, Barrington's 'crafty and prudent minor politician', which were often held together with his son: these comprised at least ten

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[107] Abstract from N.L.I., MS 21.F.18- Maps of the Estates of Sir John Parnell from surveys compiled by various hands, by Samuel Byron:

	Acres	Roods	Perches
Rathleague, incl. Tinnekill and Ballymoney (Queen's Co)	1116	2	16
Pallace (Queen's Co.)	1466	2	13
Dounane (Queen's Co.)	549	2	4
Slatt (Queen's Co.)	550	2	2
Buglanton (Cheshire)	44	3	10
Congleton (Cheshire)	63	2	36
Church Skorley (Cheshire)	64	2	32

[108] 635 acres at Fethard, co. Tipp., at an undefined rent (Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 261.583.173152); 24 acres at Listowsky, Armagh, at 36 (ibid, 302,104.199336); 112 acres at Loughaun, King's Co., at 80 (ibid, 305.91.200603).

[109] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 344.343.231888.

[110] At Millicent, realising £352 pa. Ibid., 363.564.246215.

[111] At Coolnakilly, realising £90 p.a. Ibid., 464.546.297562.

[112] Ibid., 535.24.349758.

sizeable houses round the centre of the city, certainly producing several hundred pounds a year in rent.[113] After his father's death Sir John Parnell added some properties round George's Street which must have been extensive, as they are recorded as having '£6000 expended recently on improvements'[114] and a house in Merrion Square let out at £300 a year. There was also the Parnell family's interest in the lands of Ballytrasna, Co. Wicklow, which, under the name of Avondale, were deeded to Sir John Parnell by Samuel Hayes in 1795; this was not, however, in Parnell's possession for the greater part of his life, and I shall deal with it in detail later.

Parnell's wealth was augmented by marriage; Letitia Charlotte Brooke was co-heiress of Sir Arthur Brooke of Colebrooke, and by her marriage settlement brought him £5000, the income from the manor of Brookeborough, several farms in Fermanagh, and an annuity of £300 a year paid to Parnell's father.[115] As a man of property and position he was trustee in many settlements such as the disposal of the deceased Earl of Carrick's

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[113] The Parnell property in Dublin - Abstract from Reg. of Deeds Memorials.

Description	Address	Rent(£)	Reg.of Deeds Reference
House	Winetavern St.	18	255.324.165063
House	Cook St.	?	257.20.165130
Undefined lands	Dublin City	?	265.629.180088
House	Anne St.	?	294.500.195546
Corner Houses	Fisheries Lane	?	298.558.198645
'Large Brick House'	St. Mary's Lane	23	298.558.198645
House	Rochelle Lane	28	311.349.210628
House	Bull Alley	62	320.195.215257
House	Newtowncastlebyrne	20	337.52.225275
House	Dawson St.	20	337.52.225275
House ('large')	Back Lane	46	337.161.276446

[114] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 428.253.280110.

[115] Ibid., 344.343.231888. The extent or incomes of these lands are undefined.

estates in 1779[116] which he held in trust for the half-witted heir, Lord Bangor. He was also a trustee for Lord Sydney's fortune in 1784, raising £38,000 by the sale of lands to pay off debts,[117] and for the similarly encumbered estate of John Barrington in 1792,[118] as well as several others.[119] A man of extensive property, he seems to have rarely parted with any of it.[120] Bearing in mind that all this was merely his private landed fortune, independent of other investments and of his considerable emoluments as Commissioner for Customs and Excise and Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as Commissioner for the Treasury, he must have died a wealthy man - made all the wealthier by being reimbursed, just before his death, with £7500 for the loss of the Maryborough representation following the Union.

VI

Although his wife died in 1783 Sir John left, on his death, a sizeable family. His eldest son, John Augustus, was born deaf and blind, so his second son Henry Brooke was enabled to succeed as heir by a special Act of Parliament passed in 1789; on John Augustus' death in 1812 Henry succeeded to the baronetcy and was later created Lord Congleton. The youngest son, William, inherited the Wicklow estate and was MP for that county. There was also a daughter, Sophia, who married George Evans of Portrane,[121] and two more sons, Thomas and Arthur, who are scantily recorded; though Thomas was the engineer who designed the roads at

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[116] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 331.234.221495 and 221496.

[117] Ibid., 362.137.242921 and 374.33.247754.

[118] Ibid., 444.532.289565.

[119] See for instance ibid., 500.449.375622.

[120] One of the rare exceptions is his selling lands at Carrignapark and Donamase outright to Thomas Williams and Alexander Robinson in 1784; see Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 389.77.255741. The price paid was £2424.

[121] 21 Aug. 1805, He was MP for Dublin County.

Powerscourt,[122] and was a well-known Dublin evangelist who influenced his nephew John Vesey Parnell, the second Lord Congleton, in his adoption of the Plymouth Brethren faith.[123] The Congleton branch of the family seems to have grown apart from the others, and is better recorded than the rest; I shall deal briefly with them before considering Samuel Hayes, through whom the Avondale estate entered the family, and William Parnell, Charles Stewart Parnell's grandfather.

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[122] See Mervyn Wingfield, History of Powerscourt, p. 97.

[123] See Henry Groves, Life of the second Lord Congleton (London 1884), p.11.

Chapter 2

The Congletons

Of Sir John Parnell's descendants the Wicklow Parnells were thus merely a cadet branch; the primary line was continued by Henry Brooke Parnell. He was born on 3 July 1776 and educated at Eton, Winchester and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he did not, however, take a degree. He succeeded to the Parnell estates on 5 December and to the title on 30 July 1812, at the death of his dumb and crippled brother. A Liberal in politics, from 1797 to 1800 he was MP for Maryborough in the Irish Parliament; after the Union he sat for Queen's County at Westminster from April to June 1802, for Portarlington from July to December of the same year, for Queen's County again from 1806 to 1832, and for Dundee from 1833 to 1841. He had a prominent career in government; escheator of Munster in 1802, he became a Lord of the Treasury in 1806, was chairman of the Finance Committee in 1828, a member of the Bullion Committee from 1810, and was appointed a Privy Councillor on 27 April 1831. From 1831 to 1832 he was Secretary at War, being dismissed for voting against the government over the Russian-Dutch war question. In 1833 he was a member of the Excise Commission of Enquiry and from 1835 to 1836 Treasurer of the Navy; from 1835 to 1841 he held the post of Paymaster-General. On 18 August 1841 he was created first Baron Congleton; a year later, in August 1842, he committed suicide.[1]

This is, again, the outline of a politically successful career; in its details, however, Sir Henry is shown to have been less predictable than might be supposed. As can be guessed from the offices he filled, his chief

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[1]See Vicary Gibbs, The Complete Peerage (London 1913), iii, 393.

interest was finance; in this sphere he chaired committees investigating bullion and the public income, and wrote several treatises on fiscal matters.[2] In this area he was looked on with some suspicion. Though the D.N.B. recorded that 'in the art of giving a plain, lucid statement of complex financial matters he had few superiors' and 'in his treatise on Financial reform, which had a considerable effect on public opinion, he laid before the country the financial and fiscal policy which Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone later carried out',[3] Grenville called him 'a rash economical innovator' and 'a bad man of business in its details'[4] - the latter accusation being one that was levelled more than once at his father as well. Sydney Buxton defined Sir Henry's suggestions in Financial reform as follows:

> He advocated the repeal of the taxes on raw materials, as well as the excise duties on home manufactures and the reduction of the import duties on foreign manufactures. He strongly opposed the whole system of protection, whether of corn or of any other commodity. He desired the reduction of taxes which, otherwise commendable, were excessive in amount, namely the duties on such 'luxuries' as tea, sugar and dried fruits as well as on tobacco, wine and spirits. He was strongly in favour of retrenchment, especially in the navy and military services. But realising that no practicable economy could reduce the expenditure sufficiently to allow of his proposed abolitions and reductions of taxation, he did not shrink from advocating the re-imposition of an income tax at the rate of 1½ to 2 per cent (from 3½d to 5d in the pound).[5]

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[2] Observations upon the state of currency of Ireland and upon the course of exchange between London and Dublin (3 editions), Dublin 1804; The principles of currency and change, illustrated by observations upon the state of Ireland in 1805, with an appendix containing the substance of the evidence given before the committee of the House of Commons, (London 1805), Observations on paper money, banking and over-trading, including those parts of the evidence taken before the Committee of the House of Commons which explain the Scotch system of banking, (London, 1827 and 1829); On financial reform, (London, 1830, 3 editions), (Selections from this list compiled by Henry Lloyd Morgan were published in 1873 under the title National Accounts). He also wrote A plain statement of the power of the Bank of England and the use it has made of it; with a refutation of the objections made to the 'Scotch System' of banking and a reply to the 'Historical Sketch' by J.R. McCulloch of the Bank of England, London 1832.

[3] See Sydney Buxton, Finance and politics (London, 1888), i, 32(n).

[4] D.N.B.

[5] Buxton, op. cit., ibid.

This was in its outline a policy ahead of its time.[6] In 1835 Sir Henry's political creed was defined as

> perfect freedom of labour and capital; the speedy abolition of the corn laws and in the meantime a moderate fixed duty; the removal of all unequal taxes and the substitution of a property tax of six or eight millions; the repeal of the Septennial Act, the ballt, an extension of the franchise if found necessary, abolition of flogging and of impressment;[7]

one aspect or another of which Sir Henry publicised in several pamphlets.[8]

A surprising omission from the definition quoted above of Sir Henry's political causes is his support of Roman Catholic claims. In 1809 and 1810 he moved an investigation into the question of tithes; in 1813 he supported Grattan's motion for an enquiry into Catholic claims; two years later he campaigned for a committee of the whole house on this question. He strongly supported the relief Bill of 1829, and attempted during the early eighteen-thirties to persuade Melbourne and Brougham to accede to some of O'Connell's further demands.[9] In 1808 he published a lengthy treatise called A History

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[6] See T. Sherlock, Parnell, p.8: 'one of those men who are said to be in advance of their time'.

[7] A.Webb, A dictionary of Irish biography (Dublin, 1878), p.428.

[8] See note 2, above. Also Treatise on the Corn Trade and Agriculture, 1809 (The substance of the Speeches of Sir Henry Parnell in the House of Commons, with additional observations on the Corn Laws, (London, 1814; a 3rd edition published in The Pamphleteer, iv, London 1894); Observations on the Irish Butter Acts (London, 1825); A treatise on roads, wherein the principles whereby roads should be made are explained and illustrated by the plans, specifications and contracts made use of by Thomas Telford, esq., on the Holyhead Road (London 1833 and 1838).

[9] See Melbourne to Anglesey, 18 Dec. 1830: 'Sir Henry Parnell having pressed upon me in the most urgent manner the necessity of gratifying O'Connell, I desired my brother to communicate to him for his satisfaction what had passed between O'Connell and you at his last interview, and your convinction that it was hopeless to entertain any further expectation of reconciliating him. He said that whatever had passed, he was of a different opinion and that no reliance was to be made upon any declaration made by O'Connell however vehement and decided, and that he would immediately accept any direct offer that was made him'. L.L. Sanders (ed.) Lord Melbourne's Papers (London, 1890), p.167.

of the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics from the Treaty of Limerick to the Union;[10] though more restrained than his brother William's eloquent Historical Apology for the Irish Catholics, it argued cogently the case for reform. He was, for the times, an advanced liberal and as such may have raised suspicions among his superiors. His appointments to government office come after 1830, when his motion for referring the civil list to a select committee was carried against the government, toppling Wellington's administration: Parnell was Secretary At War under Grey in the new government. However, he was soon nearly dismissed because of unauthorised negotiations with the French Post Office; shortly afterwards he clashed with the ministry over his proposal to reduce the army estimates; and if he had not been dismissed in early 1832 over the division on the Russian-Dutch war question, where he again voted against the government, it seems likely that he would have lost office in any case. Greville remarked in his diary: 'Parnell has been turned out for not voting on the Russian affair and Hobhouse appointed in his place . . . Parnell was properly enough turned out and he is a good riddance but it is not the same thing as turning people out on Reform. He wrote an excellent book on finance but he was a very bad Secretary at War'.[11] An explanatory footnote adds 'He had exasperated his colleagues by entering upon an unauthorised negotiation with the French Post Office . . and by encouraging Joseph Hume to bring on a motion against the Post Office. Parnell narrowly escaped dismissal at that time and on his next sign of disaffection to the government he was turned out of office'.[12] He became Paymaster-General in 1835, but lost office in

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[10] London, 1808; new editions in vols. xx and xxi of The Pamphleteer, London, 1822; 4th edition, London 1825.

[11] M. Reeve (ed.), The Greville memoirs, ii, 243. Entry for 2 Feb. 1832.

[12] Ibid, ii. 243.

1841, when he gained a peerage.

Parnell's connections with Ireland seem to have been tenuous; though Rathleague remained his family seat there, and he inherited much of his father's extensive Irish property, he chose an English title and his address is usually given as London.[13] However, he pressed the cause of Irish reform in his politics; besides his support of the Catholics, he asked for a committee in 1823 to look into Irish disturbances, opposed the Irish Unlawful Societies Bill in 1825, and introduced a bill in the same year about reform of the Irish J.P. system; in 1832 he presented another motion for a select committee to look into Irish affairs.

There was probably little connection with his brother William's family in Wicklow; Emily Dickinson recalled that when John Henry Parnell's family visited London they stayed at the house of his mother's relative, Sir Ralph Howard, and none of the family memoirs mention the Congletons. There are, however, some likenesses between the first Lord Congleton and his brother's grandson; they both campaigned to abolish flogging, and a contemporary description of Lord Congleton's parliamentary style has a familiar ring:

> He has a fine clear voice but never varies the key in which he commences. He is, however, audible in all parts of the House. His utterance is well-timed and he appears to speak with ease . . his gesticulation is a great deal too tame for his speeches. He stands stock still except when he occasionally rises and lets fall his right hand.[14]

Another family likeness, which harks back to his ancestor Thomas the poet, has to do with his death. The detailed account of his death in the Annual Register describes him as a suicidal depressive whose family, on the instruction of his doctor, had to

> collect everything in the house with which /their/ father could commit suicide . . /he/ suffered from want of sleep at nights and when asked about his feelings his constant answer was that he felt 'very low' . . he had lost his interest in things; he tried

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[13] Cadogan Place, Chelsea. See Annual Register, 1842, Chronicle section, p.104.

[14] J. Grant, Random recollections of the House of Commons (London, 1836).

> to read but used to give it up . . He was a very reserved man . . /His valet/ said that he never spoke to a servant except to give orders.[15]

This 'extreme melancholy' was attributed to a fever he had had a number of months previously, and the verdict was suicide by hanging 'while in a state of temporary derangement'.[16] However, one is reminded of Swift's description of Thomas Parnell as being 'almost always out of order with his head' for the latter years of his life;[17] O'Brien said of him 'towards the close of his life he seems to have suffered more acutely from fits of depression, to which he was apparently subject for many years'.[18] Nor are these isolated instances in the family; when Charles Stewart Parnell's own generation is discussed, the idea of a hereditary instability may appear not to be a fanciful one.

In 1801 Lord Congleton married Lady Caroline Elizabeth Dawson, the eldest daughter of the first Earl of Portarlington.[19] She outlived him by many years, dying in Paris in 1861. They had six children: John Vesey, the second Lord Congleton; Henry William, who succeeded him; George Damer, vicar of Long Cross, Chertsey, from 1861 to 1875, who died in 1882;[20] Caroline Sophia, who married C.T. Longley, later Archbishop of Canterbury, and died in 1858;[21] Mary Letitia, who married first Lord Henry Seymour Moore and then Edward Henry Cole, of Stoke Lyne, Oxfordshire, and died in 1885;[22] and Emma Jane, who married Edward, fifth Earl of Darnley, and died in 1885.[23] Thus most of this generation lived to see their Irish cousin achieve great prominence; but I can trace no connection between them and him.

I intend to consider further only the life of John Vesey Parnell, second Baron Congleton; an interesting man in his own right, he was a founder of the Plymouth Brethren and led a remarkable life for the age.

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[15] Annual Register, 1842, Chronicle section, pp.103-4.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Journal to Stella; quoted in O'Brien, Parnell, i,5.

[18] O'Brien, Parnell, i,5.

[19] 17 Feb. 1801. She was born on 21 March 1782 and died on 16 Feb. 1861.

[20] On 17 December; see Vicary Gibbs.

[21] On 9 March; ibid.

[22] On 6 May; ibid.

[23] On 15 March; ibid.

II

The second Lord Congleton is the only Parnell between Thomas and Charles Stewart to have a biography published of him:[24] a memoir no less absorbing and entertaining for being decidedly hagiographical in its tone. The life it records was an eccentric one. Born in 1805,[25] John Vesey Congleton was educated in France and at Edinburgh University, where he won a prize for mathematics; in 1829 he joined the Plymouth Brethren (at that time called simply 'The Brethren'), although he had been intended for an army career. In 1830 he established a meeting-house at Aungier Street in Dublin; from 1830 to 1833 he undertook an unproductive but well-recorded evangelical mission to Baghdad with F.W. Newman and Edward Cronin.[26] While there he married Nancy Cronin, who died shortly afterwards. In 1834[27] he visited India, after marrying in Baghdad Khatoon, daughter of Ovaness Moscow of Shiraz and widow of Yoosoof Constantine, an Armenian merchant from Bushire. In 1837 he returned to England, inheriting the title in June 1842; due to his refusal to take the necessary oaths, however, he did not enter the House of Lords until 1852.[28] In 1865 his wife died;[29] two years later he was married for the third time, to Margaret Catherine, only daughter of Charles Ormerod of the India Board.[30] He had one daughter, Sarah Cecilia, by this marriage;[31] on his death on 23 October 1883[32] the title passed to his brother, Henry William Parnell.

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24 Henry Groves, A Memoir of (the second) Lord Congleton (London 1884).

25 6 June 1805, in London.

26 See F.W. Newman, Personal Narrative, principally in Letters from Turkey (London, 1856).

27 See H. Groves, op. cit., p.45. The D.N.B. gives the date wrongly as 1832.

28 On 4 November.

29 30 May.

30 21Feb. 1867.

31 B. 5 Aug. 1868; m. 21 Nov. 1895, Henry Ambrose Mandeville, Anner Castle, Clonmel; d. 26 April 1912, leaving issue (Vicary Gibbs).

32 At no. 53, Gt. Cumberland Place, Hyde Park.

Before considering the life of the second Lord Congleton, an introductory note about the religious sect which he joined is necessary. The Brethren - sometimes incorrectly called the Plymouth Brethren - was a movement which rejected both sectarianism and any clerical procedure not warranted by the New Testament. It first met in 1830. The moving spirits were A.N. Groves, J.G. Bellett, and J.N. Darby, all of whom had attended Trinity College in the 1820 s and been ordained. Darby was curate of Calary church, Co. Wicklow: his pamphlet Considerations in the nature and unity of the church of Christ was the seminal work of the movement. Darby went on to become curate at Enniskerry, and had religious meetings at Powerscourt House: indeed, though 'renouncing all this world esteems' was a central tenet of the Brethren, the patronage of county gentry was important to the Movement (as it was now called): meetings were often held in the drawing-rooms of houses like Dromore Castle. The membership was middle-class, well-off, and intellectually formidable. Though founded in Dublin, the movement was soon, for practical purposes, centred at Plymouth (where G.V. Wigram, who married C.S. Parnell's aunt, was prominent). From this, the members were called (at first ungraciously) 'the brethren from Plymouth.'

From 1845 a controversy rent the Brethren, the movement being split between 'open' Brethren (those who maintained the original anti-ordination assemblies) and so-called 'Darbyites' or 'exclusives'. The strength of the movement was located in the southwest of England about mid-century; despite the split, there was a revival in 1859, which affected Ireland as well. Here the efforts of J. Denham Smith, an ex-minister from Kingstown, led to the erection of Merrion Hall in Dublin. The movement spread widely in England from this time (there were hundreds of local assemblies in 1940). The revival took place to a lesser extent in Ulster, and even manifested itself in Southern Ireland; it is not surprising that Greystones became a centre, but less explicable is a revival amongst the gentry of Co. Kerry in the 1860s. A characteristic of the movement in England as well as Ireland was the

aristocratic sympathisers it attracted: Lady Powerscourt, the Earl of Cavan, Lord and Lady Radstock, the Earl of Carrick and Lady Queensberry were all influential. Another characteristic was the cheerfulness of the Brethren: they were never a gloomy sect. An eyewitness describes James Wright preaching with 'his eyes sparkling with joy, that he had such a message to deliver'. Both these characteristics are exemplified by Lord Congleton: but he carried both his dedication to the movement and his cheerful elevation above worldly distractions to a degree unusual even amongst nineteenth-century enthusiasts.[33]

For details of his strange life I have drawn on Henry Grove's Memoir.[34] According to this writer Parnell enjoyed the normal hilarious life of a University student until he came under the influence of his father's brother Thomas. From 1827 'he was often in Dublin where his uncle Mr. Thomas Parnell resided: a man well-known for his love to the Lord and his earnestness in the circulation of the scriptures'.[35] Through him he met J.N. Darby, curate of Enniskerry and one of the founders of the Brethren. In 1830 Parnell was induced to accompany a missionary friend to St. Petersburg; on his return he took an active part in the Brethren, hiring their first assembly-room in Aungier St; and in September 1830 he set out with the others for Baghdad.

Groves' description of this adventure is engrossing: the travellers started out from Dublin with high hopes, a small library, and even a

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[33] For details about the Brethren I have drawn upon D.J. Beattie, Brethren: the story of a great recovery (Kilmarnock, 1940). There is also a book of Reminiscences by J.O. Bellett, and a History of the Plymouth Brethren by W. Blair Neatby.

[34] H. Groves, op. cit.; see note 24 above.

[35] Groves, p.11.

printing-press; the journey presented such hardships that much had to be jettisoned along the way. Eventually reaching Aleppo, they were stranded until news of Sir Henry Parnell's vote toppling Wellington's administration arrived at the British Consulate; the Consul then became 'desirous to serve in any way he could the son of him before whom the great Duke had retired'.[36] Moving on to Aintab, their distribution of Bibles there led the Muslim authorities to request them to leave; their journey over the desert to Baghdad was marked by disease, theft and endless bargaining in which the travellers invariably came off worst. In June 1833, battered but still intrepid, the party sailed on a raft down the Tigris to Baghdad; here they were constrained to limit their activities to the Armenian and Roman Catholic communities, finding the Muslims 'peculiarly bigoted'.[37] Reduced by death and defection among their own number, Baghdad became wearying to the missionaries, 'not so much from open persecution, which might have shown that the seed sown was taking root, but from the impossibility of access to the people'.[38] In 1834 they moved on to India, where A.N. Groves had preceded them, and settled north of Calcutta in Cannanore, where they proselytised among the Europeans at the military station, abandoning all efforts with the polite but uninterested native population.[39] There was much resentment on account of this, both here and in Madras, where the company moved next;[40] in 1837 Parnell left India due to this hostility, and 'the hopelessness which he thought the want of miraculous power in the Church cast around labour among the heathen'.[41]

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[36] H. Groves, op. cit., p. 30.

[37] Ibid., p.41.

[38] Ibid., p.44.

[39] Ibid., p.49.

[40] Ibid., p.54.

[41] Ibid., p.57.

Landing at Plymouth, Parnell settled there; he later moved to Teignmouth, working amongst the poor round Torquay and Newtownabbot. On his father's death in 1842 he moved to London and lived there for four years;[42] in 1846 he moved to Brighton but three years later returned to London and settled in a small house in Cumberland Street, except for frequent travels on the Continent. He also kept up the Irish connection, visiting his Irish holdings at least once, in 1867. (He was in fact travelling there in 1883 when he was taken fatally ill). After his third marriage he moved to a larger house in Cumberland Place. He was a confirmed invalid for the last years of his life; his death in October 1883 was occasioned by rheumatic fever following a chill.

It was by an standards an unusual life; even more unusual was the fact that it was lived by someone of Parnell's position. Groves recalls that the first Lord Congleton hoped that his son would 'give up his religious ways when he entered the Army',[43] but on realising that this was a vain hope made him 'a very moderate allowance' and did not press a military career upon him. He certainly endured great material privations in his chosen way of life, but when asked once if he 'gave up' much for his faith he answered, with the cheeful unconcern which seems to have been one of his most attractive qualities: '<u>Gave up</u>! No, I gave up nothing; I <u>got</u> all'.[44] He had more wealth than his colleagues, and provided the meeting-house in Aungier Street, houses during the Turkish journey, and the large establishment they occupied in Calcutta,[45] as well as converting a room in Islington for meetings and 'largely contributing' to plots at Abbey Park cemetery for

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[42] At Barnsbury Road, Islington.

[43] Groves, op. cit., p.11.

[44] Ibid., p.9.

[45] Ibid., pp. 34, 41.

the Brethren; but he himself lived in spartan style. After his death, installed as Lord Congleton in Great Cumberland Place, an eyewitness recalled 'the coffin was in the back drawing-room near the small iron camp bedstead in which he died, in the same soldier and pilgrim fashion in which he lived'.[46] In Teignmouth a recollection of his 'primitive' life was that he lived in 'a house at an annual rental of £12, without a carpet; wooden chairs, a plain deal table (which by concession to the housemaid was afterwards stained because of the trouble it gave in constant scouring to keep clean), steel forks and pewter teaspoons, and all else to match.'[47] Grove's memoir emphasises again and again Parnell's dislike of class distinctions: when he inherited the title he often returned to this small house, which reminded him of his previous situation,[48] and made it a rule to refuse all invitations to meetings where he felt his name was being used for its effect.[49] He was married to his third wife in the meeting-room at Hackney, causing a stir 'that such an honour should have come to the locality as the marriage of a Peer of the realm'.[50] As a young man he inherited property worth twelve hundred pounds a year - but this he made over to the Brethren. 'This he entitled 'the Lord's money' and desired to employ it only as a trust committed to him and to be used only as he who gave it might indicate'.[51] He was, in fact, rather absent-minded about money, being capable of sending Brethren large cheques and then forgetting he had done so.[52] 'Towards the end of his sojurn in Devonshire',

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[46] Groves, op. cit., p. 29.

[47] Ibid., p. 62.

[48] Ibid., p. 115.

[49] Ibid., p.94.

[50] D.J. Beattie, Brethren: the story of a great recovery (Kilmarnock, 1940), p.84.

[51] Groves, op. cit., p. 12.

[52] See anecdote recalled by Mr. Nelson of Calcutta, Ibid., 67.

Groves wrote,

> He had nearly got rid of all his money; principal and interest had all gone in the service of his Master and he was contemplating entering on some secular employment for a livelihood, and paper-making was in his mind, /which/ he would probably have attempted had it not been for the earnest entreaty of his father, who thought him quite unsuited to undertake secular work of that kind.[53]

His father's death removed his problem, leaving him with £7000 and a good deal of property.[54] When the second Lord Congleton himself died over forty years later he left £7104, 4247 acres in the Queen's County, and 2900 acres in Westmeath, valued as producing an income of £4435 per annum; his Irish residence was given as Anneville, near Mullingar.[55] He had had scruples about inheriting from his father; the Gentleman's Magazine in 1842 records Lord Congleton's will as being proved 'by the Hon. Henry William Parnell, the second son, and as such the residuary legatee for life; Lord Congleton, the eldest son, having at first renounced'.[56] However, he probably accepted his father's property at the same time as he decided to sit in the House of Lords, ten years later.

His devotion to the pilgrim life affected his family as well as his fortunes; his first wife died owing to the hardships suffered on a journey in the Middle East and his second, an Armenian, he married because she had been cast out by her family when she was converted to the Brethren. Groves wrote defensively:

> It may be well to contradict here a report widely circulated that lots were cast by the three widowers in the mission to decide who should propose to the lady . . few dream of making family life subject to the higher call of God's service, and therefore many may find it hard to understand the spirit in which this marriage was entered into.[57]

Lasting thirty-one years without issue, it seems likely that this was a

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[53] Groves, op. cit., p.68.

[54] See Vicary Gibbs, Complete Peerage.

[55] Complete Peerage; p. 394.

[56] Gentleman's Magazine, 1842, pt. ii, 677.

[57] Groves, op. cit., p. 43.

mariage blanc. Sir Edmund Gosse in Father and Son recalls how the Congletons appeared to him as a small boy at meetings of the Brethren in Islington:

> The East was represented among 'the saints' by an excellent Irish peer, who had in his early youth converted and married a lady of colour; this Asiatic shared in our Sunday morning Meetings, and was an object of helpless terror to me; I shrank from her aimable caresses and vaguely identified her with a personage much spoken of in our family circle, the 'Personal Devil'.[58]

When Parnell finally decided that membership of the House of Lords was compatible with practice of his faith, he was criticised by some Brethren 'as giving up the position he had hitherto occupied and maintained';[59] at all events, it was 'an uncongenial place' to him and he sat on the cross-benches and only spoke once. He supported a bill for legalising Sunday services in places of entertainment, opposed the extension of Sunday licensing hours, and supported the separation of police and revenue departments in India; his sympathies tended to the Liberal side, but he opposed the Disestablishment of the Irish Church.[60]

During his later life he published some religious tracts, the most important being a series of interpretative notes on the Psalms.[61] For a man whose 'theme ever was man's sin and God's remedy, the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the utter worthlessness of the flesh',[62] he maintained a surprisingly cheerful and attractive manner. ('He used often to say he was "so fond of funerals, they were such times of happy fellowship"; and writing to this effect to a brother on one occasion he added in his own bright way: "I wish I could bury myself, but that, I'm afraid, I can't!"'[63] Some facets of his personality recall that of Charles Stewart Parnell (he confessed,

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[58] Edmund Gosse, Father and Son (Penguin ed., 1949), p.44.

[59] Groves, op. cit., p.90.

[60] Vicary Gibbs, Complete Peerage, p.132.

[61] Published London, 1875.

[62] Groves, op. cit., p.64.

[63] Ibid., p.123.

for instance, 'I do not much indulge in opening my heart in letter-writing'), and the frontispiece portrait of him in Groves's memoir shows a remarkable physical resemblance to his cousin. His was an original and dedicated life, lived in the best tradition of the intrepid Victorian enthusiast.

III

After the death of the second Lord Congleton the title passed to his brother Henry William, a less well recorded personage. Born in 1809 he was a naval officer, serving in the battle of Navarino;[64] he lived at Anneville, Mullingar, and was sheriff of Westmeath in 1861.A Liberal until 1886, he thereafter became a Liberal Unionist; and it seems unlikely that he fraternised with his cousin and political opponent. Of his politics, a biographer of Charles Stewart Parnell remarked sourly 'he at least has the merit of voting for liberal measures'.[65] He was married twice, in 1835 to Sophia, daughter and heiress of Col. the hon. William Bligh[66] and in 1851 to his first cousin, Caroline Margaret, eldest daughter of the hon. L.C. Dawson (his maternal uncle) and Elizabeth Emily, daughter of the 7th Earl of Meath. He succeeded to the title in 1883 and died at Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, in 1896,[67] aged 87. His widow survived until 1912.

He was succeeded by his second son Henry, the eldest - William - having died childless in 1879. Henry, who was born in 1839, was educated at

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[64] In 1827. The family details below are furnished by Vicary Gibbs's and Burke's Peerages.

[65] T.Sherlock, Parnell, p.12.

[66] He was son of John, 3rd Earl of Darnley by Georgiana, daughter of John Stewart, 7th Earl of Galloway; thus Sophia's cousin, the 5th Earl, married her husband's youngest sister. See above, p. 91.

[67] See The Times, 12 Oct. 1896.

Sandhurst and fought with the 3rd Foot in the Crimean and Zulu wars. He was colonel of the 2nd battallion of the Buffs, Major-General in 1893, General in Command of an Infantry Brigade in Malta in 1895, and retired in 1902. In politics he was a Conservative. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Dugald Doul, in 1885, and died in 1906; his wife lived on until 1912.

The fifth Lord Congleton, his son Henry Bligh Fortescue Parnell, was born in 1890. By his lifetime the Wicklow branch of the family had re-established contact with the Congletons; Captain Mateir recalls visits to Anneville after 1914 with his stepfather, John Howard Parnell.[68] But, strange as it seems, there are no references by Delia Parnell, Emily Dickenson or John Howard Parnell himself to fraternisation with the Congletons in Charles Stewart Parnell's lifetime despite their prominence and the fact that they also lived between London and Ireland. Any influence on him from this branch of the family would seem to have been indirect.

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[68] Conversation with Captain Mateir in 1972.

Chapter 3

The Avondale Tradition: Samuel Hayes and William Parnell

Having followed the Congleton family as far as possible, I wish to return to Sir John's youngest son, William, Charles Stewart Parnell's grandfather; but before this I shall consider the background of Avondale, Sir John's estate in Wicklow, and its first owner, the elusive figure of Samuel Hayes.

It is not possible to determine the date of his birth; but a Samuel Hayes, son of John Hayes of Dublin, matriculated at Oxford on 16 November 1762 aged nineteen, and was almost certainly he.[1] A barrister-at-law,[2] he was M.P. for Wicklow from 1783 to 1790, a J.P., and a Colonel in the Volunteers. Active in the Dublin Society (later the R.D.S) he was a member of the Committee sponsored by this body to collect agricultural implements abroad for display in Ireland, and also sat on the committee that selected the site for a Botanic Garden in Dublin.[3] He was a member of the Royal Irish Academy, and in 1786 reported on behalf of a parliamentary committee appointed to look into the state of buildings belonging to the House of Commons.[4] From 1791 until his death in 1795 he was M.P. for the borough of Maryborough and a commissioner for stamp duties.[5]

In parliament as in private life his interests were primarily agricultural; and in this sphere his chief preoccupation was forestry.

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[1] J. Foster (ed.), Alumni Oxoniensis 1715-1886, p.633. There is no other graduate of this name in the Oxford, Cambridge or Dublin University records for the period. He was therefore born in 1743.

[2] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 17.

[3] Established in 1792. See Eileen McCracken, 'Samuel Hayes and Avondale' in Irish forestry, xxv, no. 1 (Spring 1968).

[4] 4 April 1786; Parl. reg. Ire., vi, 438.

[5] See Walker's Hibernian Magazine, 1795, p.568. Hayes's death is entered for December.

The trees at Avondale still bear witness to this; and in 1794, at the request of several members of the Dublin Society, he wrote the first book on planting in Ireland: A Practical Treatise on Planting and the Treatment of Woods and Coppices.[6] In 1788 he presented a bill for amending an act 'for the encouragement of the cultivation and better preservation of trees, shrubs, plants, and roots' which received a first reading.[7] He was the recipient of a Dublin Society Medal for planting 2550 beech trees under 5 years old in 1768.[8] Hayes was interested in general aspects of planning and conservation, being responsible for recognising 'a heap of rubbish covered with brambles' in Glendalough as the most easterly of the seven churches there and supervising its reconstruction as the Church of St. Saviour;[9] he used some carved stones from the site as keystones for a bridge with three elliptical arches that he designed to span the river in front of Derrybawn House.[10] His interest in agriculture extended to a plan to encourage sheep-farming; in 1788 he moved to bring in a Bill 'for the better preservation of sheep and the more speedy detection of sheep-stealers'; he saw this encouragement as a measure to reduce the price of wool, which he believed - with some naïveté - was high only because of the small numbers of 'that useful creature' kept by farmers owing to the ease with which they could be stolen.[11] In 1786 he presented a bill for 'the protection and improvement of the inland fisheries of this kingdom'. In his public capacity as well as on his estate he seems

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[6] About 24,000 words. 1st ed. 1794; a 3rd by 1822.

[7] 10 March 1788; Parl. reg. Ire., ii, 384.

[8] At a distance apart of 15 feet. McCracken, op. cit., p. 38.

[9] Ibid., p.39.

[10] The house was owned by James Critchley, Ibid.

[11] 21 Jan. 1788; Parl. reg. Ire., viii, 17. Bill presented 5 March 1788.

to have deserved the tribute paid to him by Frazer six years after his death: 'a name truly endearing to all those who feel the enthusiasm of extending zeal for the rural arts'.[12]

Hayes was an active parliamentarian in other spheres too, speaking on such disparate topics as the treatment of offenders against the Act for lighting Dublin,[13] the expense of the new Courts of Justice,[14] and the salary of the Chamberlain of the Linen-Hall,[15] besides bringing in a bill to amend the laws in force for the upkeep and repair of the roads.[16] He is also recorded as strongly defending the police, and supporting a proposed bill to improve Petty Sessions and empower a Grand Jury.[17] Earlier he had supported the formation of 'a well-regulated militia', while defending the Volunteers from accusations of political aspirations; in this context he quoted a speech of his own to the Quarter Sessions (of which he was Chairman) on the advisability of giving up arms in favour of the implements of domestic sciences.[18] Though in favour of reform of the Parliamentary Registration Act,[19] he opposed the Bill on this subject as being too complex; he believed the registration of higher-class rural freeholders unnecessary, as their holdings would be generally known in any case.[20] Again one senses a simplicity amounting to naïveté, an impression reinforced by his expressed view on the tithe question: 'In the part of the kingdom he was best acquainted with a dispute for tithe was unknown and a non-resident beneficed clergyman equally unheard of'.[21] Politically

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[12] General View of Co. Wicklow, 1801.

[13] 1 March 1786; Parl. reg. Ire., vi, 227.

[14] 29 Jan. 1788; ibid, viii, 64.

[15] 5 March 1789; ibid, ix, 277.

[16] 30 April 1789; ibid, p.432.

[17] 24 Feb. 1790; ibid, x, 300.

[18] 14 Feb. 1790, ibid, vi, 221, 230.

[19] 22 Feb. 1786; ibid, vi, 209.

[20] Ibid, 324.

[21] 16 Feb. 1788; Parl. reg. Ire., viii, 262.

he was described as 'entirely uninfluenced but very friendly to government' and 'an independent honourable man . . A friend to government, much connected with Sir J. Parnell'. He had been brought in by his neighbour Mr. Tighe, whose wife (a niece of Ponsonby) owned the borough of Wicklow.[22] His speeches embody a sometimes heavy-footed whimsy,[23] in accordance with the taste of the age, and a similarly 'period' wealth of classical allusion that is often bewilderingly eclectic: in a speech on the paving and lighting of Dublin he remarked that 'the commissioners had not only cleaned an Augean stable but given light to drag Caucus from his den; and he hoped they would go on till they discovered the lamp of Aladin which not only gave light but riches, honour and power to its possessor'.[24] The picture that emerges of Colonel Hayes (as he was generally known) is of an educated, optimistic, improving landlord, influenced by the scientific progressivism and intellectual classicism of the late eighteenth century: a specimen that might have been sketched to perfection by Addision or Steele.

A characteristic of this type was the possession of some solid property, and in this Samuel Hayes was no exception. He owned a town house in Nassau Street, several farms in Glenmalure,[25] and the estate of three to four thousand acres at the Meeting of the Waters described as 'Hayesville' until 1770, when he began to build the sizeable - though not unduly large - Palladian house that was called Avondale.[26] He also owned

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[22] E.Johnston, 'Members of the Irish Parlt., 1784-7'. (R.I.A. Proc., vol. 71, section C, no. 5, p. 184).

[23] See Parl. Reg. Ire., vi, 209.

[24] Ibid., vi, 227.

[25] One at Walshestown was 100 acres (Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 472.424.303548); another - Cummeen, near Ballymoreustace - 44 acres (Ibid., 303.707.204647).

[26] Eileen McCracken states that Avondale was built 'beside' an older house. Hayes's address in 1768 was 'Hayesville'; the name was still used in 1775 (Reg. of Deeds, Mem 303.707.704104). In 1776, however, a legal deed calls him 'Samuel Hayes of Avondale' (ibid., 313.538.210289); this was used from then on.

a farm of eight hundred acres of Newtownmountkennedy.[27] Through his wife he had an interest in lands in Limerick and Wexford and a house in Stephen's Green, which he leased in conjunction with her two sisters and their husbands.[28] Besides his own demesne at Avondale he let out farms at the Meeting of the Waters totalling 286 acres.[29] As with the calculation of Sir John Parnell's property in Chapter 2, above, this is merely based on memorials in the Registry of Deeds; the likelihood is that Colonel Hayes owned more property than this.

Besides the income from rents and the demesne he farmed himself, Samuel Hayes seems as conscious of the mineral potential of this part of Wicklow as his successor's grandson was to be; a lease of 1772 from the Bishop of Leighlin grants 'all mines and ore of lead, copper, tin and metals, and all coals and other minerals which shall be found out of all or any part' of Taghmon and Killalogue - his see-lands in the area - to Hayes and his neighbours Richard Symes, Reverend John Symes and Samuel Tench.[30].

However, the demesne of Avondale and in particular its plantations remained his chief interest and constitute his chief monument. A description of these in 1794, the year before Hayes's death, reads:

> The banks of the Avonmore are either covered with close coppice wood or with scattered oak and ash of lofty growth . . on the front and side /of the house/ spreads a smooth lawn spotted with clumps and single trees gently rising to a hill crowned with large beech and uncommonly thriving fir, particularly spruce, whose feathered branches hang to the ground. On the back of the house the ground in some parts slopes down with a gentle declivity, in others falls in steep and abrupt precipices, covered with ancient oaks, the roots of many of which are a hundred feet perpendicular over the topmost summit of others.

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[27] Sold in 1777 for £1300. Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 316.293.212062.

[28] See ibid., 332.203.224121, 313.538.210289, 356.293.240258.

[29] Kingston (incl. Ballyhuduff and Carrigmore), 78ac. 1R 8P at £87 pa. (ibid., 500.27.308600); Carrickonshue, 76ac 3rd at £38-13-6 pa. (ibid., 478.160.308602); Ballyknockin, 100ac at £44 (ibid., 331.479.222929); Ballyteague, 31ac. at £15 pa. (ibid., 348.388.234231).

[30] Ibid., 286.511.190098.

A walk winds down through this wood and some pleasant plantations of Weymouth pine and larch to a vale of considerable breadth. On the other side the river's banks rise to a great height, covered thickly with oak woods, here and there indented by the meadows of two adjacent farms.

The vale extends above four miles . . where the natural growth of wood has been too thin Mr. Hayes has not spared any expense to supply the defect with every foreign and domestic tree suited to the soil and climate, and perhaps no part of Europe admits a greater variety than this district of Wicklow . .

A carriage road is constructed a considerable way with attention to the surrounding views and about a mile from the house, adjoining to a woodranger's lodge, in a most sequestered spot, is a room in the form of an old English cottage for dining in on rural parties. It is built close to the river over a remarkably deep and solemn part, backed by a rock above three hundred feet high, whose rugged cliffs /are/ fringed with oak, quicken and holly . . [31]

Six years later Frazer wrote of 'the elegant improvements of Avondale':

All of this vale (Clara) is capable of being highly ornamented and improved; it extends between five and six miles to Rathdrum, adjoining to which a beautiful example is exhibited of what can be done in this country in the improvements of Avondale, made by the late Colonel Hayes . . .

Avondale, which was bequeathed by its late proprietor to Sir John Parnell, bart., is proudly situated on the banks of the Avonmore which name, signifying the great winding stream, corresponds most happily with its character, the banks continually forming the finest waving lines, either covered with close coppice woods or with scattered oak and ash of considerable growth, the ground in some places smooth meadow and pasture and in others rising in romantic cliffs and craggy precipices. The demesne of Avondale enjoys this diversity of scenery in the highest perfection. The house, which was built by the late Mr. Hayes, is large and remarkably well finished . . /In the woods at the back/ the grotesque forms of the rocks covered with ivy and moss-grown roots vie with the variety of natural wood flowers and several curious plants to render the scenery at once pleasing and romantic. On the farther side /of the vale/ the Avonmore glides with a smooth and gentle current, at others /sic/ dashes over huge masses of rock and broken granite with the foam and rage of a cataract. On the other side the banks rise to a great height, covered thickly with oak-woods, here and there indented by the well-cultivated meadows of Mr. King, who seems strongly to have imbibed the spirit of his late friend and neighbour . . The bold contour of the surrounding hills, the picturesque simplicity of the rural edifice and the burst of the torrent from under the high rock can never fail to give perfect satisfaction to the admirers of nature and her romantic scenery. [32]

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[31] Pamphlet of 1794, quoted by E. McCracken, op. cit. (Title unmentioned).

[32] R. Frazer, Survey of Wicklow (Dublin, 1801).

How Hayes acquired the Ballytrasna lands is uncertain; Mrs Delia Parnell was 'told that Colonel Samuel Hayes . . . was related to two maiden ladies, named O'Byrne, who left him Avondale',[33] but there is no record of such a bequest in the Registry of Deeds. In any case, this idyllic demesne passed into the Parnells' hands on Hayes's death in 1795; how it did so deserves some examination.

Where the coming of Avondale into the Parnell family is mentioned it has usually been assumed that Hayes left it to Parnell because he was a political admirer of his - occasionally even because he admired Parnell's stand over the Union. This last contention is easily enough disproved by the date of Hayes's death, 1795, and still further by the fact that he made his will in 1783;[34] it continues to seem unlikely that such a valuable holding would have been simply a gift to a political associate.

Hayes was married in 1766 to Alice Le Hunte, a daughter of Thomas Le Hunte, Counsellor at Law and MP for Wexford.[35] One of her sisters, Anne,[36] married Reverend Abraham Symes who, like Hayes, lived in Wicklow; the other, Jane, married John Lloyd of Queen's County. Hayes, Symes and Lloyd together administered their wives' considerable property.[37] There was no recorded issue of the Hayes marriage,[38] which would seem to lend colour to the idea that Avondale was a free gift from a political admirer; however, evidence in the Registry of Deeds shows that the Parnells were

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[33] Mrs D.T.S. Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 21 January 1880 (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237/6).

[34] 24 December. See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 553.340.368785, which refers to it.

[35] She was born in 1750. For Mrs Hayes's pedigreee see J. Lodge, Peerage of Ireland (Dublin, 1789). Coincidentally, her stepmother was a sister of the first Earl of Darnley, whose grandson and great-grandson were both to be connected with the Congleton family.

[36] 1769-83. See ibid.,

[37] Above, p.106, n .28

[38] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1852, 26.282, states that Hayes died without issue; but ibid. for 1854, 24.128, says 'without issue male'. Further references to the Parnells' title in records of the Land Commission (Box 902, Schedule 4, no. 2, record 1159) reaffirm that he was 'without issue'.

connected with the estate long before 1795 - in fact, from the date of Hayes's marriage in 1766, when the future second baronet and Chancellor was twenty-two years old, and several years before he entered politics.[39] In consideration of the marriage between Samuel Hayes and Alice Le Hunte, and of the marriage portion to be paid by Thomas Le Hunte to John and Samuel Hayes, the lands at the Meeting of the Waters called Ballytrasna (later the Avondale estate) and the Walshetown and Glenmalure farms[40] were granted and released in trust to John Parnell of Rathleague (the first baronet - not yet knighted) and Richard Le Hunte. Richard Le Hunte was Alice Le Hunte's uncle, her father's eldest brother;[41] John Parnell's relationship becomes clearer when mention is found elsewhere of a Mrs. Anne Hayes, <u>née</u> Parnell, sister of the first baronet,[42] and John Hayes's widow in 1776.[43] It can safely be inferred that she was Samuel Hayes's mother and the first Sir John Parnell's sister.[44] Thus in the Hayes-Le Hunte marriage arrangement, as generally was the case, two senior relatives - a man of standing from each of the contracting families - were nominally entrusted with the property settled on the couple (an exceptionally young one) about to be married:[45] the groom's uncle, John Parnell, and the bride's uncle, Richard Le Hunte. Also by this arrangement of trust under the marriage settlement, Alice Le Hunte's father was to leave a third of

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[39] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. of indentured Deed of Release dated 1 Oct. 1766; 255.222.164473.

[40] 'Ballytrasna' incorporated Ballytrasna, Crevagh, Ballyhuduff, Carricknaminaun, and Ballindring. Also specified were Ballyknockan, Carrowsillagh, Ballynaskeagh, Ballyteigue and Ballyeustace (all in Co. Wicklow); Lr. and Upr. Walshetown, Co. Dublin, and land in Ballymoreustace and Rimmin.

[41] M.P. for Enniscorthy - see Lodge, op. cit.

[42] Reg. of Deeds, 311.349.210628 and 320.195.215257.

[43] Mem. 311.349.210628 is dated 1776 and defines her as such.

[44] Logically she could have been a daughter of Parnell's, but as his son was only a year younger than her son Samuel, it seems unlikely.

[45] Samuel was 23, Alice only 16.

of his property to his brother and Parnell to administer for the couple. It is significant that the lands in trust were deeded to Parnell and Richard Le Hunte and their heirs for ever; though it is impossible to be certain without reading the original deed (now untraceable), it seems likely that Parnell retained an interest in the property after Hayes's marriage, and very possible that the estate was to revert to him if Hayes died without issue - as came to be the case. Presuming this, it is suggestive that Hayes sat for Maryborough when he lost the seat for Wicklow in 1791 -Maryborough was, of course, a borough in control of Sir John Parnell[46] - and also that he held the office of Commissioner for Stamp Duties: again, a job in his cousin's gift. The advent of Avondale into the Parnell family can be seen as a family arrangement, or even as one of the 'crafty and prudent' first baronet's property interests coming home to roost; but since it was the outcome of a will made in his favour by Sir John Parnell's first cousin, while the former was still in his 'thirties, only seven years after he entered parliament and years before he became Chancellor, it can by no stretch of the imagination be said to have been a free gift from a political admirer.[47]

II

If little has been written about Parnell's family in general, next to nothing has been written about his paternal grandfather William Parnell or Parnell-Hayes (he adopted the suffix when he inherited Avondale, but rarely used it and his son did not retain it). But as well as being one of the most interesting of Charles Stewart Parnell's ancestors I believe William

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[46] See above, p.84.

[47] Authorities have always been uncertain about the relationship between Hayes and Parnell; though R. Johnston called them 'cousins' (Parnell and the Parnells, p.9), John Howard Parnell believed Hayes was 'no relative' (C.S. Parnell: a memoir, p.14).

Parnell was one who exercised a great deal of influence on him, albeit indirectly; those who return to his 'patriotic' great-grandfather or even the martial figure of his mother's father to explain Parnell's analysis of the Irish situation have never taken into account that his grandfather was as radical a theorist as it was possible for an Irish Protestant landlord to be and that, though he died long before his grandson was born, he left behind several provocative pamphlets, an absorbing propagandist novel about Irish rural life, and a considerable reputation as a controversialist.

Born in 1777, William was the third son of Sir John Parnell. He attended Cambridge, where he excelled in 'the liberal sciences' and literature.[48] Inheriting Avondale from his father and living there much of his life,[49] he married in 1810 Frances, the daughter of a prominent neighbour, the Hon. Hugh Howard of Bushy Park. In 1817, 1819 and 1820 he was elected MP for Wicklow; he held the offices of J.P. and Deputy Lieutenant of the county. In 1805 he anonymously published An Enquiry into the causes of popular discontents in Ireland[50] and in 1807, under his own name, An historical apology for the Irish catholics.[51] In 1816 he published a book of educational sermons for Irish schools;[52] but he was not done with controversy, for in 1819 he wrote his anonymous novel Maurice and Berghetta; or, the Priest of Rahery which provoked such a violent attack

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[48] Freeman's Journal, 15 Feb. 1821: 'A distinguished student in the University of Cambridge, excelling in the cultivation of the liberal sciences, unequalled in chaste literature'.

[49] With exceptions; see below, p. 113.

[50] By An Irish Country Gentleman (Dublin 1805). Reprinted with an angry Preface and Notes by A Friend to the Constitution.

[51] Dublin, 1807; a third edition in London by 1808.

[52] Sermons partly translated, partly imitated from Massillon and Bourdaloue, designed for use of country schools in Ireland (London, 1816).

from the Quarterly Review that Parnell wrote a pamphlet answering it. This Letter to the Editor of the Quarterly Review[53] was the last piece Parnell wrote; in January 1821 he died - like his nephew, Lord Congleton and his grandson, Charles Stewart Parnell - from a fever following a severe chill, aged only 44.[54] His wife had predeceased him, leaving two children: John, born in 1811, and Catherine. An obituary said:

> He endured the most severe of all afflictions - the loss of a beloved, aimable and endearing wife - with the resignation that became a Christian but with a sorrow that would not be discreditable to the most dignified philosophy. Indeed, that calamity bore heavily upon him to the last; but his parental solicitude was only increased, if possible, by the additional duties that devolved upon him. He was a good man in all his courses, but as a father he excelled inimitably. The education of his children occupied a principal portion of his time and thoughts; these tender orphans, bearing the marks of his care, now furnish living proofs of the excellent qualities of their lamented guide, director and parent.[55]

Between writing and politics, William Parnell's chief occupation was that of landlord. Besides Avondale and its environs,[56] there is also evidence that lands in Newcastle (Co. Wicklow) were part of the Hayes estate, which descended in its entirety to William Parnell.[57] Parnell sold these to Peter Latouche for £5591 in 1803;[58] in 1805 he sold off more of the inheritance, the lands at Walshestown, for £2113.[59] He did not, however, diminish the lands at Avondale, except to exchange some of the property at Ballyhuduff and Carrigmore for the lands along the Avonmore at

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[53] Dublin, 1820. The review was in Q.R., xxi, 471-86. Maurice and Berghetta was revised and reprinted in London as The Priest of Rahery under Parnell's own name in 1825.

[54] On 20 Dec. See F.J., 15 Feb. 1821. 'The day having proved unusually wet, he caught a severe cold that terminated in a malignant fever. He died at the house of his revered and distinguished father-in-law, Col. Howard, on the 2nd January, being ill but eleven days'.

[55] Ibid.

[56] See above, p.109, n.40.

[57] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 549.443.364504: a Deed of release of 1802 which refers to the legacy.

[58] 262 acres. See ibid., 553.340.368788.

[59] 100 acres; also the farm at Ballymoreustace. See ibid., 573.12.383112.

Kingston to unify his holdings at the Meeting of the Waters[60] and through which his driveway already ran. In 1810 he bought a house in Aungier Street for £140 and let it out.[61] Following his wife's death in 1815 Parnell arranged that his daughter Catherine should have a portion of five thousand pounds over and above the five thousand due to her from her mother's fortune; this he did by leasing the Avondale estate in trust to his brother, Henry Brooke Parnell, and his brother-in-law, the Reverend Boleyn Howard:[62] an arrangement which was to influence the fortunes of his grandson Charles throughout his life.[63] Following this he seems to have vacated the estate; in 1820 Thomas Cromwell, touring Wicklow, found

> this charming place /Āvondalē/ is now deserted, the house shut up, and everything wears the appearance of neglect and seems to mourn its owner . . /thoughē/ such are the charms of Avondale that neglect itself cannot render it other than a most enchanting spot.[64]

In 1805, however, Parnell was not in residence either, as the usually well-informed John Carr described the house as 'now inhabited by Lady Wicklow', and referred to a cottage in the grounds as being 'the summer residence . . of one of the sons of the late Sir John Parnell'.[65]

When he did live there, nonetheless, there is evidence that William Parnell was as good a landlord as the age had to offer. The D.N.B. recorded that 'as a resident and liberal landlord, he was greatly esteemed among his tenantry' and his obituary in the Freeman's Journal emphasised his solicitude for the poorer rural classes, whose wants he studied

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[60] 3 March 1808. See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 601.35.407709.

[61] Ibid., 614.560.426386.

[62] Ibid., 761.252.516787.

[63] See below.

[64] Excursions through Ireland . . A complete guide for the traveller and tourist by Thomas Cromwell (London 1820), iii, 145-6.

[65] The Stranger in Ireland, p.150.

> with a care and devotion almost chivalrous . . . his forbearance and consideration towards his numerous tenantry obtained a return of attachment the most enviable and animated . . . possessing captivating manners, a cultivated mind and eminent rank and connections, his society was cherished and appreciated by the most exalted; but his desire was to be useful rather than ornamental, and he manifested the sincerity of that predilection by his deportment.[66]

The picture of a dedicated and thoughtful 'improving landlord' is emphasised by many references throughout his own writings. In his Letter to the Editor of the Quarterly Review, when advocating the measures that should be taken to change the rural Irish diet, he digresses to the 1817 famine and states:

> in the parish of Rathdrum alone, store cattle were bought up and slaughtered . . and after supplying the necessities of the whole parish (a large and extensive one) with meat and soup twice a week for four months, the parish were enabled to return to Lord Fitzwilliam £50 and to Government £30, having not only fed the indigent without a penny of expense but alleviated the distress of the small farmers by the timely supply of meat brought to market at a cheap rate.[67]

This measure, a particular preoccupation of Parnell's,was evidently his brain-child; his close connection with country life round Rathdrum, as well as his own particular view of the Irish rural ethos, is shown in many anecdotes throughout his writings:

> An acquaintance of mine possessed of a very large landed property who has, in a high degree, that natural affability and politeness which marks the Irish; who gives his tenants plenty of leisure to pay their rents; who is the father of a little army of labourers that he keeps in constant employment; whose house is a kind of hospital where all the sick in the neighbourhood send for medicines and wine; in his courtyard the poor of the parish and the wandering beggar assemble without ceremony and find in the remnants of his hospitable kitchen more broken victuals than is supplied /sic/ by any English nobleman's house; this essentially aimable and kind-hearted man invariably prefaces a rebuke to a labourer with 'You villain you! I'll blow your bloody soul in a blaze of gunpowder to hell!'[68]

This and many similar observations must have made his neighbours look on him with some suspicion; as early as 1801 a Dublin Society report on conditions

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[66] F.J., 15 February 1821.

[67] Letter to the Editor of the Quarterly Review, p.27.

[68] Inquiry, pp. 38-9; see also pp. 76,77.

in Wicklow recorded:

> The habitations of the lower orders in this county are in general extremely wretched, miserable hovels that can scarcely bear a description. A bare recital of the state of the community has been considered as an unmerited satire on the county, and those who have endeavoured to call the attention of the public to the amelioration of their situation have been stigmatised as incendiaries.[69]

Parnell's attacks amounted to far more than 'a bare recital'. A good example is to be found in his Inquiry:

> The evil /ill-treatment of the tenantry/ is not so great among men of large property, whose manners have generally been softened by education, travelling, and the progress of humanity and civilisation; a horde of tyrants exists in Ireland in a class of men that are unknown in England - in the multitude of agents to absentees; middle-men, who take large farms and squeeze out a forced kind of profit by re-letting them in small parcels; lastly, the little farmers themselves, who exercise the same insolence they receive from their superiors on those unfortunate beings who are placed at the extremity of the scale of degradation, the Irish Peasantry.[70]

The hostile editor of this work, who damned this passage as 'a string of false and calumnious propositions for the purpose of irritating the multitude', probably exemplified the general reaction to Parnell's opinions among members of his own class; like his neighbour James Grattan, he was an enlightened squire placed in an incongruous format. He wrote bitterly of the way visitors to Ireland are beguiled from their initial horror at Irish conditions

> by the unfeeling society in whose narrow circle they pass their time; they eat pineapples, drink champagne, shoot woodcocks, are assiduously flattered, and feeling themselves very well off, forget how other people suffer.[71]

Of his own situation he wrote:

> The miseries which everywhere surround him /the author/ would make a residence in Ireland too melancholy to be endured but for

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[69] A general view of the agriculture, mineralogy, present state and circumstances of Co. Wicklow, with observations on the means of their improvement, drawn up for the consideration of the Dublin Society by R. Frazer, Dublin 1801. The reference to 'incendiaries' is a propos of an attack on the hon. Henry Grattan by the Rev. Mr. Sandys.

[70] Inquiry, p.36.

[71] Maurice and Beghetta, Introduction, p.xiv.

> the hope and exertion which still suggest a flattering belief that their end is approaching. The squalid appearance of the peasantry and their horrid habitations are sights that his eyes never get accustomed to, though a short residence in Ireland makes most people inattentive to them; he seems forced on to a study of these details of wretchedness till so pained with the idea of the recurrence of the idea of suffering that any exertion with a chance of mitigating it becomes a relief. Like the nightingale that is said to lean its breast against a thorn that sleep may not interrupt its song, this aching pity for poor Ireland has kept him constantly thinking, studying, writing, talking, in hopes that by exertion or good fortune he might be the means of bettering her condition.[72]

All he can claim, he continues, is to have studied the subject unremittingly; for all his efforts, 'success he never had to boast of'. In these and many other passages where he deals with the life close at hand to him, Parnell manifests a marked degree of alienation from it; and here again there is an echo of his grandson.

William Parnell's attitude to the political issues of the day is best seen in his writings where, often under a pseudonym, he expressed himself most forcefully and unequivocally; it is nonetheless worth examining his record for the three years during which he went to Westminster as M.P. for Wicklow. He was first and foremost against the Union; references to the foolish and unethical nature of this measure abound in his speeches as in his writings. The radicalism for which he was attacked over his writings, however, was not as evident in Parliament; the basic conservatism which often lay behind his calls for reform was here more obvious. Thus he supported an increase in the marriage settlements of Royal Dukes, because 'they were cut off from many sources of emolument which were open to persons in a different situation in society;[73] on parliamentary reform he 'professed himself a step-by-step reformer and thought some good might be attained by gradual measures which could not be

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[72] Maurice and Berghetta, Introduction, p.xii.

[73] 15 April 1818. Hansard 1, xxxviii, 93.

expected from one which excited much opposition'.[74] On the question of State Lotteries, which his father had so enthusiastically urged, he was vitriolic; quoting appositely from Fielding, he compared them to the legalisation of brothels in Holland, 'because they could not be prevented.'[75]

On the question of commerce he preached a purely laissez-faire doctrine in the Westminster parliament: any protective duties at all were 'inconsistent with the principles of a sound economy, as they could only be meant to "force a manufacture"';[76] but in his writings about Ireland he advocated 'forcing manufactures' wherever possible, and even in parliament admitted 'in the present state of Ireland it was very desirable to encourage English capitalists and he was therefore in favour of any explanatory measure which could have that tendency'.[77] Where Irish affairs were concerned, indeed, he was tireless in adovcating reform; he used such issues as the Irish window tax as a chance to attack the Union's financial proportion allotted to Ireland, 'it being very fallaciously supposed that the exports of Ireland were proof of her wealth, whereas all raw commodities being exported for the purpose of procuring from other countries that which she ought to produce within herself, these exports were only proof of poverty';[78] and from this he progressed to attacking 'the mode of governing the country itself'. He supported his brother Sir Henry Parnell's motion to investigate the office of Chief Constable in Ireland;[79] he attacked the

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[74] Speaking on Sir Francis Burdett's motion for parliamentary reform, 2 June 1818; Hansard 1, xxxviii, 1170.

[75] 4 May 1819; Hansard 1, xl, 95-6. Also see xxxviii, 969.

[76] 2 June 1820; Hansard 2, i, 803.

[77] Speaking on the Irisb Partnerships Bill, 14 Dec. 1819; Hansard 1,xxxix,1123.

[78] 21 April 1818; Hansard 1, xxxviii, 262.

[79] 7 May 1818; Hansard 1, xxxviii, 262. 'The people should be shown by a proper local appointment of constables known to them and acquainted with their circumstances that they were wrong in the notion which they had formed that the laws were made and carried into execution by their enemies'.

frequency with which transportation was sentenced in Ireland, and the indiscriminate fining of whiskey stills, which often penalised the innocent.[80] Parnell also exhorted the Government to positive action about famine fever following poor harvests,[81] objected to the Bill against seditious meetings,[82] and attacked the misrepresentation by ministers of Ireland as being in a constant state of political upheaval.[83] He moved two bills, neither of which came to fruition. One was for 'the protection, education and moral welfare of children employed in the cotton and other factories of Ireland', to which end he proposed that visitors should be appointed to tour factories and report to the English Home Secretary, the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and the Society for the Education of the Poor and the Bible Society; factory owners recommended by these Visitors were to be rewarded by tax exemptions, thus stimulating industry.[84] This was in 1819; in 1820 he prepared the ground for his second Bill by appealing to the House about the position of Irish paupers, who besides other hardships could be deported from England to any point on the Irish coast without appeal, 'the lower order of English parish-officers, who charged these paupers as vagrants, being but too apt to consider Irishism a crime'.[85] His motion for the production of the Chief Secretary's correspondence on the subject being agreed to, Parnell produced an Irish Paupers' Bill a week later which, besides ameliorating the conditions of their passage from England, also suggested amendment of the Poor Laws.[86] Thought it was pointed out that transported paupers had first of all to appear before an English magistrate, leave was given to bring in the Bill; however, it got no further. Like many of

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[80] 7 May 1818; Hansard 1, xxxviii, 55 and 1014.

[81] 7 April 1819; Hansard 1, xxix, 1432.

[82] 8 Dec. 1819; Hansard 1, xli, 877.

[83] 28 June 1820; Hansard 1, xlii, 102.

[84] 19 April 1819; Hansard 1, xxxix, 1479.

[85] 7 June 1820; Hansard 1, xl, 885.

[86] Ibid., pp. 1051-2.

Parnell's projected reforms, both bills hampered a sound idea by complex and impracticable machinery.

Nor was his reputation as a reformer restricted to his activity in Parliament. References to Parnell in the diaries of his neighbour James Grattan are frequent; he records Parnell's efforts to unite both liberal and conservative elements in the county on the issue of improved education in 1818,[87] and his critical view of local justice.[88] On several issues, however, Grattan disagreed with Parnell; he felt that his neighbour overstated the case of Catholic disabilities, and presented the liberal argument 'by abusing the other /side/; when he enumerates the disabilities of the Catholics, and reckons the oath they are bound to take: it is a privilege, not a disability.'[89] Grattan also disagreed with Parnell's outright condemnation of the trade duties imposed on Ireland by the Union: 'it is contrary to commonsense to say that a trade would not thrive with duties;'[90] Grattan believed that the psychological effect of the Union was at least as responsible for the decline in Irish industry. But despite these disagreements, the two men seem to have shared a communal interest; their opinions and preoccupations cannot have been typical of Wicklow squires in the early nineteenth century, and the sort of unpopularity which Grattan later earned among his social equals for his liberal political stance[91] must have also been felt by William Parnell at Avondale. To the end of his life he was involved in attempts at practical reforms for the unprivileged; in December 1820 he published at his own expense five thousand

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[87] James Grattan's notebook for 1821 (N.L.I., MS 5776).

[88] Ibid. (N.L.I., MS 5779); though catalogued as 1822, this date refers to the accounts in the front section of the MS, and the diary is evidently of an earlier date.

[89] James Grattan's notebook for 1815 (N.L.I., MS 3848). p.62.

[90] James Grattan's notebook (N.L.I., MS 5779) p.4.

[91] See above, section 1, pp 33-5.

copies of Notes on the need for a government grant towards the education of the Catholic poor, and on the 20th of that month succeeded in procuring through the Secretary for Ireland an annual grant of £3000 for this purpose; it was while in Dublin on this business that he caught the chill which was the cause of his death.[92]

III

The essence of William Parnell's thought, however, and the intellectual heritage which he left behind him, is contained in his writings. These, though described by the Gentleman's Magazine as 'works which have been greatly esteemed by the highest authorities for their elegance of style, the statesman-like principles which they enforce, and the pure Patriotism of the author',[93] were generally forgotten after his death. The latest edition of any of them was in 1825, and the mistake is often made of attributing Parnell's Historical apology for the Irish Catholics to his brother Henry, author of the far more restrained History of the penal laws.[94] Even R.B.O'Brien, when listing his works, omits the interesting and controversial Priest of Rahery.[95] He was nonetheless well enough recognised in his day, though probably by a restricted circle; Mrs Henry Tighe, the well-known poet, dedicated an attractive sonnet to him[96] and

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[92] F.J., 15 Feb.1821.

[93] Gentleman's Magazine, 1842, pt.i,86.

[94] Though the F.J. makes the opposite mistake in his obituary and attributes both works to William.

[95] Parnell, i, 68.

[96] She was the authoress of Psyche; see above, part 1, p.30. Her poem to Parnell is dedicated 'To W.P., esq., Avondale' -

We wish for thee, dear friend! for summer's eve
Upon thy loveliest landscape never cast
Looks of more lingering sweetness than the last;
The slanting sun, reluctant to bereave
Thy woods of beauty, fondly seemed to leave
Smiles of the softest light that slowly past
In bright succession oe'r each charm thou hast
Thyself so oft admired. And we might grieve
Thine eye of taste should ever wander hence
O'er scenes less lovely than thine own; but here
Thou wilt return, and feel the home more dear;
More dear the Muses's gentler influence
When on the busy world with Wisdom's smile
And heart uninjured, thou hast gazed awhile.

an often-repeated anecdote in Thomas Moore's Journal about his Meeting of the Waters shows he and Parnell were close friends.[97] In his own writings, however, he was concerned with issues very different from those of these two friends; for this examination of the original works he wrote[98] is necessary.

Parnell's first publication, in 1805, was his Enquiry into the causes of popular discontent in Ireland by 'An Irish Country Gentleman'. The author's nom-de-plume is significant; throughout the work, the view is that of someone close to rural life who possessed a sharp and accurate analysis but whose ideal is an Ireland where the country gentry can rely on a contented, industrious and healthy peasantry. This aim is not remarkable for its radicalism or its audacity; but the causes to which Parnell attributed the unfortunate state of Ireland and the measures he proposed to deal with them must have appeared to many to be both.

Causality, in fact, is the germ of the pamphlet. Beginning with a simile about draining land by first finding the source of the water, Parnell remarks:

> We hear much of the effects of rebellions in Ireland, but very little of their causes . . though Government has been armed with all latitude of power, though it has not been crippled by want of means, has not been embarrassed by restrictions, has not been stayed by responsibility; though punishment has been urged almost to ruin, though blood has flowed profusely, still life is miserable in apprehension, still property is poor in security, the government is supported only be terror, and this so imperfectly that the moment an enthusiastic leader is found a rebellion is organised.[99]

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[97] Repeated in O'Brien, Parnell and elsewhere. First told in Moore's own Memoirs (ed. Lord John Russell, London 1856), vii, 109, entry for 25 Aug. 1835. 'Poor William Parnell, who now no longer looks upon these waters, wrote of these doubts /about the location of Moore's inspiration for the poem/ and mentioning a seat in the Abbey churchyard belonging to him where it was said I sate while writing the verses, begged of me to give him an inscription of two lines to that effect to be put on the seat. "If you can't tell a lie for me", said he, "in prose you will perhaps, to oblige an old friend, do it in verse"'. Moore did not in fact 'oblige his old friend,' preferring to leave the matter in doubt.

[98] Omitting the Sermons, of which I have been unable to trace a copy.

[99] Enquiry, p.2.

The causes must be like the rebellions themselves: 'active, constant and uniform'. These risings are due neither to a natural propensity on the part of the Irish nor to the Roman Catholic religion, which, he holds, suppresses independence; the causes he isolates are (1) the recollection in Ireland of being a conquered people; (2) the distinctions maintained between Protestant and Catholic; (3) the great confiscations of private property; (4) the distinctions between members of the Church of England, Protestants and Presbyterians; (5) Tithes; (6) the degraded state of the peasantry; (7) the influence of a Republican Party; and (8) the Union.

On the question of the Conquest, Parnell points out that the English never restored the Irish Land, amalgamated their own interests with those of the natives, or exterminated the latter - their only three viable alternatives. He attacks the Statutes of Kilkenny as foolish as well as unjust, since they emphasised the Irish identity. Going on to property confiscations Parnell states a basic tenet of his belief: 'The origin of all industry, wealth and civilisation proceeds from security of property'; thus, 'where confiscations have often taken place, industry will have little enterprise'. Here again, the English have acted against their own interests. Considering the nature of the confiscations, Parnell asks, 'can we wonder that oppression became a habit or doubt that the early rebellions of the Catholics were justified, if injury justifies resentment?' He follows this forthright question with the observation that restitution of property would by now be impracticable but the removal of religious distinctions would end 'the continuance of the injury'. This brings him on to penal legislation, of which he states - again pithily - 'the height of infatuation was to rob a man, to spare his life, and yet to load him with every injury and insult.'[100] Many of these laws, repealed in letter, still remain; in a footnote he attacks the Orange Lodges, 'those great political

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[100] Enquiry, p.12.

blunders of the Irish Gentry'.[101] Thus the English themselves create the nominal justification for Irish rebellion. It should be noted, however, that he adds: 'I consider the Popish religion as the most formidable source of slavery and superstition that has sprung from the use of religion and where the destruction of it is the end that Government pursues I would at least be a willing ally'; though, in view of his later writings, this seems intended more as a precaution against dismissal of the author as another Popish rebel than as any definitive article of faith on Parnell's part. He emphasises the strengthening effect on a religion of discriminatory laws: 'Pass but a law that Methodists shall wear red capes to their coats and it is a chance but in ten years they over-turn the government'.

Thus Parnell opposed distinction between any creeds; in a passage that Voltaire might have written, he states (on the subject of a Church Establishment):

> If we give these honeyed cakes to only one head of Cerberus it will increase the fury of the rest; feed them all and we may go quietly to heaven above or to the shades below in our own way.

Parnell sees the Presbyterians as 'the real strength of the rebellion' in 1798, and perceptively contrasts northern wealth, intellect and moeurs to those of the south of Ireland[102] as well as analysing the 'great political importance' of the Irish Presbyterians.

On the subject of tithes Parnell contrasts the situation of landholders in England and Ireland.[103] Attacking the inertia of Parliament about the

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[101] Enquiry, p.15. This passage abounds in felicitous metaphors; answering a hypothetical protest that the Catholic position is now greatly improved, he states: 'It is very little comfort to the man who has his eyes put out at Tunis that he might have had his nose cut off if he had lived at Acre'.

[102] See p.29.

[103] One reflection - 'If tithes be found a grievance in England how much more must their weight be felt in Ireland?' - is practically word for word what his neighbour James Grattan was writing in his journal at the same time.

tithe question even in the face of agitation, he does not spare Grattan's parliament from the same charge. With his sixth 'cause' Parnell comes to one of the subjects closest to him, which was to inspire his one and only novel - 'the degraded state of the peasantry'. Discussing the English treatment of the native population, he remarks that the latter's desire for vengeance led to rebellion, not a mere wish for rapine and murder. On this subject he launches a significant attack on his own class of landlords:

> There were but too many instances in the last rebellion when we were the descendants of men who held it lawful to shoot a wild Irishman; and notwithstanding the magic of the Union, a stranger can readily distinguish the race of the conquerors from that of the conquered in the impervious insolence of the former and the sullen deference of the latter.

His approach leads him to what amounts almost to an idealisation of the rebels of 1798, where he claims for instance that they 'never violated a woman'.[104] He is, however, on stronger ground where he writes of the understandable terror of Protestant violence among the Catholic tenantry. He sees jury reform as no answer, as juries are composed of the landlord class anyway; a religious approach is equally pointless, since Roman Catholic landlords are at least as bad as the rest. Parnell's solution is to raise the peasantry in their own estimation by making municipal offices elective and salaried and encouraging open competition for them. Thus the gentry would become reliant on their local reputation to gain offices, and by the creation of a system of county administration the peasantry themselves would aspire to local office.[105]

Dealing with Republicanism in Ireland, Parnell saw this as a secondary

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[104] And gives his hostile Editor an opportunity to correct him by quoting a proclamation of the Commander-in-Chief at Wexford which shows they indubitably did.

[105] Parnell was in this idea, as in much else, well ahead of his time. The Municipal Reform Act of 1840 abolished the old self-perpetuating corporations and provided elective bodies for town government; however, the bill was passed only with difficulty, and the franchise stipulated for electors was high, while many local offices remained in the appointment of the Lord Lieutenant. Really representative local bodies of the kind Parnell advocated did not make their appearance until the Local Government Act of 1898.

cause of rebellion magnified by governments into a primary cause to obscure their own shortcomings. He confidently believed that reforms and Catholic emancipation would remove the need for, and therefore the inclination towards, revolution. He then progresses to his eighth cause, the Union; this is revealed as his chief topic, and he deals with it at far greater length than any other 'Cause'. I do not propose to do likewise, finding more to comment on in the early part of his treatise, as it shows more unpredictable opinions; as a son of Sir John Parnell he could be expected to be violently anti-Union and to blame much of Ireland's distress on this measure. His psychological view, of the disunited elements in Irish society each disliking the measure but not combating it because it penalised others as well as themselves, is provocative and well put; so is his demonstration that trade and security of property have suffered equally since 1800 and English Lords Lieutenant who 'find it an easier task passively to believe the misrepresentations of their boon companions than to question merchants and shopkeepers'.[106]

On the issue of the irrelevance of appealing to the 'utility' of the Union he comes as close to referring to an indigenous national identity as he ever does; he prefers, however, to attack the Union on the grounds that commitment to the government weakens as the size of the state unit increases and the incitement to create wealth becomes correspondingly weaker. Again and again he recurs to the equation which was to seem so obvious to reformers of a later age: an incentive to material industry means an accompanying increase in self-respect which in turn produces the progress of intellectual civilisation, hand in hand with material wealth.[107]

A long quotation will give the best idea possible of Parnell's particular combination of an embryonic nationalism with the values of a country gentleman. Once more, his point of departure is the Union. The

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[106] Enquiry, p.49.

[107] See ibid., p.55.

address is to the English nation:

> Why exact from her /Ireland/ so galling a sacrifice as her independence; a sacrifice which under similar circumstances no Englishman would endure to make to France? Are the English to be the sole possessors of national honour? And yet Irishmen must be supposed to be blind to their interests, when the very fountain of their national honour is forever drained, if they are heard to murmur.
>
> You tell us to interest ourselves in the glory of the English government; we tell you we cannot. Why? Because we cannot love our stepmother as our mother. Could you under the same circumstances feel what you require for France? On the contrary, in spite of yourselves, you despise us; we despise one another; as Irishmen we are the contempt of the world. You told us we should be rich, we are far poorer. You said we should be tranquil but our civil commotions are greater than ever. You said our religious distinctions should cease, they have acquired new rancour. You said English capital should go to Ireland, on the contrary all the capital of Ireland is drawn to England. Give us, then, back our independence; hunt our trade from your ports; that national spirit which lightened its shackles can assert its freedom; leave us to our rebellions, the courage that repressed them once can repress them again; take back the lenitives you would apply to our religious distinctions, we shall not always be bigots but shall one day acknowledge the maxim that by removing religious distinctions we remove religious animosities. These are evils that time and experience will remedy and we might yet be a happy and a wealthy people; but if you destroy the principle of national honour you destroy the very principle of wealth and happiness and our misery will be such as our baseness deserves, our poverty as complete as your narrow jealousy could desire.
>
> I am aware that this language will be thought the exaggerated expression of mistaken patriotism. It is not. The present situation in Ireland amply justifies it . . A sensible change has taken place in the national character; from being patriotic, high-spirited and generous the Irish are become abject, selfish and mercenary; they have no longer a respect for each other; their homes are no longer homes; that respectability of character which attaches importance and content to the idea of what is our own, is entirely unknown to them; and they prefer a paltry lodging in London and a transient glance at the refuse of London society to the noble mansions where their fathers were the centres of hospitality and the objects of gratitude and esteem. The finest seats in Ireland are now laid waste, the houses deserted, the trees felled. Why? Because what is thought of these things in Ireland is no longer of any consequence as long as it is not known at a London route.[108] To be praised by men devoid of importance is of little moment; and hence the great stimulus to national improvement is done away.

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[108] Used to mean a party or reception.

> When Ireland acquired its independence under the auspices of Mr. Fox, the Irish learned to respect each other; public applause became the great spur to patriotic efforts. It is an un-noticed, but it is a very striking and important effect, which was produced on the declaration of independence: the great capitalists seemed inspired with a new character; every gentleman built a palace and surrounded it with a paradise; the before-forgotten peasantry became objects of benevolence; their houses were made more convenient, their wages raised; agriculture was created[109] and new enterprise given to commerce. No expression can give an idea of the improvement which took place in Ireland immediately on the development of its national dignity.[110]

This passage shows how radical Parnell must have seemed to contemporary readers, especially of his own class; but it also shows that when he appealed to 'nationalism' he had by no means forsaken the interests of his class. An important reason to him why Parliament should return to Dublin was that the landowning class would then be in residence once more;[111] thus he wanted as a halfway measure that the Imperial parliament should sit in Dublin once every three years. He wrote emphatically:

> There is a more formidable party than the Roman Catholics in Ireland, which regards England with a jealous and indignant eye; it is the nation, it is the national feeling which, outraged and wounded, pervades all the Roman Catholics, all the Presbyterians, and all the enlightened and high-spirited part of churchmen.

But his own support for this was limited. That he recognised its existence was due more to his liberal idealism than to any sympathy of his own. For, practical as many of his ideas were, he was in essence an idealist. In parliament he confessed that 'nothing had given him greater pain since the short time that he had sat in parliament than the seeing how frequently great questions of justice and morality were sacrificed to expediency';[112] and in his Enquiry he remarked sadly how 'every event and every day /afforded/ proof how easily in Patriots as well as ministers, in

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[109] Here Parnell means 'encouraged'.

[110] Enquiry, p.59 et seq.

[111] Ibid, p.61

[112] 26 May 1818; Hansard 1, xxxviii, 969.

the self-appointed as in the regularly designated guardians of the public good, the slightest private convenience overbalances the greatest public interest'.[113] This idealism led him to pour calumny on the English government of Ireland as 'that long unbroken tissue of outrage, the monstrous blot in the monstrous history of European cabinets',[114] But he cannot be claimed as a 'nationalist': another long quotation, from his 'Conclusion', shows that he was in essence appealing to the Anglo-Irish gentry. Of British government, Parnell states:

> We /now/ see the ultimate effects: fanaticism, anarchy, rebellion. We see too the secondary causes: religious intolerance and civil oppression. . .
>
> It is a dispiriting task to endeavour to interest English ministers, an English parliament, I had almost added English patriots, in the welfare of Ireland; the present apprehension of its loss gives it a momentary importance; but in general the affairs of Ireland are considered not only with indifference but with contempt, and in spite of the fiat of a legislative union the nations in fact remain as severed and distinct in their local interests and feelings as in their geography.
>
> But I would repeat again to the remnant of that once important class of men, the Irish country gentlemen, that neither their dignity, nor their interest, nor their happiness can ever consist in setting themselves up as a party opposed to the mass of the peasantry and the majority of the nation. Their true and natural station is to be the protectors of their tenantry and peasantry; to enlighten their ignorance; to soften their prejudices; to repress but not to persecute either their civil or their political offences. But above all situations the situation of a country gentleman is most dignified and respectable when he stands forward incapable of a bribe and above the influence of any minister or party: a sure and immoveable defence of liberty and property, a guarantee of public right, the pride and local protector of his own immediate neighbourhood. But when country gentlemen, by any unnatural bias, are led to quit their true station, when instead of being the security of the peasantry they become their terror; when instead of a barrier to the ambitious views of government they are reduced to throw themselves upon its direction and become its instruments - such a reverse might have been unavoidable, may have been necessary, but still it is a reverse; still it is pregnant with insecurity, with incomparable degradation. Oh! do not lightly acquiesce in it, but examine what are the causes, what the circumstances, that led to it; and if more enlightened views,

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[113] Enquiry, p.64.

[114] Ibid.

> more prudent counsels, more temperate measures can make this unnatural thraldom dispensable, make such views, such counsels, such measures all your own; they must, they will, reconcile all interests; religious rancours will cease, political animosities will be composed, the poor man will be contented in his cabin, the rich man will be secure and respected in his palace.

It is not over-imaginative to see his grandson both sharing this ideal and responding to the appeal.

An interesting insight into how William Parnell's ideas struck his contemporaries is provided by the second edition of the Enquiry, which contains a preface and Notes by an infuriated 'Friend to the Constitution'. 'Of all the inflammatory productions which have appeared in England since Jacobinism raised its baleful head', states the editor, 'this pamphlet seems to have the most dangerous tendency'; he sees his notes as an antidote to the poison disseminated by Parnell's 'pestilent libel'. These annotations, written in a sour and pedantic style, play a consistent coda to Parnell's sharp fluency: where they are not illogical they are often irrelevant.[115] He denies that anti-Catholic discrimination remains, while he himself repeats every accusation made from 1641 on; on the question of rebellions he accuses Parnell of 'a design to inflame the multitude' - 'he is guilty of the grossest fictions for that purpose'. Though all Parnell ever meant by 'independence' was an independent legislature, his views are seen as 'Jacobinical' and 'incendiary'. The overall effect of this edition is to present a vivid dialogue between reactionary and liberal in the context of early nineteenth-century Irish affairs.

The same analysis as is evident in his Enquiry is the basis for Parnell's Historical apology for the Irish Catholics.[116] It is dedicated to the Duke of Bedford in admiration of his short-lived administration, and unlike the first edition of the Enquiry it was published under Parnell's

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[115] As where he points out that the British legislature 'were not partial in their restrictions on Irish Papists', for instance.

[116] Quotations are from the second edition 'with additions and corrections', Dublin, 1807.

own name. His expressed motive in producing the pamphlet is interesting: 'To give security to every Irishman in his property and person, both of which must be exposed to risk as long as any civil distinctions are imposed on so numerous a body as the Irish Roman Catholics'. Though many of his readers credited him with a wider ambition than this, it is unlikely that he subscribed to the inflammatory ideals attributed to him. It is the advisability of removing anti-Catholic distinctions even on the grounds of prudence alone that lies behind much of his case. He does nonetheless present a strong historical argument for the injustice of their treatment, and incidentally defines his approach to history, which was well ahead of its time in condemning secondary sources as a sole basis and undertaking to work entirely from contemporary accounts.

There are occasional bouquets offered to the present government, at least in comparison to those past; this and other characteristics of the Apology suggest that the reception of his anonymous Enquiry impelled Parnell to be more moderate in his second pamphlet. But the implication of his argument is as damning an indictment of the British government of Ireland as his previous work. His distinction between the causes of political rebellion and those of Catholic discontent imply the factor of nationalism; but he does not follow this up, preferring to concentrate on his thesis that it was their maltreatment of citizens, not any innate principle of Catholicism, that made Irishmen of this faith such unsatisfactory subjects. This is not presented as a defence of the Catholic Church, which he once more professes to disagree with, but of its members. Dealing with Irish history century by century, he points out how little religion was taken into account by contemporary writers of the Tudor period; the breaking of faith by the English and the confiscation policy were at the root of disaffection. He also denies that Irish rebels were 'traitors', using the terms of the loyalty oath to substantiate this. The English knew that the Irish submitted as feudal princes, not as subjects; and

> like all men conscious of duplicity, they acted with inconsistency; though they began to call the Irish chieftains rebels, they felt they were not so; and whenever these chieftains were induced to submit their submission was always received as a compliment, not as a matter of right.

Parnell anticipated a much later view of Irish history by seeing Irish history from the Plantagenet era as the rejection of a great opportunity to make a solid and productive colony, in favour of quick gains from an avaricious economic policy.[117] Even under Catholic Mary Tudor, he points out, exploitation and therefore rebellions continued. As for the behaviour of the Irish Catholics at this time, 'they are the only sect that ever resumed power without exercising vengeance'.[118] Well informed in the detail of Irish history, Parnell deals lucidly and pungently with 'the extinction of the principality of Thomond' in the following reign as an example of Catholic English domination and progresses from this to an examination of the invasion of Gaelic rights by English officials. Even in the rebellions of Elizabeth's reign he sees Catholic zeal as far less influential than has generally been supposed, finding substantiation in Cox and Moryson. 'It was on one side a powerful government possessed with the spirit of rapine, invading property and privileges not its own; it was on the other side a band of feeble but lawful princes fighting without hope yet fighting with tenacity, because they fought for power and independence'. We may agree with him; but it was not a commonly acceptable thesis at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Parnell's references to the humaneness and civilised intelligence of Irish leaders like O'Neill compared to their English counterparts must also have been highly controversial. The 'licentious system of English cruelty',

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[117] A thesis which may have been inspired by Sir John Davies's Discovery.

[118] He contrasts this bitterly with Irish Protestants, who ignore this chapter of Irish history: 'So natural is it that lions should be always represented as vanquished when men are the painters' - p.37.

he held, had no place in Ireland; Elizabeth had 'all the rapaciousness of a land pirate' and Essex embodied 'the duplicity of conscious villainy'. The Irish had no legal resort, 'having to go to law with the devil when the court was held in hell'. The degeneration of 'old English' into 'mere Irish' occupies several pages, with an intelligent account of the Desmond fortunes;[119] the laws and social ethos of the Irish are compared to those of the English; and Parnell's final judgment is that it is only surprising that there were not more rebellions.[120] He eulogises the leaders of the Nine Years' War - 'O'Donnell was a hero, O'Neill was something still better' - and sees this episode not as a rebellion but as a war, and 'one of the most singular yet least noticed revolutions that ever took place in any country'.[121] It was only after this era that Catholic bigotry became an appreciable factor, and that 'English' and 'Protestant' slowly became identified. The syndromewas begun by Elizabeth, in her Irish affairs 'among the most oppressive and vindictive tyrants that have insulted the feelings and outraged the interests of mankind'; her successor, on the other hand, showed 'admirable wisdom' in his policy of teaching the Irish that they were English subjects[122] and thus peacefully destroying feudal anachronisms and Celtic customs; James I's one great mistake was land confiscation. The first anti-Catholic legislation <u>implanted</u> disaffection, because

> their sense of honour was lively and resentful . . their conduct frank and manly . . their minds liberal, enlarged, rich in the natural luxuriance of talent, and grateful to culture . . /they had/ moral and physical courage, disinterestedness and promptitude. We see in their conduct nothing paltry, wavering or selfish.

These wrongs, with the longstanding grievances from previous reigns, led to the rebellions under Charles brought on by Strafford's wholesale confiscation plans, The Puritans created Catholic bigotry in this period and then decided

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[119] Pp 65-71.

[120] P.71.

[121] P.85.

[122] P.95.

it had to be stamped out; but the Catholics of the Pale still identified with the Government until the last possible moment, when necessity and self-respect drove them at last to ally with 'the native Irish'. From this time on, rebellion had a Catholic character.

At this point Parnell ceases his historical argument and argues instead for the removal of current restrictions. Leaving moral right aside, he sees them simply as 'a losing speculation' for English interests, in terms of alienating potential military manpower and weakening commerce. In fact, Parnell sees an identity of interest between those who support Catholic restrictions and the people of his opinion who oppose them:

> They wish to secure the forfeited properties to their present owners; so do we. They wish to put an end to Catholic rebellions; so do we. They wish to curb the bigotry and intolerance of the Catholic religion; so do we.

Persecution, he often repeats, is the reason both for the flourishing of the Catholic religion in Ireland and for its peculiar nature in that country. Parnell points up the illogic of anti-Catholicism with examples of other phenomena in science and economics that follow a logical line of argument but cannot be apprehended by 'vulgar opinion';[123] in this as elsewhere, he manifests a strong strain of intellectual élitism. The coronation oath cannot be used as a shield against reform as long as the English continue to violate the Treaty of Limerick, 'a monument of the most flagrant perfidy that ever disgraced a nation'.[124] The Irish Catholics have proved their loyalty to the person of the King - certainly compared to the Irish Protestant, 'who only loves his King as a Dublin coal merchant loves a foul wind, because it increases his monopoly'.[125]

Finally, Parnell gives a comprehensive list of current discriminations against Catholics. As in his Enquiry he attacks Orangeism and the Twelfth of July parades,

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[123] P. 130.

[124] P. 132.

[125] P. 135.

> notoriously intended by the one party and felt by the other as a parade of insulting domination . . it requires no great spirit of prophecy to foretell that if the English cabinet go on preparing every year more materials for a civil war in Ireland, the public celebration of one of these days will afford the trifling cause, the little spark, which is ever wanting to make the train of mischief explode.[126]

On the whole question of discrimination he asks 'how can we torture with this refined barbarity?' and then mounts his most bitter attack yet:

> O hearts of barbarians, of zealots, of Protestants! the flames which made the name of Bonner accursed, the hideous night of St. Bartholemew, are not so great a disgrace to the character of man as your cold conniving bigotry . .
>
> They at least had the excuse, the varnish, of religious feeling; they sprang not from selfishness but from a vision of fanaticism as inscrutable as physical insanity. These men merely made a mistake; they worshipped a demon and thought him God.
>
> But you, with perfect possession of your faculties, with a calm pulse and minds unaffected by the slightest emotion, perpetuate statutes to gall the best and most honourable feelings of many millions of men whose sensations of pleasure and pain are exactly of the same nature as those from which your own happiness or misery is derived. [127]

This classical liberalism is adulterated with the intellectual arrogance already referred to:

> Can we find too strong terms to expose to Europe, everywhere else enlightened and liberal, the dull and malignant conduct of the Irish and English Protestants? Can we find words to express our astonishment that the English cabinet should become an echo, not to ravings of Bedlam, but to a cento of everything that is gross, vulgar and perverse: Dublin guilds, common councilmen, aldermen, corporations: fat fools that have been hitherto nondescripts in the classes of science, literature and good sense?[128]

Parnell's conclusion is an apposite recasting of the fable about the wolf and lamb: accusing the lamb of muddying the stream, though the latter paddles downstream from his drinking-pool, the wolf makes this and the lamb's parents' supposed sins the excuse for eating him.

> Pride and cruelty never want an excuse to oppress . . for accusing is proving where malice and force are joined together in the prosecution. As to the business of this world, when Lambs are the accused and Wolves the judges, the injured must expect no better quarter; especially when the heart's blood of one is the

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[126] P. 40.

[127] P. 143.

[128] P.145.

nourishment and entertainment of the other'.[129]

Parnell's eloquent pamphlet was given at least one favourable notice, by Sydney Smith in the Edinburgh Review:

> We are truly glad to agree so entirely with Mr. Parnell upon this great question: we admire his way of thinking: and most cordially recommend his work to the attention of the public . . his remarks /are/ full of truth, of good sense, and of political courage.

Opinion in Ireland, even among liberals, was hardly as sympathetic; but it was Parnell's next work that aroused most opposition.

This was Maurice and Berghetta; or, The Priest of Rahery, described not unfairly by Allibone's literary dictionary as 'a political novel'.[130] As a period piece it has great interest; and its intrinsic qualities are far greater than this. Its purpose is nonetheless polemical, combining Parnell's two particular preoccupations: recognition of Catholic civil rights and the improvement of rural life in Ireland. The book is dedicated to 'The Priesthood of Ireland', of whom Parnell declares himself a staunch admirer. (This does not mean an admirer of Roman Catholicism; he states that, unfortunately, with acceptance by the State, Catcholicism will be exposed to 'the contamination of the Castle and the Vatican; and it would be difficult to say in which of these petty courts the foullest traffic to corrupt the purity of individual principle has been carried on'.)

In the Introduction that follows this dedication Parnell occupies himself with the pitiful state of rural Ireland;[131] interestingly, he attacks laizzez-faire economics as irrelevant in the Irish situation, where Adam Smith is invoked to justify starvation, though Parnell had spoken strongly in favour of this economic policy in Parliament.[132] This leads to a prophetic attack on the government policy with regard to famine fever, giving a

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[129] p. 142.

[130] Allibone's Dictionary of Literature, ii, 1510.

[131] See quotations from this on pp 115-6 above.

[132] See p. 117 above.

graphic picture of rural destitution following an epidemic.[133] He adds

> It will immediately be said, why make Mr. Peel accountable for the effects of the atmosphere and the seasons? What has his administration to do with famine and fever? Nothing certainly, if these evils arose entirely from the inclemency of the times and seasons; but if the intolerable degree of these evils had their origin in the want of foresight, of prudence, and of accumulation, which always characterises an oppressed and degraded people, then his administration must have had a very great concern in producing these effects.[134]

Recognition of equal rights for Catholics, and the improvement of the minds of the Irish population, would lead to different attitudes both towards the country and within it; from this Parnell inferred, with the optimistic logic of his age, that economic improvement was axiomatic. He shows, however, an approach to social psychology ahead of his time in his distinction between the 'domestic' virtues characteristic of the English and the 'anti-domestic' virtues of the Irish, traditionally vivacious, sociable and polished at every level; the causes of this are obvious in the rural system where improvement to their miserable homes is discouraged, the low supply of books leads to group amusements,[135] and the lower classes are excluded from the country's civil business.[136] As well as accounting for rowdy wakes and the frequency of faction fighting, these sufferings have produced the compassionate and generous nature of the Irish compared to the English. The introduction to Maurice and Berghetta can be read individually as a literate and analytical tract on rural Irish problems, and this is the approach Parnell wished readers to take to the novel itself:

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[133] Again, purely from first-hand accounts. He concludes: 'And you see everywhere cabins fallen down where you are told the family died of the fever!' Cf. the anecdote in Arland Ussher's The Face and Mind of Ireland where Ussher's uncle says of a ruined hovel 'There was some weakness in the whole family and they all died'.

[134] xxix.

[135] Parnell believed that the availability of more reading matter would encourage people to spend their time peacably at home instead of joining in wild carousals.

[136] xxxviii.

> If the reader should feel disappointment in the want of dramatic interest in the following Tale, let him consider that the Author's object is not to write a novel but to place such observations on the manners of the Irish peasantry as have occurred to him in a less formal shape than that of a regular dissertation.

Nonetheless, the story is worth a brief treatment. It deals with the fortunes of Maurice O'Neal, a peasant orphan who by industry and intelligence improves his lot beyond recognition; his story is told by his guardian, the Priest of Rahery. Maurice's life is, however, not all happiness; his young wife dies, and he becomes involved with a well-intentioned but hasty Gaelic aristocrat who has fallen on hard times and attempts to right his lot by rebellion. After this failure Maurice's sister Una emigrates to Spain where her ancient descent from the O'Neills is recognised; his children follow her and settle there, equally recognised and respected.

This is in essence the story; though a Gothic novel in its melodrama and characterisation, it is remarkable for the strong sociological didacticism throughout. Parnell's emphases are first, what the Irish could achieve by industry: wealth comes easily, almost inevitably, to Maurice simply by industrious and intelligent work. Linked with this is the author's second preoccupation: what the Irish farmer can learn from the English. One of the most important parts of the book deals with Maurice's visit to England, his impressions of English farming, and how he introduces new methods to Rahery. Thirdly, Parnell attacks the uselessness and viciousness of 'old Irish' ways. Even in attractive figures like Maurice's friends the Hi Sullivan Beeres, their kingliness is too inclined to dwell in the past; in Merrit McCormick, villain of the piece, his garrulity and stinging tongue lead him to informing, premature senility, and insanity; and Rose, his alcoholic herbalist mother, is little better. Nonetheless, the descent of the O'Neals from kings is never forgotten, and is heavily emphasised in the Spanish section of the book; and Rory Oge, the Hi Sullivan's faithful and resourceful retainer, epitomises all the best Irish qualities of ingenuity and intelligence.

Parnell, if self-confessedly no novelist, had a more than capable way with a story. His characterisation, for all its didacticism, remains cleverly ambivalent: Una O'Neal is beautiful and gentle, but susceptible to pride and hardness; Headcroft, the English farmer, is likeable but lumpish; James Hi Sullivan is a hero, but an unreasonable one. Maurice and his Berghetta are allowed perfection - but even Berghetta rather too much so, as in her over-ready and fatalistic embracing of death after her mother's decease. Parnell's sharper observations are stated with economy and wit: on the English liking for pugilistic contests he writes:

> This same savage temper which Christianity put an end to at Rome has been renewed in England by that sickening affectation of honest coarseness and brutality which is mistaken for manliness in this country.[137]

Of the country round the princely but decrepit castle of the Hi Sullivan Beeres, Maurice recalls:

> I had no refuge but the seashore, where a Hi Sullivan was never found, for they looked on the sea as an element fit only for Englishmen and smugglers and they even disdained to catch the fine fish that frequented their coast.[138]

Another emphasis of Parnell's is a strong plea for religious toleration, primarily in the shape of a long homily from the Priest to Maurice's Spanish son-in-law on the advisability of encouraging a diversity of sects. This is couched in the language of an eighteenth-century philosophe, and sounds strangely in the mouth of a rural curate. Elsewhere also Parnell's personal biases emerge strongly, as for instance in the high value he puts on security of property; Maurice is perfectly content with his cottage, and on inheriting the Headcroft fortune rejoices only in the fact that it will make his children secure. Another bias of Parnell's was a dislike of what he saw as the Irish vices of pride and levity; the grandiose expatriate Irish of the Continental armies lead James and Una astray through pride and Merrit is damned forever by his levity.

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[137] p.63.

[138] p.101.

Through Maurice and Berghetta Parnell proclaims himself in favour of a simple and godly life among a sort of Irish yeomanry whose Catholicism responds to the benevolent patriarchs of priests; whose best qualities are intelligence and perspicacity, but which latter have to be guided; and who could learn greatly from English ways instead of wasting their time defaming that country, however richly she deserves it. For all his condemnations, though, an equivocal note remains, especially with regard to the English. Maurice notes their coldness and aloofness, even to friends and neighbours:

> These people have no look, language or manner that expresses affection, but they are great critics of the proprieties; all their conversation too consists in commonplace observations, which extreme inanity seems to arise as much from the coldness of their hearts as from the poverty of their imagination.

Yet, he observes, 'notwithstanding these great deficiencies in manners and character, in point of conduct and the virtues of their station they far exceed us'.[139]

Parnell's Irish characters, it may be noted, never speak in brogue or with any of the idiosyncrasies of Samuel Lover's; but the cadences, humour and subtleties of rural speech are faultlessly caught. Though Una and Maurice shine because their English was taught them by an English widow with 'a good accent', Parnell shows a real appreciation of the richly Irish use of English among country people that far exceeds the taste of his class for 'Irish Bulls' - although this does not mitigate his anger at what he sees as Irish vices.

Whatever impact Maurice and Berghetta made upon the reading public must have been considerably increased by a long and vitriolic notice in the Quarterly Review of April 1819.[140] The first edition of the novel had been printed anonymously, but the author's name was given in advertisements; and it is on Parnell himself that the reviewer directs most

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[139] p. 57.

[140] No. xlii, pp. 471-486.

of his fury. Beginning with a sharp attack on the novel's own merits, he satirises 'an Ultonian Utopia . . where everything which use could require or taste wish for is provided, down to a fashionable accent'. From this he progresses to attacking the 'popish' narrator as unconvincingly tolerant given his calling, and has much sarcastic play at the expense of the 'recondite mysteries' of agriculture learnt by Maurice in England, and the 'royal peasants' who people the story. The synopsis of the plot given by the reviewer is garbled; but some of his criticisms are apt enough, such as that the priests to whom Parnell dedicates his work would hardly be pleased by the self-confessedly inadequate clerical narrator, who regains his faith by reading books written by Protestants. Nonetheless, he misses Parnell's important distinction between the religious and the social functions of the Irish priesthood, and similarly concentrates on one side only of Parnell's argument regarding English virtues and Irish vices, saying that the author's attitude is doubly insulting to Ireland when 'Mr. Parnell himself, with all his patriotism, is a boon - and that of no very late date - from England to Ireland'.[141] The author's facts and theories are attacked and ridiculed, and the conclusion of the review aims a shaft at Parnell's political career:

> It may appear incredible that any man should publish a book at once so mischievous and so absurd, and venture to usher it in by an introduction which talks political economy ex cathedra and sneers at Adam Smith and all the puny statesmen who have governed Ireland from the earliest to the present time; but there is a circumstance which mitigates our surprise: the attention of Parliament was during the last session solicited to two bills, introduced with sufficient pomp, for the alleviation of some of those tremendous evils under which Ireland is represented as labouring - the one was a bill for the education of children employed in cotton factories, the other for regulating the office of coroner in Ireland; their chief enactments were some paltry details, either impracticable or incomprehensible. These bills were for a short time a bye-word among those who had looked at them; and they sank under the weight of their own inconsistencies before they had reached any debatable stage: - they were from the same pen and in the same spirit as the Priest of Rahery.[142]

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[141] Quarterly Review, xlii (April 1819), p.482. The intention is ironic.

[142] Ibid., p.486.

This indictment produced another pamphlet from the author, the last he was to publish.[143] This was not, as might be expected, an irate refutation of the Review's attack on Maurice and Berghetta; Parnell instead professed to welcome the criticism of the work itself and the publicity accorded to Irish affairs in the process. What he takes issue with is the reviewer's ignorance of agriculture, and especially farming in Ireland; much of the pamphlet is merely a re-statement of the attempts made in Maurice and Berghetta to explain the advantages of English methods of cultivation. He also corrects the reviewer on details of Gaelic terminology and genealogy and defends his own indictment of Irish faults, which he says are retained only through lack of education and a certain complacency:

> I have never doubted but that this evil has been much assisted by the opinion generally received in Ireland that the Irish peasantry are a much superior race to the English peasantry and that whatever failings they may have are to be excused in consideration of their wit.[144]

A similar tendency, he says, was evinced by the Irish newspaper which attacked him for describing the Irish as addicted to faction fighting and then reported several such incidents in its columns a few days later.[145]

In his own extenuation he quotes a review from the Irish Farmer's Journal which gives an interesting contemporary view:

> We had heard a great deal of Mr Parnell's new work - Maurice and Berghetta - and certainly under the point of view in which it was placed we were by no means disposed to regard it with charity. We were told that he had called the Irish base, cowardly, and savage, and when we considered the strength of the expressions and knew they were not always true, we certainly felt indignant that an Irishman could be found who would bestow such epithets upon his countrymen. We had even conceived that this book was written in a true spirit of illiberality and that its chief aim was to lower the Irish character in the estimation of the world, and even rejoiced that the courage, generosity and spirit of our country had been already so far established in the opinion of foreigners that every word spoken against them would bear with it a conviction of falsehood. This was precisely what we imagined of Mr Parnell; and judge of our

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[143] A Letter to the Editor of the Quarterly Review (Dublin, 1820).

[144] Letter, p.13.

[145] Ibid., p.16. This implies that controversy over the work was wide-spread.

> surprise when we found him loud in the praises of his countrymen wherever it was possible to afford them praise, and where he was obliged to censure doing it solely and merely for the purpose of improvement. It is a well-known fact that the first step towards amendment is a consciousness of error and that Irishmen should feel this consciousness is part of the design of this work. We shall certainly give him credit for his wish that it may work its proper effect; and so far as we are concerned, we shall assist him in giving additional publicity to that portion of his view which falls within our immediate province.[146]

Regarding religion, Parnell stated his own views definitely in answer to the Review's barely-concealed accusations of apostasy:

> I consider the Irish Protestant Church as at present constituted to be the most expensive failure of an experiment that ever was persisted in and wholly inapplicable to the circumstances of the country; yet on this account I feel no alienation from the Protestant religion, no disinclination to enjoy the many advantages which the Church confers upon its followers.[147]

He patiently repeats what would seem to need no re-statement, that his aim is to discourage sedition, not to foment it, and that as long as discrimination against Catholics exists the mere facts of Irish history will in themselves appear inflammatory.[148] Eventually he returns to the question of the novel itself and tells of some changes he expects to make in the next edition:

> As to the literary merit of the work, I pretty much agree with the Reviewer, and I think his remarks just . . I could not but be aware that by making the characters of Una and Hi Sullivan selfish I destroyed the interest of the work as a novel, but I wished to show that an inclination to turbulence generally existed in captious and selfish characters . . I seem, however, to have failed of my aim and have therefore restored to these two characters the aimable qualities they should naturally possess.
>
> It was plain that after the death of Maurice it would be impossible to renew the interest of the work and that nothing could sound more improbable to English readers than the latter part of the book /the careers of the young O'Neals in Spain/. But I did not write for English readers, but with the hope of forming a popular book that should interest the peasantry of Ireland. I had to speak very harsh, very true remarks, and the only way of making amends was to flatter the national vanity of my countrymen . . neither has this aim been disappointed, for

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[146] Letter, p.4.

[147] Ibid., p.18.

[148] Ibid., p.19. 'Emancipate the Catholics and you may call up the memory of old Irish chieftains with as little danger as is found in the narratives of old Scottish chieftains.'

> though the work contains no very flattering description of the habits of the peasantry in Ireland it is read and liked by them; and I hope may become as popular, and with all its defects be more instructive, than the Lives of the Rapparees . .
>
> If I had imagined that the work was exposed to the severity of criticism which it has experienced, I should have followed the course which I have now taken: that is, I should have adapted one edition to Ireland, another to England. As the English Reviewers insist upon making me accountable for a novel, I shall endeavour to give it more of the character of that style of writing . . a cheap edition now printing in Ireland will retain the Spanish scenes; without some qualification of this kind so much censure of their old habits would not be tolerated by the Irish peasantry.[149]

Returning to the reviewer's quibbles Parnell points out, a propos of a farm labourer's diet, that 'that food is cheapest to the working-classes not which costs them least but which enables them to earn most', and re-states his strong case for weaning the Irish labourer from his diet of potatoes. His view is that, besides the trouble of cooking and bringing the potatoes out to the men in the fields, their nutritional value is exaggerated and the fevers accompanying a bad harvest fatal. Over-population and total reliance on the potato, he warns, could have dire results; in this prophecy as in much else, William Parnell was a man ahead of his time,[150] though in common with many contemporary theoreticians he underestimated the dietetic value of the potato, especially combined with milk, and did not realise the great superiority of this fare to bread and tea.

Statistics enable Parnell to refute the Review's jibes at Maurice's farming successes, and examples from his own experience are called up to demonstrate the advisability of encouraging meat-eating among the rural Irish. He prefers to leave political questions to a later work, but sharply recapitulates on the lack of achievement of British governments in

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[149] Letter, pp. 21-3.

[150] See his comment on use of store cattle, above p.114. This measure in time of famine, he maintained, would keep food prices steady, instead of inflating them with government purchase of meal and potatoes.

Ireland, quoting Burke's indictment of Chesterfield and thus neatly turning the tables on the reviewer, who has professed admiration for both. A footnote to this short but forceful pamphlet deals with the Protestant church in Ireland, attacking its Establishment in terms that show once more that Parnell had a grip of political realities well in advance of the general view in early nineteenth-century Ireland.

The Quarterly did not let matters rest there, but answered Parnell's Letter with a further broadside,[151] amounting to little more than a re-statement of their previous criticisms and incidentally including many mis-spellings and inaccuracies where the characters and plot of Maurice and Berghetta are concerned. The only new point raised is the question of Parnell's announcement of a separate edition of the work for Irish leaders; perhaps reasonably, the Review attacked his retention of 'all the nonsense' for the Irish. The potato diet is defended warmly, invoking Arthur Young's impressions of the healthy Irish, and Parnell's father Sir John quoted as an example of the good character of Irish public officers. Maurice and Berghetta has become, it is claimed, 'the jest-book of the United Kingdom wherever it has been read or heard of'. As for Parnell:

> Whether advanced in a bill or in a novel, in sad reality or in fantastic fiction, his theories are the wildest yet the meanest - the most impracticable and the most idle - even if they could be put into practice - that we have ever witnessed . . /He is/ an aimable but weak, well-intentioned but extravagant gentleman who ever hoped by the agency of a novel to eradicate sedition and potatoes out of Ireland and who thinks that the example of his hero is on the whole beneficial to his countrymen because, with the little faults of high treason and suicide he combined a high and ardent love for short-handled spades and long-handled scythes.[152]

This last shaft showed an imperfect grasp of the plot of the novel (confusing the characters of Hi Sullivan and Maurice) as well as of the author's intention; but it remained the last word. William Parnell died

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[151] Quarterly Review, xxiii, no. xlvi, pp. 360-73.

[152] Ibid., p. 373.

before he could answer. In retrospect, he did not need to. The record of his life, and a close reading of his remarkably interesting works, show him a man of intelligence, foresight and dedication; and history in the long run was not to bear out his crabbed and censorious reviewers, but to vindicate men of his minority opinions.

In this section I have attempted to give a picture of the Parnell family before Charles Stewart Parnell, emphasising not the contemporary aspects of their lives but rather what they left behind them to shape the lives of their descendants, whether in the form of money, property or reputation. In the case of Sir John Parnelll, his reputation can be seen to have been based largely on misapprehension of the real nature of his politics, though its influence was nonetheless potent for that. The Congletons are interesting mainly in being fairly close relations of Charles Stewart Parnell who pursued parliamentary careers and lived in London at almost the same time that he did, but with whom there is no evidence that he maintained contact. In Avondale Samuel Hayes bequeathed a tangible inheritance to Charles Stewart Parnell; and with it, the tradition of a showpiece estate as well as that of an improving landlord. The shade of William Parnell, however, seems most directly influential. It was often said, with questionable accuracy, that Parnell knew nothing of Irish history;[153] but one thing which is certain is that he must have read the works of his grandfather, and that his father did so before him. What one absorbs from these books is a strong sense of the criminal inefficiency as well as the ethical injustice of the British way of ruling Ireland, in a historical as well as a contemporary context; this is coupled with a forceful appeal to the country gentry to enter politics in this spirit

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[153] O'Shea, Parnell, ii, 161; J. McCarthy. Reminiscences, ii, 99.

and work for a change. Though warmly sympathetic to country people, there is a strong bias against urban middle-class interests in politics which is again as characteristic of the grandson as it is of the grandfather.
I have yet to discuss the background of Parnell's mother, with its well-publicised anti-British flavour; but in the life and works of his paternal grandfather must lie a great influence on Parnell's political development. The same heritage that brought him Avondale carried with it an idea of the political duties inherent in such a position, cast in a strongly anti-British, if not purely radical, mould. These influences would have acted no less strongly on Parnell for being imbibed in the surroundings of the mid-nineteenth century Wicklow which I have profiled in my last section. The next section of my work will deal with Parnell's immediate family and with Avondale at the time of his childhood. To such topics as these I believe this treatment of Parnell's forbears is a necessary prelude.

Part 3

The Family of John Henry Parnell,

1811-1859

Introduction

There is little that is concrete known about Charles Stewart Parnell's father. Unlike his son, he created no stir in the world; and unlike his own father, he left no literary bequest behind him. The one personal record available is the absorbing journal he kept during his tour of North America and its incompleteness, as well as its many excisions, make this less valuable than it might otherwise be. The picture that emerges from a synthesis of this and secondary sources is, quite simply, of a country gentleman with little that is unpredictable about his make-up. John Henry Parnell fits smoothly into the Wicklow profiled in my first chapter: except in one all-important particular. He did not marry, as might have been expected, into one of the neighbouring county families, an Acton or a Truell, nor did he choose one of his relatives among the Wicklow Howards; but during his extended Grand Tour of North America he met and married (with uncharacteristic haste) an eighteen-year-old girl, Delia Tudor Stewart. She outlived him by nearly forty years, and brought up their many children with a new slant to their Wicklow county conditioning. It was not, as St. John Ervine dismissed it, a childhood in a milieu 'out of the novels of Lever';[1] it was something much more complex.

This paper, however, will not deal with the life of Mrs Parnell and her children after her husband's death, for this is a subject requiring individual treatment. I intend simply to examine the life of John Henry Parnell, his marriage, and Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell's life up to the time of her husband's death in 1859. This event meant a total change for the family both in their way of life and in the influences which surrounded the upbringing of the children.

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[1] St John Ervine, Parnell (London 1925), p.40.

I shall also deal briefly with the children of the marriage, up to 1859, and with the childhood of Charles Stewart as far as the same year. The really formative years of his youth were probably those of his rather haphazardly organised adolescence, following his father's death, which occurred when he was just thirteen; this period will form the next part of my study, and I shall also reserve for this a detailed treatment of Avondale as it was when Charles Stewart inherited it. What follows is the background to Parnell's youth and, in a sense, to his later life.

Chapter 1

The Country Gentleman: John Henry Parnell

I

William Parnell-Hayes and Frances Howard had only two children: Catherine, born in 1810, and John Henry, born in 1811. Tradition has it that William left Avondale to Catherine, as it was always to pass to a younger child, and that she deeded it to her brother in order that he might be better endowed when competing for the hand of Delia Tudor Stewart; this seems completely unfounded in fact. Marie Hughes, in her comprehensive and otherwise accurate account of 'The Parnell Family',[1] repeats this story and adds that Catherine granted Avondale to John in return for a mortgage of £10,000. Catherine was endowed with £10,000 drawn on the Avondale estate, but this was a marriage portion and came from an arrangement made by her father in 1815.[2] Moreover, memorials for deeds dated as early as 1823 refer unequivocally to John Henry Parnell (still a minor) as the heir of Avondale and the other lands that came to the Parnells through Samuel Hayes.[3] It would have been strange if the arrangement had been otherwise, for the only other property William Parnell had to bequeath was the much-mortgaged Parnell estate in Armagh, of which the head landlord was Trinity College. The idea that John Henry Parnell came into the Avondale estate only in 1834 is completely inaccurate. It may have originated from a fancy of Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell's or Emily Dickinson's; neither lady was a stickler for accuracy. It is true that Avondale twice passed to a younger son, but in the many recapitulations

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[1] Marie Hughes, 'The Parnell Family' in Dublin Hist. Rec., xvi, no. 3 (March 1961), pp. 86-95.

[2] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 761.252.516787.

[3] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 786.555.532090; also Mem. for 1835, 14.173.

of Samuel Hayes's celebrated will that are to be found in Memorials in the Registry of Deeds, there is no mention of such a stipulation. When William Parnell inherited the estate, it was because his elder brother was left the larger family seat in the Queen's County; Avondale was a comparatively minor holding. When Charles Stewart Parnell inherited it before his elder brother, John Howard, the explanation was that the latter was to be provided for by his father's relative, Sir Ralph Howard. In 1821 John Henry Parnell inherited his father's estate at the Meeting of the Waters, and his sister a considerable fortune; any other arrangement would have been unexpected, and need not be looked for.

After their father's unexpected death John and Catharine were put in charge of the Chancery Court. The adults who represented them legally and are described as 'next friends' (though not as legal guardians) were Thomas Parnell, William's evangelist brother; the Hon. Hugh Howard, their grandfather on the maternal side; and the Hon. Granville Leveson Proby (later Lord Carysfort), who married another Howard aunt, Hugh's and Frances's sister.[4] At the time of her marriage in 1835 Catherine was living at Bushy Park, the home of her uncle Ralph Howard (Hugh's son).[5] Her brother's upbringing and later life reflect the same sort of background; travelling in the United States on Christmas Day in 1834 he recalled: 'Christmas Day in the morning - how one misses the old family servants coming round to wish one 'many happy Christmases', pockets full of money, etc. - the roast beef and plumb /sic/ pudding and the merry family party in the evening'.[6] John went to school at Eton and was admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge, on 30 April 1831 (mistakenly entered as 'Richard');

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[4] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 786.555.532090. Thomas Hall, a solicitor, was the guardian appointed by the court for John Henry Parnell.

[5] See Catherine's marriage settlement, Reg. of Deeds Mem. for 1835, 14.173.

[6] J.H. Parnell's 'Journal of a Tour in the United States', 1834-5 (hereafter cited as 'Journal'), p.109.

he matriculated at the end of that year.[7] His tour of America was during 1834-5; after his return to Wicklow he became a Justice of the Peace, Deputy Lieutenant of the county, and Chairman of the Rathdrum Board of Guardians, as well as M.F.H. of the Rathdrum Hunt. The date of his marriage is generally given as May 1834, but was actually 31 May 1835. His premature death took place on 3 July 1859.

The only first-hand account of John Henry Parnell's life is in the period from October 1834 to April 1835; a diary kept while travelling in Canada, the United States and Mexico.[8] This journal begins at Frederickton, Canada, on 7 October 1834, when Parnell and his travelling-companion, Lord Powerscourt, were staying at Government House there; parties, snipe-shooting and flirtations are vividly recorded, along with impressions of Canadian life and manners. Always critical and discriminating, the journal appears written to be read, often adopting a didactic tone;[9] the numerous expurgations in the text are further evidence of this.

Parnell and Powerscourt travelled to Montreal via Quebec, and thence to Albany and New York. Constantly on the look-out for 'Yankeeism' and 'American impertinence', it is not surprising that he found them; but he quickly learnt to appreciate the style and vivacity of American women. Nonetheless, on 4 December he moved on to Philadelphia, 'hoping never again to see New York except for the purpose of leaving it for Liverpool'.[10] Here the parties continued, as did Parnell's criticism of American manners in society.[11] Baltimore was his next stop, where he visited a country house in Maryland that reminded him of Shelton Abbey. On 22 December Parnell

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[7] Alumni Cantabrigiensis, ed. J.A. Venn (1953), part II, v, 33.

[8] Purchased from Mrs. Parnell (widow of John Howard Parnell) in 1926; now in N.L.I. (MS 2036).

[9] As in p.47, where he copies passages from the newspapers that 'explain the defects of the present state of government in the United States'.

[10] Journal', p.76.

[11] See p. 86 for a description of upper-class American youth simultaneously devouring ice-cream, oysters and champagne as if famished.

want to Washington, where he had been in the spring: here he visited the Senate and helped Powerscourt narrowly avoid a duel over an unthinking remark to a newly-married lady - an account discreetly retailed in French.

Prevented by the cold weather from leaving Washington for Cuba, Parnell returned to New York and sailed from there with some friends on 22 January 1835. He had been ill at ease in the New York social round - 'but that is perhaps my fault'[12] - and wished he were travelling home. However, the 25 days' journey to Vera Cruz is described by him with wit and enjoyment. Mexico, however, horrified the travellers (now a party of 5: Powerscourt, Parnell, Kertchikoff (?) - a Russian diplomat - Worral, an American friend, and McCracken, an English officer); encounters with banditti in the Mexican hills en route to Mexico City are described with relish. In early March Parnell left Mexico City by horse for Tampico, guided by a villainous muleteer. He visited some silver mines belonging to an English company on the way, and was reminded again of Wicklow. At Tampico Powerscourt was tempted to set off to Buenos Aires; Parnell, on the other hand, felt nothing but revulsion for 'the barbarous and quarrelsome republics of South America, which must after all both in language and manners very much resemble that of Mexico'. Here the diary ends, though there were evidently some further entries. The date Parnell reached Tampico was some time about the middle of March; inside the back cover of the journal is written 'libro hui finem posui hac die 12th April - deck of the schooner Comet anchored within 18 miles of the Bellisle with a contrary wind and close to shore'. He therefore spent little time in New York on his return journey; but he was to come back the following month for his marriage.

Parnell's American diary is characterised throughout by a deliberate

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[12] 'Journal', p.154.

circumspectness; and most of the few passages with some personal bearing - flirtations, gossip and the like - are scored out by a later pen. The journal remains of great interest, and helps to build up a definite picture of the man. He was, for a start, very much the young gentleman. He was travelling with Lord Powerscourt (Richard Wingfield, the 7th Viscount), who was his first cousin, being the son of his mother's sister. Their association meant that the travellers were received with a flourish almost everywhere. At the beginning of their Canadian visit Parnell records that 'all the grandees of the Province were invited to meet us'[13] and this remained the tone of their stay. Arrival in any town from Quebec to Mexico City immediately resulted in a flow of invitations from the Governor and polite society.[14] It is hard to know whether Parnell would have been similarly fêted if he had been alone; he recorded that Powerscourt attended more parties than he did, but only occasionally because 'they had not the civility to ask me';[15] he was, in fact, inclined to be anti-social.[16] Still, his companion tended to create rather a splash in foreign society; in Vera Cruz 'Mr. Gifford, the British Consul, who had heard of the titled personage on board, made his appearance and very politely took us ashore in his own boat';[17] and at the New Year's Day levée in the White House Powerscourt withered a patronising Congressman:

> One of the members asked P/Powerscourt/ - 'I guess you have not often been in a larger room than this' - P looked at him with sovereign contempt as he replied 'I have got a room in my own house which would hold two of this'. Mr. Willis, the Member, looked incredulous.[18]

Parnell himself, however, was capable of an equal hauteur in his attitudes. Some of his opinions reflect those of the age rather than an individual

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[13] 'Journal', p.28.

[14] See pp. 29, 77.

[15] At Philadelphia; 'Journal', p.114.

[16] See below, p.164.

[17] The italics are mine.

[18] 'Journal', p.129.

reaction, as where he expresses his shock that in America a bride on honeymoon should travel unabashedly on a public steamer,[19] and his dismissal of anybody with Indian blood as ipso facto both debauched and idle.[20] But a more deep-rooted attitude is evident in his summing-up of Canada:

> Il faut avouer that they /the Provinces/ are pleasanter for gentlemen than any part of the States, that is to say the society is more agreeable and their ideas are more suitable to an Aristocratic education and feelings - no vulgar fellow came up to shake our hands off against our inclination and more deference and real respect was shown altogether; but I must add that our colonies in America are far, far behind the United States in civilisation.[21]

He did not, however, do without 'deference and real respect' in the United States. At the Atlantic Hotel in New York

> the barkeeper divided the public sitting-room so as to leave half of it for us as a private apartment - the democracy in the other half made loud complaints against this exclusion but the nobility prevailed and we have retained possession of our half.[22]

Again, in a controversy about private boxes at the New York Opera he declares himself firmly for privilege:

> The 'mobility' . . declared that they had no idea of such a system of exclusiveness and that they would not go to a place where everyone was not on the same footing . . The Aristocracy on the other hand, who built the theatre by private subscription and allow the company to have the use of it rent-free, besides making up a purse of $8000 for the manager this year, complain that it would be very hard, after such sacrifice on their part for the amusement of the public, the possession of a private box for their families should be denied them - I agree fully with the latter.[23]

Parnell's social attitudes were those of the class he came from and amongst whom he lived. The contacts of Irish society, indeed, reached as far as Quebec, where the Irish travellers were looked up by a relative of the Hamiltons of Hamwood.[24] Parnell was closely involved in Wicklow 'society'. As well as being related to them, he was a close friend of the Powerscourts

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[19] 'Journal', p.51.

[20] Ibid., p.55.

[21] Ibid., p.57.

[22] Ibid., p. 63.

[23] Ibid., p.64.

[24] Ibid., p.34.

and was a trustee in the deed drawn up for his friend's marriage to Lady Margaret Jocelyn a year after their return.[25]

The picture of John Henry Parnell from other sources adds to the impression of an average young gentleman of his time. His son John Howard wrote:

> After his marriage he settled at Avondale as a quiet country gentleman, keeping fine horses and hounds and hunting with all the Wicklow gentry. He was very fond of agriculture, at which he was recognised as an expert, and gave great employment to the people in reclaiming the land at Avondale. He was a prominent magistrate and D.L. for Wicklow. High-tempered when aroused, he was of a quiet disposition as a rule. He was fond of shooting and preserving the game all over the country and had his shooting-lodge at Aughavannagh, an old military barracks in the mountains of Wicklow, where he often went to shoot. He was a very fine cricketer and maintained a first-rate cricket club.[26]

John Howard Parnell here, as often elsewhere, extracts the pith of the matter in a few words; his sister Emily's statements about their father's 'rare knowledge' of horses and 'courteousness as Master of the Hounds'[27] are little more than additional frills. R.B. O'Brien enlarged slightly on the picture, probably from conversations with both John and Emily:

> John Henry Parnell led an uneventful life. Reading on his estate in Avondale and interesting himself chiefly in questions of agricultural improvement, he sought by every means in his power to promote the well-being and happiness of his people. A good landlord, a staunch Liberal, a kind friend, he was respected and esteemed by all classes in the county.[28]

Charles Stewart Parnell added little more about his father when giving evidence before the Special Commission, except to say that 'he took a

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[25] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1836, 2.145. She was a daughter of Lord Roden. Her marriage portion was £2000, with other payments making up £4000; Catherine Parnell was a considerable heiress by comparison.

[26] J.H. Parnell, C.S. Parnell: a memoir (London 1916), p.9.

[27] Emily Monroe Dickinson, A patriot's mistake (London 1905), pp. 1-7.

[28] R.B. O'Brien, The life of Charles Stewart Parnell, 1846-91 (2 vols, London, 1898), i, 20.

very extensive interest in local affairs'.[29] His local popularity was attested to by the tribute paid to him by a fellow-member of the Rathdrum Board of Guardians, that he was 'a patrician in feeling and descent, and yet accessible even to the humblest peasant';[30] long after his death, a correspondent of his eldest son's recalled John Henry Parnell's reputation for 'espousing the popular side in local contests', which could be a reference to his expressed indignation during the famine at landlords who 'appropriated for their own benefit money voted by Parliament for "public works" with the ostensible object of providing employment for the starving people'.[31]

Evidence of John Henry Parnell's agricultural interests is to be found in his diary; he describes in detail foreign phenomena like the Canadian method of conserving root-crops[32] and in his travels round Pennsylvania notes almost automatically facts like 'the cows can still pick up some grass in the fields . . I saw some wheat about 4 inches high.'[33] His love of country-house life is amply demonstrated in his delight at a visit to a country estate outside Baltimore: 'I mentioned to him /Gilmour, the owner/ what a pleasant life it is to have a country house and farm if a man has sufficient income to support it'.[34] With a predilection for this sort of life went an enjoyment of hunting; his disgust at a Mexican shooting-party where ladders were used to obtain a better vantage point is almost comical:[35] 'I longed for my dog Rory'.[36]

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[29] Sp. Comm. Proc., ii, 695.

[30] Wicklow Newsletter, 7 April 1860.

[31] See 'Fanny Parnell' (anonymous) in Celtic Magazine, vol. i, no. 2 (Sept. 1882) p. 281. The less specific reference comes from a letter from Joseph McCarroll to J.H. Parnell, Appendix E in the latter's C.S. Parnell.

[32] 'Journal', 21 Oct. 1834.

[33] Ibid., p. 242.

[34] Ibid., p. 103.

[35] Ibid., p. 257.

[36] Ibid., p. 257.

The Mexicans, furthermore, 'annoyed me very much by showing that they were afraid I should shoot them - as if I had not seen more of shooting than the whole set put together'.[37]

The life of a nineteenth-century country gentleman presupposes some involvement in local affairs; here John Parnell was as active as might be expected, but no more. He was a J.P. from 1837 until his death, a Deputy Lieutenant for Wicklow from 1835, and High Sheriff of the county for the year 1837.[38] As such, he was involved with the running of the county, so to speak; letters to him from Robert Chaloner, Lord Fitzwilliam's industrious agent at Coolattin, make such requests as that 'Mr Newton would make a particularly good coroner; if you can procure any support for him, you would oblige'.[39] Parnell also helped the political interests of Chaloner's employer; in 1852 Chaloner recorded that 'Lord M /Milton - the Earl's eldest son/ will write to ask Tynte to propose him and to Parnell to second him. He is anxious to have the election as early as possible . . '.[40]

Parnell was deputy vice-chairman of the Rathdrum Poor Law Union in 1849,[41] vice-chairman in 1850[42] and 1851[43] and chairman for 1852 until his death.[44] The workhouse of the Rathdrum Union was opened in March 1842, accommodating 780 persons, and two auxiliary buildings eventually housed 460 more.[45] Parnell would evidently have increased accommodation still further, but the Fitzwilliam interest was against this policy; in April 1849 Chaloner wrote to Parnell:

> The premises you mention are held by Messrs Perrin and Nolan so I can take no steps to procure them for the Guardians. I think increasing the poorhouse accommodation on every pressure a bad plan, as there must be many cases in so large an establishment suitable for outdoor relief.[46]

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[37] 'Journal', p.257.

[38] See Thom's Directory for the period.

[39] 8 Nov. 1848; see Robert Chaloner's Letter Book 1842-52, (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 3987), p.234.

[40] 3 July 1852. Ibid., p.410.

[41] See Thom's Directory, 1849, p. 559.

[42] Thom's Directory, 1850, p.445.

[43] Thom's Directory, 1851, p.620.

[44] See Thom's Directory, 1852-9.

[45] Thom's Directory, 1853.

[46] 21 April 1849, Robert Chaloner's Letter Book, p.252.

Parnell's close involvement with the Poor Law Union leads to the question of his own policy to tenants during the 'forties; but in the absence of account books for Avondale it is impossible to know how the estate was run during the famine. Chaloner's voluminous correspondence for the period does not mention any relief centre on the Parnell demesne, and Parnell does not appear on the Board of Guardians until 1849, when the worst was well over.[47]

Parnell was a concerned and improving landlord; a memorial in the Registry of Deeds records his application for a loan under the Landed Estates Improvement Act (10th Victoria), under which a Commission 'approved of certain necessary works' at Ballyknockan (possibly the land reclamation scheme mentioned by John Howard Parnell) and granted a loan of £300.[48] On the lands John Henry Parnell held from Lord Fitzwilliam (about 130 acres at Corballis) he 'erected four cottages which must have cost beyond £100, and he levelled fences and drained part of the land'.[49] Another source reckoned that 'Mr Parnell laid out over £600' on the Corballis farms.[50] A letter of Chaloner's shows him referring a tenant who was 'a respectable man and an improving tenant' though under sentence of ejectment, to Parnell's estate in search of work - a significant incident. Parnell was preoccupied with improving the estate, and was responsible for creating a by-pass at the demesne entrance, where the public road originally ran through part of the estate; he shut this off and built a new road which skirted the boundary of his lands. This required renting more land from Lord Fitzwilliam - the portion between the gate off the main road, and the inner gate, still clearly demarcated today. When the estate

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[47] See Chap. 2 of this study, part 1.

[48] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1848, 5.122.

[49] Fitzwilliam Tenants' Memoranda, 1843-65, (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 4967), pp.149-50.

[50] Fitzwilliam Tenants Memoranda, 1862 (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 4967, p.18).

came to be sold in 1899, this arrangement had to be revised.[51]

Outside Rathdrum, however, John Henry Parnell's public involvements seem to have been minimal. Many of the Wicklow gentry - not only those from the great commercial families such as Arthur Guinness and David Latouche, but also men such as Sir Ralph Howard, Colonel Acton and John Wall of Knockrig - were involved in Dublin charitable organisations;[52] Parnell's name never occurs in similar circumstances. Nor does he seem to have been involved in business ventures based in the capital, as many of the same men were. In his American journal he wrote prophetically 'these railroads pay so well that we must get them up in the Co. Wicklow, for instance from Bray to Wexford',[53] and in 1841 he was a director of the short-lived Munster and Leinster Railway Company;[54] but he was not involved with its successor, the Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow and Dublin Railway Company, although neighbours of his such as Daniel Tighe of Rossanna and Colonel Acton of Westaston were.[55] His involvements seem to have been local, and his interests domestic.

Secondary sources have recorded Parnell as a book-lover; an article in Truth on Anna Parnell stated that he 'read and thought a good deal',[56] and St. John Ervine portrayed him as 'a clever man who drifted along', absorbed in his library. Both these authorities, however, were concerned with presenting John Henry Parnell as an abstracted and intellectual figure, too ineffectual to instil sense into his womenfolk. Neither Emily Dickinson nor John Howard Parnell recalled their father as a reader. Nor

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[51] See Fitzwilliam Papers (N.L.I., MS 10,696) for proceedings brought against John Howard Parnell in 1899 for the rent; also letters to John Redmond from Frank Brooke and J.H. Parnell clarifying the position.

[52] See Thom's Directory.

[53] 'Journal', p.106.

[54] Thom's Directory, 1841, p.194.

[55] Thom's Directory, 1847.

[56] Quoted in R.M. McWade, The Uncrowned king: an account of the life and public services of the hon. Stewart Parnell (Philadelphia, 1891), p.73.

does his journal contain any notable literary allusions; and the Avondale library catalogue (which I shall deal with in detail elsewhere) gives the impression of having been little added to after William Parnell's death. In his leisure, John Parnell certainly enjoyed chess; a typical entry in his diary, after an evening at tournament, is:'lost 8 dollars and dreamt of chess all night long'.[57] This interest was inherited by his son John Howard; John Henry Parnell's other chief pastime was bequeathed to Charles Stewart, who like his father always remained devoted to cricket. The very first page of John Henry Parnell's journal contains a reference to his disappointed hopes of playing cricket at Frederickton; he even attempts to organise 'a sort of a game of cricket' aboard ship enrroute to Vera Cruz;[58] and in Mexico he could again enjoy 'my old well-beloved game'.[59] His fondness for cricket eventually proved, in a sense, fatal; his death was occasioned by his insistence on playing for Leinster against Phoenix while suffering from a rheumatic fever.[60]

An important aspect of Parnell's character is his religious attitude. The doctrine of the Brethren which the second Lord Congleton imbibed from John Henry's uncle, Thomas Parnell, was not adopted by John; but it is notable that his sister Catherine married one of their number, George Vicesimus Wigram,[61] and that meetings of the Brethren were patronised by his aunt, Lady Powerscourt. A staunch Protestant, John Henry Parnell shows in his journal a leaning towards the strictness of 'left-wing' Protestantism

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[57] 'Journal', p.263.

[58] Ibid., p. 167.

[59] Ibid., p. 233.

[60] See J.H. Parnell, p.38.

[61] G.V. Wigram: b. 1805, 20th child of Sir George Wigram, a London shipowner and merchant; had been an army subaltern, but was 'brought to the Lord' and entered Queen's College, Oxford to take holy orders. He wrote The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee concordance to the Old Testament, and a cognate version for the Greek New Testament, upon which venture he spent most of his money. He also wrote Hymns for the poor of the flock, for the use of the Darbyite wing of the Movement - which body he warmly supported in the split of 1845.

rather than the happy-go-lucky religious attitudes of the majority of Church of Ireland squires in this period. In Mexico he 'did not think it altogether proper to spend Sunday shooting';[62] the average Irish country gentleman would probably have thought it improper to spend it any other way. In Philadelphia he 'was rather shocked to see Mrs W. /his hostess/ introduce cards on a Sunday evening . . I mentioned my horror to one of the girls, who did not seem to enter into my feelings at all.[63] He remained a regular churchgoer in America, in contrast to most of his acquaintances, and was constantly interested in the religious attitudes he found:

> Mrs Featherstonehaugh stated that very few of what is reckoned the fashionable society in Philadelphia belong to any church, in other words do not profess any religion, whatever their private devotions might amount to. She added that the Presbyterians in general consider balls and public gaieties and discourage it as much as possible in their congregations /sic/; the love of the world therefore prevails over the love of religion and the gay young ladies, rather than subject themselves to the rebukes and disagreeable precepts of the heads of the churches, prefer remaining in an independent state of non-professing Christianity - if indeed those deserve the name of Christians who in their public walks consider religion as an intrusive disturber of their pleasures and put it as much out of sight as possible. I was astonished to hear this statement from so good a source, it is undoubtedly a good argument in favour of having an established church protected and maintained by the state.[64]

Parnell's attitude to Roman Catholicism seems to have been hostile in the extreme; Mexican priests are 'black pillars of hypocrisy and vice', he is disgusted by the reverence accorded to 'greasy beasts of friars', and all in all, 'in this country /Mexico/ the perverting, debasing

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[62] 'Journal', p.258.

[63] Ibid., p.93.

[64] Ibid., p.115.

effects of the Catholic religion appear in naked force and would almost justify the dogma of some of our Irish Orangemen who esteem it doing God a service to get rid of a bloody Papist'.[65] However, the qualification in the last passage ('would almost justify') is indicative; and elsewhere Parnell attacks 'puritanical bigotry' and defends nuns as 'doing a great deal of good . . . devoting themselves to God in the manner in which they feel they can alone do it effectually'.[66] In his native context he seems to have maintained this more liberal attitude; in 1850 he approached Robert Chaloner about the possibility of building a Catholic church at Rathdrum.[67] Possibly he inherited his father's combination of repulsion from Catholic doctrine allied with admiration for the social function of Irish priests.

At this stage it may be useful to attempt some definition of John Henry Parnell's character as it can be reconstructed from his journal. He was undoubtedly a man of intelligence and strength of mind, as well as a certain impatience and asperity towards what he considered affectation - whether it was the too-carefully modulated tones of a Canadian Governor's daughters,[68] the attempts of Fanny Kemble, an ex-actress, to make the grade in colonial high society,[69] or the fashion for visiting asylums and houses of correction as sights to be seen.[70] Linked

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[65] 'Journal', pp. 217, 284, 176.

[66] Ibid., p. 61. Nonetheless, his impressions of the Abbess of the convent tend towards cynicism: 'a large, fat, fresh-looking woman who had been evidently no stranger to the world and even now does not seem to mortify herself much.'

[67] And was not encouraged. Letter of 25 Feb. 1850, Chaloner's Letter-Book, (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 3987), p.299.

[68] 'So that it was a considerable tax on one's hearing to pay proper attention to their remarks'. Their father was Sir Archibald Campbell. 'Journal', p.4.

[69] 'Mrs Pierce Butler (Fanny Kemble) was there, trying to look like a Heroine'. 'Journal', p.89.

[70] 'One sees enough of the mad and vicious in every day's occurrences without going out of one's way to look for them'.

with this sharpness is a power of observation beyond the ordinary; Parnell's Journal is far more imaginative and discursive than most Victorian travel diaries. He takes care to record long conversations with inn-keepers and chambermaids whenever he considers the opinions expressed are worth noting;[71] his views of colonial and American society are pungent, amusing and always readable. He evinces something of his famous son's dislike of social duties, as where he 'opened Mr.Forsyth's door intending to leave cards only, just heard him talking inside in time to shut the door and run away':[72] he frequently records with relief having 'escaped' a smoking-party after dinner.[73] This reclusiveness is accompanied as so often, by a liking for rectitude in others and a strong sense of the importance of the proprieties. In New York he was shocked by the general reception accorded to an opera singer 'who made herself too famous in England by her elopement with Paganini . . I did not go, but heard that several ladies of good society in New York were present. I charitably suppose they were not acquainted with her history'.[74] Similarly, in Mexico City he thought it 'questionable taste' on the part of two English ladies to parade on the Pasao in the evening, as Mexican ladies and gallants did.[75] Such questions of correct behaviour , while not an obsession of Parnell's, were certainly a preoccupation; his great dislike of oaths, even in rough company, is also significant.

Despite his acute perception and his often humorous observations on foreign ways, he was not a natural traveller. 'I hate all foreigners', he recorded on board ship to Vera Cruz, 'especially as bedroom companions',[76]

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[71] See 'Journal', pp. 18-19.

[72] Ibid., p.38.

[73] For instance ibid., p.43. Also see p.83: 'Nothing to do but make morning calls on ladies, which I detest'.

[74] 'Journal', p.76.

[75] Ibid., p.262. He had found ladies of this country 'in their immorality, worse even than Spanish or Italian ladies' and that their faces 'always appear to be clouded with a hidden consciousness of guilt, so different from the fresh, innocent countenance of an English or American girl.' p. 262, ibid.

[76] See ibid., p.282.

and his real interest is often reserved for those of Irish blood whom he meets abroad - like the Irishwoman in French Canada who teaches her children 'as good Irish dialect and accent as could have been taught in Connacht.'[77] In Mexico, his strongest reaction was anger at the maltreatment of horses and mules: the sight of naked Indians toiling underground in the English silver-mines merits only a passing reference. In these attitudes he emerges strongly as the young English or Anglo-Irish gentleman abroad, whose catholic interest in all he sees is nonetheless accompanied by a recurring desire to return home and an unyieldingly insular attitude. This type of young man, having made his tour for the sake of his education, rarely travels abroad at length again; and this seems to have been true of John Henry Parnell. After he returned with his new wife in 1835, his life centred round Avondale. The little that is recorded of him after this period bears out the impression created by his unconsciously revealing diary: the young man who expressed such censoriousness about indiscreet women and rowdy parties disapproved equally in later life of his rackety neighbours the Dickinsons, and of his children's amateur theatricals.[78] Later, when Emily was discovered in an illicit rendezvous with an admirer while in London, Lady Howard expressed her surprise at 'a daughter of John Parnell' thus disgracing herself;[79] an uncompromising attitude towards such peccadilloes remained one of the central features of his character until the end of his life.

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77 'Journal', p.11.

78 J.H. Parnell, p. 37; see below, p. 204.

79 E. Dickinson, p.27; see below, p. 207.

II

The one inconsistency in John Henry Parnell's life - the one impetuous act on the part of a generally sober and predictable young man - seems to have been his romantic marriage. 'This was the one notable event in the life of John Henry Parnell',[80] according to R.B. O'Brien; it was certainly the most striking.

The circumstances of the match are shadowy. Emily Dickinson wrote:

> My father was a wealthy and very handsome man, belonging to one of the best old Irish familes. Soon after attaining his majority he had, while travelling with his cousin Lord Powerscourt, met, fallen violently in love with, and married the lovely and only daughter of Admiral Stewart.[81]

This is the skeleton of the story, and it is hard to enlarge upon it. Mrs Parnell herself told the story in a characteristically rambling and disconnected way to R.M. McWade in 1891. Since the words - whatever their accuracy - are her own, it is worth giving the account in full:

> Mr. Parnell was induced by his friend Lord Powerscourt to travel. He was his cousin. On the steamer coming they met Mr and Mrs Thomson Hankey. Mrs Hankey was related to the Biddles of Philadelphia /frequently mentioned in Parnell's journal as playing host to Powerscourt and himself/. The whole party came to Washington together. My mother called on Mrs Hankey and when the two young men heard there was a young lady in the drawing-room they also put in an appearance. This was early in 1834. Then the whole party came to see us. The two young men were sure to come too and on the occasion of that very first visit to us Mrs Hankey astonished me by beginning to quiz Mr Parnell about his admiration for me. This was something like Benedict and Beatrice and probably laid the first stone, for Mr. Parnell was very shy, like many a young Englishman. His friend was not. Both were very handsome young men, but Mr Parnell was the handsomer by far. Then they went away on different visits together, but soon separated. We went to West Point as usual . . Mr Parnell and his cousin came to West Point took immediately after our arrival there . . I induced the proprietor of the hotel to give a ball to the cadets. I got very few dances with them because of the persistent attentions of Lord Powerscourt and Mr Parnell to me. Right in the midst of the dancing, which I was enjoying very much, Mr Parnell said to me: 'I hate this dancing; won't you come into another room?' However, I went into another room, where there

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80 O'Brien, Parnell, i, 20.

81 E. Dickinson, p.5.

> were several other couples; so then he dragged me off to another room, with a similar fate. Then he got me out on to the piazza, and there were several other couples; and then he gave vent to a John Bull oath, 'Damn it', which I had not heard since my father's ship, which astonished me exceedingly. I began to think he was very bad-tempered and became a little afraid of him. So the next morning he went out to smoke with his cousin but soon left him smoking and hurried up to the hotel and asked me if I would not like to see Kosciusko's Retreat. Of course, as I had never seen it, I was glad to go and see it. There he proposed - asked me to go to Ireland with him; and going away from the Retreat we met his cousin hurrying to find out where we were. I hardly took Mr Parnell to be serious so I said to Lord Powerscourt very frankly: 'Your cousin has just asked me to go to Ireland with him but I don't like being lost in an Irish fog and I am afraid he has no house there'. That was my idea of Ireland. Lord Powerscourt laughed and said he 'thought his cousin had a mud cabin'. That was all the encouragement he gave me. Well, we had parties on horseback and different things and they left me and we went to Lebanon to see the Shaking Quakers; but the whole of this business at West Point gave me a violent headache which lasted for a week.[82]

There she ends the story of Parnell's proposal; Mrs Parnell does not detail his further advances, merely adding:

> This is but the beginning of the history of his perseverance, which ended in our marriage at Grace Church, New York, Dr Taylor officiating, the 31st of May, 1835. My mother was very much opposed to the match and she would not consent to it herself until he promised to bring me back every year to see the family. Yes, but he did not keep his promise, as he did not promise to bring the children and I was not willing to leave them.[83]

Several comments can be made about this exiguous account. First of all, though Parnell was a cousin of Powerscourt's, after Powerscourt died, the relationship between the families dropped into abeyance; when Richard Wingfield's son, the 7th viscount, wrote his History of Powerscourt he cannot have supposed the Parnells to be relatives or he would not have referred to them so patronisingly.[84] The 6th viscount was evidently a

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[82] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.44.

[83] Ibid., p.44.

[84] See Mervyn Wingfield, A history and description of Powerscourt (Dublin 1903), p. 97. 'Old Tom Parnell', the engineer who laid out the drives, 'was a very poor man . . very rough in exterior but most kindly in heart'. He was in fact an uncle of John Henry Parnell - one of William Parnell's two younger brothers. Later in the chapter, C.S. Parnell is referred to as 'his nephew the agitator'.

close friend of John Henry Parnell, but when he died (prematurely, in 1846) their families cannot have remained close. There are also several doubtful claims in Mrs Parnell's story, which cast some shadow on the accuracy of her memory. She describes her husband as a 'young Englishman', capable of a 'John Bull oath'; elsewhere she says that he belonged to 'the Church of England.'[85] These are extraordinary mistakes for the widow of an Irish squire to make. There is also the smaller point that Parnell, on the evidence of his journal, disliked smoking and abhorred swearing; and, with reference to her last sentence, it might be pointed out that scruples about leaving her children rarely bothered Mrs Parnell in later life.

Nonetheless the account is definitely authentic. The rather jumpy style, the characteristic of including completely extraneous details while glossing over important facts, the preoccupation with herself and the figure she made[86] - in all these features this chapter in McWade's; scantily documented and hastily compiled book resembles (for instance) the lengthy letter about her family that Mrs Parnell wrote to T.D. Sullivan some years before.[87] Her distinctive style is of dubious advantage to the reader, but is readily identifiable.

Unsatisfactory as Mrs Parnell's long account is, it is the only first-hand account available. Her story takes place in the summer of 1834; her husband's American journal begins in the October of that year, when he had left American for a visit to Canada, and it was finished in April 1835. Thus for the period throughout which he kept the diary he was certainly in pursuit of Delia Tudor Stewart, and possibly engaged to

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[85] McWade, op. cit., p.50.

[86] I have not included a passage about the great estimation she was held in by the West Point cadets, which she introduces into the middle of her account of the unfortunate Parnell's pursuit of her.

[87] Now in the Sullivan MSS, (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237/6), and dated 21 Jan. 1880. Used by Thomas Sherlock for his early biography of Parnell, published from the Nation office in 1882; I have cited it below simply as 'Letter to Sullivan'.

her; when he ended it he must have known that in a month he would be returning to marry her. Yet his references to her throughout - where they can be detected - are infrequent and formal. Not too much construction need be placed on this; as has been said, the diary seems to have been written to be read, and discretion is in the forefront of Parnell's mind throughout. Nonetheless, the picture given is not of a young man in constant pursuit of a recalcitrant maiden. In fact, at every ball or party he attends, Parnell gives an inventory of the ladies present, often in a manner that suggests he was at least interested in their possibilities. In New York he 'danced with Miss Costa, who has 200,000 dollars hard cash - 60,000 pounds; she is a substantial, good-humoured littled lump';[88] at Washington his attention was engaged at ball after ball by a Miss Seaton.[89] His future wife is referred to as 'Miss Stewart' or sometimes 'Miss Delia'. In New York at Christmas he and Powerscourt encountered her at many dances; Parnell's diary for this period is remarkable for the number of lines, and even complete pages, that have been scored out. His pursuit over Christmas was not unduly hot: 'I had promised to go to a party at Mrs Stewart's but feeling lazily inclined stuck to the hearth all evening.'[90] Some days later at a ball Parnell 'met Miss Stewart and danced a quadrille with her, but she was afterwards engaged to waltz with Murray and the heat was so excessive that I made an attempt to escape'.[91] At a New Year's Eve reception in Washington Powerscourt 'danced with Miss Delia in a cotillon';[92] the following day provides the only hint of anything more than a social acquaintance with the lady, when Parnell 'fulfilled my promise to Miss D. and made an expense of 6 dollars to give her The English

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[88] 'Journal', p.69

[89] Ibid., pp. 136 et seq.

[90] Ibid., p. 118.

[91] Ibid., p. 124.

[92] Ibid., p. 128.

Keepsake /ān almanac/ which has some beautiful engravings'.[93] If Parnell throughout this period was beseeching Delia Tudor Stewart to be his wife, he took care not to hint at it in his diary.

This is, however, not unnatural in someone of his reticence, who expected his journal to be read and was moreover not certain of having his proposal accepted; Mrs Parnell's account must still be taken as the only definitive one. John Howard Parnell believed that his parents met in Mexico,[94] which is contradicted by the evidence in his father's diary. (John Howard also gives his father's age incorrectly as 21; he was actually 23).

The couple married in New York and returned to Avondale. The effect of what Emily Dickinson described - with characteristic dash - as 'the sudden transformation from having been the belle of New York to the solitudes of Avondale'[95] will be discussed in full in the next chapter; but here it is appropriate to consider how the marriage turned out. Mrs Parnell rarely mentioned her husband, and their children do not record much of value about the relationship between their parents; but circumstantial evidence seems to show that it was not an unduly happy marriage. Country life did not agree with the bride, and she seems to have had little distraction apart from her many children. She bore eleven sons and daughters.[96] William Tudor was born in 1837 and died five years later, 'through bad vaccination'.[97] Delia was born in 1838, Hayes in 1839, Emily in 1840, John Howard in 1843, Sophia in 1845, Charles Stewart in 1846, Fanny in 1849, Henry in 1850,[98] Anna in 1852 and Theodosia in 1853.

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[93] 'Journal', p.131.

[94] J.H. Parnell, p.9.

[95] E. Dickinson, p.5.

[96] One other child - a boy - was still-born, and was probably her first.

[97] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.46.

[98] According to Debrett. J.H. Parnell, not always accurate about dates, states Henry was born in 1853, but this was the date of Theodosia's birth.

As can be seen from this list, children were born regularly to the couple - almost one a year - until 1853, but none after that year, though Mrs Parnell was only 36 years old. From about this time Mrs Parnell (usually with some of her children) seems to have resided largely in Paris.[99] It was in this year too that John Henry Parnell took Charles Stewart - aged only seven - to school at Yeovil and told the schoolmistress that he was anxious the child should spend some years in England '<u>with someone who would mother him</u> and cure his stammering'.[100] Mrs Parnell was in Paris when he husband died; she did not return until after the funeral. Nor did she inherit anything, except a small annuity, which she later renounced;[101] all his property went directly to his children. St John Ervine was told by 'one who knew the Parnells and Avondale' that Mrs Parnell 'was considered by the people about the estate to be a "flighty" woman . . she would go away and not see her husband for near a year again'.[102] This was, of course, what Ervine wanted to be told, believing already that Mrs Parnell was 'bad all along and mad in the end'; but circumstances seem to show that Delia Parnell began the peripatetic style which characterised her later life[103] five or six years before her husband's death.

The fact that the Parnells lived largely apart from 1853 may be at least partly explained by a tragedy that took place about that year: the accident which led to the death of their eldest son, Hayes. His death is described by Emily Dickinson as being caused by a clumsy horseman riding

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[99] See E. Dickinson, p.10.

[100] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 37; the significant phrasing could possibly be J.H. Parnell's, though O'Brien had the advantage of corresponding with the schoolmistress herself in 1898.

[101] Letter to Sullivan, p.3. (For a full reference, see n. 87 above).

[102] St John Ervine, <u>Parnell</u>, p. 23.

[103] She lived between Paris, Bordentown (New Jersey) and Avondale.

over him in the hunting-field.[104] John Howard recalled that Hayes 'died from consumption, which developed after a fall from his pony';[105] and Mrs Parnell recorded that his death was brought on by pleurisy.[106] But the riding accident was generally blamed as the cause of the fatality; and Mrs Dickinson significantly added:

> My mother had always dreaded these hunting-days for her children, predicting that some day one of them would be brought back dead; but her husband had invariably ridiculed her fears, maintaining that there could be no danger for his children, as they were all born riders. 107

Not a horsewoman herself, it is likely that Mrs Parnell would have blamed her husband for allowing the tragedy to happen; this reinforces the impression that Mrs Parnell lived, to all intents and purposes, apart from her husband from 1854,and also provides a reason for the separation.

III

Unlike the two previous squires of Avondale, John Henry Parnell never stood as M.P. for Wicklow; but it is both relevant and possible to reconstruct his political sentiments. R.B. O'Brien described him as 'a staunch Liberal',[108] and many entries in his journal bear out this judgement. In Frederickton he wrote sympathetically of an acquaintance who was 'a nephew of Dan O'Connell's and suffers accordingly from the bitter Tories of the regiment, which most of them are'. He criticised a Mr Hamilton encountered in Quebec as 'a red-hot Tory . . nothing appeared to satisfy him but bayonetting the whole House of Assembly;' and he described at length a debate at dinner

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[104] E. Dickinson, p.9. She dates the accident as happening when she was 13, and Mrs Parnell states that Hayes was 15 at the time; both statements mean that the year was 1854.

[105] J.H. Parnell, p.11.

[106] Letter to Sullivan.

[107] E. Dickinson, p.9.

[108] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 20.

> between Mr Ogden, the Attorney-General, a most genuine bigoted Tory of the old school and a Mr Daly, an Irish Papist, as we would call him chez nous . . In heart I believe him as much of a Tory as any of the others, however on this occasion he took the Liberal side of the question /which concerned government discrimination against those in favour of Canadian legislative reform when considering applications for civil service jobs/; I was delighted to find a liberal in such company, and joined Mr Daly warmly.[109]

His own views on contemporary questions mainfest a generally liberal analysis:

> The conversation turned on the North-Western Indians. Kertchikoff was expressing feelings which I believe are common to all Europeans respecting them, namely conseration for their sufferings under the war of extermination which is carried out against them by whites wherever they come into contact. McKinna turned to me and said gravely "It amuses me to hear so much false sympathy wasted on these Indians, since it is evident from certain causes producing certain effects, Providence has decreed that this race should become extinct and make room for the whites and civilisation. How useless and weak is it then to attempt to retard the progress of their annihilation; I for one am convinced that it would be far more humane to accelerate their destiny as much as possible" (by this he meant wholesale butchery of the poor creatures). I enquired of him what were the natural causes which he referred to; he replied "Weakness and ignorance". "Cannot ignorance be remedied by education?" asked I, "and is weakness, either from inferiority of numbers or of strength, a sufficient reason for slaughtering your fellow-creatures?" "Oh," said he, "it is all very well to talk thus, but the history of mankind has always shown that right must yield to might in the end and that the great body of men are only obedient to laws because they are compelled to be so." I was shocked at his sentiments with regard to the poor Indians, the rightful owners of the soil, but I fear that the same opinions on this topic are entertained by three-fourths of the Americans, only they do not venture to express them quite so openly.[110]

Such liberal opinions are reinforced by a sour reference elsewhere to Louis Philippe, 'who accepted monarchy and has since shown his deep respect for liberal institutions by getting rid of them upon every occasion that they interfered with his ambitious views'.[111] Given his liberality about current politics and the Indians, however, Parnell was by no means unilaterally enlightened. His first impressions of Mexico

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[109] 'Journal', p.34.

[110] Ibid., p.105.

[111] Ibid., p. 103.

are significant, especially considering that he wrote them down on his very first day in the country:

> The white faces are few and far between but there are plenty of crosses between whites and blacks, whites and Indians, negroes and Indians, & c. down to the fifth generation. I could not look on these beings at first without disgust and felt for the first time in its full force the privilege of being a white man. Their character fully corresponds to their appearance - they are lazy to extremes, fond of drinking and gambling, would rather thieve than work, and totally destitute of intelligence or education, except in so far as the ipsa dicta of the priests go.[112]

On social issues he could take an even harder line, writing of the new prison at Philadelphia:

> My humble opinion is that confinement here, even for life, would not be an adequate punishment for great crimes, the cells are too comfortable, too much pains have been taken to dissipate the natural horrors of a prison. It might safely be said, if we had such establishments in Ireland, that rogues and assassins would be infinitely better off than half the population of the country.[113]

Moreover, if he considered himself a Liberal in politics, John Henry Parnell was still nothing like a Radical. A strong vein of anti-republicanism runs through his journal. 'I think that this is one of the great evils of an unlimited republic,' he wrote in New York, 'that the freedom of doing what they like with their own is denied to the rich, though fully conceded to the poor'.[114] Similar views are evident in his reaction to Jackson's Presidential levée:

> I was disappointed in the levée, because I expected great amusement from the impudent intrusion of Kentuckian and Western barbarians in the assertion of their rights of equality. I also expected to witness a scene of noise and indecorum, if not of riotousness - but everything passed off, so quietly, so properly, I might even say gentlemanlike, that I was disappointed of my fun - if there were blackguards present, and I have no doubt that there were a few, they felt their inferiority and kept in the background without attempting to interfere with the well-dressed people who paraded the centre of the room. Thus it is that vulgarity and rudeness will always shrink from the contact of refinement and true gentility, and this practical effort to show that all men are equal convinced me more than all the arguments in the world that all men are not equal, nor were intended to be so.[115]

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[112] 'Journal', p.170.

[113] Ibid., p.80.

[114] A propos of the opera-house controversy mentioned above, p.155.

[115] 'Journal', pp. 130-1.

Parnell's view of the British-Irish connection is not stated in his journal, but it can be deduced. He refers more than once to 'we Britishers'[116] and 'our transatlantic dominions'[117] (as Isaac Butt was to do); however, he was well aware of the injustice implicit in government from afar, at least as regarded judicial appointments and religious and educational administration in Canada:

> Who shall then wonder that in such a situation of things, with the flourishing state of Maine alongside of them, that some should begin to doubt the boasted advantage of British connexion and sigh for the change which has produced such brilliant results to their neighbours?[118]

This is not to say that Parnell supported Canadian discontent; elsewhere he records incredulously that 'they demand an election council, the abolition of the land company, a civil governor instead of a military one, and several other extravagant demands.'[119] Later on he ascribes the superiority of American civilisation and commerce over that of Canada 'wholly to the disadvantage of colonial government'; but, he adds carefully, 'it is a most difficult question to determine whether if they are to remain colonies they can be governed in any other or better manner.'[120] It seems likely that, had he lived, he would have supported Butt's Home Government Association, as a thoughtful and Liberal country gentleman; how much further he would have gone is a moot question.

IV

Emily Dickinson described her father as 'a wealthy man' at the time of his marriage.[121] That he was a man of property is undeniable; but his assets at the time of his death seem to have been limited. Before

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[116] See 'Journal', p.66.

[117] Ibid., p.15.

[118] Ibid., entry for 15 Oct. 1834.

[119] Ibid., p.27.

[120] Ibid., p. 58.

[121] E. Dickinson, p.5.

considering this circumstance, it is enlightening to review the extent of his property as it can be reconstructed from memorials in the Registry of Deeds for this period.

John Henry Parnell's direct inheritance from his father was, of course, Avondale. Under William Parnell this contained the townlands of Ballytrasna, Cassino, Crevagh, Ballylugduff, Carrignamornan, Ballinderry, Ballyteigue, Ballyeustace, Tyclash and Rockstown;[122] the Hayes estate had also included lands near Newcastle and at Ballymoreustace, which William Parnell sold[123] (probably to provide for Catherine's endowment, which he arranged about the same time), and the lands of Carrowsillagh and Balliniskea in Glenmalure, which were retained.[124] The more cursory inventory of the estate in John Henry Parnell's day omitted Ballyteigue, Crevagh and Ballinderry; but Ballyteigue probably appears under Ballyknockan (which abuts onto it), and the new names of Kingston and the Meeting of the Waters can be taken to embrace the other discrepancies; there are no memorials of sales by John Parnell of land in his area. He augmented the Avondale holding by renting 123 acres from Lord Fitzwilliam at Corballis, near Rathdrum, on a short lease.[125] He maintained this land carefully, and his family were granted £250 in lieu of this when the lease lapsed upon his death.[126] Six acres of these lands 'adjoined the approach to Avondale'[127] and as such it was in the interest of the Parnells to retain the lease; however John Henry Parnell

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[122] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 760.103.516033.

[123] See ibid., 553.340.368788 and 573.12.383112.

[124] John Parnell also inherited a third share in a Stephen's Green house which had been part of Alice Hayes's property and brought him £36-18 per annum - Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1834, 1.83.

[125] 123 ac., 3 rds., 54½ p., at £154-1-6 pa. See Fitzwilliam tenants' memoranda, 1843-65 (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 4967, pp. 149-50); see above, p. 159.

[126] See ibid., Also 'Tenants' Memoranda for 1862', (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 4995, p. 40) and account entry of 4 June 1863 in Fitzwilliam Tenants' Accounts (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers MS 6119, p. 24).

[127] Fitzwilliam Tenants' Memoranda 1843-65 (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers, MS 4967, p. 150).

had only leased this holding 'by some understanding with the tenant but had no consent of the office for doing so . . and it was contrary to rules of the property that farms should be held by persons not on the property',[128] so the lands were re-let after his death. (Robert Chaloner's correspondence includes many letters to Parnell about the farm at Corballis.)[129]

The nucleus of Parnell's property was, however, Avondale; at the time of his death St John Ervine claims it 'had a free rent-roll and was worth about £4000 per annum'.[130] He gives no source for this information, and it seems likely that it was an approximation derived from conversations with John Howard Parnell. A Government survey of 1876 estimated the estate at 4,678 acres.[131] When John Henry Parnell inherited in 1821, the estate was committed to paying Catherine the £10,000 due to her;[132] however, he had financial resources through other family arrangements. He did not inherit anything from his uncle Arthur Parnell's sizeable estate in 1827, as the latter's will (made in 1807) left money to his brother William but not to his heirs.[133] However, by Sir John Parnell's will an estate in Armagh, Collure, was left to William Parnell 'and after his decease to furnish and suffer the first son of the said William to receive the issues and profits thereof for his own use, until he attain the age of twenty-one years'[134] - the restriction being because the lands were committed to producing £8000 to be divided between William's younger brother and sister,

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[128] N.L.I., MS 4967, p.150.

[129] See Chaloner's Letter-book (N.L.I., Fitzwilliam Papers MS 3987), pp. 123, 153, 243, 275, 281, 299, 341.

[130] St John Ervine, Parnell, p.51.

[131] Summary of the returns of owners of land in Ireland, HC 1876, (422), vol. LXXX.

[132] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1835, 14.173.

[133] John Parnell, son of Sir Henry Brooke Parnell (later Lord Congleton), eventually inherited most of Arthur's property. See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 857.64.572064.

[134] Ibid., for 1844, 17.127.

Arthur and Sophia Parnell.[135] However, through Thomas Parnell, another uncle, John Henry held a mortgage on a large Dublin premises in Sackville Street;[136] and - possibly in return for re-assigning this mortgage to his uncle - in 1855 Thomas presented to John Henry 'the interest, dividends and annual proceeds of Trust monies, stocks, funds and securities' which he inherited from his sister Sophia Evans in 1855.[137]

Thus on paper at least, John Henry Parnell was a man of considerable property; and he was to add to this property on a large scale, with his purchase of the Carlow estate of Clonmore, just before he died. Before considering this purchase, however, the position regarding the Armagh estate requires clarification. This estate, referred to as Collure,[138] was held on a long lease from the Provost, Fellows and Scholars of Trinity College, Dublin. At the time of Sir John Parnell's marriage to Letitia Brooke in 1774, the estate was assigned to Lord Bangor and Lord Knapton (later Viscount de Vesci), to be held in trust by them for producing £8000 in trust for the younger children of the marriage. A similar arrangement was outlined in Sir John's will 27 years later; Collure was bequeathed to Robert Stubber, Lord de Vesci, Charles Ward and Robert Scott, 'in trust for the benefit of' William Parnell and his eldest son. John Henry Parnell paid £3692-6-2d (currency having been revalued in the

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[135] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1844, 17.127.

[136] John Henry lent Thomas £784 in return for being assigned the mortgage, which was for £1153. See ibid. for 1853, 26.110.

[137] The amount is not specified, but Mrs Evans died childless and a widow, so it must have been the bulk of her estate; this impression is reinforced by the fact that there were several annuities due on the sum inherited. See ibid. for 1855, 23.9.

[138] In various memorials the lands are listed as Aghinlig, Keenaghan, Kinnagoe, Lisasley, Mullaghring and Timacronnor. See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1847, 12.212.

meantime) to Sophia Parnell from the estate, as part of the earlier arrangement. The long lease from Trinity College was re-granted to John Henry Parnell in 1846;[139] in 1851 the lands were granted to him in perpetuity by the Trinity College Leasing and Perpetuity Act.[140] St John Ervine states that the head-rent due to Trinity College was £1100 p.a., a figure he probably obtained from Mrs John Howard Parnell, whose husband inherited the property;[141] it is therefore fairly trustworthy. Ervine goes on to claim that when this head-rent was paid and other expenses met, there was nothing of the estate's income left over; this statement will be evaluated later, when I come to examine the estate more closely.[142] Certainly, as it was not owned outright, Collure was less of an asset than it seemed; the head-rent and running expenses may have left a very narrow margin indeed.

The most significant information about John Henry Parnell's property, however, especially with regard to the state of his affairs at the time of his unexpected death, is contained in a Memorial of a mortgage made in July 1858, exactly a year before his death.[143] This concerns the estate at Clonmore, Co. Carlow, which was left to his third son, Henry Tudor Parnell; it seems most probable that John Henry Parnell's acquisition of it was for the express purpose of providing for him. What is surprising is the extent of this estate: it comprised nearly all of the portion of County Carlow which juts into the south-west corner of Wicklow - a rough square bordered on the north, east and south by the Wicklow county

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[139] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1857, 6.172.

[140] Ibid.

[141] St John Ervine, Parnell, p.51.

[142] The only rents mentioned for the period are certainly low: £47-2-4d for 52 acres (Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1857, 6.172) and £16-17-0 for 21 acres (Ibid. for 1858, 5.227).

[143] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1858, 25.123.

boundary and on the west by the Derreen river and its tributary the Douglas. This area measured about 22 square miles, or 13,000 acres; nearly every townland named in it by the 1911 Ordnance Survey map is contained in the inventory of the Clonmore estate.[144]

Mrs Parnell wrote to T.D. Sullivan concerning these lands that 'the property of the Wicklow Howards was purchased from the Duke of Ormond, and I believe that the property which my son Henry sold was part of it; this property descended to my husband's grandfather Hugh Howard, and furnished the title - Clonmore - of the eldest son of the earls of Wicklow'.[145] She thus implies that her husband inherited these lands through his grandfather; but this was far from being the case. It is true that the lands were originally the property of the Wicklow Howards: they were initially purchased by Robert Howard, Bishop of Elphin, in 1740, and descended to his son Ralph, the first Earl. The latter's grandson, Hugh, was John Henry Parnell's grandfather; Hugh inherited the Clonmore estate in 1815 when his brother, the 3rd Earl, died without issue. But when he died in 1841 it was his son Sir Ralph Howard who inherited Clonmore, not John Henry Parnell; and John Henry purchased the estate from his uncle in 1858, for the large sum of £69,469. 'It was not convenient to the said John Henry Parnell to pay the entire of the purchase money'; so he produced £13,500 'in hand, well and truly paid' and arranged with Sir Ralph to let the remaining £55,969 'stand out on the security of the said estate thereby conveyed'. In other words, a bare year before his unexpected death John Henry Parnell undertook a mortgage for nearly £56,000 in order

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[144] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1858, 25.123. 'The manor and lordship of Clonmore and all those the castles, towns and lands of Killelongford, Kingsholding, Little Scotland, Ballyshane, Ballyduff, Ballynakill, Ballynagilkey, Ballysallagh, Knockballystile, Creerin, Raheen, Raheendrohogue, Rahinshinogue, Cullenagh, Tombreagh, Drumguin, Ballycullane, Constable Hill, Brownbogg, Ballaghclay, Killneany, Cronoskeagh, Eagle Hill, Hacketstown, Rathnegrew, Raheeneels, Ballykilduff, Minamaul, Monsteel, and Carrowree'.

[145] Letter to Sullivan (see note 101 above).

to purchase a third estate.

This £56,000 was to be paid off at 6% interest, in equal half-yearly payments; Sir Ralph covenanted not to foreclose on the mortgage as long as the conditions were kept up. This arrangement is recorded in an immense Memorial, over six pages long, in the Registry of Deeds; it was a correspondingly weighty undertaking. John Parnell died at the very worst time, as far as this arrangement went: when the payments of the huge principal had just begun. There were several provisos to encourage as speedy a payment as possible; the wisest course his widow could have taken would have been to put every resource available to her into paying it off, but there is no evidence that she did so.

Indeed, there are signs that even in the short period before his death John Henry Parnell felt that it was worth lessening the acreage of Clonmore in order to provide ready cash. In April 1859 he granted 767 acres of the estate in perpetuity to Charles Davis of Dublin at a yearly rent of £219; in return Davis paid him £5697.[146] In June of the same year he made a similar arrangement with regard to 119 acres, with another tenant.[147] He had committed himself to a good deal in taking on the Clonmore mortgage; possibly he felt already that he had bitten off more than could profitably be chewed.

With this in mind, it is not hard to see why Alfred MacDermott, the Parnell's solicitor, 'found everything in a very confused state' when he came down to Avondale after John Henry Parnell's sudden death.[148] Parnell had not been a man of complex business interests; the only commercial involvement which I can trace is his directorship of the Munster and Leinster Railway Company, which lasted from 1841 to 1844.[149] In 1847 the Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow and Dublin Railway Company was formed,

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[146] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1859, 12.26.

[147] Ibid., 29.251. The rent was £25-11-9d; the purchase price was unmentioned.

[148] J.H. Parnell, p.40.

[149] Thom's Directory, 1841, p.194. It had a capital of £800,000 and shares were £100 each.

with several of the same directors; but John Henry Parnell was not one of them. (Charles Stewart Parnell was later granted £3000 compensation from this company when the railway was extended through his estate).[150] Nor was John Henry Parnell involved in the Dublin and Wicklow Railway Company which was formed in 1858; and - unlike his relative, Sir Ralph Howard, and his neighbour, Colonel Acton -he was not a director of any commercial banking company.[151] He was simply a man of landed property, who died before his one large investment could pay off. It is probably unfair, almost definitely inaccurate, and certainly unsubstantiated to say, as St John Ervine did, that 'Mr Parnell, living like a lord, managed to load his estate with debt'.[152] The only authority for a lordly life at Avondale is Emily Dickinson's unreliable romancing about high life in her far-off youth, and any debt there was had been incurred by John Henry Parnell's wish to provide an inheritance for his third son. Alfred MacDermott's 'first act was to pay off all the workmen not actually required; while, by order of the Court of Chancery the livestock and farming implements were sold by auction. Sufficient horses for the use of the family were kept, and the rest sold'.[153] An economy measure could also be seen in Mrs Parnell's decision to live away from the estate for the next few years; but it is more likely that this represents her personal inclination.

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[150] J.H. Parnell, p.44.

[151] See Thom's Directory for the period. (Sir Ralph was a director of the Bank of Ireland, as well as having subsidiary commercial interests).

[152] St John Ervine, Parnell, p.53.

[153] J.H. Parnell, p.40.

John Parnell's death took place on 4 July 1859. As might be expected in the case of a country gentleman of local habits, there was no announcement in the Dublin papers. The Leinster Express carried a brief notice twelve days later,[154] but the Wicklow Newsletter and County Advertiser was the only paper to have any sort of obituary:

> In the high social position which Mr Parnell occupied, he rendered himself deservedly popular by his kindly disposition, frankness, and urbanity, Steadfast in his friendships, just and impartial as a magistrate, and cordial and unreserved in his intercourse with his humbler neighbours, he will long be regretted by them and by the numerous tenantry on the large estate which he so ably managed.[155]

On 16 July, his death was followed by the demise of Henry Grattan, who lived a few miles down the Avonmore at Clara House[156] like Parnell, the direct descendant of an eighteenth-century 'Patriot' politician who had done well out of the old House at College Green and whose sons had been content to live as liberal country gentry in one of the most pleasant parts of Wicklow. Henry Grattan had entered politics, but more in his character as local squire than in any sense of carrying on a torch; so had William Parnell, if in a more reforming spirit. It is not unlikely that John Henry Parnell might have stood at M.P. for Wicklow, had he lived longer. Like Henry Grattan's elder brother James, John Parnell's father had been a Wicklow landlord in liberal politics; the tradition was not to end with them.

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[154] Leinster Express, 16 July 1859.

[155] Wicklow Newsletter, 9 July 1859.

[156] Ibid., 23 July 1859. He was the youngest son of the great Henry Grattan.

Chapter 2

'The Belle of New York in the Solitudes of Avondale':

Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell

> The sudden transformation from having been the belle of New York to the solitudes of Avondale appears at first to have been a great disappointment to her.
>
> (E. Dickinson of her mother, A patriot's mistake, p.5.)

My treatment of John Henry Parnell's family postulates a great divide in 1859, with his death; and before this period little is recorded of his American wife, except what she herself recalled and what she told her children. Mrs Parnell as a widow is a different proposition, and I will deal with this period of her life at a later stage. I have already discussed her marriage, and her virtual separation from her husband for the last six years of his life; in this chapter I will deal briefly with other aspects of her life and character up to her husband's death.

I

By her own accounts in a letter to T.D. Sullivan and in reminiscences published by R.M. McWade (both scanty with regard to dates), Delia Tudor Stewart was maternally descended from a family who settled in Boston in colonial times. The first of the family in America was a Mrs Tudor, widow of a Colonel Tudor from Wales; she was a high-class baker and confectioner in Boston and her son John was Delia's great-grandfather. He was miserly and difficult; his wife maintained and educated their son William, who married Delia Jarvis, of Hugenot stock. Delia Jarvis Tudor was a great influence on her grand-daughter and name-sake, who refers frequently to her in her reminiscences, where she appears as still a lively and girlish figure at ninety-one. Her husband William Tudor was a prominent man, a Judge and advocate-General of the Revolutionary Army; he studied law with

John Adams, and they remained close friends. A member for Massachusetts of the House and the Senate, he was from 1809-10 Secretary of State for the same state; there is a biography of him in the Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society.[1]

Of his children, Emma married Robert Hallowell Gardiner, of an old New England family; Frederic Tudor invented a freezing method for exporting ice to Cuba and thereby made his fortune (the Dictionary of American Biography recorded that 'his vigorous, not to say ruthless, method, his fanatical belief in his business, and his determination to become rich and enjoy the "delicious essence of flattery", overcame all obstacles . . he was an extreme example of militant, despotic and punitive individualism',[2] though his niece never mentioned these qualities); William was a well-known soldier, statesman and journalist who died as Charge d'Affaires in Rio (a scholar and essayist, he was editor and proprietor of the North American Review;[3] the youngest daughter, Delia Tudor, married Admiral Stewart and was the mother of Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell. Judge Tudor and his wife were influential people who entertained many French dignitaries during the 1790's, and are eulogised in the Comte de Séguier's memoirs; the Dictionary of American Biography describes them as 'an affluent and socially prominent Boston family'.[4]

Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell's reminiscences have a way of attributing the same qualities of beauty and intellectual accomplishment to every lady of her family who she has cause to mention; it is thus no surprise to find that her mother was the 'Belle of Boston', spoke five languages fluently,

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[1] In Vol. xviii. He is mentioned at length in the Dictionary of American biography, which gives his dates as 1750-1819.

[2] For further details of Frederic Tudor see Daniel J. Bootstin, The Americans: the national experience (N.Y., 1965), Part 1, Chapter 2.

[3] He lived from 1779 to 1830.

[4] Dictionary of American biography, xix, 47-8.

was artistic and musical, 'studied history with an extraordinary avidity', and 'was as familiar with the abstruse sciences as the ordinary girl is with the intricacies of a spring bonnet'.[5] Abroad, she created - according to her daughter - a sensation in London society. 'Her soul', Mrs Parnell summed up cryptically, 'was too great for her means and her sphere'.[6]

Dealing with her father's family Mrs Parnell displayed more reticence and considerably less coherence; the reason was probably because, owing to her parents' early separation, she heard a great deal less about them. Her father's parents were Belfast people who emigrated to Philadelphia. Mrs Parnell was assured that their family silver was emblazoned with the royal arms of Scotland, but that

> at the time of the Revolutionary war, when this disaster in this infant country was extreme, /Delia Parnell's grandfather's/ widow, who besides being of Milesian origin was still further revolutionised in this land, and by his death freed from the influence of her severe Scotch husband and of the little God of Love, more potent than blood, his widow, through the urgency of her son-in-law John MacCauley of the United States Navy - melted down her plate to help suitably to rear her eight children, a matter of prime importance, and as it seems, especially as far as the youngest child Charles Stewart was concerned.'[7]

I quote this lengthy and confused sentence in its entirety to illustrate the sort of obtuse and pretentious rambling that Mrs Parnell was prone to, especially in her long letter to T.D. Sullivan (although it was written as early as 1880, eighteen years before her death). The value of her recollections, even at this stage of her life, is made still more doubtful by the fact that her memories of Admiral Stewart's mother - her true singing voice and beautiful figure, even in her nineties - are almost

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[5] Quoted in R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.34.

[6] D.T.S. Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 21 Jan. 1880, p.18 (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237/6; hereafter cited as 'Letter to Sullivan').

[7] Ibid., p.7.

identical to those she recalls elsewhere about her other grandmother. However, the facts of her father's remarkable career are easily enough ascertained.

After running away to sea in his youth, Charles Stewart became a naval lieutenant in 1798; by 1800 he was in command of the schooner Experiment, and captured the Deux Amis and Diana from the French; in 1815, commanding the Constitution, he captured two British warships, the Cyane and the Levant (the latter was later recaptured). For this exploit he received a gold-hilted sword from the legislature of Pennsylvania and a Gold Medal from Congress. He was later nominated for the Presidency of the United States, and was made an Admiral by Lincoln. His career was not all success, as he was court-martialled in 1826 for diplomatic breaches; however, he continued to serve in the Navy after reaching retiring age in 1857, and died aged 92 in Bordentown, New Jersey, on 6 November 1869. He married Delia Tudor in 1815, but the marriage was not a happy one; they separated in 1826. I intend to go no further into the life of Admiral Stewart here; his daughter lived chiefly with her mother, and his career has been amply recorded elsewhere.[8]

Delia Tudor Stewart was the elder child of the marriage, born in 1816; she had one brother, Charles. The two children, she recalled, 'were very close; but an unfortunate occurrence which separated my father and mother resulted in our being parted for years, he going to live with father and I remaining with mother'.[9] The 'unfortunate occurrence' concerned, she says,

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[8] See A biographical sketch and the services of Commodore Charles Stewart, (1838); The Stewart clan magazine, Oct. 1830; E.S. Ellis,'Old Ironsides', in Chatauquan,July 1898; J. Frost, American naval biographies (New York, 1844); C. Morris, Heroes of the navy in America (1907); C.J. Peterson, The American navy and biographical sketches of American naval heroes, (1858); Fenimore Cooper, History of the American navy; Public ledger (Philadelphia), 8 Nov. 1869.

[9] Quoted in R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.38.

her mother helping a refugee Spanish officer during the Spanish war against Chile and Peru, when the Admiral was quartered in the area; Stewart was court-martialled for 'violating the neutrality law' and his wife, because of 'a nervous nature', would not go personally to court to vindicate him. 'He could not forgive her at the time, and they were separated'. Delia was then ten years old; she lived with her mother until her marriage to John Parnell eight years later. Her parents' separation may have been for more mundane reasons than this story of a diplomatic breach; Emily Dickinson mentions that 'an illegitimate relation' sued for some of Admiral Stewart's money after his death in 1869,[10] and the whole tenor of Delia's references to her father suggests that her mother left him, not the other way round:

> He said to me when he was nominated for the Presidency of this country that had he appreciated my mother's abilities in time she would have had him made president two years previously . . . My father told me that the great mistake of his life had been not valuing my mother as she deserved, that the brilliancy of his career had in a great measure been due to her, and through her sympathies and influence had been destined to be still better and brighter.[11]

A reference by Emily Dickinson bears this impression out. When Emily's father died, her American grandfather suggested that she come to live with him; but

> My uncle, Mr. Wigram /Catherine Parnell's husband/ belonging to the sect of the Plymouth Brethren . . determined I should not be allowed to live in such a questionable atmosphere, as he rightly considered residence under his (Admiral Stewart's roof to be. He therefore paid down the necessary amount required to make me a ward of court, as he knew very well the Lord Chancellor would not permit me to go to live in America .[12]

Elsewhere Mrs Dickinson states that her grandmother 'refused to live any longer with Admiral Stewart for domestic reasons';[13] her references

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[10] A patriot's mistake, p.210.

[11] Letter to Sullivan, p.18.

[12] E. Dickinson, p.38. Wigram later offered to adopt Emily outright.

[13] Ibid., p.7.

clearly imply a separation on the grounds of infidelity rather than because of the rather insufficient story told to R.M. McWade by Mrs Parnell.

For whatever reason Mrs Stewart left her husband, the separation was final; when Delia married John Parnell her mother followed the couple to Europe and took up residence with her son in Paris. Before this, however, she had lived with her young daughter in Washington; their life seems to have been the normal existence for those of good connections in society and ample means, with seasons in Washington and summers in Boston (with Mr and Mrs Frederic Tudor) and Maine (with Mrs Stewart's sister, Mrs Hallowell Gardiner) and Newport -

> this in the earlier days of Newport, when it was just beginning to be fashionable; there was not a cottage there;[14] everybody lived in boarding-houses; Newport people were very easily satisfied then . . We got rye coffee and always got hot cakes; everywhere we went we got good buckwheat cakes.[15]

I quote this passage in deliberate contrast to Mrs Parnell's tendentious remarks on the Stewart family silver already quoted;[16] it is significant that such lucid writing as this last piece always occurs when she is simply recalling her youth, instead of retailing what she has been told second-hand, or what she wishes to believe.

The family was not exceptionally well-off. Delia Parnell wrote to T.D. Sullivan that her Stewart grandfather 'gave half his fortune to the Revolutionary government and so helped to impoverish his family', while her father presented the ships he captured to the government and never sued for the prize money due to him.[17] On the Tudor side her grandfather, though left a large fortune,

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[14] Mrs Parnell refers, of course, to the baronial piles erected by great industrial families in the late nineteenth century and ironically called 'the Newport cottages'.

[15] Quoted in R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.43.

[16] Above, p. 186.

[17] Letter to Sullivan, pp. 8-9.

> generously spent a colossal fortune in benefiting individuals, the public of Boston, and its environs . . Both sides of my family were wealthy at first, and for this land then, immensely wealthy . . therefore had they let their means moderately take care of themselves, we would have been among the richest of the rich in this rich country. However, we have been taken care of by a wise Power, and their descendants have never been seen begging their bread.[18]

Elsewhere she mentions her Tudor grandfather's 'financial troubles',[19] but does not enlarge upon them. Her uncle Frederic Tudor, 'the Ice King', succeeded, according to Mrs Parnell, 'in building up a large fortune, restoring his family fortunes and the prestige of the Tudors for wealth';[20] but the Dictionary of American biography tells a different story:

> Notwithstanding the growth of his /ice-packing/ business enterprise, Tudor's embarrassment continued; the loss of over $200,000 in an unlucky coffee speculation kept him dependent on his creditors; for years he carried on a fierce fight with his agent in Havana for control of the business there. It was not until he reached the age of 65 that, with his debts extinguished and his lawsuit won, he was a free man.[21]

Elsewhere Mrs Parnell states that her brother Charles 'was entirely the artificer of his own fortunes':[22] she was later to inherit all his money, and the entirety of her father's estate came to her in the same year (1869-70). It was at this stage that she gave up the small annuity which was her husband's only bequest to her.[23]

Delia's brother studied law and engineering; he became a member of the bar, but was also involved in such engineering schemes as the Reading railroad. He died unmarried at a comparatively young age. Mrs Parnell gives no information about her own education; her life as a society

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[18] Letter to Sullivan, pp 8-9. That both sides of the family were originally 'immensely wealthy' seems unsubstantiated, and contradicted by her own evidence.

[19] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.35.

[20] Letter to Sullivan, p.13.

[21] Dictionary of American biography, xix, 48.

[22] Quoted in R.M. McWade, op. cit., p.38.

[23] Letter to Sullivan, p.3.

belle in Washington and New York seems to have been undisturbed by incident until the spring of 1834, when she met John Henry Parnell and Lord Powerscourt on their Grand Tour.

II

As the epigraph to this chapter suggests, marriage and the subsequent introduction to Wicklow county life may have been more than Delia Tudor Stewart expected. Of her marriage, practically all she records is in one paragraph of the reminiscences in R.M. McWade's book:

> Our home was made in Avondale, County Wicklow, except when we were visiting among his /John Henry Parnell's/ friends and when I went to Paris for the education and social advantages of my family. My mother and brother had a beautiful home in Paris, My husband was pleased to have us go there on account of the great advantages it afforded to me and to my children; but he would not let them go to school unless I was near them.[24]

A propos of this reflection, neither John Howard nor Charles Stewart went to school anywhere near their mother, until John went to Paris to study art; Charles, as described above, was sent to 'somebody who would mother him' in Yeovil when he was only seven. Moreover, the passage quoted above obscures the fact that she resided practically all the time in Paris throughout the late eighteen-fifties, according to both Emily Dickinson and John Howard Parnell; there is also evidence that she lived for a time on the south coast of England.[25]

It would be interesting to know more of the friends the Parnells

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[24] Quoted in R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.46.

[25] Theodosia was born at Torquay (R.M. McWade, p.46); and Charles Stewart Parnell told Sir Robert Edgecumbe that he had lived there as a child, though when driven there he was unable to remember in which house (O'Brien, Parnell, ii, 157). He also had an idea that he had been born at Brighton (T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian (London, 1929) i, 98), although he was baptised at Rathdrum.

'visited among'; Lord and Lady Wicklow are mentioned by John Howard Parnell as frequent visitors to Avondale,[26] and the Proby family at Glenart Castle are mentioned as close friends by Mrs Parnell herself;[27] there were also the Brookes at Castle Howard, whose children were playmates of the young Parnells;[28] and there must have been many more. Nonetheless, society in rural Wicklow would have been quiet indeed after the social round of Washington and New York, especially when her husband disapproved of rowdy neighbours like the Dickinsons; his daughter Emily wrote:

> My father went in for farming on an extensive scale which, joined to his being an ardent lover of all kinds of sport, kept him very much in the open air, so that my mother, not caring for outdoor recreations, was in consequence left a good deal alone and naturally, in contrast to the gay life she had led in America, found it dull and lonely. However, when in due course children began to come, she no longer complained so much of loneliness or want of occupation, though she never took kindly to the country or country pursuits.[29]

This is not to say that Delia Parnell was an unusually worldly nineteen-year-old; in some ways she was exactly the reverse. 'I had never seen a drunken man . . until I married and went to live in Ireland', she recalled later, 'and could not for a long time discover when a man was drunk'.[30] Her first impressions of the country were a welcome contradiction of the 'mud hut' conception with which she had teased her suitor; she wrote to T.D. Sullivan forty-five years later that the Irish were

> a race that even in the poorest looked to me, a young American nurtured among great men, when I first landed at Kingstown, as one and all gentlemen of ease as they lounged about with their hands in their pockets to keep them warm and clean while looking for a job: if it is true that what is bred in the bone will come out in the breeding, the Irish must have drunk in better days of congenial Parian springs and for mother milk sucked honey from Hybla, for no fashion can disguise, no hardship obliterate the

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[26] J.H. Parnell, p.3.

[27] Letter to Sullivan, p.11.

[28] J.H. Parnell, p.3.

[29] A patriot's mistake, p.5.

[30] Quoted in R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.26.

> keen intellect, the ready wit, the noble composure of their solid substratum, their ancient foundation; I wrote to my dear mother that the Irish made as much in a minute by their speech as others did in a week by their hands.[31]

However, it can reasonably be doubted that she ever really adapted to the Irish way of life. Her dislike of riding[32] was in itself a contravention of local custom; her references to her husband as an 'Englishman'[33] and 'a member of the Church of England'[34] suggest that she understood little of the Irish ethos.

This is not to imply that she lived outside of county society. Emily Dickinson described her mother as (in about 1849) 'a beautiful and accomplished American, still quite a young woman . . she was particularly famous for her talents as a hostess and in the good old days, when hospitality was extensively and generously practised, she had ample scope for the exercise of her talent in this respect'.[35] Here allowance must be made for Mrs Dickinson's delusions of grandeur where her early life was concerned; but her brother John Howard also recalled that 'my mother was extremely fond of entertaining'.[36] Mrs Parnell herself recalled that, in her entry into Wicklow society, her father's reputation had to some extent paved her way. A neighbour, Mrs Seaton, had a young brother who had been a midshipman aboard the Cyane or the Levant and was full of admiration for the Admiral's treatment of the crews aboard the ships he captured; Granville Leveson Proby, Lord Carysfort, who was a British

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[31] Letter to Sullivan, p.10.

[32] E. Dickinson, p.9.

[33] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.44.

[34] Ibid., p.50.

[35] E. Dickinson, p.4.

[36] J.H. Parnell, p.61.

admiral, had crossed swords with Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell's father at Gibraltar, and she 'used to fight my father's battles over again with him in a friendly way'.[37] Lord Carysfort's wife was a Howard, and an aunt of John Henry Parnell; when the latter died, the Carysforts offered his widow a home at Elton in England. 'My best and earliest friends were their sons and daughters, my husband's first cousins; to write of them my pen would tire ere it could stop'.[38]

But the impression remains of someone who cannot have been at home in Wicklow. She was to find Dublin more congenial at a later period of her life, but probably not before this; Emily Dickinson states unequivocally that when her mother took up residence at Dalkey as a widow 'she made her first entrance into the social atmosphere of Dublin'.[39] She lived away from Wicklow for the last years of her husband's life, and did not return until after his funeral; when she did come back, it was only to auction off his personal belongings and remove herself to Dublin.[40] The likelihood is that her husband's death liberated her completely from a way of life that was uncongenial to her, and which she had already largely rejected. When she died in 1898, none of the local gentry attended her funeral in Rathdrum or the interment in Glasnevin[41] - although this may have been a reflection of her son's politics rather than of her own popularity.

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[37] Letter to Sullivan, p.11.

[38] Ibid.

[39] E. Dickinson, p. 36. My italics.

[40] Ibid., p. 80.

[41] See full attendance list in Daily Nation, 2 April 1898; none of the familiar names of the Wicklow county families are mentioned.

III

At this stage a brief consideration of Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell's character is of value: again, in view of how she appears in the period of her youth and marriage. John Howard Parnell repeated his sister Emily's judgement of their mother as charming and accomplished:

> A charming woman, brilliant in both public and social life, she was also very generous amongst the poor . . The taste for art, which I have inherited from her, she possessed to a very marked degree and was in addition extremely well-read and a brilliant conversationalist. In appearance she was of medium height, with dark hair and bluish eyes.[42]

These are traits which are hard to ascertain from a later vantage point, but a less laudable characteristic comes through her own writings with unmistakeable clarity: a strong preoccupation with social position which at times becomes an overwhelming snobbery. Recalling her family history for R.M. McWade, she emphasises that her pastry-cook ancestress was 'a Colonel's widow', and that her aunt married 'a near relative of Sir Benjamin Hallowell'; she refers grandiosely to 'the Tudor vault' in a Boston cemetery;[43] her tendentious reference to the royally-crested Stewart silver has been quoted above.[44] Sometimes this preoccupation produces an unintentionally hilarious effect, as where she writes of her mother's social success in London: 'The sons of George the Third crowded round her piano'.[45] She continues in this vein: 'It was said that a Duke and more than one Lord had sought her hand in vain'. At such times Mrs Parnell achieves the most outrageous heights of 'stage American' social snobbery. The history of the Stewart family gave her less room to manoeuvre, but she could still claim that 'my father was descended from Irish gentlemen,

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[42] J.H. Parnell, p.10.

[43] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.33.

[44] See p.186.

[45] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.34.

under the hollow of whose feet water could run without touching them'.[46]

Marrying John Parnell gave her ample scope to indulge her genealogical speculations. A telling passage in her recollections deals with her daughter Theodosia's marriage to Captain Claud Paget:

> Lord Anglesea, the head of the family, is a cousin of the husband of Minnie Stephens of New York. There was not a family in England that would not have been proud to be allied to the Parnells . . all the near relatives of his /Captain Paget's/ family went from England /to the wedding in Paris/ and thought themselves fortunate in being allied to the ancient family of Parnell. In this connection I wish to say that my son's family is one of the most ancient in Great Britain, going back to a Norman duke who was killed at the battle of Hastings, on the Norman side, and on the English side going back to the Lord High Stewarts of England, and by marriages to the Stewarts of Scotland and the Howards of England. My cousin, the Rev. Samuel Stewart, a missionary, who was connected with the Lispenard Stewarts of New York, used to say that the Stewart family were descended from Banquo's ghost. In the story, you know, Fleance, the son of Banquo, was saved. He fled to Paris and there married a princess of the house of Tudor, so that the Stewarts were descended from the Tudors.[47]

In her letter to Sullivan Mrs Parnell delved at length into the genealogy of the Wicklow Howards, coming up triumphantly with a relationship (via the Earl of Darnley) to Queen Anne though she 'did not wish to vouch for this tradition . . without being sure of it';[48] and in later years she published in the American press a pretentious 'family tree' which showed the Parnells' descent from the 'King-maker' Earl of Warwick through Anne Ward, Sir John Parnell's mother.[49]

It is hard to know how far she carried this attitude into her own social life; it is significant, however, that she sent her sons John and Charles to Mr. Wishaw's school in Chipping Norton because Lord Brabazon (the son of the Earl of Meath, who lived at Kilruddery near Bray) and Louis

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[46] This is presumably a reference to the belief that a high instep indicates good breeding. Letter to Sullivan, p.10.

[47] R.M. McWade, op. cit., p.49.

[48] Letter to Sullivan, p.12.

[49] See Davitt, Fall of feudalism, pp. 658-9. For Anne Ward see above, part 2, p. 57.

Wingfield (a cousin of Lord Powerscourt) attended it - not to an Irish school, which would have been more consistent with the anti-British feeling later attributed to her. All in all, it is not easy to form a complete picture of the lady at this stage of her life. What impression can be gained is not unduly likeable, which is in large part due to the bombastic nature of her own recollections: she had an undeniably good conceit of herself. St John Ervine referred to her as

> one of those outspoken, strong-minded, silly women, commoner now, perhaps, in America than anywhere else, who have been so admirably exposed by Mr. Bernard Shaw in the characters of Mrs Clandon in You never can tell and Lady Britomart Undershaft in Major Barbara.[50]

Fair or not, this description applies more accurately to the Mrs Parnell of later years, when her political views received prominence. At this stage Mrs Parnell resembles more closely another of Shaw's characters, the posturing Raina of Arms and the man; she could well have done with a chocolate-cream soldier to bring her down to earth.

The question of her sons' schooling raises the most important point of Mrs Parnell's character, at least for the purposes of this study: the extent of her leanings towards Irish nationalism, and how much they affected the upbringing of her children. This is a topic to be dealt with fully in the next section of my work;[51] but it is important to state here that all concrete manifestations of Mrs Parnell's much-publicised nationalism seem to post-date her husband's death. This is not the traditional view of the development of Mrs Parnell's political philosophy, which is generally formulated as Thomas Sherlock, for one, saw it:

> Mrs Delia Parnell, the daughter of Admiral Stewart, brought to her Irish home of Avondale a strong American love of independence and a hearty hate of British greed and desire for domination.

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[50] St. John Ervine, Parnell, p.24.

[51] See below, pp 242-8.

> She became in thought and feeling an Irish Nationalist; and from her mainly is derived the warm popular sympathies which glow in the breasts of four of her children.[52]

St John Ervine tells the same tale, with an opposite bias:

> She set herself, almost from the beginning of her life at Avondale, to the mean mischief of making bitterness and wrath between her husband's family and their countrymen in England. She is not the only American woman who, having married into an Anglo-Irish family, has wrought incalculable harm to an adopted country and people by importing into it an entirely artificial hatred of England .. . [53]

Mrs Parnell herself contributed to this picture of the young bride bearing the sacred torch of Republicanism to the aristocratic fastnesses of Avondale. In the reminiscences published by McWade she states:

> From the time I first placed my foot upon Irish soil in 1835, as the bride of John Henry Parnell, my heart and actions have been in sympathetic accord with all movements for the liberty and prosperity of the Irish People.[54]

But those close to her were not so emphatic. Emily Dickinson is silent on the subject of her mother's patriotism during her marriage, and when John Howard Parnell wrote that 'our mother was American to the core, a burning enthusiast in the cause of Irish liberty, and possessed of an inveterate hate against England',[55] he refers to a later period of her if life. Even then, he goes on to say, she always instilled into her children the 'principle of personal loyalty to their sovereign'; a letter to John Howard from his mother towards the end of her life read:

> How the Queen must despise low, mean, mischief-making extremists! They get money by arousing passions and exaggerating aims. If they succeed, rebellion and anarchy will run riot in Europe . . [56]

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[52] The patriotic children were John Charles, Fanny and Anna; T. Sherlock, Parnell, p.30. See also R. Johnston, Parnell and the Parnells (London and Dublin 1888), p.18, and R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell,p.103.

[53] St John Ervine, Parnell, p.24.

[54] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.61.

[55] J.H. Parnell, p. 128.

[56] J.H. Parnell, p. 128.

The 'Fenianism' on Mrs Parnell's part which made such an impression on Charles' schoolmaster at Chipping Norton was articulated only from the eighteen-sixties on; the quotation above suggests that it never went very deep. Certainly, Mrs Parnell's initial political stance was harmless enough:

> My first real public action was a public speech that I made in Dublin, and I was nearly scared to death. I had started a series of musical and dramatic gatherings which were called 'Originals', because everything was to be of original Irish talent . . The ladies who came to play brought their own quadrilles, waltzes, galops, etc. . It was in 1861, I think . . My part was to deliver the address of welcome which opened the series. Fully three thousand people were present, many of them being from the Viceroyal households. Lord Carlisle, though unable to attend in person, was represented by many of his aides-de-camp . . besides my opening address I selected a portion of Emerson's poems to recite . . In my speech I referred to the poem and to our American republic, telling the people that it was characteristic of the Americans to 'go ahead'. I astonished my audience, and the aides-de-camp looked nervous . . 57

This type of meeting could hardly have been farther removed from a political platform, though Mrs Parnell tends to represent it as such; the impression that one gains is rather of a smug self-consciousness at being an enfant terrible at large in Dublin Society. Her first political speech in America, she goes on to relate, was in the early eighties, well after Charles Stewart Parnell had become an established public figure; even the modest trial run described above was not undertaken until two years after her husband's death. Mrs Parnell quotes in McWade's book a poem she wrote in 1846, struck by the famine emigration, as evidence that 'my life and my thoughts have been given to . . the /Irish/ cause'. This begins 'Dear home of my Heart, dear Erin, Farewell/ My sad heart now beats to thy sorrowing knell', continues in like vein (and uninterrupted metre), and could have been written by any contemporary

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57 R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.61.

lady with literary pretensions and nominal powers of observation.[58] When writing to Sullivan to 1880, and even more when reminiscing in 1891, Mrs Parnell was anxious to imply that the unadulterated patriotism she imported to Avondale 'had much to do with turning the mind of my son so strongly in this direction';[59] it is with this in mind that she emphasises not only the American Republican tradition of her mother's family, but also her maternal grandfather's impressions of Ireland in the previous century: 'He forcibly condemned from Ireland the British government there'[60] and 'his observations led him to predict the Irish Rebellion of '96 /sic/'.[61] The error in this last quotation is significant. It is the sort of mistake (like the belief that to be a member of the Established Church in Ireland was to be in 'the Church of England') made by someone whose involvement with Ireland cannot, at least initially, have been deep. Mrs Parnell's political analysis, and her view of the Irish cause, will be examined in depth at a later stage; in the period up to 1859, in which year she returned to Ireland and set up residence in Dublin, there seems little ground for supposing that her political beliefs were an important factor in the upbringing and conditioning of the Parnell children.

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[58] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.64.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Letter to Sullivan, p.21.

[61] McWade, op. cit., p. 30.

Chapter 3

The Parnell Children up to 1859

> We had eleven children born, five sons and six daughters, all born at Avondale except Theodosia, who was born in Torquay, the place where the family first landed in England;[1] and Henry, who was born in Paris, All born in the same room at Avondale except Anna. Five of the eleven children are now living, three daughters and two sons. Ten of them grew up to majority. Hayes died of pleurisy and an affection of the liver at fifteen; and I lost an infant son, five years old, William Tudor, through bad vaccination.[2]

Thus wrote Mrs Parnell in 1891, reminiscing to R.M. McWade with uncharacteristic brevity and conciseness. The children were, in order of age, William (1837-42), Delia (1838-1882), Hayes (1839-1855), Emily (1841-1918), John (1843-1923), Sophia (1845-1877), Charles (1846-1891), Fanny (1849-1882), Henry (1850-1915), Anna (1852-1911), and Theodosia (1853-1920).[3] There was also a boy, stillborn, who was probably the first child. In this chapter I will deal briefly with the Parnell children up to their father's death, and in particular with the early childhood of Charles Stewart. Not surprisingly, all the information on these topics comes from published reminiscences.

Before considering the general question of the Parnell children's upbringing, I will deal with each child briefly.

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[1] The reference is to the Norman Duke, a companion of William the Conqueror, who is mentioned by Mrs Parnell as ancestor of the Parnells.

[2] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.46.

[3] I have compiled these dates from J.H. Parnell's memoir, Burke's Landed gentry of Ireland, and Debrett's Peerage.

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Delia was the eldest (surviving) child, and is mentioned in both her brother's and her sister's memoirs on account of her beauty. Her education was mainly in Paris, where she met the American whom she later married. John Howard Parnell describes her visits home to Avondale during school holidays;[4] otherwise, he simply states succinctly that 'Delia was considered a great beauty, she had dark hair and complexion'.[5] Here, as in many other cases where their accounts overlap, the style of his description is in total contrast to that of his sister Emily, who could never resist the florid cliché:

> She /D̄eli ā/ was of medium height, with perfectly modelled figure, l̄ike a Venus. Her hair, soft and very abundant, of dusky black, contrasted with her ivory skin. When relieved by a light flush she looked radiant. Her features were of the Grecian cast and her eyes were soft and dark, with melancholy depths in them.[6]

Emily had spent a season in London immediately after her sister's debut and had found herself constantly categorised as 'sister of the famous beauty'; as is often the case with celebrated beauties, little else about Delia is recorded. She married James Livingston Thomson, an American who lived in Paris and was 'a descendant on his mother's side of the excellent and distinguished Chancellor Livingston of the United States', according to Mrs Parnell.[7] According to Emily it was Thomson's money rather than his lineage, or even his personality, that carried weight with Delia, and she 'frankly told him so beforehand, but he was so infatuated with her that he was content to take her on any terms.'[8] The marriage thus inauspiciously entered into was solemnised in Paris about the time of John Henry Parnell's death, probably slightly before it; the marriage settlement (an annuity of £100 for Delia, chargeable upon the Avondale estate) is

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[4] J.H. Parnell, p.12.

[5] Ibid.

[6] A patriot's mistake, pp. 10-11.

[7] Letter to Sullivan, last page (un-numbered).

[8] E. Dickinson, p.45.

dated 4 June 1859.[9] Emily Dickinson credits her mother with having disapproved of the match from the outset.[10] She (Emily) refers to Thomson as a 'millionaire', a term which she tended to use with undiscriminating enthusiasm; he certainly appears to have been rich enough to keep his bride in some style in Paris, and it is significant that John Henry Parnell did not feel required to make any further settlement on his eldest daughter than a small annuity.

Hayes was the next eldest child. Like his sister he was dark in colouring; like his younger brother Charles, he was mechanically-minded. John Parnell recalls him as 'clever . . very quiet and studious, and slightly built'.[11] Mrs Parnell's recollections of her son, who died aged fifteen, seem tainted by hindsight:

> Hayes evinced remarkable patriotism, character, artistic and literary talent from 5 or 6 years of age, writing prose and poetry, and in his passion for naval and military life covering sheets of cartridge paper with original battle-scenes and with plans for constructing the best and swiftest ships. When areas were to be ascertained, and while yet ignorant of the name of Euclid, he drew problems for accuracy's sake of his own invention. He wrote a History of Ireland as she is to be, in which he framed laws for her free government.[12]

Whether he was unnaturally precocious or not, the manner of Hayes's death seems to have been in the long run the most influential thing about him; I have discussed this already.[13] Since consumption and pleurisy are both mentioned as causes (albeit vaguely, and in conjunction with a riding accident), it seems likely that he was tubercular.

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[9] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1859, 19.138.

[10] E. Dickinson, p.46.

[11] C.S. Parnell, pp. 10-11. He also wrote that his brother 'was called Hayes, after Colonel Hayes, an intimate friend of our father', which seems unlikely in view of the more obvious derivation of the name.

[12] Letter to Sullivan, p.13.

[13] Above, pp. 171-2.

Emily was the nearest in age to Hayes, and his 'special chum'.[14] She is the best recorded of the Parnell sisters, a fact mainly due to herself. A patriot's mistake is subtitled Reminiscences of the Parnell Family,[15] but it is really an autobiography, if a rather incoherent one. Before considering this work, John Howard Parnell's recollections of Emily as a child can be briefly considered. He remembered her as musical, vivacious, athletic and high-spirited. Although her father's favourite, he disinherited her just before his death owing to her romance with Arthur Dickinson, who lived nearby at Kingston and who, with his brothers, was forbidden to visit at Avondale; a graphic little scene in John Howard's memoir describes amateur theatricals with the Dickinsons, and his father's disapproval. The world of Mansfield Park seems only a little removed from the vale of Avoca.[16]

John recalls his sister's love of horses and hunting, and her winning record in the donkey races organised by the children at Avondale; Emily's own book begins with an account of her first hunt, in the company of Hayes and her father. (Writing in 1905, she dates this as 'fifty years ago'; it must have been in fact in 1849, as she mentions that there were only six children then and that Charles was three years old). The account of this hunt, and of the subsequent dinner-party, sets the tone of the book. It is completely self-centred, often unperceptive, extraordinarily self-opinionated, and written by someone able to blind herself to anything less than attractive in her own behaviour, as well as being basically uninterested in the actions and character of others except in so far as they affected herself. The value of A patriot's mistake is correspondingly limited. The book is further marred by writing which is usually bad and often

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[14] E. Dickinson, p.8.

[15] Published London, 1905.

[16] C.S. Parnell, pp. 7-8. The play was She stoops to conquer; Charles Stewart played a plage.

obscure, and by a tendency to wild exaggeration, bordering on delusion. Mrs Parnell became 'a millionairess' upon her brother's death;[17] the hall at Avondale was 'capacious enough to drive a coach and four round';[18] the cricket-game between the Phoenix and Leinster clubs which proved fatal to her father is transformed into 'a big international cricket match'.[19] Very few of Mrs Dickinson's statements can be taken at face-value; but her book remains, with John Howard Parnell's terse memoir, the only primary source available for the Parnells' family life.

To return to Emily herself, she describes herself as a weakly and delicate child; but she seems nonetheless to have been well able to hold her own. Her attachment to Arthur Monroe Dickinson began when she was twelve years old, and 'by the time we had reached the respective ages of fifteen and twenty we were very much in love and became privately engaged'.[20] Her loyalty to Dickinson, not only during their forbidden romance, but also throughout their far more trying marriage (he was to become an unbalanced dipsomaniac) is one of Emily's most likeable characteristics. Her attachment to Arthur continued throughout adolescence and she married him five years after her father's death.[21]

Up to 1859, Emily's life continued much as her sister's had done. She went to Paris about 1857, to 'finish' her education at a large and cosmopolitan boarding-school; in 1859 she went to London to be a debutante.

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[17] E. Dickinson, p.79.

[18] Ibid., p. 8. The hall is imposing enough, but by no means as grand as that.

[19] Ibid., p. 30.

[20] Ibid., p. 10.

[21] The whole story is strikingly reminiscent of a contemporary whose patience in love was also rewarded by a disastrous union; three years after Emily Dickinson's wedding, after an equally long engagement, Katharine Wood married another dashing young subaltern, called Willie O'Shea. See Katharine O'Shea, Charles Stewart Parnell: His love story and political life (2 vols, London, 1914), i, chs. 2-6.

Like Delia, she stayed with Sir Ralph and Lady Howard in Belgrave Square. In London she was expected, in her turn, to 'make a matrimonial choice';[22] but she remained faithful to Arthur.

The London scene is described in A patriot's mistake with a wealth of cliché and detail; throughout, Emily points out the contrast she made to her beautiful sister. She repulses liberties attempted by Lord W-, talks back to men who expect her to be mute and decorative, wins over a misogynist cousin,[23] and makes her own sort of impact, with a great deal of self-satisfaction. The chapter is relieved by a humourous portrait of Sir Ralph Howard, but in general Emily contents herself by blowing her own trumpet with a good deal of nonchalance:

> I was a very good instrumental performer /on the piano/ but had not yet attained the height of my abilities as a musician. Later on, some said that my execution and expression did not fall short of the great Thalberg and that, next to himself, nobody else had ever been able to play the music of this celebrated composer so well . .
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> I was flatteringly told that I looked like a young queen . . I was very slight and rather delicate in appearance. My face had not any striking regularity of features or style of beauty, but it had life and brightness and magnetism in it, was thought uncommon, and one of those which for many men have much attraction . . Like all the family, I had that keen enjoyment of life and artistic appreciation of form and colour which goes with the Celtic blood, though some of my charm came from my American mother. My freshness and youth, set off with the Paris gown and the joie de vie /sic/ which I have always possessed, attracted a good deal of attention and won more than a passing smile from the royal personages present. .[24]

She shared the imagination of Delia Stewart Parnell, who could visualise without any difficulty the sons of George the Third crowding round her mother's piano.

Emily's recitation of compliments received and social successes

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[22] E. Dickinson, p.12.

[23] Sir William Fraser, stepson of Sir Ralph Howard. Coincidentally, he died in the same month as Delia Parnell (and Aubrey Beardsley, the illustrator) - March 1898. (Annual Register, 1898).

[24] E. Dickinson, pp. 21-3. The occasion was Emily's presentation at court.

registered is varied by the sudden irruption of Arthur (on leave) into the house at Belgrave Square, and his tussle with the footman; St John Ervine's description of Captain Dickinson as 'a representative Lever soldier' seems well justified.[25] This contretemps was followed by a tryst with Arthur in the square, and a kiss that was observed by Lady Howard; Emily placated her by telling her of their secret engagement, and then had to return to the square to let out Arthur, who had inadvertently managed to get locked in. Seen in this act by Lady Howard, the latter and Sir Ralph decided that their charge was not to be trusted and wrote to her father that she intended running away with Dickinson. His feelings about the family at Kingston have been described; he went straight from the cricket match in Dublin to his solicitor's, cut Emily out of his will, and died suddenly a few days later.[26]

Here Emily's account is corroborated by John Howard Parnell, and seems likely enough. By the summer of 1859, which was to change the Parnell children's lives so decisively, the pattern of Emily's life had been laid down; she did marry her 'representative Lever soldier', and she remained headstrong and self-opinionated until she died nearly sixty years later.

In contrast to Emily's book, John Howard Parnell's C.S. Parnell: a memoir[27] is exactly what it purports to be. Very little of the writer, diffident and self-effacing, obtrudes into the picture; it is in no sense an autobiography. Born two years later than Emily, John Howard became after Hayes's death the eldest son. He seems to have been more shy and quiet than his high-spirited sisters and brothers; a speech defect could have been either the cause or the effect of this. His stepson,

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[25] St John Ervine, Parnell, p. 40.

[26] E. Dickinson, pp.27-31.

[27] Published London, 1916.

Captain Mateir, believes that he had 'a divided palate'; John Howard Parnell himself refers to being 'afflicted with stammering' as a child, but states that this was cured after a spell at school in Paris.[28] It seems to have returned, however, for Mrs Parnell wrote in 1898 that her eldest son's political career had been hampered by 'a nervous defect of speech'.[29] (His Parisian teacher is named variously as 'M. Marderon'[30] and 'M. Roderon';[31] he taught 'French, drawing, and a little painting'). John was still at school in Paris when his father died in 1859.

As the only two boys in the family after 1854, except for Henry who was a comparative infant, John and Charles were constant companions in escapades round the estate; C.S. Parnell copiously records these pastimes, and I will mention them later. Their schooldays, however, were not spent together (until they both attended Mr Wishaw's at Chipping Norton, after their father's death). This was because Charles's frequent imitations of his brother's speech hesitation both aggravated John's defect and produced a stammer in his own voice.[32] Thus John Howard, who scrupulously excludes his own reminiscences except where they involve his brother, gives us no picture of his own schooling. It seems conclusive, however, that neither he nor his brothers attended Eton, where their father, grandfather, and many of their relatives had been pupils; nor did they attend a similar school. Their education was entrusted to an odd mixture of private tuition, small private schools, Parisian tutors. and pre-university crammers.

John's character is testified to more often at a later stage of his life; but the qualities of kindness and integrity which are recalled by the son of the last steward of Avondale, Mr Hugh Gaffney, and by John

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[28] J.H. Parnell, p. 29.

[29] Quoted in R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.46.

[30] J.H. Parnell, p.29.

[31] Ibid., p. 38.

[32] Ibid., p. 27.

Howard Parnell's stepson, Captain Mateir, seem to have been characteristic of him from his youth. These qualities were not inconsistent with the strength of emotion which he shared with most of the family; Mrs Parnell wrote to Sullivan:

> My son John is full of pity and kindness for everyone. When a boy, having received some great provocation, but unwilling to hurt anyone weaker than himself, he seized hold of a heavy old-fashioned mahogany armchair, and saying 'I must hurt something', smashed it to pieces on the floor.[33]

This anecdote, while not exactly illustrating the 'pity and kindness' which Mrs Parnell quoted it to corroborate, is nonetheless indicative of the strength of feeling inherent in most of the Parnells.

The next oldest child was Sophia or Sophy, who seems to have been remarkable only for her beauty (of a blonde type, unlike Delia), and for her elopement with the family solicitor, which took place long after her father's death. She was only a year older than Charles, with whose childhood I will deal separately.

Fanny was two years younger than Charles, but was an especial companion of his.[34] Like Hayes, she had a literary bent; John Howard called her 'the poetess of the family and our bluestocking sister . . she knew every book in the library at Avondale'.[35] Dark, sharp-tongued and witty, she was Charles's constant opponent in games like tin soldiers, which gave rise to the famous and too often quoted story of his gluing his army to the floor.[36] Fanny's soldiers always represented the Irish

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[33] Letter to Sullivan, last page.

[34] J.H. Parnell, pp. 13, 20.

[35] Ibid., p. 13.

[36] Originally told in T. Sherlock, Parnell; given in full in J.H. Parnell's C.S. Parnell, p.20; used to damning effect in St John Ervine's Parnell in 1925.

side, John Howard recalled; and, he added, 'I think that Fanny's impassioned patriotism had a great effect on Charley's convictions in later life'.[37] The extent of Fanny's patriotism as an influential factor in the young Parnells' life will be discussed later, when I come to deal with their residence in Dublin after their father's death; at this stage there is not enough evidence to count it as anything but negligible. Certainly, however, Fanny was one of Charles's closest companions; her early death in 1882 was to be a great shock to him. She was far closer to him, in temperament as well as age, than the equally strong-willed, but Philistine and unintellectual, Emily. (Significantly, Emily never came to share the politics of her younger brother and sisters).

Henry Tudor Parnell, the youngest son, is a mystery figure. He is very rarely mentioned and is only referred to cursorily by John Howard Parnell. The Clonmore estate was left to him, and was probably purchased by his father with the express purpose of providing an inheritance for him; he was later to sell it off, and to marry a daughter of Dr Thomas Luby, a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin. He studied law at Cambridge but, John Howard stated cryptically, 'was too nervous to pass his examinations'.[38] A son of his, who was mentally deficient, lived with Mr and Mrs John Howard Parnell in Glenageary during the 1920s.[39] These are the only easily ascertained facts about Henry Tudor Parnell; I will enlarge on them in a later part of my study.

Anna was next in age to Henry, but was similar in her convictions to Fanny and was often compared to her in later life. Little is recorded of

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[37] J.H. Parnell, p.21.

[38] Ibid., p. 11.

[39] He was known locally as 'Young Parnell', and was a familiar figure round the locality until his death in the 'thirties.

her at this stage, though she was to become a more public figure than any of her sisters. She was only seven when her father died. Like Delia, Emily and Fanny, she was dark-haired and slightly built; like many of the family, she had a delicate constitution.[40] She shared with John a facility for painting, and later studied art in England.

Theodosia was the youngest child, and is described by John Howard as 'a real society belle; though of a very quiet disposition'. However, she was only six years old in 1859. Her later life was to be more conventional than that of any of her brothers or sisters, and Mrs Parnell alone records anything of it, when she describes - with obvious pleasure - her marriage to Claud Paget, a well-connected young English naval officer.[41]

Even a cursory survey of the Parnell children yields one or two rough generalisations. There seem to have been two strains of character. One was strong-minded, individualistic, and - except for Emily, who is otherwise of this group - intellectually oriented and politically minded. These are the Parnells who were often called 'mad', and they included Emily, Fanny, Anna, Charles and Hayes. The other strain was more retiring, did not enjoy the limelight, and was ready to accept a quiet and uneventful lot; they often took up residence in England. Theodosia, Delia, Sophy and Henry were of this type. John Howard alone combined the characteristics of both. In general terms, it could be said that the first group 'took after' their mother and the second after their father; simplified as it is, this is a more logical criterion of division than any other. The more retiring and un-political Parnells are not a uniformly younger or older group; nor are they only girls. This group includes the

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[40] J.H. Parnell, p.13.

[41] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.48. See above, p.196.

eldest (Delia) and the youngest (Theodosia) as well as the middle child, Sophy. Thus the politically-minded children were not those who were brought up almost entirely by their mother, nor those who had known their father best; the distribution was, in terms of age and sex, completely even. The interesting thing is that,as children, the different patterns can already be seen so clearly.

The life of the Parnell family during the 1840s and 1850s is worth some comment. Nothing has been written of this except for John Parnell's careful recollections of boyhood pranks, and Emily Dickinson's patchy delusions of _la vie de château_ lived in the grand style at Avondale. From these observations and from conversations with Mrs John Howard Parnell and Tudor MacDermott (Sophia Parnell's son), St John Ervine reconstructed a graphic picture of a totally eccentric, roistering, Leveresque country family, ignored by a bookish father and ruled by a mad matriarch who was mentally unhinged by her obsessive hate of England.

> The Parnells and their neighbours might have stepped out of the novels of Lever. Wicklow, like other Irish counties, was inhabited by a hard-living, hard-drinking set which loved hunting and gambling and loud, lavish hospitality. Mr Parnell's affection for books kept him from the rougher life of his neighbours such as the Dickinsons, but his children fell into it as if by instinct. His daughter Emily, whom he disinherited because he suspected her of having schemes to elope with a Captain Arthur Dickinson, a representative Lever soldier, gives an account of her upbringing in _A patriot's mistake_ which shows that the Lever Ireland, though it no longer exists, certainly existed in the middle of the nineteenth century.[42]

Much of this, as I have shown, is unfounded. John Henry was no retiring, indecisive bookworm. His wife was not the eccentric that Ervine paints her as elsewhere, and moreover abhorred exactly the country life that he describes. The 'loud, lavish hospitality' existed more vividly in Emily Dickinson's rambling recollections than it ever had in real life. But the interesting thing about Ervine's view is that it represents - albeit largely by hypothesis - a unique attempt at a view of the Parnells

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[42] St John Ervine, _Parnell_, p.40.

as contemporaries must have seen them: he attempts to put them in some sort of contemporary context. His view is biassed and over-simplified, but it is nonetheless a worthwhile effort.

There was, moreover, some substance for his accusations that Mrs Parnell devoted less care to the bringing up of her children than she might have done. John Howard's story of Charles's infancy, when his mother, on hearing visitors while nursing him, 'hastily stowed away the future Irish Leader in the drawer of a large press, which she closed without thinking'[43] and forgot all about him, is not so amusing in its implications. Nor had she any compunction about leaving her children to go to Paris, or about sending Charles to a boarding-school when aged seven. John Howard's references to 'the succession of uneducated nurses who had charge of us elder children'[44] and to the children's appreciation of the admirable Mrs Twopenny, 'a most respectable woman' who at last succeeded these nurses, is also indicative.[45] Little enough can be reconstructed of the Parnell's early life at Avondale; but the blurred picture which emerges probably corresponds more closely to St John Ervine's over-coloured period print than to later hagiographical depictions where Delia Parnell, the angel of high-souled patriotism, instils principles of republican

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[43] J.H. Parnell, p. 19.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Mrs Twopenny is mentioned in J.H. Parnell's memoir; but long before the publication of this, an article by T.M. Healy in the Westminster Budget, 10 Nov. 1893 (vol. ii, no. 41, pp. 9-11), recalled how Parnell used to compare Rowland Winn, the Tory whip at Westminster, to "an old nurse I had - she had a very queer name - Mrs Twopenny". As Healy told it, Parnell would go on to recall Mrs Twopenny in fits and snatches between Parliamentary speeches, emphasising his fear of her and her fund of frightening stories. Healy gained the impression that "it was from this antique serving-woman the Irish leader drew whatever tendency towards the "Abberglaubisch" his childhood received".

independence into children whose young brows are already touched with the light of dedicated nationalism.[46]

II

After this long treatment of the context of his childhood, it is time to introduce Charles Stewart Parnell himself. He was born on 27 June 1846, and was thus a year younger than Sophia and two years older than Fanny. Despite the proximity of their ages, Sophy was not a particular playmate of his; he was closest to John and Fanny, both of whose temperaments were more similar to his own. His brother recalled him as:

> a wiry little boy, very bright and playful, making fun of everybody and everything. He was fond of mechanics, like his eldest brother Hayes. He had dark brown hair, a pale complexion, very dark brown and very piercing eyes. His figure was slender and he was very small for his age. He did not grow until late, and was nicknamed 'Tom Thumb' at home.[47]

Like many children brought up by a variety of nurses, he had a tendency to be fractious; he was never, however, corporally punished, 'but only shut in a room by himself where he howled himself to sleep'.[48] (It is notable that it was his father who inflicted this punishment, in contrast to Ervine's picture of a vague and unconcerned bookworm). His characteristics seem those of any lively and possibly over-indulged child; his brother recalled 'Charley's delight in disturbing his father's games of billiards'[49] and his frequent mimicry of John's speech hesitation,[50] which led to Charles himself developing a stammer. He was, according to John Howard, 'the gayest and most vivacious of us all (as also the most domineering)';[51] although it was Emily who always insisted on being leader

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[46] An illuminated address which accompanied the Parnell Tribute, now in T.C.D. MSS collection, contains many scenes of this kind.

[47] J.H. Parnell, p.11.

[48] Ibid., p.20.

[49] Ibid., p. 22.

[50] Ibid., p. 24.

[51] Ibid.

in games of follow-my-leader, not (as claimed in some bowlderised versions of his childhood) Charles.

His relationship with his brother was what might be expected between two headstrong boys in a large family of girls:

> We had many fights, or rather tussles, for there was rarely and ill-feeling. He used to aim a blow at me and then run, catching up anything he saw and flinging it over his shoulder at me. I followed at full speed, also catching handfuls of ornaments, knick-knacks, sofa-cushions and even flower-pots and hurling them at him. During one of these pell-mell chases, leaving a trail of destruction in their wake, I remember seizing a poker from a grate and breaking it over the back of a sofa, with no intention of hurting him, but just in order to give him a thorough good fright . . . in temper he was headstrong and self-willed, often to the point of rudeness, while at times he showed a curious mixture of jealousy and suspicion, which developed strongly in later years. His love of mischief was unbounded, but underlying every action was the rooted desire to have his own way at any cost . . Still, in the days of his childhood as throughout life, he and I were the best of friends.[52]

His jealousy and wilfulness are not to be marvelled at. Too much can be, and has been, read into his boyhood characteristics. Even the usually balanced view of his brother is too prone to hindsight:

> Charley, having been petted from his boyhood, became unmanageable and even at the early age of six evinced the desire to rule the household. His special delight seemed to be to get the upper hand of me, in which he generally succeeded. So strong was this characteristic in him that his old nurse, Mrs Twopenny, often said 'Master Charley is born to rule!'[53]

This is taken by John Howard as prescience on Mrs Twopenny's part; but Charles's childhood characteristics were not incontrovertible evidence of his destiny to become leader of the Irish Nation. He was, as his brother states, over-indulged. He was brought up amongst a class never noted for its humility; his parents' union was neither a close nor a happy one. Several of the other children developed in as headstrong and self-willed a direction as Charles; Emily was at least as much of a handful. A good example of the sort of exaggerated emphasis that is laid on Charles's nursery characteristics is contained in A patriot's mistake:

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[52] J.H. Parnell, p.24.

[53] Ibid., p. 26.

> Charles . . from an early age exhibited a masterful propensity for dictating to and managing others, assuming the leadership and trying to set the world and its pilgrims right. In order to get his own way with his brothers and sisters he would 'butt' us all around with his head like a goat, so that he acquired amongst us the nickname of 'Butthead'. His high spirits, which would not brook control, proved a source of great trouble to his nurses, and later on to his governess and tutors, who one and all found themselves incapable of managing him, though a word of tender remonstrance from his mother would appeal at once to his affectionate disposition and curb his most turbulent outbreaks of passionate temper.[54]

As so many later biographers did, here Emily Dickinson is making the sketchy structure of his nursery characteristics bear the weight of the politician that he was to become thirty years later. John Howard Parnell, however, makes clear that the tyrannical excesses of Charles's spoilt infancy were greatly modified by his schooldays. After his first term at Yeovil,

> when he removed to Avondale on his first vacation, the greatest improvement was noticeable in him; he seemed to have lost his old habit of domineering over the family, especially over his sisters.[55]

He was, in fact, a typical example of someone exposed to the doubtful privilege of having a boarding-school 'knock some manners into' him. 'As he grew in later years', his brother adds, 'he rapidly became more and more reserved'.[56] His sparring relationship with John Howard continued, but there was no animosity involved,[57] His delicacy as a child allied with his own intensely strong will meant that he was highly-strung; John recalls that even when Charles was aged about eleven,

> at that time, during the cricket-matches, I used to notice Charley's extreme nervousness; his fingers twitched anxiously, even while he was watching the match, and I know that in after-years he was just as nervous, though perhaps he did not show it to outsiders, in the greater game played in the House of Commons.[58]

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[54] E. Dickinson, p.9.

[55] J.H. Parnell, p. 27.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., p. 30.

[58] Ibid., p.31.

His constitution remained delicate; besides an attack of typhoid while at school in Yeovil, he was stricken with scarlet fever at Avondale in 1858. At this time John was separated from him, kept in quarantine in the dower-house at Cassino, and the latter recalled: 'Although I had Sophy's company . . that did not make up for the loss of Charley's vivacity and ever-charming manner'.[59] Again, it is striking how the livelier Parnell children - those of the first strain mentioned above—were closest to each other, irrespective of age: there was a bond between Emily, John, Charles, Fanny and later Anna, which did not extend to Sophia, Theodosia or Henry.

In thus briefly considering the characteristics of someone who seems to have been a spoilt and headstrong child - though no more so than could reasonably be expected from his background - I must once again emphasise the fatuity of drawing any direct lines from these nursery traits to his character as a political leader. His mother was particularly fond of this kind of dissertation; writing to Sullivan she remarked:

> Charles in particular has shown that the child was father to the man, for the energy and devotion that he now manifests to his country, to those who need a mighty help, are the outgrowth of his youthful activity and consideration in favour of his family, of his feeling, just and indulgent judgement, respect and unselfishness towards all who came near him.[60]

This at least is a change from the school of thought that sees the Iron master of the Irish Party in the child who shouted at a maid for disturbing his birds' egg collection, or the politician who out-manoeuvred Gladstone in the boy who glued his soldiers to the floor; but it is no more useful or relevant. If, in fact, Charles Stewart Parnell had developed logically from the sort of child he seems to have been, he would never

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[59] J.H. Parnell, p. 34.

[60] Letter to Sullivan, p. 4.

have made the politician of consummate patience and self-control that he became.

Charles's early life at Avondale passed in the sort of activity that might be expected. From the time when as a child he used to watch cricket on the pitch at Avondale, until he and John were old enough to organise matches among the work-boys on the estate,[61] this game was his chief pastime; other social recreations were donkey races on the lawn in front of the house,[62] visiting the Brooke children at Castle Howard,[63] and playing hockey and handball. With their father the boys went shooting, and carried home the game; he also taught them how to play cricket and took them on fishing expeditions to Aughavannagh, where he had a shooting-box.[64] A pastime more peculiar to Wicklow was driving in a donkey-cart to Aughrim and panning for gold in the river there.[65] This, at least, was a preoccupation that never deserted Charles: 'the gold found in the river he treasured, I believe, till the end of his life'.

Charles was a good cricketer; when still quite young, he was a substitute player on many of the Wicklow teams. His primary pursuit at this stage of his life was the reprehensible one of collecting birds' eggs; more enterprisingly, he was a partner with John in a potato-growing enterprise, the produce being sold in Rathdrum for pocket-money.[66]

It was just what might be expected of a county Wicklow childhood, with the usual round of cricket-matches, donkey-driving, visiting, and church on Sundays (where John made himself faint by putting his head between his knees). Since Hayes's death John Henry Parnell gave up being Master

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[61] J.H. Parnell, pp. 13,22.

[62] Ibid., p. 30.

[63] Ibid., p. 24.

[64] Ibid., pp. 31-2.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., p. 33.

of the Hunt and sold his hounds, so riding does not play as large a part in John's early memories as in Emily's; both memoirs taken in conjunction, however, give much the same impression of childhood at Avondale up to 1859. There could have been few more attractive places to grow up in, and the Parnell children enjoyed the potentialities of the neighbourhood to the full; but it seems that they took the natural beauty of the place for granted. John Howard mentions that Mrs Twopenny (an Englishwoman) 'was very fond of the scenery round Avondale and instilled a love of the country into me which Charley, however, did not show until later'.[67]

As far as his schooling went, however, Charles Stewart Parnell's youth was not as typical as in other respects. His schooldays began at the age of seven, when his father took him to Miss Muirley's in Somerset. I have already dealt with this, quoting Miss Muirley's own account to R.B. O'Brien. (John Howard Parnell remembered it as his mother taking Charles to Yeovil, because he had been over-spoilt at home;[68] this would have been a drastic measure indeed, and there is no reason to doubt Miss Muirley's own memory of the incident). Charles became a great favourite of hers, and she seems to have given him the 'mothering' that John Henry Parnell requested. She nursed him through a long spell of typhoid, and always retained an interest in his later life. The Yeovil period, however, can only have been a short-term arrangement to tide over a period of domestic awkwardness at Avondale; the school was a girls' establishment, and Charles was not enamoured of the situation.[69] At all events, his serious illness there, and the fact that he continued

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[67] J.H. Parnell, p. 19.

[68] Ibid., p. 26.

[69] Ibid., p. 26. 'He complained to me afterwards that they all made love to him and bothered him out of his life. In any case, he resented being sent to a girls' school, on the grounds that it was not manly.'

under medical attention after it ('his head seemed peculiarly affected'),[70] meant that he remained at home after spending only a year or so away.[71] Here he was taught first of all by his sisters' governess, who found him too much of a handful, and then by a tutor; this did not suit him either, as 'he always wanted to be with bigger boys'. After this unsuccessful period he was once more sent away to school, aged eight or nine. This time he went to a Mr and Mrs Barton, who ran a school near Kirk Langley in Derbyshire. Discipline was again a problem, but he seemed to enjoy this experience; he told John that 'it was at Kirk Langley that he learned all his boyish tricks and he always referred to it as a bright spot in his memory, owing to all the fun he had there'.[72] After a year with the Bartons he left the school; St John Ervine claims that his parents were asked to remove him, but does not substantiate this. From 1856 to 1859, John Parnell recalled, Charles was educated at home once more, by one tutor after another; a Mr William Clarke, son of Dr Clarke of Rathdrum, fulfilled the office at one stage, 'and Charley as usual did not get on very well with him and was in the habit of making awful faces at him behind his back'.[73]

It is unlikely that he learnt much. His mother later wrote 'I gave great care to his education, requiring him to make accurate and fine translations from the original into the English, both in Caesar's Commentaries and Virgil';[74] but in the same vein she recalls 'religiously my son was a Protestant . . His father belonged to the Church of England and Charles was much with religious and pious people',[75] and that 'particular pains were taken to place Charles with manifestly kind and

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[70] J.H. Parnell, p.26.

[71] He returned home in 1855; his illness took place late in 1854. O'Brien, Parnell, i, 37.

[72] J.H. Parnell, p.32.

[73] Ibid., p. 35.

[74] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.51. Also see her rather smug anecdote to Sullivan describing how travellers on the Rathdrum stage exclaimed that 'that little fellow has been wonderfully well taught'.

[75] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.50.

religious people'.[76] This glosses over a youthful characteristic of Charles's which John Howard explicitly emphasised: his complete impatience with religious instruction. At Avondale, after he left Miss Muirley's, 'the effort to give him religious instruction /was not/ attended with any better success . . he turned everything to ridicule and sent away his instructor hopelessly saddened'[77] and after his sojurn with the Bartons the same disposition remained: 'The Rev. Henry Galbraith, then rector of Rathdrum, was engaged to reach us Scripture . . Charley hated this, and whenever he got a chance ran off and hid in the shrubberies.[78] Mrs Parnell does not choose to recollect this; perhaps she never knew about it. She was rarely at Avondale in those days. Elsewhere, when she claims 'I went to Paris for the education and social advantage of my family',[79] Charles was certainly at least one exception to this rule.

The standard Charles's education reached at this stage does not seem to have been unduly high. Miss Muirley found him 'quick and interesting to teach',[80] and Mrs Parnell wrote to J.D. Sullivan that 'all my son's tutors expressed a high opinion of Charles's abilities';[81] but the impression gained from John Howard's memoir is that his brother must have been idle and hard to teach (a judgement subscribed to, after conversations with the family and others, by R.B. O'Brien). Certainly what Thomas Sherlock wrote of him - that 'as a child he showed an uncommon love of study, devoting far more time to his books than to the ordinary sports of childhood'[82] - is totally unfounded, and is a flight of fancy not even to be found in the rambling letter from Mrs Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, which

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[76] Letter to Sullivan, p.5.

[77] J.H.Parnell, p.28.

[78] Ibid., p. 34.

[79] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.46.

[80] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 37.

[81] Letter to Sullivan, p.5.

[82] T. Sherlock, Parnell, p.31.

Sherlock used as a source of his book. But neither was it true to say, as did St John Ervine, that 'his mentality was slow';[83] there is every evidence that throughout his life he had no trouble in learning what interested him.

The normality of Charles's Wicklow childhood comes through strongly in the many anecdotes which John Howard Parnell and others tell of his early youth. Playing soldiers,[84] losing a favourite dog in a mineshaft,[85] raiding the kitchen-garden at Avondale, constructing ponds and building rafts,[86] playing at the ruined fort on the estate,[87] instigating a firework display,[88] visiting the local 'haunted cottage'[89] - it could be the childhood of any child born into the comfortable background of the Irish landed gentry of this period.

But even at this stage, there were differences. Mrs Parnell was not a typical wife for an Irish squire; her inclinations did not lend stability to the children's background. She and her husband did not live much together; this in itself must have been unsettling, and it seems to have been the chief cause of Charles's rather premature trips to school in England. Then there was the sudden death of John Henry Parnell in 1859, at a time when Charles was the only one of his children in Ireland, and the only one to attend his funeral. The fact that he died at so disadvantageous a time where his financial affairs were concerned meant that the break in his children's way of life was to be all the greater. Avondale was let, and a new sort of life began when Charles was only thirteen. The co-existence of the country gentleman and the discontented ex-belle may

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[83] St John Ervine, Parnell, p.30.

[84] J.H. Parnell, p.20.

[85] Ibid., p.30.

[86] Ibid., p. 33.

[87] Ibid., p. 34.

[88] Ibid., p. 36.

[89] Ibid., p. 36.

have ended, to all intents and purposes, six years before the death of the former; but his way of life seems to have been the dominant influence on their children up to 1859. The influence of Delia Parnell on Charles's life and on the formation of his opinions - especially bearing in mind that he was one of the children who did not accompany her to Paris and attend school there - can only have been notable after 1859.

Appendix

Hugh Gaffney's Recollections of the Parnell Family

The Parnells' life at Avondale was vividly put before me in conversations with Mr Hugh Gaffney of Roundwood, Co. Wicklow, whose mother, Maria Gaffney, was housekeeper to John Howard Parnell and Emily Dickinson, and whose great-aunt, Mary Gaffney, was Charles Stewart Parnell's nursemaid. Mr Gaffney's father, Peter Gaffney, worked on the estate as a boy, was valet to John Henry Parnell for the last years of the latter's life, and then became a steward of the estate for Mrs Parnell. The family was descended from a Hugh Gaffney who came from the Parnell's estate in Armagh, and they lived in Avondale House, not in an estate cottage; the bond was a close one. Mr Gaffney's memories of what his parents and great-aunt told him are sharp, decisive and endlessly interesting; however, as they are not first-hand recollections, I have decided to put them in an appendix rather than drawing on them as sources throughout my narrative.

The general view thus given of the Parnell ménage in its early days is in direct contrast to Emily Dickinson's memories of seignorial splendour. The Parnells, Mr Gaffney states, 'never lived it up', except for organising cricket matches. The house was 'plain and neglected'; Mrs Parnell was 'proud', and 'didn't mix with the county.' The family did not entertain; nor were they particularly good 'church people' (they did not, for instance, read the lesson in Rathdrum Church). They had, Mr Gaffney recollects, no carriages, unlike the Byrnes of Crony Byrne; Peter Gaffney drove them in a sidecar wherever they wanted, and as a boy he remembered walking into Wicklow town to collect their letters, as there was no carriage to be sent. Nonetheless,the family was noted for its charity, though not for its wealth.

Many of Mr Gaffney's recollections deal with Avondale after the death of John Henry Parnell; but Mary Gaffney, who travelled from Ballyshannon

to Avondale in 1848 to be a nursemaid to Charles Stewart Parnell, lived until 1916 and retained a clear mind until the end; a perspicacious and intelligent woman, she was - with Peter Gaffney, Mr Gaffney's father - one of the best educated people in the parish. Their recollections of the Parnells are still remembered by Mr Gaffney; and the details I have adduced here are illuminating, though essentially secondary, data.

Part 4

Parnell before Politics, 1859-74

Introduction

The previous chapters of my work have dealt with Charles Stewart Parnell's family background and personal history up to his father's death in 1859. In this year his life changed dramatically; the family left Avondale and their life henceforth was dictated by their mother's peripatetic existence instead of the Wicklow county life-style in which their father had been absorbed. When Charles returned to Avondale to take up his inheritance, some of the restlessness seems to have remained; it may partly have accounted for his plunge into politics. The following section of my study deals with Parnell's progression from childhood to the years of discretion, and with the process by which in 1875 the squire of Avondale became the hon. member for Meath.

Chapter 1

The Parnell Family 1859-75

I

For the Parnell family, the immediate result of John Henry Parnell's death was a complete reorganisation of their lives. Avondale was to be vacated, although not at once; the family returned there after the funeral and almost immediately began to arrange the temporary disposal of the estate. This was overseen by Alfred MacDermott, described by John Howard Parnell as 'our father's solicitor'. John Parnell goes on to say that MacDermott

> found everything in a very confused state, and his first act was to pay off all the workmen not actually required; while, by order of the court /of Chancery/ the live-stock and farming implements were sold by auction; sufficient horses for the use of the family were kept, and the rest sold; Mr West of Mount Avon was appointed agent.[1]

Although the auction was first advertised on 30 July 1859, about three weeks after the funeral,[2] it did not take place until 11 and 12 October. There is a detailed inventory of this auction, as well as of the later sales at Casino, in the appendix to this chapter; but a brief glance at the list shows how thoroughly the establishment at Avondale was broken up; it would never be as extensive again. 62 head of cattle were sold, 22 sheep and 12 horses (even though several had been reserved for family use). A great many farming implements were auctioned, and four carriages.[3] Over a year later, a further auction at Casino, the dower house (or more accurately, large cottage) nearby, disposed of more personal effects such

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[1] J.H. Parnell, C.S. Parnell: a memoir (London, 1916), p.39.

[2] Wicklow Newsletter and General Advertiser, 30 July 1859.

[3] See inventory published in Wicklow Newsletter, 1 Oct. 1859.

as china, furniture, the contents of an extensive wine-cellar, and 'a good cricket-ground tent in perfect order';[4] two years later there was yet another sale of 'the property of Mrs Parnell'.[5]

The servants were, however, kept on; the house was to be let 'by order of the Court', according to Emily Dickinson,[6] and obviously required a functioning establishment. The shadowy Miss Zouche, described by John Howard Parnell as 'a devoted relative who had been acting as housekeeper',[7] remained at Avondale for a year; after this the family moved to Dublin. Emily Dickinson dates this move as the spring of 1860.[8] Neither she nor John mentioned to whom the house was let, but local newspapers of the time record Mr Thomas Edwards, chief engineer of the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway, as living there;[9] Edwards later became a friend of John Parnell's.

The family moved to Dalkey, then an upper middle-class watering-place connected by train to the city. Mrs Parnell, Emily says, 'would have liked to take her children away to London or Paris, but was prohibited by the Court from taking them out of Ireland'.[10] The location of the house 'at the seaside' was also by command of the Court of Chancery.[11] Mrs Parnell moved nearer Dublin a year later, and into the city in 1862.[12]

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[4] See Wicklow Newsletter, 1 Dec. 1860.

[5] Ibid., 19 Dec. 1863.

[6] E. Dickinson, A patriot's mistake (London, 1905), p.33.

[7] J.H. Parnell, p.41.

[8] E. Dickinson, p.33.

[9] The railway was being extended to the area at this time. Edwards appears as resident at Avondale in records like the Rathdrum Horticultural Show prizes, Wicklow Newsletter, 20 Aug. 1864.

[10] E. Dickinson, p.34.

[11] J.H. Parnell, p.34. The house was called Khyber Pass; it is now the Killiney Heights Hotel. John Howard Parnell returned to this area towards the end of his life, and was living at Ballybrack when he died.

[12] The intermediate house was in Kingstown and belonged to the O'Conor Don - 'Granite Lodge', near Clarinda Park.

Emily recorded this final move, to a house in Temple Street,[13] as being 'ordered by the court . . so that her elder daughters might have the advantages of a Dublin season'.[14] However, it is more likely that Mrs Parnell had simply had more than enough of seclusion. John wrote that 'our mother did not care for the country, so took a house at 14, Upper Temple Street',[15] and this seems reason enough.

Mrs Parnell was not, however, her own mistress. It is unfortunate that the Chancery Court records for this time were all destroyed in 1922; the contemporary Irish Law Reports do not record any orders made concerning the Parnell children, and for their legal position I have had to rely only on scattered references in the Registry of Deeds and the reminiscences of John Howard Parnell and Emily Dickinson. At all events, the guardians of the children were Sir Ralph Howard, their father's uncle, and Robert Johnson of Dunblane in Scotland, 'a Scotch agricultural expert and an old friend of our father's'.[16] John Howard Parnell recalled that 'Sir Ralph Howard was annoyed at being joint guardian with Mr Johnson', and Emily Dickinson states that Sir Ralph 'declining to act as "guardian of the persons", the court selected my mother for the office'.[17] Howard's refusal may have been caused by disapproval of his co-guardian, but an additional reason could have been the bad impression Emily made on him in London; he had already declined responsibility for her once before. At any rate, when the will was made known, John Howard Parnell recalled that 'our mother took steps to have us all made wards in Chancery'[18] and the Court seems to have taken the important decisions regarding the children, for the next years at least. Alfred MacDermott 'managed our affairs under the

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[13] No. 14, now part of the Children's Hospital.

[14] E. Dickinson, p. 35.

[15] J.H. Parnell, p.45.

[16] Ibid., p. 39.

[17] E. Dickinson, p.33.

[18] J.H. Parnell, p.39.

Court of Chancery'[19] and the two trustees seem to have had relatively little to do, though described in legal memorials as 'testamentary guardians'[20] as well as joint trustees of John Henry Parnell's estate.[21]

According to herself, Emily was the only child not to be made a ward of court as there was no money to be deposited on her behalf, her father having cut her out of his will;[22] she did not become a ward until G.V. Wigram, who had married her father's sister, paid out the necessary amount as a way of preventing her maternal grandfather from adopting (and, by implication, corrupting) her.[23] In any case, references to the children in legal memorials mention Emily as a ward with all the rest, and a Chancery order mentioning her is dated as early as 19 July 1859.[24]

In a consideration of the terms of John Henry Parnell's will, the destruction of the Irish Public Record office again creates a divide that cannot be crossed. The most important provisions, however, were recalled by John Howard Parnell:

> Avondale was left to Charley; the Armagh estate (Collure) to myself; and the Carlow property to Henry. I well remember Charley standing by our mother's bed discussing our father's will and saying 'I suppose John has got Avondale', and when mother told him it was his he was greatly surprised and said he never expected it.[25]

Elsewhere he explains why the Wicklow estate did not go to himself, as the eldest son:

> Although I was the eldest son, my great-uncle and guardian, Sir Ralph Howard, had always told my father that he intended to leave me a considerable portion of his property, as under the terms of Colonel Hayes's will Avondale was always to pass to the second son. It was for that reason that under my father's will I was only left the comparatively unproductive estate in Armagh, burdened as it was, moreover, my annuities to my sisters. The relations between my father and myself were always perfectly cordial but he, naturally, did not wish to leave any of his sons unprovided for, and so left the Carlow property to Henry, as I was the prospective heir of Sir Ralph.[26]

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[19] J.H. Parnell, p.39.

[20] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1862, 18.112. They were appointed so on 4 Apr. 1860.

[21] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1863, 17.141.

[22] E. Dickinson, p.37.

[23] Ibid. See part 3 of this work, ch. 2, p.188.

[24] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1862, 18.112.

[25] J.H. Parnell, p.39.

[26] Ibid., p.114.

Sir Ralph's legacy did not, in the event, work out as lucrative as the Avondale inheritance would have been, but John Henry Parnell was not to know that. There were, moreover, financial burdens on Avondale about which his son knew nothing; though not as unprofitable as Collure, it was by no means an unencumbered legacy.[27] The provision about Avondale always passing to a second son seems an unnecessary addition; there are no references to it in the many recapitulations of Samuel Hayes's will in the Memorials of the Registry of Deeds. It is likely that this was a piece of hearsay absorbed by John Howard; he elsewhere refers to Samuel Hayes as 'a close friend of our father's', which shows a very imperfect idea of the original owner of Avondale.

It is significant that John Howard Parnell never shows any rancour at the arrangement made for him by his father; and it is an equally telling reflection on his sister's character that she does. Emily Dickinson wrote:

> . . . nobody could understand the reason of this apparent act of injustice, Certain it is, however, that my father's will and Charles's consequent accession and heritage as the eldest son never brought him any blessing, but quite the contrary. It might have been better for him if he had remained in the position of a younger son, instead of having been given the place which belonged by moral right to his elder brother. An unjust will never brings a blessing to the one who profits by it.[28]

Elsewhere she waxes even more wrathful:

> /My father's will/ practically made an Esau of John. He, though naturally gentle and the reverse of ambitious, had found it the cruellest blow of his life to be disinherited for no fault of his own. It was this that made him an exile from his native land, though he never cherished the least resentment against his younger brother Charles.
>
> Indeed, few were aware of the kind heart and the strong human sympathy that lay crushed beneath that early act of injustice that so altered his after life. John had a sensitive nature and he shrank as much as possible from contact with those who knew of the slight put upon him by his father.[29]

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[27] See below, chap. 2, part III, pp. 310-13.

[28] E. Dickinson, p.34.

[29] Ibid., p. 192.

It should be pointed out that, contrary to the impression given here, John Parnell's 'human sympathy' was not 'crushed beneath that early act of injustice'; he seems to have struck everyone who knew him as a kind man as well as a good one.[30]

The will, then, bearing John Howard's revelation about Sir Ralph's promise in mind, was not a particularly strange one. The boys inherited the property and the girls small annuities (£100 a year), in most cases chargeable upon the Collure estate. Mrs Parnell also had a small income, which she later waived;[31] but for domestic expenses she relied upon an allowance paid to her from her sons' property by the Court of Chancery.[32] She inherited a good deal of money from her father and brother later on, but her husband was not to know this when he made his will. Indeed, she seems to have been largely ignored in John Henry Parnell's dispositions. John Howard declared that 'she had been left nothing under father's will';[33] her husband's uncle and a friend were guardians of the children, and it was only because Sir Ralph declined to become 'guardian of the persons' that he legal connection with the children was as close as it was. Nor had she much to do with the administration of her sons' property. This no doubt had partly to do with the position of women, especially as regards property, at the time; but the scanty attention paid to John Henry's wife in his will implies a large degree of detachment, if not almost complete estrangement, between them.

There were complications in the situation in which children and

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[30] See, for instance, recollections of Captain Mateir and Hugh Gaffney, both of whom knew him well.

[31] See her letter to T.D. Sullivan, 21 Jan. 1880, (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers MS 8237/6), p. 3: 'So far from inheriting my husband's property I gave up the dower I might have had, hoping that my dear brother's bequest to me would be enough.' (Cited below as 'Letter to Sullivan').

[32] E. Dickinson, p.33.

[33] J.H. Parnell, p.61.

guardians suddenly and unwillingly found themselves. The memorials dealing with the Parnell affairs in the Registry of Deeds have constant references to a petition heard in the Chancery Court of 'Howard and Parnell minors v. Charlotte Zouche, Delia Parnell and others'.[34] The case is not recorded in the Irish Law Reports, and the Chancery records have been destroyed; but since the case gave rise to a Chancery order of 16 May 1860, 'that C.M. West was appointed and still is receiver over the said estate and interest of the said minor Charles Parnell. . and as such receiver is in the receipt of the yearly rents',[35] it seems to have involved an attempt on the part of one of the contestants to gain control of the administration of the Avondale estate. This order was not the end of the case, as an additional decree was made in respect of the Howard v. Zouche petition on 30 July 1867: with reference to this, Charles Stewart Parnell mortgaged Avondale and its income to Sir Ralph Howard to pay £1500 of the debts and funeral expenses settled by Sir Ralph in favour of his late nephew. (Charles had come of age about a month before). The case therefore seems to have been brought to determine who should administer the sizeable income of Avondale; West's receivership was called into question, but upheld by the court. What is significant is that Sir Ralph and his charges were on one side in the case, and Mrs Parnell and Miss Zouche, the housekeeper-relative mentioned by John Howard, on the other. An effort seems to have been made by Mrs Parnell to question the arrangements dictated by her husband's will; possibly her plan was for Miss Zouche, who had been managing Avondale for a year, to act as receiver of the income. At all events, West retained the post, and that is all we definitely know. It would be interesting to ascertain, for instance, on what side Alfred MacDermott, the ubiquitous family lawyer, stood; but I can find no more details of this case besides the synopsis of its outcome.

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[34] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1862, 18.112.

[35] Ibid.

Some antipathy between Delia Parnell and her husband's relations is further indicated by the efforts of G.V. Wigram, the husband of her sister-in-law, to prevent Emily going to live in New Jersey. According to Emily, he not only made her a ward of court but also offered to adopt her. 'My mother was very much troubled by the possibility of losing me';[36] but Emily made her preferences clear and the Lord Chancellor rejected the offer. Though Emily places these recollections in the context of her life at Temple Street (1862-4), she was made an official ward in July 1859,[37] so the Wigrams must have made their feelings clear immediately after John Henry Parnell's death. The fact that they negotiated about this step through the Court instead of asking Mrs Parnell's feelings first and then abandoning the effort to adopt Emily is significant. As members of the Brethren, it is in any case unlikely that they approved of their American sister-in-law; her tastes and interests were very much of 'The World'.

The terms of their father's will, then, dictated the Parnells' life for the next years; but their mother's influence became paramount. They left Avondale, and country life; though the Court of Chancery organised their income, Mrs Parnell made most of the decisions. She could not take them out of the country to live, though it seems likely that she would have if she had been able;[38] but their life with her must still have been very different from under their father's sober rule. To realise this, a general examination of the nature of the family's life under Mrs Parnell's influence is necessary.

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[36] E. Dickinson, pp. 37-8.

[37] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1862, 18.112.

[38] Emily Dickinson states this quite categorically. See A patriot's mistake, p.34.

II

For the years immediately following her husband's death, Mrs Parnell's life revolved of necessity round Dublin. It was not until 1865 that she 'got leave from the Court' to take the youngest members of the family with her to Paris, where she intended to set up house with her brother;[39] significantly, this was the year that John Howard came of age, and so could assume some responsibility for the rest of them. At this time the family was living at 14, Upper Temple Street. They had initially moved to Khyber Pass, a large house above the sea at Dalkey. John Howard recalls learning to swim at Kingstown Pier and off the rocks at Dalkey, boating at Bullock Harbour, fishing off the Mugglins Rocks and shooting rabbits in the grounds of the house; he and Charles also went ferreting on Dalkey Hill, 'taking with us the porter from the railway station'.[40] However pleasant for her children, this rural life cannot have suited Delia Parnell; in less than a year (the early summer of 1860) the family moved into Kingstown,

> taking the O'Conor Don's house /'Granite Lodge'/ near Clarinda Park. This house was beautifully situated in a large wooded park full of fine elm, beech and ash trees. There was also a large fruit and vegetable garden, protected by a high wall, where in summer Charley spent a great deal of his time, much to the annoyance of the gardener . .[41]

This was an even shorter sojourn;in the following winter (1861-2) the elder children went to stay in Casino, the house near Avondale, while Mrs Parnell took 14, Upper Temple Street, and here she stayed.[42] It was at Granite Lodge, in August 1860, that old Mrs Stewart, while on a visit, suddenly died; Mrs Parnell was much affected by this,and may have been ready to leave the house on this account.[43] But her whole inclination seems to have been towards city life. Furthermore, after 1862 John and

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[39] E. Dickinson, p.65.

[40] J.H. Parnell, p.41.

[41] Ibid., p.43.

[42] Ibid., p. 45.

[43] Ibid., p. 44.

Charles were at a pre-university 'crammer's', and their mother had more time to devote to social life. Once moved into the city, according to John Howard,

> Our mother /kept/ open house in Temple Street, giving dinners, balls and small dances to her many Dublin friends . . she was extremely fond of entertaining.[44]

Emily recalled of this era (1862-4):

> /Sophy/ and I now led a very gay life, running the giddy round of vain delights and living in a world made up of drives and rides, dinners, kettle-drums, balls, concerts and theatres, fashionable talk, and everything else that was light and sparkling.[45]

Both she and her brother attribute the extent of her mother's social involvement to her friendship with Lord Carlisle, the Lord Lieutenant at the time.

> /He/ was an old friend of my mother's. Now, taking advantage of such an excellent opportunity of renewing his former friendship, he 'took her under his wing' and secured to her and her daughters introductions to the best houses and families which Dublin society afforded, so that my mother's first entrance into the social atmosphere of Dublin took place under the most favourable auspices. Lord Carlisle directed that invitations should be sent to her to all his own entertainments, either public or private,including the dinner-parties, on which occasions he showed her every personal attention and at balls introduced partners himself to my sister and me. He also insisted that the names of my mother and her two daughters /Emily and Sophy/ should be amongst those on the list submitted to him for every private party at which he intended to be present.[46]

This is the sort of reminiscence in which Mrs Dickinson took most delight, and where she usually gave her fancy free rein; but her more sober brother bears her out in this instance, remarking that the Lord Lieutenant, 'being a friend of our mother's', used to single the Parnells out at Castle functions.[47] Lord Carlisle died in December 1864;[48] Mrs Parnell began her

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[44] J.H. Parnell, pp.54 and 61.

[45] E. Dickinson, p.37.

[46] Ibid., p.37.

[47] J.H. Parnell, p.55.

[48] He was George William Frederick Howard, the seventh earl, b.1802. As Lord Morpeth, he was Chief Secretary of Ireland 1835-41. A Liberal, he was in favour of Roman Catholic claims and Tithe Law Reform. He was Lord Lieutenant from 1855 to 1858, and resumed the office when Palmerston returned to power in 1859. He retired in October 1864. See Annual Register, 1864, p.183,for his great personal popularity in Dublin. For an irreverent and entertaining account of the social side of his viceroyalty see Recollections of Dublin Castle and of Dublin society by a native (London 1902), pp. 60-81.

habit of living between Paris and Dublin shortly afterwards. The Temple Street house seems to have been used only episodically in the later 1860s, and was given up by 1870.[49] Although the children visited Avondale and occasionally Clonmore, Mrs Parnell does not seem to have left Dublin often during her residence there. She was involved in viceregal society, her own entertainments and activities like the "Originals' club" she started in 1861, which I have described in my last section.[50] A contemporary recollection of Mrs Parnell as a Dublin hostess casts an interesting sidelight on the actuality of the sort of grand entertainments vaguely hinted at by Emily Dickinson.

> This entertainment /a haphazard house-party at the Connollys' house, Castletown/ suggests another of a rather singular kind, given by an American lady, no other than the mother of the patriot, Charles Stewart Parnell, who must then have been in his frocks. It was a sort of 'go as you please' show. There was to be a late lunch, then a tea, and then a sort of dinner, to be followed by a dance. The idea was that the guest was to take up his residence in the house for this protracted period! I recall meeting there the pleasant Dion Bouccicault . . Mrs Parnell had a bevy of pretty daughters who did their best to stimulate the proceedings but the fact was, no-one knew why on earth he was there or what was to be done next, so the thing gradually languished out and, quietly folding our tents, we stole away very early.[51]

It is interesting that the anonymous author of these remembrances, while no stickler for protocol, still firmly puts Mrs Parnell's party firmly in the context of 'grotesque entertainments'.[52] His view of Lord Carlisle's circle is also significant; 'rackety' is a charitable description. Looked at in the context of these recollections, Delia Parnell's favoured position in viceregal society is a good deal less impressive than it first seems.

It is hard to know how lavishly she lived, but the allowance from the

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[49] J.H. Parnell, p.62.

[50] See R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.61; also above, part 3, chap. 2, p.199.

[51] Recollections of Dublin Castle and of Dublin society by a citizen (London 1902), pp. 130-1.

[52] Ibid., p. 128.

Chancery Court on which she depended until she inherited from her father and brother in 1869-70 cannot have been large. One of Charles's early schemes was to make money out of the Avondale timber 'to provide her with ample funds for her wants', as she was 'extremely fond of entertaining'.[53] By 1872 Mrs Parnell was living in Paris permanently, and from 1870 she seems to have visited America more often than Dublin. Emily and Sophy were by then married, neither of them to a man she approved of, and John and Charles had come of age. The age of her children, and their circumscribed legal position, seem to have been all that kept her in Ireland.

This is not to say that Mrs Parnell was unduly concerned with them. As early as 1861 the boys were spending months alone at Casino; and John Howard recalled, in a revealing sidelight:

> We all got into a terribly disorganised habit as to meals during our days together at Avondale, after our father had died and our mother had gone to America. The only meal during the day at which all the family and visitors were certain of meeting was dinner.[54]

The haphazard way of life that St John Ervine attributed to the Parnell family is more relevant to this stage of their existence than during their father's lifetime. The family was, in a sense, dispersing. Certainly from about 1865 the life of each of them began to develop separately; from this date the Temple Street house was used infrequently and when it was given up altogether (before 1870) 'the family scattered, never again to meet all under one roof'.[55] Delia was settled in Paris, John went to America, Emily and Sophy were married, Charles had moved back to Avondale, Anna was at art school in England, Henry at school and then university; only Fanny and Theodosia were in any way consistently attached to their mother. Of the early period at Temple Street, John Parnell wrote:

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[53] J.H. Parnell, p.61.

[54] Ibid., p.178.

[55] Ibid., p.62.

> Looking back over our past lives, I can see that it was here at Temple Street that our fates were really decided. From this time forward great changes took place in the life of each of us and this may be said to have been the birth of our careers . . .[56]

At least part of the reason why Delia Parnell resided less continuously in Dublin after 1869 was that she could then afford to travel. Up this this, she had had very little money of her own. Writing to T.D. Sullivan about the 1860s she implied that she lived in Ireland in order to be 'enabled to watch the proceedings of the agents and attornies considering my sons' estates . . The guardians lived out of Ireland'.[57] Certainly her interest in these estates was paramount: she had no other income than what she was allowed out of them. In November 1869, however, her father died in New Jersey; in 1872 she went to live permanently in Paris with her brother, Charles Stewart, but he died in October of the following year, in Italy. She therefore not only inherited her own share of her father's money, but also - within three years - her brother's portion; and the latter also left her 'all his large fortune in Southern railroad bonds and shares'.[58] For the next month she was occupied in sorting out Stewart's Parisian affairs[59] and in late 1873 she went to New York to organise his business interests there.[60] 'She was now quite a millionairess', recalled Emily Dickinson with unconcealed satisfaction, 'and was able to make me a liberal allowance . .'.[61]

She was certainly comfortably off. Her distinguished father must have amassed a good deal of money (especially as he could afford to run for President some years before) and Charles Stewart was well off, appearing in several memorials in the Registry of Deeds as a sort of financial

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[56] J.H. Parnell, p.46.
[57] Letter to Sullivan, p.4.
[58] J.H. Parnell, p. 115.
[59] Ibid., p. 116.
[60] Ibid., p. 117.
[61] E. Dickinson, p.79.

benefactor and provider of loans to the Parnell daughters, in return for holding their annuities in trust.[62] It is doubtful if Mrs Parnell's fortune was an 'immense' as Emily liked to remember; if so, her mother must have managed it remarkably badly, for she was in straitened circumstances again before long. But at the end of the period with which this chapter deals, her position looked secure. She had contacts in Paris, money in America and a family in Ireland, and divided her time between the three.

It seems doubtful that Mrs Parnell spent much, if any, time at Avondale after 1860, even when Charles had taken up residence there once more; but her children retained a close connection with Wicklow, even during the peripatetic years of 1860-64. In the late summer of 1860, for instance, John and Charles

> went down to Casino, the dower-house near Avondale, for a change; we had many friends there and were asked out repeatedly to dinners and to cricket matches,and spent many pleasant evenings with Mr Edwards /who was renting Avondale/. [63]

The next year, John recalled:

> We all went down to Casino again for the winter, Charley and I got up a shooting-party for woodcock, which were plentiful in Avondale woods. Our mother did not care for the country . . but Charley, Fanny and myself remained at Casino for some time longer, with our sister's Italian governess. We had a very happy time, for we all loved Avondale . . .[64]

The following Christmas (1863) John and Charles went down to Casino when they returned from school,taking Fanny with them; there they found Emily and her governess in residence. Once more they went shooting and walking and renewed their acquaintance with local people like Mrs Twopenny,

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[62] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1866, 21.202, where Stewart undertook to pay the debts chargeable on Sophy regarding her father's affairs and the Howard v. Zouche case; also Mem. for 1867, 32.68, where the trusteeship of Sophy's annuity and an insurance policy for £1000 was made over by Stewart to Emily and Arthur Dickinson.

[63] J.H. Parnell, p.44.

[64] Ibid.

Charles's old nurse.[65] John and Charles spent a fortnight of this Christmas vacation at Casino, and only had time for 'a few days' with their mother at Temple Street before returning to school.[66] When Charles was at Cambridge, Avondale was his base rather than Dublin; here, according to his brother, 'he had many social duties. The Wicklow county families constantly entertained him, and no invitation to Avondale was ever refused'. Thus the connection with Wicklow was kept up during Charles's childhood and by 1870, when he had left university, John found him living in solitary state at Avondale, except for two servants.[67] After his lengthy visit to America the following year, Lord Carysfort was to urge him to 'remain here and take up your position in the county';[68] in a sense, this was simply encouraging the regularisation of a relationship which had been, if intermittent, a constant factor in Charles's and his siblings' lives since their father died.

From 1859 to 1870, then, the period during which Mrs Parnell lived in Ireland, her children kept up the Wicklow connection although she was not inclined to renew it herself.[69] How she influenced their development in other areas is not easy to chart; but one important aspect of their life is the nationalist slant to political thinking with which she is traditionally supposed to have inbued them.[70] I have referred to this before, in examining Mrs Parnell's later claim that she was an adherent of Irish Nationalism from her first days in the country;[71] a later chapter is

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[65] J.H. Parnell, p.50.

[66] Ibid., p.51.

[67] Ibid., p.59.

[68] Ibid., p.117.

[69] Her name, for instance, never appears in the lists of donations to local charities published in the Wicklow Newsletter for this period.

[70] See T. Sherlock, Life of C.S. Parnell (Dublin 1882), p.30; R. Johnston Parnell and the Parnells (London and Dublin, 1888), p.18; R.M. McWade, The uncrowned king: the life of Stewart Parnell (Philadelphia 1891), p. 103.

[71] See above, section 3, chapter 2, pp 197-200.

devoted to her political involvements throughout her long life.[72] But here it is worth briefly considering the 'Fenian' nature of her sympathies during the 1860s. The idea that her opinions could be so described seems to depend on two much-told stories. The first was related to R.B. O'Brien by a classmate of John's and Charles's, almost certainly the Earl of Meath:

> 'I well remember,' says one who was at Chipping Norton with Parnell, 'the day the Parnells came. Their mother brought them. She wore a green dress and Wishaw /the headmaster/ came to me and said "I say, B----, I have met one of the most extraordinary women I have ever seen - the mother of the Parnells. She is a regular rebel. I have never heard such treason in my life. Without a word of warning she opened fire on the British government and by Jove she did give it us hot. I have asked her to come for a drive, to show her the country, and you must come too for protection." So we went for a drive, but my presence did not stop Mrs Parnell from giving her views about the iniquities of the English government in Ireland'.[73]

Several observations can be made about this passage. The Parnells did not first come to Chipping Norton accompanied by their mother; John has described their arrival, alone and at night, in detail.[74] This encounter must have been another time. Further, there is nothing of the 'rebel' in Mrs Parnell's attitude as quoted; there was and is nothing treasonable about attacking 'the British government', and nothing rebellious about condemning 'the iniquities of the English government in Ireland'. Disraeli himself did as much, and more.[75] The interpretation of Mrs Parnell's views as 'Fenian' in this case was probably the Earl of Meath's; he was, in fact, exactly the kind of Wicklow aristocrat who looked on Parnell as a traitor to his class and his duty.[76] Hindsight must also be allowed for;

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[72] Below, part 6, chap. 2.

[73] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 39. The Earl was then Lord Brabazon, named as a
[74] classmate by John Howard Parnell.

[74] J.H. Parnell, p. 48.

[75] In the House of Commons, 16 Feb. 1844. See J.L. Hammond, Gladstone and the Irish nation (1st ed., London, 1938).

[76] And often said as much. See below, part 5, chap. 4, II, for his activities in the East Wicklow Loyal & Patriotic Union.

it is unlikely that the concept of Fenianism would have sprung to the lips of an English schoolteacher in 1862. Finally, Wishaw cannot have been so very scandalised by Mrs Parnell, as he was friendly enough with the family to visit them in Ireland some years later, staying with them in Temple Street.[77] This anecdote shows that Mrs Parnell was outspoken about the British administration of Ireland, and nothing more.

The second and more weighty anecdote that is often adduced to prove Mrs Parnell's active nationalism at this period postulates that in the later 1860s she was in the habit of concealing Fenian fugitives at 14, Upper Temple Street, and on one occasion had her house searched by the police because of this. Besides turning up in most secondary accounts of the Parnell family background, this story is told at first hand by Emily Dickinson:

> My mother felt a most lively interest in the sufferings of these poor men, spending money liberally on their necessities and smuggling some at her own expense off to America, thus enabling them to escape arrest and imprisonment. She even went the length of hiding and harbouring some in her own house. This was the cause of suspicion being directed against it by the Castle authorities and a search was ordered and made.[78]

R.B. O'Brien was told that 'her house in Temple Street was placed under police surveillance . . One night a batch of detectives paid a surprise visit and insisted on searching the premises',[79] and R. Johnston claimed that when posting a letter late one night in Temple Street in 1866 he was told by a constable that he was watching number 14 because 'Mrs Parnell . . hides the Fenians on us'.[80] John Howard Parnell, however, has an interestingly different slant to this connection:

> Owing to our mother being a prominent American woman and to her undisguised sympathies with the Fenian outlaws, a number of tramps and imposters used to call at our house in Temple Street for aid . . In the days of frenzied police action which followed the rising and Rossa's trial our mother not unnaturally became suspected of

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[77] J.H. Parnell, p.58.

[78] E. Dickinson, p.60. Justin McCarthy, for instance, retails the story in his Reminiscences, ii, 109 (wrongly placing it as at Avondale) and adduces Parnell's political orientation from the incident.

[79] O'Brien, Parnell, i, p.47.

[80] R. Johnston, Parnell and the Parnells, p.19.

> complicity with the Fenians owing to the number of visits paid by suspicious characters to our house in Temple Street. As a matter of fact, she had actually assisted one of those connected with the Manchester affair to escape to America in female clothing. However, one day a body of police suddenly appeared at our house in Temple Street with a search-warrant and insisted upon going through the whole house.[81]

But all these accounts were written with hindsight, affected by the image of Charles Stewart Parnell as an out-and-out Nationalist and by his mother's latter-day claims to a personal history of patriotic fervour. It is therefore particularly interesting to find a version of the affair written by P.J. Hanway as early as 1881, which implies a far less extreme situation:

> /In 1867 Mrs Parnell/ busied herself in lightening the burden of /the Fenians'/ imprisonment and in pleading their claims for treatment less inhuman and revolting than that provided by English prison discipline for the most desperate classes. About this time an amusing incident occurred. The Parnell physician was suspected by the police of being an active Fenian and his movements were closely watched. He was in constant attendance on one of the family who was stricken down with cholera. But the police were not aware of this; the drawn blinds in the windows of the sick-room and the constant visits of Dr O'Reagan left no doubt in the mind of a lynx-eyed detective that escaped Fenians were concealed in the Parnell household. A descent on the house was immediately ordered, but when the advance-guard reached the darkened room and learned that it contained a young lady suffering from Asiatic cholera, they beat a hasty and by no means dignified retreat.[82]

This version is interesting on a number of accounts. It was written comparatively recently after the event described; the Fenian connection that aroused police suspicion was not Mrs Parnell, but her doctor; there is no mention of any Fenians ever having been actually abetted by Mrs Parnell. Furthermore, and most important, her interest in the Fenians is described specifically in terms of their conditions of imprisonment - in other words, Mrs Parnell was sympathetic to the idea of amnesty, as many people were well before the foundation of the Amnesty Association in 1869. This is, of course, a very different thing from being 'a regular rebel';

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[81] J.H. Parnell, pp. 69-71.

[82] See Celtic Monthly, May 1881, pp. 328-9.

it is also far more the sort of interest one would expect of Mrs Parnell, with her Castle connections and her 'Originals' tea-parties. She subscribed to the Irishman; but so did Isaac Butt, and other moderates like Bushe and the Rev. Gilmour of Rathmore.[83] Moreover, a facet of her interest in Irish agitators of the time which is recorded by both William O'Brien and John Devoy is, significantly, that the men who received help from her were Americans.[84] She paid the passage home of several Americans in 1866, released on condition that they would return to the United States. And her connection with them need not imply a great degree of political sympathy; for a letter from one or these officers to the Irish World years afterwards describes how he encountered Mrs Parnell when she was prison-visiting in Dublin in the 1860s.[85] Again, the activity involved is much more closely allied to the respectable Amnesty movement than to Fenianism. Americans imprisoned in Dublin appealed to her as a prominent compatriot, with connexions in viceregal society, and she helped them; there need have been no more to it than that. The interests of her daughter Fanny were a different matter, and I will come to them presently. But the 'amusing incident' related in the Celtic Monthly seems a far more likely story than the exciting take of intrigue which found its way into Barry O'Brien's book and which Emily Dickinson and John Parnell remembered respectively forty and fifty years later.

In any case, if Mrs Parnell had Fenian sympathies at this stage, it is debatable whether they noticeably affected her sons. John Howard Parnell recalls that neither he nor Charles had much use for the 'tramps' who came to Temple Street seeking help:

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[83] See John Devoy, Recollections of an Irish Rebel (London, 1929), p.43.

[84] See ibid; also William O'Brien, Evening memories, pp. 58-9.

[85] See 'Fanny Parnell' (anon.) in Celtic magazine, vol. i, no. 2 (September 1882), p. 284.

> I think he /Charles/ came to look upon most of the nondescript visitors to our house as tramps, as I did also to a certain extent. He finally got so tired of their constant visits that he used to wait for the so-called Fenians behind the hall-door in Temple Street and (like Sam Weller at Ipswich), directly the door was open, make a rush for them and kick them down the steps.[86]

He was put out by the police raid on Temple Street, but only because the police impounded his Wicklow Rifles uniform, which he wanted to wear to a Castle levée. 'Charley especially disliked the idea of his uniform being mistaken for a Fenian one . . He distinctly resented the idea of being stamped as a Fenian, especially as he was in the Queen's army and was proud of the fact.'[87] His reaction to the affair was an increased impatience with nationalist politics: 'He finally declared that he would leave the house if anything more was said about the Fenians'.[88] John Howard Parnell was in absolutely no doubt about his brother's opinions at this time:

> My recollection of Charley's attitude at the time is, as I have recounted, distinctly against his entry into politics being in any sense due to the influence of the Fenian movement.[89]

His sister, who differs from John Howard on so many points, is here equally categoric:

> Charles had not as yet shown any Radical tendencies; rather the reverse . . Charles evinced no sympathy with the Fenians and was vexed with his mother for taking the active part on their behalf which she did, and for mixing herself up so much with their affairs.[90]

Mrs O'Shea gives a similarly decisive view, and emphasises the slightness of Parnell's contact with his mother at this stage.[91] There seems to be little evidence for the theory that attributes Charles Stewart Parnell's subsequent entry into nationalist politics to the Fenians and his mother's

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[86] J.H. Parnell, p.69.

[87] Ibid., p. 71.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., p. 72.

[90] E. Dickinson, p. 60.

[91] K. O'Shea, i, 127.

interest in them. Statements like Robert McWade's about Mrs Parnell instructing her children about the 'inherited infirmities' of the British Royal Family[92] are directly refuted by John Parnell, who wrote of her enduring admiration for Queen Victoria and crown authority.[93] Other claims about her influence on Charles are generally both second-hand and affected by hind-sight. One worth examining is a saying triumphantly quoted by St John Ervine, which he found in Frances Power Cobbe's autobiography. Mrs Power Cobbe knew Sophia Evans, William Parnell's sister, and wrote that she remembered Mrs Evans saying:

> 'There is mischief brewing! I am troubled at what is going on at Avondale. My nephew's wife has a hatred of England and is educating my nephew, like a little Hannibal, to hate it too.'[94]

However, though the 'little Hannibal' is intended as a reference to Charles Stewart Parnell, the 'nephew' referred to would have have been John Henry Parnell, not one of his children, who were grand-nephews and grand-nieces of Mrs Evans; furthermore, Mrs Cobbe, writing in 1894, dates this as 'in the 1840s', when Charles was at most three years old. Hind-sight seems again to be responsible for the flavour of this confidence, recalled half a century later by a woman who was self-confessedly the bluest of Tories; she elsewhere refers to Parnell as 'an Englishman', and 'only one example more of the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon intellect in every land of its adoption'.[95] Her recollections of Delia Parnell's character, besides being admittedly second-hand, are likely to have been strongly influenced by the reputation that lady had gained in the meantime.

This is not to say that the whole family remained unaffected by the nationalist fervour of the 1860s. Though John records his agreement with Charles regarding the 'tramps and impostors' who visited Temple Street, he

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[92] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.75.

[93] J.H. Parnell, p. 128. See above, section 3, ch. 2, pp.198-9.

[94] F. Power Cobbe, The Life of Frances Power Cobbe, by herself, (2 vols., London, 1894), i, p. 186.

[95] Ibid., i, 187.

still accompanied Fanny when she walked to the Irishman office with her poems, whereas 'Charley made fun of her poetry and steadfastly refused to accompany her to the Fenian stronghold.'[96] John and Fanny attended O'Donovan Rossa's trial, and even bought him a bouquet which they could not summon up enough courage to throw. When the sentence was passed, 'Fanny could hardly restrain her tears and I think pictured herself as the next occupant of the dock'.[97] Fanny was, as John Howard affectionately termed her, 'an arch-rebel'; but the fervour with which she embraced the Fenian ideals did not extend to her brothers. She was a 'bluestocking' poetess (again in John Howard's terms), and was more susceptible to abstract ideas than they; whereas John and Charles both owned estates, and it was coming to grips with running them and their subsequent realisation of the possibilities of rural improvement inherent in the tenant-right movement which initially impelled them into Irish politics. This is, however, to anticipate.

Any interest in politics which Charles Stewart Parnell evinced at this time of his life seems to have been located in the affairs of his mother's country. John Parnell states this emphatically:

> If anything can be said to have been the first impulse that direct Charley's attention towards politics, it was the American Civil War. This was a constant topic of conversation in our family circle, owing to our being American on our mother's side.[98]

At first supporting the side of the North, Charles became sympathetic to Southern claims during his visit to Alabama in 1871.[99] I shall return to his opinions on this topic later; but his interest in the subject was far more lively than his involvement in domestic politics. While the war was on, 'Charley eagerly read every item of information contained in the newspaper and discussed the details freely';[100] even after it was over, he

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[96] J.H. Parnell, p.69.

[97] Ibid.

[98] p. 125.

[99] Ibid., p. 87.

[100] Ibid., p. 55.

was capable of keeping companions on a shooting-trip awake all night by talking about it, while his brother 'wondered how he could keep his interest so much alive in the politics of what was, after all, a remote country'.[101] This remarkably concentrated interest was not to be brought to bear on affairs nearer home for some years; when it was, the intellectual involvement would be even more complete, but in the 1860s Irish politics seem to have concerned Parnell little enough.

III

Before considering Charles Stewart Parnell's life at this period in detail, it is well to deal briefly with his brothers and sisters from 1859 to 1875.

Delia had married Livingston Thompson, for his money according to all the authorities, shortly before her father died. Emily Dickinson records the intense jealousy of Delia's husband, who followed her everywhere and refused to allow her to go riding; though wealthy and living in a 'fairytale' château at St Germain, her life seems to have been an unrelievedly unhappy one.[102] Emily and Arthur Dickinson honeymooned at the Thompson's Paris house, and Mrs Parnell visited there from time to time; otherwise the unfortunate Delia's life is little recorded until the death of her only child in 1882.

In contrast, Emily's life during the period under consideration is of course covered copiously in her quasi-autobiography. Her father's death, and the discrimination against her in his will that prevented her - for a time at least - from marrying Dickinson, left her deeply depressed;'in a nature like mine, keenly felt emotions were liable to take a deep root',[103] and even the gay social life into which she and Sophy were plunged at Temple Street meant little to her. In 1862, however, she came of age and was

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[101] J.H. Parnell, p. 125.

[102] See E. Dickinson, A patriot's mistake, pp. 45-7.

[103] Ibid., p.31.

officially betrothed to Arthur Dickinson, whose regiment was now quartered in Dublin. In April 1864 they were married. Their two-year engagement was a happy one, with Emily enjoying a social life centred round Arthur's regiment ('renowned for its entertainments, which were conducted on the most elaborate and extensive scale') and her own accomplishments as a musician:

> I had some time reached the zenith of my fame as a pianist, and was frequently asked to play at the large concerts organised for charitable purposes. My audience often consisted of a couple of thousand people . . I excelled in the pathetic softness with which I played the passages that called for expression. These often drew tears from the eyes of my hearers.[104]

She was to need this buoyantly good conceit of herself from the early years of her marriage on. Arthur did not stay long in the army; Emily recalled that he was posted to the Cape of Good Hope, where her health would not allow her to go, and he resigned his commission rather than leave her, saying "I shall get a land agency and we will live in Dublin' - a telling indication of how little he expected such a job to occupy him. He then, according to Emily, became agent for the Collure estate. John Howard Parnell, however, dated this arrangement from before the wedding:

> In order to enable our sister Emily to marry Captain Dickinson, Charley got me to appoint him agent of my estate, which I did, with the result that he and Emily were married soon after.[103]

Certainly, the wedding took place shortly after John came into possession of Collure. But whether or not the Captain became agent before or after his marriage, he was to remain largely dependent upon his wife's family. Though resident at 22, Lower Pembroke Street in Dublin for some time, the Dickinsons lived more and more at Avondale. Charles settled an annuity on Emily from the estate, as well as giving her away in marriage and presenting her with a diamond necklace and bracelet as a wedding present;[106] he seems

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[104] A patriot's mistake, p.40.

[105] J.H. Parnell, p.59.

[106] E. Dickinson, p.45.

to have been friendly with his likeable but unsound brother-in-law.[107] The dependence continued; it was Mrs Parnell's legacy that enabled the Dickinsons to start hunting again, and Emily received an income from her mother after Admiral Stewart died in 1869.[108] But life at Avondale, though first described by Emily as a pleasant idyll,[109] became increasingly troubled as Arthur's lack of occupation and fondness for the United Services Club, reinforced by a naturally roistering temperament, led to a developing alcoholic problem. He was 'a very enthusiastic, genial, social character, with a strain of wildness and easily led'.[110] One of the few genuinely eloquent passages in A patriot's mistake (if not the only one) deals with Arthur's decline into dipsomania:

> What words can describe the torture of witnessing the slow but sure descent of one you love, of seeing him go from bad to worse, and feeling your utter impotency to save him? Of watching his frantic struggles to resist the temptation, only to fall again in the end; and saddest of all, the sight of his remorse and repentance, his tears and promises of reformation - in fact, the piteous spectacle of a strong man drinking himself slowly but surely to death?[111]

She genuinely loved her 'representative Lever soldier' and stuck by him, though her affection became increasingly mothering and protective. The violence of his drinking bouts increased, and he had to be bought out of numerous undefined 'scrapes'. In the early 1870s Charles (after an attempt to keep Arthur sober and in isolation at Avondale, which culminated in the Captain downing a bottle of whiskey and chasing his host out of the house) tried to persuade Emily to separate from her husband, but she refused.[112] Arthur similarly rejected an offer from the Parnell family of £500 a year on condition that he live abroad, away from Emily (who now had a baby

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[107] See below, pp 297-8.

[108] E. Dickinson, p. 79.

[109] Ibid., pp. 71-3.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid., p. 86.

[112] Ibid., p. 90. Charles's request caused 'the only estrangement that ever existed between him and me'.

daughter, Delia). His drinking continued, and his eccentricity increased; when drunk he was liable to burn all his clothes or throw crockery from the windows at Avondale. 'Occasionally he threw the servants down the staircase but they were so fond of him that they did not mind such rough usage'.[113] Emily showed similar ingenuousness in attributing her husband's frenzied drinking to a wish on his part that he might die before she did, because he loved her too much to outlive her,[114] whereas elsewhere she records her difficulty in dissuading him from strangling her because he 'was so fond of her';[115] but it is likely that a certain amount of self-deception was all that made her miserable existence bearable.

By the early 1870s the Dickinsons seem to have been living entirely on small incomes from the Parnell family. In 1867 Mrs Parnell had arranged for an annuity of £100 p.a. and a life-insurance of £1000 to be made over to Arthur;[116] in 1873 Emily inherited a legacy from Sir Ralph Howard;[117] there was also her marriage settlement, which brought in £100p.a., and the undefined allowance received from her mother. Arthur's family was not poor: his father whad been a solicitor, and clerk for Co. Wicklow[118] and his uncle, Sir Drury Dickinson, was prominent in Dublin life.[119] It is possible that some annuities from this side kept the couple solvent, after Arthur's agency for Collure lapsed in 1872; but like their neighbour Lady Caroline Howard, who wrote gloomily in 1869 of residence in Shelton Abbey that 'nothing but actual poverty drives us here',[120] the Dickinsons

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[113] E. Dickinson, p.97.

[114] Ibid., p.85.

[115] Ibid., p.97.

[116] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1867, 32.68.

[117] E. Dickinson, p. 120.

[118] See Wicklow Newsletter, 11 Aug. 1860. The Clerkship alone was worth £800 p.a. The auction of his effects (Ibid., 22 Oct. 1864) shows him to have been a man of substance.

[119] See Celtic Monthly, April 1881, p. 329.

[120] See Lady Caroline Howard's journal for 1869 (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 4792).

held the uneviable position of poor relations by 1875, and were totally dependent on Charles Stewart Parnell for somewhere to live.[121]

John Howard's life for the fifteen years under review was an eventful one. He shared Charles's tutor while living in Dalkey and Kingstown, but after the sojurn at Wishaw's cramming school 'went to the School of Mining in St Stephen's Green, and there obtained two certificates for mining and geology, while I also kept up my painting'.[122] Previous to attending Chipping Norton he had 'only been to school in Paris and had not made the progress I should have done with the English language';[123] it is unlikely in any case that he would have gone to university as his interests, though intellectually-oriented, were not academic.

About 1866[124] John received a letter from his mother's brother in America suggesting that he go out there and make some money in the post-war boom. He had recently come into a legacy, and was thinking of investing it:

> Charley thought I ought to consult our uncle, Sir Ralph Howard, but from him I got no encouragement. He told me that I had no need to go, as he would leave me well off. This, however, did not suit me, as I had no fancy for waiting to step into dead men's shoes, and I decided to go to America.[125]

Once there, he became involved in cotton-planting and formed an affection for the American South which he was never to lose. He returned to Ireland in about a year but was back in America by 1871, experimenting with peach-farming in Alabama, where Charles visited him and prevailed upon him to return to Ireland, against his original inclination. In the spring

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[121] References in the Wicklow Newsletter of this period refer to them as 'The Dickinsons of Avondale'.

[122] J.H. Parnell, p.45.

[123] Ibid., p. 49.

[124] According to his book, this was 1869; but a memorial in the Registry of Deeds records him as resident in America in December 1866 (Mem. for 1867 2.16).

[125] J.H. Parnell, p.58.

of 1872 the two brothers were back in London, visiting Sir Ralph Howard, by now old and ailing. In a well-intentioned attempt to impart some enthusiasm about his heir's American ventures to Sir Ralph, Charles first of all biassed him against American business by describing a careless railway accident and then compounded the injury to John's interests by 'praising up my investments in land in Alabama more than they were justified'.[126] Once again, John's lack of rancour in describing such incidents - well-meant though they were - is remarkable.

Returning to Ireland, John found his affairs there needing attention. Having good-naturedly but unwisely appointed Dickinson as his agent, he found the Collure accounts badly in arrears. (Dickinson cannot have paid much attention to his sinecure; he lived at Avondale, and Emily never mentions any visits to Armagh, let alone residence there). John set to running his own estate, and experienced a sort of revelation:

> After two years I gave up acting as my own agent, as I saw that the tenants could not possibly pay in a bad time, as it was difficult enough to get in the rents in comparatively good times . . My collecting, although I met with considerable success in it, certainly opened my eyes to the real condition of the tenant farmers, especially as at this time Mr Butt was advocating his tenant-right principles.[127]

He and his brother were to discuss this, with far-reaching results.

In August 1873 Sir Ralph Howard died at his house in Belgrave Square.[128] The ramifications of the Howard v. Zouche and Parnell case, whatever they may have been, must by then have been forgotten; Mrs Parnell stayed with him through his last illness.[129] The will read, John Howard found that his great-uncle seemed to have been as good as his word:

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[126] J.H. Parnell, p.111.

[127] Ibid., p.113.

[128] See The Times, 9 Aug. 1873, p.16.

[129] She must have adopted the casual Irish attitude towards litigation; in no other country could families, then as now, bring lawsuits against each other as readily or forget them so easily.

> He had left me what appeared to be a very considerable fortune, derived from his English mining investments, which brought my income to an almost equal amount to what Charley received from Avondale.[130]

There were, however, drawbacks. After his conversation with Charles about John's American investments Sir Ralph had altered his will by codicil,

> leaving me in the end only half the amount of his original bequest amounting to about £4000 a year, the other half being left to his cousin Lord Claude Hamilton /later the Duke of Abercorn/, owing to the increase in value of the investments since the will was made. However, he made me liable for all the calls on the shares.[131]

Thus John, on paper destined to be at least as well provided for as his younger brother, ended up not as well off. There was, indeed, a further provision made for him which he does not mention but which recurs in memorials in the Registry of Deeds. His father's aunt, Sophia Evans, left a residual sum of £4800 in Brazilian bonds (subject to some annuities) to her brother Henry Parnell and William George Prescott in trust for John Henry Parnell or his eldest son.[132] The money was to be invested in land, and the income descended, after a case heard in the Chancery Court in 1856[133] to John Howard Parnell. Alfred MacDermott, the family solicitor, managed the income in trust for John Howard by an arrangement made on 16 March 1868;[134] but he cannot have been well off, as the same year he took out an extra mortgage on the already heavily encumbered Armagh estate in order to borrow an undisclosed sum of money from Sir Ralph Howard, and subsequently mortgaged the income on Sophia Evans's legacy to Sir Ralph as well.[135] This could have been an additional reason why

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[130] J.H. Parnell, p.114.

[131] Ibid., p. 115.

[132] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1868, 14.134.

[133] John Henry Parnell and John Howard Parnell v. the rt. hon. Henry Parnell and William George Prescott.

[134] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1870, 32.192.

[135] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1868, 14.135.

Sir Ralph cast a cold eye on his great-nephew's subsequent American dealings; he must have lent most of the money required for them.

Nor was the inheritance of Collure a particularly enviable acquisition. Describing his attempts to collect the rents in 1872, John wrote:

> It was thought that because I had in some instances to take proceedings against the tenants I was acting harshly, but I had to provide both for my sisters' annuities and the Trinity College head-rent, which had also fallen into arrears, getting nothing for myself.[136]

This was no exaggeration. A list of Armagh townlands and landlords for 1860 in the National Library of Ireland gives the Collure estate as 1494 acres, valued at £1092.[137] Even if the rents were reasonably high, the profit margin after a head rent of £1000 a year and annuities totalling £500 cannot have been much. Small wonder that he mortgaged the estate for £4000 in 1867;[138] it could never have been a source of profit to him and as the years went by it was to weigh him down more and more.

In this commentary on John Parnell's property, extensive on paper but meaning little hard cash, he can be seen to some extent as playing as unfortunate but good-humoured Esau to Charles's unintentional Jacob - destined for preference, though through no manipulation of his own. John

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[136] J.H. Parnell, p.112.

[137] N.L.I., MS 2716. The full schedule is as follows

Townlands (Loughgall Parish)	Acres	Rds.	Per.	Valuation (£-s-d)
Aughinley	509	1	36	351 - 19 - 11
Keenaghan	401	1	11	284 - 7 - 0
Kinnegoe	203	3	19	139 - 15 - 7
Lisasley	211	1	20	174 - 18 - 8
Mullaghmore	168	0	11	141 - 2 - 7
	1494	0	17	£1092 - 4 - 9

The Ordance Survey put the estate at 1747 acres in its entirety (Reg. of Deeds for 1867, 2.16).
For details of estate leases see Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1865, 26.95, and for 1867, 2.16.

[138] Reserving many rights, ranging from advowsons to minerals, for T.C.D. Mortgage to W. Smith and M. Fenton, Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1867, 2.16.

Henry Parnell thought he was leaving each well provided for, but Charles ended up with the choice estate in Wicklow whereas John had to mortgage Collure and his great-aunt's bequest while awaiting Sir Ralph's legacy; on top of this, Charles's well-meaning interference halved this inheritance, leaving John with little more than enough to clear his debts and keep up his commitments. Charles's own estate was not unencumbered,[139] but John had to farm in America for a living and was not conspicuously successful at it. Once again I must recur to John's extraordinary good nature in the face of undeserved adversity (or comparative adversity); the complete absence of rancour or 'side' is one of the most pleasant things about his attractive memoir.

This image of John as a person ready to oblige his decisive younger brother even at his own inconvenience enters into the last aspect of his life I intend to discuss up to 1875; his brief fling at politics in 1874. Told that he was ineligible to run in the 1874 election for Wicklow because he was High Sheriff, Charles was in no doubt what to do: John must run instead. John did not want to, but knew it was no good:

> I was therefore launched in politics, but, what proved to be more important, it was Charley who launched me and who directed my course. For it was in the wake of my fruitless little Wicklow expedition of 1874 that he himself became drawn into the sea of politics.[140]

Entering the running late and at a disadvantage,[141] he came a very inglorious last;[142] as was to be expected. Nevertheless, he ran all the same; he was to remain steady and self-effacing in his support of his brother to the end of his life.

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[139] See below, pp. 310-13.

[140] J.H. Parnell, pp. 123-4.

[141] A letter from R.T.C. Johnson in the Freeman's Journal, 5 March 1874, p.7, explains this. See below, pp. 321-2.

[142] The results were: Andrew O'Byrne (H.R.) - 1511; Fitzwilliam Dick (C.) - 1146; Lord Fitzwilliam (L.) - 927; and J.H. Parnell (H.R.) - 553. J. Vincent and M. Stenton (ed.,) McCalmont's parliamentary pollbook (8th ed., Brighton, 1971).

The next child in order of seniority was Sophy, who distinguished herself by secretly marrying Alfred MacDermott, the family solicitor, in 1862, when she was only sixteen; the marriage was not made public until she came of age in 1866. Emily Dickinson wrote with great bitterness of MacDermott as an 'ingratiating' acquaintance of Mrs Parnell's who insinuated himself into the family's affairs 'as a friend'.[143] This is not accurate; he acted as solicitor for Sir Ralph Howard, and for John Henry Parnell before the latter's death.[144] Emily further claimed that 'he first of all directed his attention towards me, which culminated in an offer of marriage' shortly after her father's death;[145] indignantly repulsed by Emily, he turned his attention to Sophy and 'persuaded her to elope with him, without the knowledge of her mother, who was ill at the time, or that of her family, even running the risk of the Lord Chancellor's anger'. After a Scotch marriage the pair returned to Dublin, keeping their union a secret; MacDermott's career could have been jeopardised by such an action and Mrs Parnell, according to Emily, was bitterly disappointed by such a match for 'her peerless daughter', whose blonde beauty 'formed a bewildering picture hardly of this earth'.[146] The MacDermotts were, at all events, re-married in Dublin to satisfy public curiosity and went to live in Fitzwilliam Square. Emily wrote that the pair were known in Dublin society as 'Beauty and the Beast'; 'needless to say', she adds unnecessarily, 'which was Beauty and which was Beast'.

The impression deliberately given by Emily is that MacDermott was out to marry one of the Parnell girls for their money, and did not much care which one it turned out to be. In 1860-61, however, there was little enough coming to any of them; Mrs Parnell's American legacies had not yet come to pass, and as family solicitor MacDermott must have known of the

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[143] E. Dickinson, p.34.

[144] See J.H. Parnell, and Wicklow Newsletter, 1 June 1867.

[145] E. Dickinson, p.34.

[146] Ibid., pp. 34, 61.

mortgages on the family estates. Emily's dislike of MacDermott was intense and unbalanced; she blamed him for her sister's early death, and whatever passed between MacDermott and Emily before she married Dickinson left an intense and lasting antipathy. In fact, her husband in one drunken fit set off to shoot MacDermott (with an unloaded gun), but Emily dissuaded him: 'I knew', she recorded with a certain disingenuousness, 'my brother-in-law would have made a "case" out of this harmless incident if he had got the chance'.[147] John Howard Parnell is reticent about the marriage, referring to it only twice[148] and then without any of the spice provided by his sister's account. (A son of this marriage, Tudor MacDermott, administered the famous horsewhipping to T.M. Healy after the Split; a visitor to his house in Greystones in later days recalled a display of the numerous engraved whips presented to MacDermott by Parnellite associations).

Of Fanny, next in age (leaving out for the moment Charles Stewart), little enough is recorded at this stage. Emily described her when nineteen years old as

> talented and very pretty, neither fair nor dark, but something between. She had brown hair, aquiline features, a fair complexion slightly touched by the damask of the rose, and a slight but well-proportioned figure. Her eyes were dark blue. She had had proposals in Dublin but was desirous of marrying well, and none of them had come up to the mark.[149]

On this last count, John Parnell had something to add:

> Fanny . . was engaged to Mr Catterson Smith, the celebrated artist, who at that time, however, had not made his name, so that Charley raised strong objections to the match. I think he afterwards regretted taking this course, as Fanny never married.[150]

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[147] E. Dickinson, p.89.

[148] J.H. Parnell, pp. 41, 45.

[149] E. Dickinson, p. 65.

[150] J.H. Parnell, p.46. He places this incident in the context of the year 1862; it must have been a good deal later, as Fanny and Charles were only thirteen and sixteen years old respectively at this time.

In any case, Fanny was despatched in 1868 to do the regulation season at Lady Howard's in London, but as Lady Howard died suddenly in that year her niece took up residence in Paris with her sisters Anna and Theodosia and their mother. Here she attended art school, as her brother John had done, and entered society. Her mother recalled:

> People said Fanny was destined to be a grande dame, the wife of some great character, taking an active part both in diplomatic and political life . . she thought nothing of her dress, but let me dress her as I liked. She took part in tableaux with great effect.[151]

Mrs Parnell adds with relish that 'a future Duke' wanted to marry her; but on her uncle Charles Stewart's death Fanny accompanied her mother to America and lived mostly there for the rest of her short life.

The quotation above notwithstanding, she was not as passive a character as her mother implies. Rather than being destined to become the wife of someone influential, she came to wield some political influence herself. I have already mentioned the fact that Fanny was the most active Nationalist, and possibly the only active Nationalist, in the Temple Street household during the 1860s.[152] Charles Stewart Parnell did not take her seriously then;[153] in some ways he was always to remain detached from Fanny's brand of nationalism. Discussing Fanny's most celebrated poem, 'Hold the Harvest', Standish O'Grady wrote:

> I saw Parnell smile when those verses were read out in court during a State trial. It was a very pleasant smile, merry and natural, as if he were highly and affectionate amused at the dithyrambics of his little sister and playfellow. He did not regard landlords as 'coronetted ghouls' . .[154]

Some of his attitude towards his sister's impassioned politics probably remained since the days of Temple Street, Rossa's trial, and kicking the 'tramps' down the steps; it is unlikely that he ever really warmed to her 'heroic' poetry. But others did, and made of it a sort of anthem.

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[151] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.71.

[152] See above, pp. 209-10, 248-9.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Standish O'Grady, The story of Ireland, p. 256.

Fanny was only to become 'known' in the nationalist movement after her brother's rise to pre-eminence; but by 1875 she had taken up her position.

Little is known of the youngest brother, Henry Tudor Parnell, who came into the Clonmore estate in 1871. He is mentioned by Emily Dickinson as being at an Avondale cricket-party in 1867,[155] and by 1874, she claims,

> Henry Parnell had married and turned to housekeeping and superintending babies, which he varied by mountain-climbing.[156]

Debrett, on the other hand, dates his marriage as 1882, and is more reliable. In any case, he was still a law student in 1874. He was admitted to Cambridge after going to school in Ireland (at St Columba's, Rathfarnham), unlike his brothers. Entering Trinity College, Cambridge in October 1868, he matriculated in 1869;[157] according to his brother John he finished his course there but was 'too nervous to take his degree'. In January 1872 he entered Lincoln's Inn to become a barrister, and was called to the Bar in 1875;[158] but, again according to John, he never practised. His life seems to have gone largely unrecorded.

In one sphere, however, Henry's activities are detailed more extensively than any of his siblings - the disposition of his property. I have described how he had been left an enormous but largely unpaid-for estate in Carlow;[159] his solution of the debt problem was to sell off the lands bit by bit instead of retaining the whole and making the revenue pay off the mortgage. Delia Parnell claimed that her son showed 'extra-

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[155] E. Dickinson, p.66.

[156] Ibid., p. 123.

[157] J.A. Venn (ed.), Alumni Cantabrigiensis (Cambridge, 1953), part ii, vol. vi, p.33.

[158] Ibid.

[159] See above, part 4, ch. 1, pp.230-1.

ordinary business capacity' when he came of age 'in the rearrangement of his property and its sale to his tenants';[160] whatever about the business acumen shown, the sales were by no means always to 'the tenants', and when they were, were usually to very large-scale tenants indeed; it seems likely that Mrs Parnell's terminology in reviewing these events was influenced by later land-agitation demands.

The Clonmore estate as bought by John Henry Parnell had comprised, as I have stated elsewhere, a large part of the area of Co. Carlow that juts into the south-west corner of Wicklow;[161] no measurement is given for the entire estate, but by 1859 John Henry Parnell had sold off 886 acres[162] and an advertisement for the letting of the shooting in 1868 estimated the area as 7800 acres.[163] It could initially have been even larger than these 8686 acres, as Sir Ralph may have repossessed some of his ward's estate between 1859 and 1868 in return for a reduction in the sum owed him; the corner of Carlow in which it was situated, and where practically every townland named on the Ordnance Survey map is included in the estate inventory, measures about 13,000 acres. The income from the estate at this time was given by St John Ervine, probably from conversations with the John Howard Parnells, as £2000 a year;[164] this low figure is explained by the fact that most of the lands as defined in the Registry of Deeds were held by fee farm lease on very low rents.

However, if the Clonmore income was not commensurate with the estate's physical extent, Henry Parnell certainly utilised the market potential to the full. A large number of memorials in the Registry of Deeds show that

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[160] D.T.S. Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 21 Jan. 1880, (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237/6).

[161] See above, part 3, ch. 1, pp 179-80.

[162] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1859, 12.26 and 29.251.

[163] Wicklow Newsletter, 5 Sept. 1868.

[164] St John Ervine, Parnell, p.52.

from 1874 to 1876 he sold off a total of 6760 acres for £70,425.[165] At the end of 1874 he bought a more compact estate of 617 acres in Kilkenny for £5850.[166] In 1859 the capital sum owed on the Clonmore estate was about £50,000;[167] even if no reduction in the size of the estate took place until Henry attained his majority and began selling it off, what he made from land sales must easily have covered the debt and left a large surplus. There was, moreoever, more than a thousand acres not accounted for in the land sales recorded. On the lands sold, he retained head-rents of over £500 a year.[168] The Kilkenny estate was purchased before he had sold off all of Clonmore, and he had to borrow £3600 for further land purchases in Carlow;[169] but a memorial of the following year records a payment of £1500 to him 'in respect of the surplus proceeds in respect of the sale after payment of encumbrances' in the matter of his estate. Nor was his position as straightforward as simply the seller of an encumbered estate; he had begun to speculate, selling the lands in Carlow bought for £3600 in 1874, and put in Charles's name, for a profit of nearly £1000 the following year.[170] Henry's address at this time was recorded as Chapel Street, Park Lane, London, and it seems likely that the Kilkenny estate was bought purely for an income and as an investment for some of the money realised by the Clonmore land sales; he seems to have lived in London for most of his life, and the money he made from his land deals

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[165] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1874, 24.178, 25.77, 26.97, 26.101, 26.180, 29.11, 30.132, 30.177, 32.45, 42.8, 44.259; Mem. for 1875, 8.224, 37.38; Mem. for 1876, 1.77, 4.28.

[166] The lands of Garnagale (244 ac.), Ballynascarne (216 ac.), and Glenreagh (157 ac.), The rent roll was £451 p.a. See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1874, 47.287 for a detailed schedule of the estate.

[167] Originally £56,000, but less £5697 for 767 acres sold off in 1859 (Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1859, 12.26) and an undisclosed sum made by the sale of 119 acres (Ibid., 29.251).

[168] See references in n. 165, above. The head-rents reserved totalled £509 p.a.

[169] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1874, 47.289.

[170] The lands were Blindennis and Ballinagilkey in Rathvilly, comprising 422 acres. After putting the title in his brother's name, Henry sold them to Major Glascott of Wicklow for £4500. See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1875, 2.246, and for 1876, 1.77.

suggests that he could have lived comfortably off investments. An article in the Celtic Monthly in 1881 mentions that despite owning an estate in Kilkenny he spent much of the time travelling for the sake of his health;[171] at the time of his death he was living in Lausanne.[172] Mr Hugh Gaffney of Roundwood recalls that a great-uncle of his accompanied Henry Parnell to Madeira on a trip for the sake of his health when he was still quite young; it seems quite likely that he had a tubercular weakness.

The nature of Henry's extensive land sales deserves some comment. In practically every sale, he reserved the position of head landlord, receiving a head-rent and retaining rights of hunting and mining. In the case of smaller holdings the purchaser was often the incumbent tenant, with a local address; but generally the buyers seem to have had an eye merely to income or speculation. A Dublin stockbroker, J.A. Wilson, bought 493 acres for £1250;[173] T.F. Caldbeck of Eaton Brae, Loughlinstown, Dublin and Bartholomew Warburton Rooke of Herbert Street, Dublin, paid £12,900 for 628 acres.[174] On a smaller scale, Miss Augusta Newton of Brighton bought 97 acres at Eagle Hill which she had been leasing for years; but these transactions were not at all the same thing as selling out to the occupying tenantry, which is what Mrs Parnell implied in later years.[175] John David Vanston of Dublin bought 943 acres for £1510,[176] obviously as an income; and in 1875 the biggest investment deal involved, interestingly enough, a consortium of Wicklow gentry. W.J. Westby of High Park, William Kemmis of Ballinacor and William Grogan of Taney Park, with Richard Long of Wiltshire and H.L. Lopes of Kensington, bought 1785 acres for the enormous sum of £39,000.[177] After examining such transactions, and

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[171] Celtic Monthly, April 1881, vol. v, no. 4, pp. 326-9.

[172] See Debrett's Peerage.

[173] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1874, 26.101.

[174] Ibid., 30.132.

[175] For the Eagle Hill sale, see Ibid., 32.345.

[176] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1874, 42.8.

[177] Ibid for 1875, 37.38. The rent roll was £1050 p.a. Kemmis and Lopes were acting as trustees for Quentin Dick, another Wicklow landowner (and M.P. for the county).

considering the total amount realised by Henry Parnell, the purchase of Clonmore makes sense; the investment potential of the estate was obviously large, and seems to have been well exploited by Henry. He was the only Parnell brother to do well financially out of his inheritance, and seems to have led a more regulated kind of life than his brothers; his stable financial position was probably an important factor in this.

In 1875, Anna Parnell was 23; her life up to this is only scantily recorded. She accompanied her mother in Paris, studied painting, and then attended an art college in England. Details of her youth are quoted in R.M. McWade's book as given in an undated article from Truth. She was 'a girl of a nervous, resolute disposition - wayward, a little snappish, and absolute mistress of the house; but she was liked by humble neighbours, with whom, in their trials, she often commiserated'.[178] Her 'febrile energy, which she took from the American side of the house' made her intolerant of people whom she saw as genteel humbugs, such as the rector of Rathdrum; her only friends round Avondale were the daughters of the local miller, named Comerford, and they were considered socially beneath her - besides not being clever enough for one

> who was a regular reader, even then, of New York and Boston journals, and . . dipped into the lectures of American oratoresses who stood on the equal rights platform; the mental inferiority to which women were condemned by ecclesiastical authority was accepted as a matter fo course by the miller's pleasant daughters, but it galled Miss Anna and chilled her sympathy for them; if they had revolted against St Paul she would have been their close friend in spite of the Castle prejudices that stood between her and them.[179]

According to the same source, 'Miss Anna was old enough when Mrs Beecher Stowe was being lionised in Europe' to take an interest in the slavery controversy; Uncle Tom's cabin was in fact first published in England in

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[178] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.73.

[179] Ibid., p.74.

1853, when Anna was only a year old, but it is likely that the family interest in the Civil War, described by her brother, led her to consideration of this in any case. Destined to be better known than any of her immediate family except Charles, Anna's early life was nonetheless little recorded. (Her own rigidly impersonal approach to the study of history would no doubt have approved of this). The above secondhand details from McWade's book are all I can find.

Research about the youngest child, Theodosia, yields even less. Only a year younger than Anna, she was antithetical in character, being mild-mannered and completely conventional. She accompanied her mother to Paris and back to London, and seems to have done little of moment until her impeccable marriage in 1880. The Wicklow Newsletter records her playing and singing at Rathdrum church concerts,[180] and this seems typical of the undemanding way in which she passed her life. She was the only sister to have a happy marriage, and one of the few Parnells who enjoyed a happy and undisappointed life; from the point of view of records, an almost complete obscurity seems to have been the result.

Thus, as John Howard wrote, the Temple Street period and the early 1870s seemed to fix the fates of the Parnell children. The two distinct groups defined in my last section stand out still more clearly. One type - embracing Delia, Sophy, Theodosia and Henry - had all chosen quiet lives, and, except for Sophy, lived outside Ireland; all were to marry fairly young. Delia showed some neurotic tendencies and Sophy had distinguished herself by her bizarre elopement, but the lives of these four remain distinctly different from those of their brothers and sisters. For this reason they are less well recorded. Of the other group, Emily, Fanny and Anna had early on made their preferences clear and had stuck by them.

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[180] Wicklow Newsletter, 19 September 1874.

Emily had insisted on marrying her unsuitable husband and was living from hand to mouth at Avondale; Fanny and Anna had declared for unfashionable opinions, spinsterhood, and a bias towards the bluestocking. John, as earlier in his life, retained elements of both groups; he left Ireland for America and a self-effacing life on a Southern farm, but returned and allowed himself to be persuaded briefly into politics. In this, of course, Charles was instrumental, belonging as he did most emphatically to the strong-minded of the Parnells. He disagreed with Emily's persistence in her marriage, laughed at Fanny's patriotic fervour, and more than likely disapproved of Anna's egalitarianism; but he remained closer in spirit to these sisters and John than to the quieter ones. He also retained a closer personal connection with them; this was certainly strengthened by the fact that, Emily apart, none of this group married until very late in life, if they married at all. The close connection with John, Fanny and Emily remained, on Charles's part, throughout his life; he was equally close to Anna until their politics estranged them.[181]

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[181] See below, part 6, ch. 4, pp 575-6.

Chapter 2

The Young Parnell 1859-74

> I remember when we arrived at Lord Carysfort's the latter said /to Charles/: 'Now that you have come home you must take up your position in the county.'
>
> (In 1873) J.H. Parnell, C.S. Parnell, p.117.

> Mr. Parnell is a young gentleman of no ordinary talent and capacity, and we hope ere long to see him assume that position in his native county which his own talents and station as well as his ancestral antecedents so fully entitle him.
>
> Wicklow Newsletter, 29 June 1867 reporting Parnell's coming of age.

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For Charles Stewart Parnell, the death of his father meant as great a break as for his brothers and sisters. He had, however, been living at home until 1859; the change to Dalkey life was not as great as in John's case. As before, he was educated by desultory private tuition but by the time he was sixteen, according to John Howard Parnell, his mother decided that this was notsufficient:

> About four years after our father's death, our mother became anxious about sending Charley and myself to a private tutor in order to prepare us for the University. When talking one day to the late Lord Meath, she asked him what would be a good place to complete her sons' education. He told her that his own son, Lord Brabazon (the present Earl of Meath), was then with the Rev. Mr Wishaw at the Rectory, Chipping Norton, England - a place which he thoroughly recommended. Mother then went over to England and saw Mr and Mrs Wishaw and decided to send us both there.[1]

Writing to Sullivan in 1880, Mrs Parnell stated that it was Lady Londonderry who recommended Mr Wishaw, 'an especially kind, highly educated and accomplished tutor';[2] at all events, the supposedly patriotic Mrs Parnell

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[1] J.H. Parnell, p.47.

[2] D.T.S. Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 21 Jan. 1880. Letter in Sullivan Papers, N.L.I., MS 8237/6) p.5; hereafter cited as 'Letter to Sullivan'.

seems to have had no hesitation in choosing for her sons an English school patronised by people of impeccable social standing.[3] John Parnell describes their fellow pupils as 'Lord Brabazon, Mr Pilkington (later an M.P.) and Louis Wingfield (a cousin of Lord Powerscourt)'.[4] The school appears to have been a small-scale crammer's, and one which did not aim at a particularly high standard; upon Charles's expressing a wish to enter Cambridge, 'a special master' had to be engaged for him. It seems likely that the school catered mainly for those backward in their studies; though Charles was sixteen and John nearly twenty when they went there in 1863, they were, according to John, the youngest pupils there.[5] Lord Brabazon was 22 in 1863, and was probably being 'crammed' for the Civil Service examinations, which he sat in that year.[6] Pilkington was probably Sir George Augustus Pilkington (knighted in 1893), who went on to become a surgeon at Guy's Hospital and was Liberal M.P. for Southport 1884-5 and 1899-1900.[7] At Wishaw's John Parnell was taught 'writing, spelling and recitation, as having only been in school in Paris, I had not made the progress I should have done with the English language'.[8] This sort of instruction was administered by Mr Wishaw himself; Charles's requirements seem to have been more exacting than the sort of education the school usually specialised in.

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[3] As regards radical opinion and social practice she seems to have resembled Samuel Johnson's friend Mrs Macaulay, who was 'a great republican'; but when Johnson begged that in that case her footman be allowed dine with them, 'she never liked him since'. See F.A. Potts (ed.), Boswell's London Journal, 1762-63 (The Reprint Society, London, 1950), p.308.

[4] J.H. Parnell, p.48.

[5] Earlier John states that they were respectively fifteen and nineteen years old, but this is not consistent with the dating as 'four years after our father's death'. I am assuming the Parnells began at Chipping Norton in autumn 1863. Charles entered Cambridge two years later, in 1865.

[6] Who's Who (London 1913), p. 1372.

[7] Ibid., p. 1603. He was, in fact, two years younger than Charles, so the Parnells were not the most junior pupils.

[8] J.H. Parnell, p. 48.

He did not, however, get on well with his 'special master'; John tells how Charles, 'his face aflame with passion and his mouth twitching nervously . . denounced the teacher and his methods'.[9] Forced to apologise, 'he could never endure this teacher afterwards and his studies suffered considerably in consequence'. However, the next year he 'took a keen interest in mechanics and altogether did fairly well at his lessons'.[10] A classmate of the Parnells at Chipping Norton told Barry O'Brien the celebrated story of Charles contradicting the lexicon, and went on to give an uncomplimentary picture of his character as a schoolboy:

> We liked John, who was a very good, genial fellow; but we did not like Charles. He was arrogant and aggressive; he tried to sit on us and we tried to sit on him. That was about the state of the case.[11]

John recalled his brother's experience of the school as happier:

> His days at Chipping Norton were happy ones, and he thoroughly enjoyed riding, hunting and playing cricket. He and a special friend of his went for many walks together and made the acquaintance of several young ladies of the neighbourhood.[12]

Since the numbers attending the school were small, the Parnells had a classroom to themselves and lodged in a cottage opposite the rectory. The small size of the school must have meant that pupils and teacher came to know one another well; Mr Wishaw and his son later visted the Parnells in Dublin, and were taken by them on a tour of the West.[13] Mrs Parnell saw 'a great improvement' in her sons after Chipping Norton; they were probably educated more consistently there than they had ever been before.

After two years at Chipping Norton John went to the College of Mining at Stephen's Green, Dublin; Charles entered Cambridge in 1865, becoming

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[9] J.H. Parnell, p.48.

[10] Ibid., p.50.

[11] O'Brien, Parnell, i, p.38. The informant ('B----') was probably the Earl of Meath, who had been Lord Brabazon at the time.

[12] J.H. Parnell, p.49.

[13] Ibid., p.58.

a pensioner at Magdalene, then a 'fashionable but unacademic college'.[14] The fact that entry requirements here were less stringent than at other colleges probably influenced his choice; his secondary education cannot have been unduly thorough. I intend to deal briefly with Parnell's university career; it has been ably discussed by Mr Ged Martin in an as yet unpublished articled called 'Parnell at Cambridge: the education of an Irish nationalist', and there is little to add.

Though he matriculated in Michaelmas 1865 and remained at university until 1869,[15] Parnell left Cambridge without taking a degree. This was due to his temporary suspension owing to a court case in which he was prosecuted for assault. Perhaps it was because of this that his mother, writing to McWade, was evasive about Charles's university career:

> He was sent to Cambridge on account of his father having been there; besides, he had a great talent for mathematics, and that is a great mathematical college . . I think he did not remain at college the full term for graduation, on account of a disagreement between himself and one of the professors. He left of his own accord, as his self-respect prevented his yielding and asking pardon where he thought he had been unjustly treated.[16]

John Parnell, though more accurate, was similarly brief:

> He was at Cambridge from 1865 to 1869 but spent little time there and left owing to his getting into serious trouble. I understood afterwards that an action for assault was successfully brought against him in the Cambridge County Court by a merchant named Hamilton, twenty guineas damages being awarded. The evidence in court was of a conflicting nature, and Charley never told me his version of the affair . .
> In any event, the college authorities decided to send him down for the remainder of the term, of which, however, there was only a fortnight left. Although there was no reason why he should not have returned at the beginning of the next term, as he had not been expelled, he steadily refused to do so, and his education thus concluded without his taking a degree. [17]

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[14] Ged Martin, 'Parnell at Cambridge: the education of an Irish nationalist': a paper to be published in I.H.S., shown to me by Professor T.W. Moody.

[15] Alumni Cantabrigiensis, part 2, vol. vi, p.32.

[16] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.51.

[17] J.H. Parnell, p. 52.

On the subject of his brother's life at the university, John Parnell's information is equally sparse:

> His references to undergraduate days were very brief and reserved, though he appeared to have got on badly with the other fellows and to have had many quarrels, which often resulted in blows. On one occasion, he told me afterwards, five students came to his bedroom for what would now be called a 'rag', and after a desperate struggle he succeeded in throwing them all out.[18]

Barry O'Brien learned slightly more from an un-named contemporary of Parnell's.[19] His rooms were in the Pepysian buildings of Magdalene, below the library.[20] His tutor was Mr Mynors Bright and one of his lecturers (in mathematics) a Mr F. Patrick, who 'used often to describe how Parnell, when he had been given the ordinary solution to a problem, would generally set about th find whether it could not be solved equally well by some other method'.[21] O'Brien also repeats a story about Parnell's chivalry in attempting to protect his tutor during a town and gown commotion, and gives an authoritative and accurate account of the circumstances of his expulsion, supplied by a Fellow of Magdalene; but O'Brien's treatment of his hero is, in these matters, as in much else, prone to hindsight and anticipation:

> His career was undistinguished at Cambridge; and indeed, the place was utterly uncongenial to him. Whether he would have taken more kindly to Irish schools and colleges may be a matter of doubt. But he certainly regarded his school and college days in England with a particular aversion. "These English", he would say to his brother John, "despise us beacause we are Irish; but we must stand up to them. That's the way to treat the Englishman - stand up to him".[22]

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[18] J.H. Parnell, p.52.

[19] Parnell, i, p.80.

[20] A.C. Benson made an attempt to have a commemmorative plaque erected in 1910, but gave up in the face of several objections. In 1920 the issue of the rooms' location was again raised and the incumbent, an Ulster undergraduate, insisted on moving out of them. A plaque was eventually put up in 1967. (Ged Martin, 'Parnell at Cambridge'.)

[21] R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p.80.

[22] Ibid., p. 64.

An oblique reference to Parnell by a Cambridge contemporary refers to him as a man 'keen about nothing',[23] and his record in the official history of Magdalene is certainly brief and dry:

> He entered in 1865. His college career was short, for, having been convicted of assault, he was sent down in accordance with the rule in such cases. It is understood, however, that the Master would have allowed him to return if he had wished to do so. He appears to have had few friends in the college.[24]

Even his favourite pastime of cricket did not draw him much into college life; he is recorded as playing only two matches for Magdalene.[25] He joined the Boat Club, but refused to renew his subscription, to the disapproval of the committee.[26]

The only authority to dispute the general consensus that Parnell's college career was anti-social is Emily Dickinson, who describes a reckless and happy first year at University:

> He mingled work and play . . Charles was trying to fit himself for the public life which was even then his greatest ambition, while enjoying to the full the college friendships, debating-clubs and wine parties which serve to brighten the grey existence of an undergraduate.[27]

However, this is merely to set the tone for her apocryphal tale of Parnell's seducing a country girl near Cambridge, and is probably as fantastic as the rest of the chapter, in which Mrs Dickinson allowed her considerable imagination full rein in order to demonstrate that 'whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.[28] Conviviality was

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[23] 'During the whole of my residence at Magdalene I do not think there were in the college more than, at the outside, three or four genuine loafers, men, that is, who were keen about nothing. And one of these, strange to say, afterwards attained considerable eminence in a career which in a special degree demanded energy and activity'. Samuel Sproston, Magdalene in the Sixties. See Ged Martin, 'Parnell at Cambridge'.

[24] E.K. Purnell, Magdalene College (London 1904), Cambridge College Histories series, p. 195.

[25] 7 June 1867 and 3 May 1869; see Cambridge Chronicle.

[26] S. Sproston, op. cit.

[27] E. Dickinson, p. 49.

[28] Ibid.

indeed present, but in a different sense. A Magdalene contemporary recalled an element there of 'sons of monied parvenus from the North of England' who were looked down upon by the 'right' sort of undergraduates and who were susceptible to rowdyism;[29] Mr Ged Martin's study points out that Parnell's companions in the escapade which led to his rustication were probably of this type. Certainly a tendency to rowdyism is amply demonstrated by the account of the court case where Parnell was convicted of assault. O'Brien gives the brunt of this in his book, but it is worth quoting directly, if at length, from the Cambridge Independent Press of 22 May 1869:

> Assault by an Undergraduate - Hamilton v. Parnell
>
> A Jury Case
>
> Poland Adcock for Parnell, Cockerall for Hamilton
>
> The action was brought to recover £26-5-0 for an assault and £6-15-0 for damage done to plaintiff's coat and trousers in consequence of such an assault. The plaintiff is a merchant at Harston, and the defendant an undergraduate at Magdalene College. On Saturday the 1st of May the plaintiff was on his way towards the station when he found the defendant lying upon the ground and a friend standing near him. He roused them and for his attention the defendant rushed at him and committed the assault complained of. Several attempts /were made/ at an amicable arrangement by giving something to the hospital and paying the costs, which proved unsuccessful.
>
> Mr Edward Charles Hamilton, examined by Mr Adcock, said he was a merchant at Harston and on the evening of the 1st of May, between 10 and halfpast, was on the station road in company with his servant. When opposite Newman's public-house saw a man lying full-length in the gutter and a gentleman standing over him. Plaintiff went up to them and said, What is the matter? and the gentleman said, 'Oh, my friend is only very drunk and we have sent for a cab to take him home'. Plaintiff then offered his assistance and the gentleman said 'No, we do not want any of you or your d----d help; go about your own business'. Plaintiff replied - 'When one offers assistance they are not usually insulted', and was about to walk on when all of a sudden the gentleman lying in the gutter jumped up and hit plaintiff with a violent blow in the mouth, cutting his lip and nose. Defendant then struck plaintiff another blow on the collarbone, which disabled his arm for three days, and after that kicked him severely on the right

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[29] Samuel Sproston, 'Magdalene in the Sixties'. See Ged Martin, 'Parnell at Cambridge'.

knee, which caused great pain. The clothes, which were stained with blood, and also the trousers (a new pair) were torn in the struggle. The value of the coat was £5-5-0 and the trousers £1-10-0. After the assault a policeman was met and he was requested to take the defendant's address, which he did. Plaintiff then went to the police-station.

Cross-examined: Dealt in manure. Was going to the station upon business. When walking down the road to the police-station the defendant's manner was that of a drunken man. Did not strike defendant before he hit me, or at any time. Mr Bentley, defendant's friend, did not strike anyone and my man Allen did not hit the defendant until I was on the ground.

Mr Charles Stewart Parnell, the defendant, was called by Mr Adcock and said he resided in Co. Wicklow, Ireland, and between 9 and 10 in the evening went in company with Messrs Hoole, Forster and Bentley, all undergraduates of Magdalene, in a fly to the station and at the refreshment rooms had some champagne, sherry and biscuits, left in about half an hour, and then went out of the station and sat on the side of the road while his friends went for a fly. While he was sitting on the side of the road he heard someone say 'Hullo, what is the matter with this 'ere cove?' and Bentley replied that they did not want any of their interference; plaintiff then said he did not expect to meet with such b----y impertinence and came opposite him, and witness asked what he meant by insulting his friend, and plaintiff then said 'Your friend has been impertinent and I will not have any from you', witness then struck at plaintiff and missed him, the plaintiff then struck witness a severe blow on the eye, and witness then retaliated by knocking plaintiff down.

By the Judge: I did not kick him.

Witness resumed. The plaintiff's man then knocked me down and struck me twice in the right eye. As soon as I got him down I picked him up again (laughter). After that a policeman met us and I gave him my name; received a letter on the 5th, and went the next day to Ireland.

Chief Inspector Robinson was called and proved that the plaintiff made a complaint at the police station relative to an assault committed upon him by an undergraduate. He described the nature of the injuries the plaintiff had sustained.

P.C. Carter proved taking the defendant's name, and stated he was offered money to settle the affair. The defendant was the worse for liquor. In cross-examination he said the defendant was not in such a state as would have justified him (witness) taking him into custody.

Mr Benson, a surgeon, proved examining the plaintiff on the afternoon of the 6th and described the injuries; he was of the opinion that the injury to the knee was most probably the result of a kick. He first saw the plaintiff on the 6th of May.

Mr. Cockerell, for the defendant, dwelt strongly upon the fact that the plaintiff did not see the surgeon until after the letter, describing the assault as provoked /sic/ cruel, cowardly and disgraceful, had been sent by Mr Adcock, and suggested that the interview with the surgeon was concocted at that gentleman's office. He must admit that an assault was committed, but they must guess of the nature from the conflicting statements. As to the damage done to the clothes, that must be left out of the question.

Mr Robert Bentley was called by Mr Cockerell and stated in answer to the learned counsel that he could not swear whether the defendant was sitting or lying or in a reclining sort of position. Saw the plaintiff and his man come up and thought one of them said

> 'What is the matter with this man?' Witness told them to mind their own business, and might have said their own d----d business. Parnell then said what do you mean by insulting my friend, and he and plaintiff then had a little shake-up and the defendant got the best of it. I think the other man did his best (laughter). Did not see the plaintiff strike the defendant, but saw him knocked down, but not kicked.
>
> His Honour, in summing up the case to the jury, said that there was no doubt an assault had been committed, and the only question for their consideration was the amount of damages. It was a most unfortunate thing that these young gentlemen should hire a fly to go to the station for the sole purpose of taking wine; he did not say there was any moral turpitude in the act, but had they not committed this indiscretion then they would have escaped this unfortunate occurrence. If they believed the plaintiff _in toto_, then a most violent and disgraceful act was committed. The question for them was, did the evidence of the defendant modify the plaintiff's statement, and he was bound to tell them that the weight of evidence was in the plaintiff's favour, in fact it would be no excuse had the plaintiff used the language attributed to him. He thought that it was a great pity the case had not been settled out of court. They must dismiss from their minds, however, all allusions which had been made as to giving the damages to the Hospital.
>
> The Jury, after a short consultation, returned a verdict for the plaintiff, with twenty guineas damages.[30]

There is here little real sign of the 'conflicting evidence' charitably referred to by John Parnell; the case was an open-and-shut one. Parnell had been drunk and abusive, as well as arrogant enough to offer a policeman a bribe 'to settle the affair' - an aspect of the case which it is surprising the judge did not draw attention to in his summing-up.[31] It was not the only time that Parnell was up in court on a charge of disorderliness at this stage of his life,[32] which lends further weight to the plaintiff's case - if it were needed. Long afterwards, reminiscing

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[30] _Cambridge Independent Press_, 22 May 1869, p.6.

[31] Parnell told Davitt years later that he gave the policeman a coin which he thought was a sovereign, but turned out to be a shilling, and that this was what offended the constable. M. Davitt, _The fall of feudalism in Ireland_ (London and New York, 1904), p. 107.

[32] See below, pp 297-8.

about the incident, Parnell told two colleagues that his opponents were 'two swell students' who attacked him;[33] either he chose to remember it this way, or his listeners supplied the gloss themselves. Either way, this shows the mythologising of a piece of run-of-the-mill loutishness.

A College meeting of the Master and three Fellows was convened five days after the court hearing (26 May), and Parnell was rusticated for the remaining two weeks of term. Though such incidents were not uncommon (the Marquis of Queensberry,a contemporary of Parnell's, was involved in several), the fact of its being brought to court was what dictated the disciplinary action.[34] The whole affair compounds the general inauspiciousness of Parnell's Cambridge career; perhaps the only important result of these four years from 1865 to 1869 was to add to the sense of his inferiority in the matter of formal education which, according to his brother, he retained throughout his life:

> There is no doubt that the fact of his never having been at a real school, and having a continued change of tutors, coupled with the perfunctory nature of his studies at college, considerably hampered him in after-life. He often expressed to me his regret that he had not received a better education, and even that he had not devoted himself with more application to such opportunities as he had for study. One result was that he was always afraid of lapsing into an error of grammar or spelling, and for a considerable time wrote out his speeches word for word, and carefully corrected them before delivery. His letters, also, throughout his career show frequent signs of erasure and alteration.[35]

That much was inevitable. His mother had never troubled herself over-much with seeing that he had a regular and systematic education; it was not surprising that,left to himself at university, he did not make a better showing. As is usual, he only came to regret this later. But at the time, the four years spent at Cambridge seem to have been little more than a casual and inglorious interlude.

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[33] A. Kettle, The material for victory (ed. L.J. Kettle, Dublin 1958), p.68.

[34] See Ged Martin, 'Parnell at Cambridge'.

[35] J.H. Parnell, p. 54.

In 1867, Charles had come of age and had gone to live at Avondale; I shall deal with this part of his life in detail. Before this, it is worth considering another important interlude in his life, after his ignominious return from Cambridge: his lengthy visit to America in 1871. He went there in search of a wife, the elusive Miss Woods;[36] but, unlike his father, he returned disappointed. It was nevertheless an instructive visit, and John Howard Parnell, who was with his brother much of the time, has left a memorable account of it.[37]

In the spring of 1871 Parnell set off to the United States to invest some money and to follow an American girl of whom he had become enamoured in Paris. After a disappointing visit to her in Newport he travelled south to join his brother in West Point, Alabama. To his astonishment, he enjoyed some of the food; he was further surprised by the large tract of land his brother had under cultivation,

> and the way in which I controlled the negroes; everything in the South was strange to him, and the negroes and the rough set of white people with whom he came in contact puzzled him a great deal at first; he did not seem to like the negroes, and thought that the life generally was unfit for me; but I told him that I liked it, as it gave me a healthy and paying occupation, though he, of course, had got his own beautiful Avondale and plenty to do on the estate.[38]

Parnell examined the local mills, went shooting, and met neighbouring farmers; a quarrel with the local Marshal about who should give way on a footpath nearly led to a fight, shelved when Parnell's relationship to the locally-respected John Howard was discovered.[39] He met Matt Hill, an uncle of the State senator, and discussed American politics with him. He experienced a cyclone, and by mistake shot a pig which got in under the piles of the house one night, a story which 'he used often to relate with great gusto

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[36] See below, pp 302-3.

[37] See J.H. Parnell, part III, chapters 3 and 4.

[38] Ibid., p. 82.

[39] Ibid., p. 84.

in after-days at Avondale'.[40] When John Howard could leave his farm the brothers went on a vist to the coalfields of Alabama, staying in Birmingham, which John vividly describes as a pioneer mining town. They examined the Warrior coal-mine,which belonged to an Irishman,[41] and then Charles went on to New Orleans to visit a Parisian friend named Cliphart. He was to meet John a fortnight later, at Montgomery; the cable went astray, but they met accidentally and set off for Birmingham. Both brothers were prey to superstitiousness (allegedly a traditional weakness of Irish Protestants); their presentiment of danger was borne out by a serious rail accident en route, in which John received serious head and neck injuries.[42] Charles nursed him for a month in Birmingham, though himself affected by internal injuries. The patient was often visited by Father Galvin, an Irish priest 'related to the Father Galvin of Rathdrum who in after-days used to assist Charley in his political fights'. After a month they returned to West Point where John, now weakening in face of his brother's injunctions to leave this barbarian country and come home, began to dispose of his cotton crop and plan his return. They also attempted to collect witnesses' names for a damages action against the railway company - the engine had been driven badly and the brakes seemed defective - but the company went bankrupt, 'so we decided to abandon the suit, at any rate for a time'. The brothers travelled back via the Clover Hill mines in Virginia, spent Christmas in Jersey City, and sailed home on the S.S. City of Antwerp on 1 January 1872. 'Charles expressed his vivid delight at being home again, as he had never really enjoyed being in America.'[43]

Nonetheless his time there had been full of incident. It would have been highly uncharacteristic for him to have kept a journal as his father did thirty-seven years before, but one cannot help wishing that he had. His

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[40] J.H. Parnell, p.86.

[41] A Mr Dunne, Ibid., pp. 91-4.

[42] Ibid., p. 98.

[43] Ibid., p. 111.

tour was of a very different sort, far closer to the people and to the rougher levels of American life; Newport was his only foray into the sort of American social round which both he and his father cordially disliked, but which had marked the latter's stay so conspicuously. His mother and uncle were in Paris, so their kind of society had no claims on him; he visited the industrially exploited South when the backlash of the civil war was still bitterly felt, and it would be fascinating to know what he made of it. John's brief account is still instructive, if only because it shows clearly the extent to which he and Charles were close friends as well as brothers. When Charles next visited America it was to be as a public figure; this early acquaintance with the country probably formed the basis of his opinions about it. It was the last free expedition of the early part of his life; he now returned to Ireland and to Avondale and was expected, as Lord Carysfort put it to him, 'to take up his position in the county'.[44]

II

A discussion of Parnell at this stage is more coherent when carried on with reference to the several aspects of his life rather than chronologically. Thus when considering his involvement with and life in Wicklow, I will discuss first of all the estate which represented his material stake in the county, then his pastimes, social life and character at this stage.

Avondale was let out until 1867 to Thomas Edwards, chief engineer with the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford railway company. The scale on which the farm stock had been sold off[45] suggests that Mr Edwards used only the house; the demesne lands were probably rented by neighbouring tenants. But the gardens were well utilised, and won prizes for Edwards at the Rathdrum

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[44] J.H. Parnell, p. 117.

[45] See Appendix 1.

horticultural shows during this period.[46] The Edwards family seem to have entered fully into local society, Edwards continuing to lend the cricket lawn for local matches and one of his daughters being married from Avondale in 1864 to Frederick Wright of Emma Vale, Arklow.[47] When the young Parnells visited the estate they stayed at Casino, but were friendly with Edwards. It seems the family rented the house throughout this entire period (1860-7); the railway extension in the area was a lengthy business. Avondale itself was originally to be traversed by the new line in 1861, but the following report of an extraordinary meeting of the company shows that the idea was dropped:

> When the making of this line was first proposed it was intended to bring it through Avondale; but it was seen that the proprietors would offer every opposition in Parliament to the carrying out of the object, and it was thought expedient to abandon the scheme. The persons who were at present acting for the minor had become amenable to the project, and the Court of Chancery had given its sanction to the course.[48]

It seems likely that the opposition in Parliament would have come from Sir Ralph Howard, who was an M.P. at the time. The 'persons acting for the minor' who had become amenable to the project could have been Delia Parnell and Charlotte Zouche, or Charles West, the agent of the estate; a disagreement on this question could have been involved in the Howard v. Zouche case, but this must remain conjectural. The new line eventually went through Parnell's land at a later stage, because his brother tells us that Charles received £3000 compensation from the company.[49] For the moment, however, it was diverted.

Edwards must have vacated the house by June 1867; in this month the Wicklow Newsletter fulsomely reported the coming of age of Charles Stewart Parnell as 'a worthy young squire', and his tenants' rejoicing:

> The coming of age of Charles Stewart Parnell, Esq., of Avondale, in this county, was celebrated with great rejoicing and festivity at the family residence at Avondale on Thursday the 27th instant by the tenantry, retainers and work-people of the property.

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[46] See for instance Wicklow Newsletter, 20 Aug. 1864.

[47] Oct. 19 1864. See ibid., 22 Oct. 1864.

[48] Wicklow Newsletter, 13 April 1861. The meeting took place on 5 April.

[49] J.H. Parnell, p.44.

Mr Parnell, who is deservedly popular amongst all those with whom he is in any way connected, was unavoidably absent on the occasion, important business in the Court of Chancery, in which he was a ward during his minority, having required his presence before the Lord Chancellor. But a plentiful and sumptuous entertainment was provided by his orders for all those who are in any way connected with the estate, and in fact it might be said for all comers, and we need scarcely say that Mr Parnell's hospitality was largely availed of.

The rejoicing was opened with large bonfires which were kept ablaze for a considerable time and were regarded as signals for a regular gathering of the merry-makers of the neighbourhood. Many were the jokes and long was the laughter which mingled with the crackling of the faggots of the joy-fires. And frequent and hearty were the wishes expressed for the health and happiness of the worthy young squire.

After the company had partaken of the good cheer provided for them, the health of Mr Parnell was proposed in a speech well suited for the occasion by Mr John Kavanagh of Ballyknockan, one of the tenants of the estate, and seconded in a short but appropriate manner by Mr Laurence McGrath. The toast was received with the greatest manifestations of goodwill, and three times three given for Mr Parnell with a heartiness and a cordiality which were infinitely creditable alike to that gentleman and his tenantry and people. Dancing and feasting were kept up till an advanced hour in the morning, when all parties quietly returned to their homes highly delighted with their entertainment.

It is with feelings of great pleasure that we give publicity to the above narrative of festivity and rejoicing, which we fully believe were neither more nor less than the occasion required. Mr Parnell is a young gentleman of no ordinary talent and capacity and we hope ere long to see him assume that position in his native county which his own talents and station as well as his ancestral antecedents so fully entitle him.[50]

The position which Parnell was now expected to fill could not have been more clearly spelled out. He had come into an estate which, according to a legal memorial of the time, totalled 3807 acres with a rent roll of

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[50] Wicklow Newsletter, 29 June 1867.

£1789 a year,[51] plus additional quit-rents and head-rents of £290 a year. The actual financial position of the estate is something I will discuss separately.[52] But Parnell did not waste time in trying to consolidate his holding. On 13 October 1870 he wrote to W. Mills King, who held the farm at Kingston for a head-rent of £200 a year, asking what price he wanted to sell out to Parnell;[53] King replied with an estimate which Parnell felt was 'a good deal beyond the mark', and he countered with an offer of £4,500, 'a sum I consider much over the market value'. Parnell added that King's title to Kingston would be easier proved to him than to a stranger.[54] These references are from letters of Parnell's; in view of them, the sum of £3000 which J.H. Parnell names as being the price his brother paid for the Kingston head-rent can be disregarded.[55] But he does make clear that the deal went through.

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[51] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1869, 27.67. The schedule was as follows:

Lands	Quit-, Chief, Head-Rents £ s d	Grand Denomination	Gross Yearly Rents £ s d
Ballytrasna (Ballyknockan)	4 - 0 - 3¾	Ballytrasna	237 - 15 - 10
Kingston	200 - 0 - 0	ibid	-
Ibid.,	3 - 1 - 1¾	ibid	225 - 5 - 11
The Meetings	2 - 11 - 9½	ibid	301 - 13 - 0
Tyclash	9 - 3 - 1	ibid	124 - 13 - 10
Ballyteague	2 - 2 - 0½	ibid	36 - 11 - 9
Ballyeustace	2 - 1¾	ibid	16 - 10 - 0
Garrymore	48 - 18 - 0	Glenmalure	65 - 0 - 0
Clonkeen	4 - 1 - 2½	ibid	42 - 18 - 4
Caravellagh (Corasillagh)	none	ibid	63 - 15 - 0
Bomaskea	none	ibid	57 - 18 - 0
Carrignamuck	none	Aughavannagh	74 - 4 - 0
Carrignaweel	none	ibid	75 - 15 - 0
Avondale	1 - 13 - 3	Ballytrasna	260 - 0 - 0
Casino	none	ibid	94 - 10 - 00
Aughavanagh	15 - 0 - 0	Aughavannagh	80 - 0 - 0
Corrasilla and Branskey mines	none	ibid	40 - 0 - 0
3807 ac 1r 38p	£280 - 19 - 9		£1789 - 10 - 11

[52] See below, pp 310-14.

[53] C.S. Parnell to J. Mills King, 13 Oct. 1870 (N.L.I., Parnell Letters, MS 15,735).

[54] same to same, 23 Nov. 1870 (T.C.D., Letters of C.S. Parnell, MS 2241).

[55] J.H. Parnell, p. 287.

There is also evidence that from the start he threw himself into the administration of those aspects of his inheritance which most interested him. In about 1869 John Howard found him 'busily engaged with his new sawmills at Avondale, where was was trying to make money out of the timber on the estate';[56] this mill, according to John, Charles had had built with a view to supplying funds for their mother's entertaining. In so doing,

> he introduced a new business into Wicklow, as the only other sawmill in the Valley of the Seven Churches was that owned by Captain Bookey of Derrybawn . . the mills at Avondale, it is curious to note, were worked by water from the pond which we made as boys; Captain Bookey and Charley, who were both young men and great friends, took much interest in their mills, which at that time were the only ones in the county.[57]

This involvement, begun in the 1860s, stayed with Parnell all his life. He returned precipitately from Paris and an amorous involvement in the spring of 1871 'owing to his presence being required at the sawmills';[58] travelling in America in the same year, he noticed the design of a bridge over the Warrior river in Alabama and decided to sketch its covering structure, 'which he wished to adapt . . . for a roof which he proposed constructing at his new sawmills in Avondale'.[59] He went to considerable danger to draw it, while John watched apprehensively for approaching trains. By 1872 his brother recorded that Charles's chief interest at Avondale was 'in the timber, which by means of his sawmills he manufactured into various articles in order to provide for the growing demand which existed in America for Irish-made articles'.[60] When mortgaging the estate at this time,[61] Parnell made a special reservation of 'the full right of lopping, thinning and pruning all timbers and other trees';[62] the pre-

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[56] J.H. Parnell, p.59.

[57] Ibid., p.62. Bookey was later found drowned after yachting in the Mediterranean. These sawmills were not in fact the only ones in the county; Peter Boland of Arklow owned one worth £2000 in 1874. (See Wicklow Newsletter, 4 Dec. 1874); and John Barton of Annamoe had a larger mill than Bookey's in the 1870's.

[58] J.H. Parnell, p.76.

[59] Ibid., pp. 92-3.

[60] Ibid., p. 113.

[61] See below. Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1871, 23.178.

[62] Ibid.

occupation with his timber and its potential never left him. Accounts of visits to Avondale during his political career include many references to his sawmills, and towards the end of the 1880s a neighbour at Annamoe recalls the Irish Leader riding over one morning to ask for a large beech tree, recently felled, to try his sawmill on.[63]

The potential of the estate for timber and later for mining were what interested him most; otherwise its administration continued as before. The Avondale gardener continued to sweep all before him at the Rathdrum Horticultural Show;[64] the squire went shooting every autumn at the Aughavannagh shooting-box, as his father had done before him.[65] Here there were also valuable peat-bogs, which Parnell examined when on shooting trips with his friend and neighbour, T.C. Corbet of Spring Farm,[66] his brother-in-law Arthur Dickinson, or the gamekeeper Patrick O'Toole; because of these bogs, he later 'became interested in the production of turf'.[67] Thus far, his life resembled his father's: Cambridge, a visit to America, and return to Avondale and involvement with the estate which was his inheritance. But even at this stage it was only certain aspects of estate farming which really claimed his attention, usually those with a mechanical bent and large money-making potential; sawmills, fuel production and mining, all of which used up the resources of the estate without putting much back in. It is significant that the collection of agricultural tracts and pamphlets itemised in the Avondale Library Catalogue are dated in John Henry Parnell's

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[63] Reminiscence of Mr R. Barton, Glendalough Hse., in 1972.

[64] See Wicklow Newsletter, 5 Sept. 1869. Thomas Gaffney took 'first prize for winter onions, potato, onions, parsnips, lettuce, flat Dutch and Bangor potatoes, white gooseberries and apples, second prize for celery, carrots, York cabbage, drumhead cabbage, red gooseberries, white currants, dahlias, asters, verbenas, stocks, hollyhocks and marigolds.' Also see ibid., 14 Aug. 1869, for similar successes in the following year.

[65] J.H. Parnell, p.63.

[66] Later one of Parnell's earliest political supporters.

[67] J.H. Parnell, p.111.

day and not that of his son and heir.[68]

In other ways too Parnell's life at this period, when he immersed himself in Wicklow society, resembled his father's. Like the latter, much of his socialising revolved round cricket. As a boy he had played the game with John and the work-boys on the estate; during this stay at Chipping Norton he played at the nearby village of Churchill and 'got a high reputation as a bat, wicket-keeper and catch.'[69] Back in Wicklow, Avondale had continued to be the local centre of cricketing activity even after John Henry's death; in 1861 a cricket team called 'Avondale' played at the house by courtesy of Thomas Edwards,[70] and in the following summer both John and Charles Parnell played (albeit without great distinction) for this side.[71] In the same year Charles appeared on the Wicklow team, though John did not.[72] By July 1863 he was captaining the Avondale team against Ballyarthur.[73] Both brothers played for Rathdrum in the same summer. 1864 saw full involvement, Charles being appointed to the committee of the Co. Wicklow Cricket Club and practice days for the Club team being held at Avondale on Mondays and Fridays.[75] It was probably this era which the Wicklow Newsletter recalled in 1890 as 'those days when on the green sward of Avondale Mr Charles Stewart Parnell encouraged and developed in his usual forcible and thorough-going style the theory and practice of "The King of Games".'[75]

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[68] See Irish Sale Catalogues, 1901, in N.L.I.

[69] J.H. Parnell, p.51.

[70] See Wicklow Newsletter, 7 September 1861.

[71] Ibid., 7 June 1862. Playing against Mr Hodgson's eleven, Charles made four not out.

[72] Ibid., 12 July 1862 and 16 August 1862, when Charles made 26 for South Wicklow against North Wicklow and received a special mention.

[73] And bowled out four of the opposition. Ibid., 25 July 1863.

[74] Wicklow Newsletter, 18 June 1864.

[75] Ibid., editorial, 10 May 1890.

During this summer he was 'a principal scorer' for Rathdrum v. Arklow[76] and 'played in splendid style'[77] against Leinster; he appears as one of the Wicklow team's principal bowlers in this season. Other teams Parnell played with at this period were Lord Fitzwilliam's Twenty-Two[78] and the Twenty-Two of Wicklow, Wexford and Carlow.[79] He became, as is well known, captain of the Wicklow Eleven; the story of his so-called dictatorship of the team has often been repeated. It appeared in the Pall Mall Budget and was repeated by Barry O'Brien. Standish O'Grady in 1894 claimed that he was 'responsible for this story, which has had a press circulation; I had it from one of the team'.[80] This is O'Brien's version:

> "Before Mr Parnell entered politics", says one who knew him in those days, "he was pretty well known in the province of Leinster in the commendable character of cricketer. We considered him ill-tempered and a little hard in his conduct of that pastime. For example, when the next bat was not up to time, Mr Parnell, as captain of the fielders, used to claim a wicket. Of course, he was within his right in doing so, but his doing it was anything but relished in a country where the game is never played on the assumption that this rule will be enforced. In order to win a victory he did not hesitate to take advantage of the strict letter of the law. On one occasion a match was arranged between the Wicklow team and an eleven of the Phoenix club, to be played on the ground of the latter in the Phoenix Park. Mr. Parnell's men, with great trouble and inconvenience, many of them having to take long drives in the early morning, assembled on the ground. A dispute occurred between Mr Parnell and the captain of the Phoenix team. The Wicklow men wished their own captain to give in and let the match proceed. Mr Parnell was stubborn, and rather than give up his point, marched his growling eleven back. That must have been a pleasant party so returning without their expected day's amusement, but the captain did not care. In later years Mr Parnell used to use the Irish party much as he used the Wicklow Eleven."[81]

There is no reason to doubt the veracity of this account; nonetheless,

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[76] Wicklow Newsletter, 25 June 1864.

[77] Ibid., 9 July 1864.

[78] See Wicklow Newsletter and Irish Times, 29 August 1868.

[79] Wicklow Newsletter, 18 September 1869.

[80] Standish O'Grady, Story of Ireland, pp. 207-8.

[81] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 52.

the way of relating it should be examined. A bias is evident from the first: the use of the word 'commendable' with reference to a reputation as a cricketer implies that Parnell's political character was not 'commendable'. The parallel between Parnell as cricketer and as politician is heavily implicit throughout, even before the direct reference in the last sentence. Parnell's insistence on the rules is obviously emphasised with his usage of House of Commons procedure in mind; both, to an opponent of his, would seem similarly 'unsporting'. And finally, in the captain who 'did not care' about his men is seen the future dictator of the Irish Party.

Indeed, the very fact that this anecdote comes from one who knew him in cricketing circles before his entry into public life presupposes that the story-teller would be an opponent of the politics embraced by Parnell. Cricket was the gentry's preserve, learnt by them in school in England, and most practiced when those public-school boys were home in Ireland during the summer vacation. The names of the Wicklow Eleven members repeat the litany of county families who ran the affairs of the district in the period under survey. A typical entry in Lady Alice Howard's diary for 1874 records: 'Went to a cricket match at Ballyarthur - Brookes, Carysforts, Sir E. and Lady Grogan and Parnells were there'.[82] Later in the same summer she went with Lord and Lady Wicklow 'to a cricket match at Avondale - it was very pleasant - all the county were there - but we were nearly consumed by midges'.[83] For the followers of cricket, 'all the county' denoted a very narrow compass. It is unlikely that the Wicklow gentry continued to meet each other regularly at Avondale cricket-parties for many summers after the occasions recorded by Lady Howard, as the owner became more and more deeply immersed in a brand of politics so repugnant

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[82] Lady Alice Howard's Diary for 1874, entry for 4 Aug. (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 3600).

[83] Ibid, entry for 6 September. (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 3600).

to most of his fellow-players. Mrs O'Shea recorded that 'he never went to matches after he entered Parliament'.[84] But at the period of Parnell's life under review, cricket and all it meant was an important social focus for his activities; and even far later, a fortnight before his death, he was able to recognise on a Dublin street someone with whom he had played cricket at Avondale 35 years before, and had not seen since.[85]

A less typical interest for a country gentleman of his class was his consuming preoccupation with amateur mechanics. John Howard wrote that at this time 'Charley was a great practical mechanic and devoted much of his time to engineering pursuits, so that his life at Avondale was a very busy one';[86] further evidence is found in his fascination with the cotton-factories, grist-mills and coal and iron mines which he found in America.[87] His interest in the Warrior River bridge, to which he returned again and again, is indicative of the man who was to find his greatest relaxation from the pressures of public life in launching 'unsinkable' model ships from Brighton Pier.

Not all his pastimes, however, were so idiosyncratic. He joined the Wicklow Rifles in February 1865, as befitted a Wicklow landowner;[88] according to his brother, an additional reasonwas that 'by doing so he would be able towear uniform at the Castle, as he disliked the levée dress, declaring that it looked too much like a footman's livery'.[89] At the same time John joined the Armagh Light Infantry, and both brothers underwent preliminary training at the Royal Barracks before joining their regiments.

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[84] K. O'Shea, ii, 49.

[85] See Wicklow Newsletter, 26 Sept. 1891.

[86] J.H. Parnell, p.58.

[87] See ibid., part III, ch. 4. In the Birmingham coal-mines 'he went into every detail of the methods of production with the keenest attention', and examining a grist-mill near West Point he was disappointed when the owner would not dismantle it to show him a certain component (p.84).

[88] See Wicklow Newsletter, 4 March 1865, for his appointment as a lieutenant on 25 Feb. 1865.

> Charley told me that he had a very enjoyable time training with his regiment, as he went to no end of dinners, dances and garden-parties . . while we were in the militia, Charley and I attended all the levees and drawing-rooms and other entertainments at Dublin Castle.[90]

In the country he entered into similarly predictable pursuits. While still living at Temple Street he used to go down to Wicklow and occasionally to Clonmore on shooting-parties;[91] he went to Aughavannagh annually for the grouse, sometimes with his neighbour, Lord Carysfort.[92] His brother does not mention riding a great deal, but Mrs Dickinson recalls that

> when at home for the vacation, in the earlier years of his mother's residence in Dublin, Charles went in a great deal for hunting; he had inherited his father's love of horses and gift of horsemanship.[93]

She describes Parnell walking his mount home 'after a heavy day with the Wards', and how her brother

> took a keen relish in the irrepressible, intoxicating sport of hunting, in the thundering rush of the hunt itself, but some doctor telling him he had heart disease and must avoid excitement, he reluctantly abandoned his favourite recreation; the doctor's opinion afterwards turned out erroneously.[94]

Whatever about this, he remained fond of riding, and Mrs Dickinson told Barry O'Brien that they used to ride all over the county together.[95] He was similarly fond of walking, preferring to walk alone than in company.[96]

His amusements were, in short, not sedentary. Barry O'Brien's quotation from John Parnell is well known:

> "Did you ever see him read in those days?" I asked . . "The only book I ever saw him read", he said, "was that" (pointing to Youatt's The Horse) "and he knew that very well". [97]

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[90] J.H. Parnell, p. 55.

[91] Ibid., p. 56.

[92] Ibid., pp. 63, 117.

[93] E. Dickinson, p.59.

[94] Ibid., p. 60.

[95] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 53.

[96] J.H. Parnell, p. 52.

[97] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 53.

Parnell himself gave weight to the idea that he was no great reader; he told a university audience in 1877 that he knew little of Irish history and learnt that late in life,[98] and a newspaper reporter in 1880 remarked upon the dearth of modern works in the Avondale library and the fact that the owner only seemed to use parliamentary Blue Books and a few books on Ireland.[99]

This implication is borne out by an examination of the Avondale Library Catalogue of 1901.[100] The vast majority of the collection is from the eighteenth or early nineteenth century; very few of the important lots are dated from Parnell's lifetime - in fact, none except for Hansard, Webb's Irish biography (inscribed to Anna Parnell), Froude, Joyce's Place-names, Lewis Carroll, issues of Hearth and Home and Forest and stream, Murray on The horse, Folkard on Water-fowling, Geikie on geology, and a good deal on mining and mechanics: Greenwell on mine-working, Richards on wood-working machines, Gibbs on architecture, and several architectural and building magazines. All these books comprise only about 20 of the 400 lots auctioned. The greatest part of the library dates from William Parnell's time and reflects his tastes. There are all the classics; eighteenth-century parliamentary records; Walker's Siege of Derry; many archaeological folios of the same period; Pacata Hibernia; Strafford's Letters; several Parliamentary Commission reports; Leland; local Irish histories; Sir John Davies; Irish Pamphlets; Spencer, Moryson, Molyneux, Curry, Borlase, Sir James Ware; Henri Bayle; a large collection of political pamphlets; old English histories (Yarrington, Baker, Fuller and Ashmore). The list, in fact, reads like a bibliography of one of William Parnell's own treatises. There are also the magazines of his time - Scribner's, The Eclectic, Pranceriana and the Edinburgh Quarterly, as well as many more.

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[98] At a speech in University College, Dublin, on 13 Dec. 1877. See Nation, 22 Dec. 1877.

[99] See an article quoted from the Irish World in the Nation, 4 Dec. 1880.

[100] See Irish Sale Catalogues (1901) in N.L.I.

The collection of William Parnell is the nucleus of the library, and is what brings it well above the standard of the average country house. Other books seem to be random later additions, and reflect the different interests of his descendants. Anna and John would have been interested in Holbein's Portraits and a Hogarth folio; Mrs Delia Parnell probably supplied the American travel books and Thomas Jefferson's collected works. Many books of heraldry, peerages and baronetages testify to her preoccupation with birth and descent; most are dated from the mid-century. Emily's interests are reflected in folios on horsemanship, and Fanny's by volumes of Victorian poetry. The interests of the family are, in fact, profiled vividly and accurately by the library. As an entity, nonetheless, it is overshadowed by William Parnell's collection, coherent and showing a dominant taste; the additions are random and of unexceptional literary interest. But those first listed above as dating from Charles Stewart Parnell's lifetime show his own interests clearly - politics, riding, shooting, geology, mining, mechanics - and there is little, except for Lewis Carroll,[101] that is there purely for the pleasure of reading.

Besides being occupied by his own particular interests, Parnell seems to have led a fairly active social life at this stage. According to his brother he had 'many social duties . . The Wicklow county families constantly entertained him, and no invitation to Avondale was ever refused'.[102] About 1870, John Howard wrote:

> I found Charles still down at Avondale,busy with his sawmills, his cricket-matches and his parties. My mother was then living in Paris, as Temple Street had been given up and the family scattered, never again to meet all under the same roof. Charley often got invitations to Paris, to balls at the British Embassy, and thought nothing of making a flying trip to France to attend one; in fact, I do not think he ever missed one.[103]

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[101] He often used to read this without a smile, remarking that it was 'a curious book' - thus anticipating much later interpretations of it as a masterpiece of surrealism. See O'Shea, i, 166.

[102] J.H. Parnell, p.58.

[103] Ibid., p.62.

But apart from such forays, his life centred round Wicklow. Here he 'spent a good deal of his time riding and hunting and dancing' with a Miss C---[104] who lived nearby,[105] but the relationship was a friendship rather than a romance. As I have mentioned, the county gathered at Avondale to play cricket, and John Parnell told Barry O'Brien that at this time 'they used to have dances in this hall /at Avondale/ and the band used to be placed in that gallery'. Lady Alice Howard at Shelton entertained 'Charlie Parnell' for a shooting-party in 1874, where with Lord Listowel, Mr Brooke and Lord Wicklow, he killed 636 birds.[106] The Howards sometimes 'drove in the phaeton to Avondale' from Shelton for a visit,[107] and Charles and Fanny Parnell came to lunch at Shelton and played tennis afterwards.[108] Lady Alice's diary records a life where Carysforts, Symes, Tighes, Brookes, Bayleys, Powerscourts and Howards lived in each other's pockets, constantly visiting with each other and meeting incessantly in Dublin as well as Wicklow; the Parnells were, though to a lesser extent, involved in this caucus of county society.

Politics were to sever this connection; a hint of this comes in Lady Alice's entry in her journal after the 1874 Wicklow election, which does not mention John Parnell's candidature, and laments only that Lord Fitzwilliam was beaten by Dick and O'Byrne, a Home Ruler.[109] John Parnell wrote that Lord Carysfort, who in 1873 encouraged Charles to 'remain here and take up your position in the county', later disapproved of his brother's politics to the extent that he refused to speak to him.[110]

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[104] Possibly Corbet or Chaloner.

[105] J.H. Parnell, p. 73.

[106] Lady Alice Howard's diary for 1874, entry for 11 Nov. (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 3600).

[107] Ibid., 18 Nov.

[108] Ibid., 26 Sept.

[109] Ibid., 10 Feb.

[110] J.H. Parnell, pp. 117, 282. In the 'eighties Parnell wanted to buy whinstone from the Carysfort quarries, but felt it was not even worth his while asking for it; he only heard indirectly that Carysfort was willing to sell it to him. See below, part 5, p.361.

This is, however, the concern of the next section of this work.[111] Up to 1875, all the evidence is that Charles mixed fully in the kind of county society for which his birth and conditioning intended him.

In this connection, Emily Dickinson devotes a whole chapter to describing a three-day cricket match organised by Charles and Arthur Dickinson in July 1867 to celebrate the former's coming of age.[112] This description furnished St John Ervine with most of the material for his condemnation of the Avondale household as 'roistering' and 'Leveresque'. After, according to Emily, deciding on 'a real spree', Charles organised a match for the Wicklow Eleven against the Dublin officers' garrison team, to be played at Avondale. Twelve officers, a Mrs Moore and her daughters, the Dickinsons, Charles and Henry Parnell were all at Avondale for the three days. There was also a Mr Frederick C---, described casually by Mrs Dickinson as 'one of my latest admirers'.

> Numerous invitations were sent to the county gentry and also to friends and acquaintances in Dublin, from whence a military band had been bespoken, and the fame of this having got abroad enhanced considerably the importance of the event . . tents and marquees were erected . . the ballroom was swept and the floor polished.[113]

The first day, she continues, started with luncheon in 'the grand, medallioned dining-room' and continued after the cricket with dinner, dancing and champagne. The 'county Magnates' were all in attendance. Cricketing concentration began to lapse on the second day, and the players, to Charles's annoyance, openly preferred to dally in the woods with the ladies of the party:

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[111] See below, part 5.

[112] See E. Dickinson, chapter 5.

[113] Mrs Dickinson's recollections of how she organised the event are reminiscent of Dr Fagan planning the Llanabba School Sports in Evelyn Waugh's Decline and Fall, even down to the incongruous band. The overtones of grandiose pretension and self-delusion are also similar.

> Now commenced a scene of fun and flirtation which surpassed description and which had probably never before been equalled in the old haunts of Avondale. In every shady nook and corner were to be seen an isolated couple engaged in the pleasant pastime of love-making. . .[114]

The hosts were not exempt from this; Arthur, in fact, had to be dissuaded from beating up Emily's 'latest admirer'. The party on the second night went on and on, and a young widow from Dublin who had arrived down received the next day a letter from her solicitor requesting her to leave as 'from rumours which had reached him with reference to the festivities at Avondale . . it was evident that the house was not fit for her'.[115] Cricket was resumed the following morning, but Charles encouraged the convivial officers to leave on a train at midnight, as a third night would not be desirable.

> The county families . . bade hostess and host goodnight, expressing with seeming sincerity grateful thanks for the pleasant time they had had, but notwithstanding that they had partaken of Charles's hospitality and enjoyed themselves immensely, afterwards professed themselves much shocked and abused the whole entertainment roundly.[116]

If all was exactly as described, this is not altogether surprising. Emily's account should not, however, be taken at face-value. It has the flavour of an often-reminisced-over story which has gained considerably in the telling. Furthermore, as regards the large conclusions which St John Ervine drew from the affair, the whole tenor of the account suggests that it was not typical of Avondale life. And it was both instigated and organised by Emily and the egregious Arthur, whereas Charles tried to keep it strictly as a cricket-fixture, sent the officers home early, complained about distractions, and ended by saying: 'The next cricket match I have I won't have any ladies, or at least only ugly ones'.[117] Finally, the occasion is not mentioned in the Wicklow Newsletter, which always faithfully reported

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[114] E. Dickinson, p. 71.

[115] Ibid., p. 76. Her bedroom had been invaded by the officers, in an accidental manner, the night before.

[116] Ibid., p. 77.

[117] Ibid., p. 79.

even the smallest fixture. Bearing Mrs Dickinson's addiction to hyperbole in mind, the whole affair was probably on a much smaller scale than she implies.

The Dickinson's residence at Avondale at this time, however, must have affected social life there, and Arthur's influence on Charles, then in his early twenties, probably did lead to a certain amount of roistering. This contention is borne out by a court case reported in the Wicklow Newsletter of 24 September 1869. Headed 'A Fracas in a Hotel', the account is of a case brought against Charles Stewart Parnell and Arthur Dickinson at the Rathdrum Petty Sessions by Ralph Jordan, proprietor of the Glendalough Hotel, 'for being disorderly in the hotel on the night of the 27th July last'. Jordan stated that Dickinson had entered the private sitting-room of a Mr and Mrs Coleman, two English guests, 'with his hat on', and on being asked to leave had retired upstairs to a room he was sharing with Parnell. When the Colemans began to play the piano downstairs Parnell and Dickinson interrupted them, demanding a dance, and were again turned away. They then took up positions in a conservatory adjacent to the Colemans' room and refused to leave, depositing their coats in the sitting-room and beginning to drink brandy and smoke cigars, while the Colemans 'received much annoyance' from them. Jordan sent for the police, but there were none in the barracks. Eventually 'threats and blows were given and returned between the parties on both sides. A scene of the utmost confusion ensued, and it was some time before the gentlemen were separated'.

The defendants actually denied very little of this, stating that they had had every right to be where they were and that Dwyer (a friend of the Colemans') had struck the first blow. But the magistrates' judgement was completely and surprisingly in their favour:

> They thought that the fact of any person refusing to leave merely the room of a hotel was not an offence within the meaning of the Act of Parliament, and should therefore dismiss the case against Mr Parnell and Captain Dickinson; and, as they considered Mr Dwyer was to blame for commencing the disturbance, they should fine him five shillings and costs.

Understandably, Dwyer's solicitor asked for an increase in the fine so that he could appeal against the judgement; but he was refused. The magistrates' decision is, however, less extraordinary when it is seen that one of them was Captain Bookey and the other Charles Frizell; both were neighbours and social equals of Parnell, and Bookey was a particular friend of his.[118] It would have been most surprising if a hotelier from Glendalough had prosecuted the squire of Avondale at the latter's local Petty Sessions and had won his case. Parnell's tendency to aggressiveness has already been seen in several embroilments on his American tour, as well as in the celebrated assault on Mr Hamilton of Harston; living with someone of Dickinson's temperament and drinking habits cannot have done anything to ameliorate this.

However, a tendency to make a nusiance of himself when drunk did not distinguish Parnell particularly from the rest of his class in Ireland; rather, in fact, the opposite. He was, moreover, very conscious of being one of the gentry, a fact John Howard draws attention to when describing his brother's reaction to visiting one of the more prominent citizens of Birmingham, Alabama:

> Charley, owing to his proud disposition, was greatly afraid of being mistaken for the usual Irish emigrant, the only class of our countrymen who were to be found in these parts, and before we went round to Colonel Powell he said to me: "For God's sake, John, when we see Colonel Powell don't tell him that we are from Ireland as they have never seen a real Irish gentleman and wouldn't know one if they did" . . However, it was already known that we had come over from Ireland, though that did not seem to do us much harm. Colonel Powell was an educated and travelled man and, as we soon learned, quite recognised the difference between the Irish emigrant and the capitalist seeking investments.[119]

The same attitude is revealed in comments of Parnell's quoted by his brother after they had visited a State governor:

> When we came away Charley surprised me by saying "You see that fellow despises us because we are Irish. But the Irish can make themselves felt everywhere if they are self-reliant and stick to each other. Just think of that fellow, where he has come from, and yet he despises the Irish". That always stuck in Charley - that the

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[118] J.H. Parnell, p. 101.

[119] Ibid., p. 90.

> Irish were despised . . The idea that the Irish were despised was always in Charley's mind. 120

He was always conscious of social standing, and while in America disliked rough company, and in particular negroes, as much as his father had.[121] But where this attitude is most important is of course in the apparent anomaly of his espousal of Nationalist politics. His brother noticed this; in 1872, when John suggested that Charles enter Parliament in support of Butt's tenant right movement, his brother answered:

> "I would not, because I would not join that set." His pride, in other words, prevented him moving with the Home Rulers of that time, because they were beneath him in station. That feeling he had apparently subdued sufficiently by the time of the dinner party in 1874 for him at least to conset to mix with the Nationalist Party. But to the end of his career he was never intimate with the members of his party, however closely he might be brought into contact with them in the transaction of political business.[122]

The question of the extent to which a country gentleman was compromising his social position by associating himself with Home Rule politics at this time is an issue which I will deal with in the next section of my work. But it should be noted that one of the members elected for Wicklow in 1874, Mr O'Byrne, was described as a 'Home Ruler' and yet was a J.P., had been High Sheriff of the county, had residences at Cabinteely House, Cabinteely, Glenealy in Wicklow, and a house in Middlesex, and was a member of the Athenaeum Club in London[123] - in other words, he was a Wicklow country gentleman and lived as one. T.P. O'Connor, talking to R.M. McWade in 1891, claimed that except for George Henry Moore, the Irish cause was at this time 'abandoned by the country gentlemen, who in other times had occasionally rushed out of their own ranks and taken up the side of the people';[124] but he went on to admit that the 1871 Kerry election returned Rowland Blennerhasset, who like Parnell was

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[120] O'Brien, Parnell, i, p.55.

[121] J.H. Parnell, p. 82.

[122] Ibid., p. 131.

[123] See Thom's Directory, 1872, p. 1282.

[124] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p. 108.

> a landlord, a Protestant and a Home Ruler; the time had apparently come when constitutional agitation had a fair chance, and when men of property who sympathised with the people would be welcomed into the National ranks.[125]

There were other Home Rule M.P.s like Esmonde and King-Harman, who were very much of Parnell's class. This is to anticipate. But the point is nonetheless relevant, that entry into nationalist politics was by no means a negation of the consciousness of social standing characteristic of Parnell in his youth, and in some ways may have reinforced it.

The social position which Parnell held, and his consciousness of it, presupposed some involvement with the affairs of the county. He was probably more than ready for this. Always proud of Wicklow - Barry O'Brien heard him say 'I am an Irishman first but a Wicklow man afterwards'[126] - the years when he lived uninterruptedly at Avondale as local squire were, according to John, 'the happiest period of my brother's life'.[127] Mrs Parnell emphasised her son's consciousness of his local position in her letter to Sullivan:

> Charles always deprecated any lack of hospitality at his early home, wanting every man and beast that came to it to be entertained, and I found, when I was a widow, that tenants and retainers who needed it, while travelling, adopted my house as a home, as in feudal times, while such was the devotion of people on our place to us, I thought, that did we require it we could raise a corps of defenders among them. Nothing could exceed the faithfulness and unselfishness of our employees.[128]

Mrs Parnell, as was her way, here over-emphasises the seignorial position of the lord of Avondale; but Parnell's position did imply a certain duty to the locality, and after taking over his inheritance he began to answer

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[125] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p. 108.

[126] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 54.

[127] J.H. Parnell, p. 64.

[128] Letter to Sullivan. R.B. Cunningham Graham in his article on Parnell in Dana claimed he was not popular 'even on his own estate', but Graham was self-confessedly a 'desultory' friend of Parnell's and the statement is unsubstantiated.

its call. From 1873 he was a J.P. and Grand Juror in the Wicklow Assizes;[129] during 1874-5 he was High Sheriff for the county.[130] At the annual Wicklow Races he held the position of Steward, along with Lord Fitzwilliam, the Earl of Wicklow, the Marquis of Downshire and other local notables.[131] After 1870 he became a member of the Synod of the Church of Ireland; he was proposed as a select vestryman in July 1870.[132] These again were more social than religious obligations. Unlike his father, however, he was not on the Board of Guardians of Rathdrum Poor Law Union.[133]

His performance as magistrate was not as remarkable as latterday stories liked to claim. The priest of his local parish wrote, when recommending him to a constituency, that 'though he is the youngest of our bench of magistrates the others defer to his opinion and when a knotty question arises postpone it till he can be present';[134] but in the period from 1873 to 1874 Parnell's presence at Rathdrum Petty Sessions is only recorded once.[135] R.M. McWade tells a story of Fanny Parnell prosecuting a man for cruelty to a donkey when Charles was sitting on the bench, and the latter fining him thirty shillings;[136] the genesis of this story must be in an account reported in the Wicklow Newsletter of 3 October 1974 which records that it was Parnell himself who prosecuted one Thomas Cooper for cruelty, and, when the defendant was fined two pounds ten shillings and costs, asked for the fine to be reduced, as 'his sole object in coming forward was to teach persons like the defendant that they cannot ill-treat

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[129] See Wicklow Newsletter, 22 March 1873; also Thom's Directory.

[130] Wicklow Newsletter, 25 July 1874 and Thom's Directory.

[131] See Wicklow Newsletter, 7 May 1870, 18 March 1871 and 15 March 1873, 20 April 1872.

[132] Wicklow Newsletter, 16 July 1870; also O'Brien, Parnell, i, p.57.

[133] Although he attended meetings of the Board from time to time.

[134] Standish O'Grady, Story of Ireland, p. 208.

[135] Wicklow Newsletter, 2 October 1875.

[136] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p. 106. According to McWade, Fanny then paid the fine herself.

poor dumb animals'. Parnell's own attendance as magistrate was perfunctory, at least at this stage. But the mere fact of his being one, and of being High Sheriff as young as 28, shows that he was entering into the round of local duties and 'taking up his position in the county'.

There was so far very little in his life and development which was at odds with his background and position; this is also true of his love life, which involved a certain amount of romance, though no more than was to be expected. At school in Chipping Norton, his brother records that Charles had a sweetheart in the neighbourhood: 'I used continually to meet them together on country roads, especially those lonely spots suited for lovers' walks . . while this attraction lasted, his studies were considerably interrupted; but when she went away he set to work steadily'.[137] Always an exceptionally good-looking man, he early became accustomed to admiration; an Italian governess of Emily's 'took a great fancy to Charles',[138] and in Wicklow society he 'was invited out a good deal and was a thorough favourite with the girls'.[139] At viceregal balls, he 'danced with all the pretty girls',[140] but his first 'really serious entanglement', according to John, was with an American girl whom he encountered in Paris, probably about 1870, at a time when he was frequently visiting his family there and 'was strongly urged by his uncle to marry one of the heiresses whom he was constantly meeting'.[141] The lady in question happened to be rich, but from Charles's point of view it was a genuine love affair. 'Their engagement was everywhere recognised'; Charles visited her family in Rome in autumn 1870 and, returning to Avondale, 'prepared the house for the reception of his expected bride'.[142] In 1871, however, she precipitately returned to

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[137] J.H. Parnell, p. 49.

[138] Ibid., p. 50.

[139] Ibid., p. 52.

[140] Ibid., p. 53.

[141] Ibid., p. 74.

[142] Ibid., p. 76.

America and when he followed her there he was told that 'she did not intend to marry him, as he was only an Irish gentleman, without any particular name in public'.[143] John implies that the girl's parents influenced her against the match. He records that Charles was depressed and melancholy for weeks after the blow, and when he recovered 'his attitude towards women for many years afterwards was a cold and even a suspicious one.'[144] In 1880 John and Theodosia called on Miss Woods, the faithless fiancée, in Newport. She was now married, and they had the satisfaction of hearing her express her regret at not having married their brother - 'How happy we would have been!'

John Parnell placed great emphasis on the importance of this early involvement:

> Had it turned out as he expected, it would have meant his living a contented and comfortable life at Avondale, on the Continent, or in America. His jilting undoubtedly helped to drive his energies into politics, for he was deeply hurt at the idea of being considered a country gentleman without any special abilities.[145]

Emily Dickinson also said that 'his entrance into a parliamentary political career had its origin in a woman',[146] and told a similar story but in a garbled version: the lady in question was a 'Miss Pearl H---', the couple met in New York in 1869 (when no other authority records Parnell as having visited America), and Miss H--- gave Parnell some time in which to prove himself, so he became a famous politician for her sake.[147] Much of this seems fantasy, with conversations freely recounted verbatim, and all the other trappings of Emily's less reliable romancings. But Parnell himself bore out his brother's take by telling T.P. O'Connor that it was a jilting that brought him into politics.[148]

143 J.H. Parnell, p. 78.

144 Ibid., p. 80.

145 Ibid., p. 130.

146 E. Dickinson, p.111.

147 Ibid., pp. 111-19.

148 T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, i, 234. Though Parnell told Mrs O'Shea a different version of his American love-affair (see O'Shea, i, 138), wherein he was the pursued rather than the pursuer, this was at their first rendez-vous and may have been prompted by the politics of flirtation.

Totally unreliable, however, is a story to which Emily gave currency, about a local farmer's daughter who was seduced and abandoned by her brother while he was at Cambridge.[149] Henry Harrison has criticised this account pertinently, and it is not even worth examining in detail. Indeed, Emily practically admits she made it up: 'Remembering chance words and allusions and the sudden termination of his college career . . I discovered with a flash of insight the whole cause of his altered and careworn looks'.[150] The 'flash of insight' obligingly supplied a wealth of circumstantial detail as well as the novelettish outline; neither deserves serious consideration. Before Harrison's refutation, Henry Tudor Parnell went to some trouble to discredit his sister's story; when her book appeared in 1906 he corresponded with the Master of Magdalene, receiving corroboration that no such incident had ever been heard of, and wrote to the newspapers denying that there was any veracity in the tale.[151] Emily told Henry that she had the story from their mother and Sir Ralph Howard (both conveniently dead), thus contradicting her own assertion that she and Arthur 'discovered' the secret from Charles himself. Henry, who believed both this assertion and the subsequent contention of Emily's that the incident was the reason why Charles was left nothing by Sir Ralph's will, went on to deduce that 'some interested person' who would benefit from their uncle's estate put the tale about the discredit Charles. However, Howard's will had been made long before 1869, and Charles was never intended to be beneficiary of it. The genesis of the story was in Mrs Dickinson's slightly unbalanced and sensation-hungry imagination; there is no need to look further.

It was by no means unnatural that Parnell remained unmarried, especially with an abortive love-affair behind him. Besides being personally attractive,

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[149] E. Dickinson, pp. 50-59.

[150] Ibid., p. 59.

[151] Ged Martin has dealt with these efforts fully, using the Magdalene College archives, bundle 'C.S. Parnell, 1906'.

he was well-off and independent; the Miss C--- and Miss P---[152] of neighbouring county families, whom he squired and whose fathers would have liked to see marry him, were kept at a distance; so was another American beauty, to escape from whom he fled to Paris in 1873.[153] He was, in fact, 'a catch' and probably knew it. There is no reason to be surprised at his marital caution, much less to credit the apocryphal stories invented to 'explain' it.

'I have so little to go upon as regards things spoken', wrote John Parnell of his brother's character, 'and as regards things written, nothing at all'.[154] Any student of Parnell encounters the same difficulty. When those who knew him recalled his character, they were always influenced by his 'image', the reputation of a proud, impassive man of iron, which was generated by his parliamentary eminence. One of the most valuable aspects of John Parnell's book is that it recalls his brother as he was before the image took over. Though he often refers forward to Parnell's aloofness, 'the robe that attracted the loyalty and even the wild enthusiasm of his own countrymen, while at the same time repelling their intimacy',[155] John also unequivocally admits that he found 'just a trace of affectation in this sphinx-like attitude towards the world in general';[156] he had, after all, known him before.

John was doubly entitled to make such an observation, because he knew his brother better than anyone else - except Mrs O'Shea. John's treatment of Charles's character in the period under review is endlessly instructive, because it isolates two ostensibly contradictory traits. One was the legendary 'closeness' - 'My idea is to mind my own affairs, and leave other

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[152] See E. Dickinson, p. 71 and J.H. Parnell, p. 74.

[153] J.H. Parnell, p. 116.

[154] Ibid., p. 125.

[155] Ibid., p. 127.

[156] Ibid., p. 126.

people's alone'[157] - and the other was a marked tendency to be aggressively disputative: 'Charley was very fond of arguing; we all said he would have made a splendid lawyer, for, try as we would, we could never get the better of him in argument'.[158] Without adopting an unduly psychological approach, it is still possible to see a certain conflict in Parnell's character between introvert and extrovert characteristics; the latter seem to have been more natural to him, but, in much the same way as his early schooling suppressed his rowdiness, his later experience seems to have subdued his aggressiveness.

This conflict went with a certain tension always noticeable in Parnell's make-up. At Chipping Norton, according to his brother, 'his highly-strung, nervous temperament was even then noticeable';[159] at this time too his 'closeness' became characteristic.[160] In Alabama, following his rejection by Miss Woods, he lapsed completely into melancholia.[161] Sleep-walking was characteristic of him, and is mentioned in connection with his American visit and with his sojurn at Cambridge;[162] this tendency is often discussed in conjunction with something called, by both Barry O'Brien and John Parnell, 'nervous attacks'.[163] He seems, in fact, to have been of an exceptionally nervous temperament; after the railway accident in America, he insisted on travelling outside, on the steps of the last carriage, in case he had to jump off.[164] This sort of nervousness is usually mentioned in conjunction with Parnell's over-emphasised susceptibility to superstition, but his brother categorically relates this

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[157] J.H. Parnell, p. 48.

[158] Ibid., p. 52.

[159] Ibid., p. 47.

[160] Ibid., p. 52.

[161] Ibid., pp 78-9.

[162] See ibid., p. 83 and O'Brien, Parnell, i, p.39.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid., p. 98. Also see his worrying when the ship's engines suddenly stopped on the journey home, p.110.

tendency to his later life.[165] Moreover, 'spiritualism and palmistry . . he always regarded with great contempt, and laughed at Fanny and myself for going round to have our fortunes told'.

What comes through most strikingly at this stage of his life is Charles Stewart Parnell's strong-mindedness. He had grown up used to getting his own way, and according to his brother 'was used to having his slightest whim obeyed'.[166] Thus when he turned to the unwilling John before the 1874 Wicklow election

> and said "John, we must run you," I knew that his mind was made up and that I must either follow the course he had set for me or break with him once for all.[167]

Others were not favourably impressed by this characteristic; one remembers the Earl of Meath's description of hi as 'arrogant and assertive'. The thread of aggressiveness that appears in several of Parnell's American encounters[168] is repeated in the court cases where he appeared as defendant, in Cambridge and Rathdrum. But this was not an uncommon characteristic of the young country gentlemen of his era and his background. There is no real evidence that it ever made him unpopular - much, indeed, to the contrary.[169]

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[165] J.H. Parnell, p. 263. 'I did not notice any particular instances of superstition in Charley during his childhood and boyhood. But in later life a tendency to ascribe an omen for good or ill to the most trivial occurrence and to see the finger of fate in the most commonplace objects became very noticeable. I think it was after the railway accident in America that Charley first began to develop this curious trait in his character'.

[166] Ibid., p. 84.

[167] Ibid., p. 124.

[168] See ibid., p. 105, where Parnell nearly thrashed a Mr Field, whom John 'had always found a most respectable man and got on very well with'.

[169] See Standish O'Grady, The story of Ireland, p. 211: 'Those who were nearest to him liked him best. His brothers and sisters seem to have loved him much. Even the gentry of Leinster, his neighbours, liked him and watched his strange career as their enemy with a certain amused and affectionate interest'.

His active social life alone is an indication of this. But he had strong opinions on what to do and what not to do. It is significant that he abandoned his pursuit of Miss Woods as 'undignified'[170] and that in a mining town during his American visit he was 'thoroughly disgusted with this mode of living, as he had always been accustomed to the best of everything and did not relish sitting down to dinner with a very ruffianly-looking crowd'.[171] I have already mentioned his well-developed sense of social standing.

But with these unexceptional traits, there remained unpredictable depths - such as for instance the great mental application he could bring to bear on a subject in which he had a special interest. John Parnell sums up the background to the 'enigmatic' nature of his brother's character with reference to this:

> Charles kept his own counsel even as a boy. As a man this trait was developed to such an extent that it was only on very rare occasions that one caught a glimpse of the real man beneath the courteous but frigid exterior . . It must be remembered that then as ever he was always a questioner rather than an informant. He wanted to get every scrap of information and every shade of opinion on any subject in which he took a real interest but at the same time he did not like disclosing his own views, expecially when they were, so to speak, in the melting-pot. Once he arrived at a definite opinion he used to express it (and then only when he considered such an expression of opinion to be absolutely unavoidable) in as few words as possible, giving no reasons, however, for his having arrived at that opinion.
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> As he gradually grew out of childhood this reserve of Charley's became more and more accentuated. The greater portion of it was undoubtedly due to a mixture of nervousness and pride resulting in a sort of shy repulsion towards allowing his inner thoughts and real nature to appear on the surface, to be at the mercy of the multitude.[172]

But, he adds carefully, there was also a trace of affectation in this attitude. This is the sort of salt, added in painstakingly measured quantities, which makes John Parnell's diffident reflections doubly valuable - most of all at this patchily recorded period of his brother's life.

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[170] J.H. Parnell, p. 79.

[171] Ibid., p. 90.

[172] Ibid., p. 125.

III

Dealing with this stage of Parnell's life, his brother refers to him as 'a pretty well-to-do country gentleman';[173] on the face of it, there seems no reason to doubt that contention. Avondale was a lucrative and extensive estate; there were also farms in Kildare and a share in the Dublin property which had been included in Hayes's bequest.[174] According to John, Charles had enough money to be able to invest in American mines, even though 'he had . . to keep the whole of the family, who had no money except the small annuities coming to them out of my property in Armagh'.[175] As early as 1869 Parnell was considering investing in American interests; in 1871, when he set off in pursuit of Miss Woods, he did so 'after discussing American investments with his uncle /Charles Stewart/ . . /and/ armed with several business letters of introduction'.[176] He already had invested in the Clover Hill coal mine in Virginia, along with his mother and his uncle;[177] a visit to the coal and iron fields in Birmingham, Alabama, interested him greatly and he decided to put £3000 into them.[178] A partnership agreement was drawn up with the owners, whereby Parnell was to put up £3000 capital;he was also interested in buying up pine-lands nearby, where John believed the coal seam continued, at only a dollar an acre.

> Of this only ten cents per acre had to be paid in cash down, the remainder being payable in instalments extending over several years. I pointed out that, quite apart from the coal, the timber on these lands would have repaid Charley handsomely. In this, however, as in all other matters, he preferred to follow his own view uninfluenced by anyone else.[179]

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[173] J.H. Parnell, p. 61.

[174] Deerpark, Co. Kildare, and Moorelawn, near Kilcullen, plus 5/9 of numbers 74,75,76 and 77, St Stephen's Green. See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1869, 24.134.

[175] J.H. Parnell, p. 61.

[176] Ibid., p. 77.

[177] Ibid., pp. 79, 88, 106: Amount unspecified.

[178] Ibid., p. 94.

[179] Ibid., p. 103.

His stubborness and his insistence on complete control led to an impasse in the negotiations, and he neither invested the £3000 nor bought up the pine-lands.[180] He retained his interest in American investments, however, and John describes him on the train back to New York, sitting up all night discussing finance with his broker.[181] Charles's departure from America was, in fact, complicated by his being hounded by 'a Wall Street sharper who had heard that he had only just come over from Ireland and had persuaded him before going South to contract for some shares in a bogus company'.[182] The 'sharper' entered a lawsuit against Parnell, who felt it prudent to remain in New Jersey until he left. John gives no details about this, and does not say whether his brother actually parted with any money; it is interesting as showing the extent to which Parnell's American trip was involved with finance.

> His interest remained. In 1872, on a visit to Paris,
>
> Our uncle Stewart often kept Charley up till two o'clock in the morning talking about American mortgages and bonds; Charley found the technical terms very confusing, but did his best to acquire a grip of American finance, as there was a possibility that our uncle, who was then an old man, would leave him some of his property on his death.[183]

This expectation was not fulfilled. But looking at Charles Stewart Parnell's fortunes as indicated in his brother's book, one feels that the legacy was not especially needed. With a valuable property behind him and money to invest abroad, Parnell appears as a more than ordinarily well-off country gentleman.

This is, however, only half the story. Evidence in the Registry of Deeds shows that not only was the Avondale estate encumbered by far more than the family expenses mentioned by John Parnell, but Parnell himself must have been in debt by the early 1870s; and to some extent the claims on his estate which initially occasioned the celebrated Parnell Tribute

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[180] J.H. Parnell, p. 103.

[181] Ibid., p. 108.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Ibid,, p. 111.

of 1883 originated long before his entry into politics.

When he came of age in 1867, he provided his guardians, Sir Ralph Howard and Robert Johnston, with a mortgage on Avondale in return for an extension of loan for a sum of £1500, which he owed them on behalf of his father's debts;[184] two years later C.M. West, his ex-agent, obtained judgement against him in the Court of the Queen's Bench for £7000.[185] No details of the case are recorded in the Irish Law Reports, nor is there any account of it elsewhere, and I cannot ascertain what occasioned the lawsuit; but only £3500 was paid over after the judgement, security for the rest being Parnell's Kildare farms, some of the Wicklow estate, and his share of the houses in Stephen's Green.[186] This outstanding £3500, at a rate of 6% interest per annum, remained unpaid until September 1883;[187] the National tribute had reached £15,000 by this month,[188] though it was not paid over until December, and it seems probable that the expectation of it provided the wherewithal to pay the debt.

Nor was this the only liability incurred by Parnell in 1869 - or by any means the largest. In this year he mortgaged the estate to George Woulfe of Bishop's Lane, Kildare, and Paul Askin, of 40 Lower Sackville Street, Dublin, for £12,000.[189] The reasons for his need of this large sum go back over half a century, to William Parnell's bequest to his

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[184] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1867, 28.193.

[185] 23 June 1869. See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1869, 24.134.

[186] Ibid. 'Part of the lands of Ballysax called Deerpark situate in the barony of Western Offaly, parish of Ballysax and county of Kildare, also that part of the lands of Moorelawn situate in the parish of Tully, barony of Kilcullen and county of Kildare aforesaid, also that part of the lands of Stylebawn, otherwise Bushy Park, situate in the parish of Powerscourt and county of Wicklow, also that part of the lands of Bushy Park called Dillon's Holding situate in the parish of Powerscourt also all that part of the lands of Stylbawn . . situate in the half-barony of Rathdown . . also five ninth parts of that place, ground and premises . . on St Stephen's Green known as no's 74,75,76 and 77'.

[187] According to a later marginal note in the memorial.

[188] According to the Nation, which kept a weekly tally.

[189] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1869, 27.67.

daughter Catherine (Charles Stewart Parnell's aunt) of £10,000, drawable on Avondale. Catherine, while retaining her claim to this, had not demanded it from her brother John Henry. When she died (12 September 1867) she left to her husband, George Vicesimus Wigram, 'absolutely all that she had power to give, including the sum of ten thousand pounds wherein described, as then lent to her brother'.[190] By 1870, when Wigram received the administration of the estate, Charles Stewart Parnell had come into full possession of 'the hereditaments charged with the said two several sums of five thousand pounds'. Wigram, though a member of the Brethren, does not appear to have shared the attractive lack of interest in money so characteristic of Lord Congleton; he required the ten thousand pounds from Parnell so peremptorily that the latter had to instruct Woulfe and Askin to pay it out at once, even before all investigations necessary for closing the loan had been completed. What happened was, in effect, that the mortgage which Catherine Wigram could have claimed on Avondale was transferred to Woulfe and Askin, for £12,000, £10,000 of which had to be paid over at once to Catherine's heir. The estate was, as mentioned above, already liable to a loan of £1500 from Parnell's guardians; by an agreement of 1871, they undertook to allow priority to the repayment of the far larger debt to Woulfe and Askin.[191] A mortgage dated 1872 shows that the latter loan was not to be one of short duration; Woulfe was by now dead, and Parnell applied to Askin and William Hobson of the Bank of Ireland in Listowel for a further loan of £1000 on the mortgage. This was 'assented to, and paid in hand'.[192] In the same year, the Avondale estate, already three

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[190] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1871, 23.173. The reference to this debt as a 'loan' suggests that this is the basis for the idea that she made over Avondale to her brother to help him gain Delia Stewart's hand in marriage. See above, part 3, p.150.

[191] Ibid., 21.178.

[192] Ibid., Mem. for 1872, 11.47. Hobson presumably inherited this loan from Woulfe.

times mortgaged, was made liable to an annuity to Emily of £100 p.a. 'for her own sake and separate use, free from the debts, engagements and control of her husband';[193] a debt of £350 to the Rev. John Ebbs was also due on these assets. These arrangements on Emily's behalf coincide with the attempts she describes her family making to free her from dependence on Dickinson.[194]

The interesting thing is that these mortgages are dated so early in Parnell's life. By 1872 the estate was liable for nearly eighteen and a half thousand pounds, from the mortgages to Askin, Howard and West, plus family annuities. By the time Parnell's affairs reached a crisis point in 1882-3 the debts must have totalled far more, but the course was set from 1867 when Parnell's majority coincided with Catherine Wigram's death and her husband's claiming the portion due to her from Avondale. He probably had no compunction about this; he had already taken John Henry Parnell to court over some interest outstanding on the £10,000[195] and, as I have mentioned, he seems to have been no friend to Mrs Parnell.

For all his enthusiasm about American investments in 1871, then, Charles Parnell was not really the 'well-to-do country gentleman' he appeared to be. Moreover, the investment he had made in the Clover Hill coal-mine in Virginia was to fail when the mine ran out soon afterwards, as John Parnell's geological knowledge had foretold it would.[196] Even before politics began to make demands on his time and resources, Parnell

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193 Reg. of Deeds, Mem for 1872, 23.238.

194 E. Dickinson, p.90. See above, ch. 1, pp. 252-3.

195 See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1871, 23.123. £769-4s-8d in interest was owing in 1835, and John Henry Parnell was ordered by judgement of the court of Exchequer to pay £1538-9s-4d as a 'penal sum' - exactly double the amount owed. This could be the debt of John Henry's paid by the trustees of his will, for whose repayment Charles mortgaged the estate for £1500 - see above, note 184, for reference.

196 J.H. Parnell, p. 100.

was not rich. The Avondale rent-roll brought in £1789;[197] the income from the Kildare farms and the Stephen's Green houses probably brought this to over £2000. But he owed £18,500 at an annual interest rate of 6%, which was £1100 a year; there was an extra £100 p.a. to Emily, and a similar annuity to Delia (the other sisters drew their incomes from Collure); and he paid out at least £4,500 in 1870 for the Kingston head-rent.[198] It was also, as his brother pointed out, up to him to support the family, or those of them that happened to be living in Ireland at any time. There cannot have been a large margin in his annual balance-sheet; little wonder that sawmills and mining, with their prospects of quick capital returns, attracted him to the point of obsession. In later life Parnell was heard to remark that politics were 'the only thing which ever made him any money';[199] this is usually taken as ironic, but there may be more truth in it than in the common contention that political involvement led to financial ruin. His affairs, as his brief survey shows, were running towards an increasing debt as early as 1871, when he was twenty-five years old, and fully four years before he entered parliament.

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[197] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1869, 27.67; for details, note 51, above.

[198] See above, p. 294.

[199] J.H. Parnell, p. 288. See below, part 5, chapter 3, p. 432.

Chapter 3

The Entry into Politics

> The Irish heart is untainted with the socialistic venom. Irishmen pay position and ancient lineage a deference which is equally free from envy and servility. They welcome heartily into their ranks scions of "the good old stock" . . The success of Charles Stewart Parnell is hoped for by every Irish fireside.
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> Freeman's Journal, 10 March 1874; leader on the Dublin election.

> Colonel Taylor: 'He had not the honour of knowing Mr Parnell - 'A voice: 'Who does?' - Laughter and 'hear, hear'.
>
> Irish Times, 14 March 1874, reporting a Conservative meeting at Kingstown.

I

The reasons for Parnell's precipitate entry into politics in 1874 form a thread which recurs again and again in this study; it is a question which stands at the centre of my work. The quotation from Henry Harrison which precedes this work shows that my lengthy study of his family antecedents can have a direct relevance to this question: Parnell can be seen as 'the logical outcome' of all that had gone before him, of his family background and his own conditioning, How conscious he himself was of this is disputable. Devoy, after meeting him in 1879 was quite categoric that

> he had never heard that a distinguished ancestor, or relative, had written a book in defence of the Irish Catholics. And I repeat, notwithstanding some recent denials of the fact, that while he had a very fair general idea of the chief events in Ireland since 1782 and knew that there were wars and colonisation in the time of Elizabeth, James the First, Cromwell and William of Orange, he was very ignorant of Irish history. But about the then condition of Ireland he was thoroughly and minutely informed.[1]

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[1] Gaelic American, 29 Sept. 1906; Devoy's description of his meeting with Parnell in Morrison's Hotel in April 1879. Also see O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 43. In 1869, 'he knew nothing of the career of his great grandfather Sir John Parnell, or his grand-uncle, Sir Henry, or his grandfather!

Henry Parnell's book about the Irish Catholics is listed in the Avondale library catalogue, and William Parnell's works were also there in Charles's lifetime; but the impression that he was not a reader is reinforced by this reflection of Devoy's. There is, however, a clue to Parnell's development towards politics in Devoy's last observation, that 'about the then condition of Ireland he was thoroughly and minutely informed'. He may have known little about the course of Irish history, even as written about by his forebears; but as an intelligent and argumentative boy and young man, he was always interested in current affairs. His brother, whose record is invaluable in this as in other respects, points out that Charles was passionately interested in the American Civil War, to the extent of arguing incessantly about it long after it was over.[2] John Parnell then makes a direct connection to his later personal involvement: 'If anything can be said to have been the first impulse that directed Charley's attention towards politics, it was the American Civil War'.[3] The depth of his interest in this certainly presupposes an involvement in current affairs which has rarely been attributed to him, but which seems completely to be expected in view of what can be seen of his character at the time.

The next factor which John Parnell isolates as influencing his brother's drift towards a political stance is more questionable. This concerns the effect on Parnell of the Fenian movement: 'if the American Civil War may be said to have first aroused Charley's interest in politics, it was certainly the Fenian outbreak that concentrated that interest on Irish affairs'.[4] Barry O'Brien in 1898 was even more definite about this,[5]

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[2] J.H. Parnell, pp. 55, 57, 87, 125.

[3] Ibid., p. 125.

[4] Ibid., p. 127.

[5] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 44.

though he was questioned on the issue by Henry Harrison.[6] O'Brien was influenced by Parnell's celebrated interruption on behalf of the Manchester Martyrs in the House of Commons, and his sister recalled his indignation at their execution;[7] but this did not necessarily imply Fenian sympathies, any more than an involvement with the Amnesty movement at that time did. The effect on Butt of the Fenian inspiration is undeniable; Parnell's response to it is not testified to as unequivocally. His own references to this influence which appear long afterwards in isolated speeches do not deserve the weight Barry O'Brien gives them,[8] at least in the pre-1874 context. Before the Special Commission, Parnell's responses to Asquith's questions about the background to his political involvement make no reference to any interest in the Fenians, though this could have been calculated on his part: 'I cannot say I was very much interested in political questions at that time. I had been observing matters; but I was chiefly interested in local matters; attending my own business.'[9]

Moreover, even while attributing his brother's political development to Fenian influence, John Howard Parnell continually emphasises that 'with the Fenian doctrine itself, and with the Fenian methods, he was never really in sympathy'.[10] His impatience with Fanny's emotional nationalism and his annoyance at being taken for a Fenian sympathiser by the police raiding-party in 1867 bear this out. Furthermore, there is a considerable

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[6] H. Harrison, Parnell Vindicated, p.46.

[7] See O'Brien, op. cit., p. 53. Emily Dickinson told him: 'The only political incident which seemed to affect him /Parnell/ was the execution of the Manchester Martyrs. He was very indignant about that'. See also J. H. Parnell, p. 129.

[8] O'Brien, op. cit., p. 44. 'How came Parnell, then, to turn his attention to Irish affairs? . . He has told us that it was the Fenian movement that first awakened his interest in Ireland'.

[9] Special Comm. 1888 proc., ii, 694.

[10] J.H. Parnell, p. 127.

time-lapse between the high point of Fenian fever in 1867 and Parnell's sudden stand in the 1874 election. This gap is doubly suggestive when it is realised that at its close come two phenomena of the early 1870s which shortly antedate Parnell's entry into politics: the Ballot Act and the tenant right movement. These two factors had far more to do with Parnell's precipitation into politics than the chimera of the Fenian ideal. Giving evidence before the Special Commission in 1889, Parnell himself left no doubt about this:

> The passing of the Ballot Act in 1872 was the first public event which more intimately directed my attention to politics. I thought that arising out of the passage of that Act the political situation in Ireland was capable of a very great change. I had some knowledge, not a very deep knowledge, of Irish history and had read about the independent opposition movement of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy and the late Mr Frederick Lucas in 1852; and whenever I thought about politics I always thought that that would be an ideal movement for the benefit of Ireland.[11]

His brother states categorically that what Parnell wanted to see amended at this time was primarily the position of the tenants, the abuses of whose position 'he saw more and more in their naked hideousness as he went about among his tenants on the Avondale estate'.[12] John had come to similar conclusions after his experiences on the encumbered Armagh lands;[13] when the brothers returned to Ireland from America in 1872, Charles 'found Butt's tenant-right campaign in full swing and studied it closely in the newspapers of all shades of opinions, though his comments were few and far between'.[14] In the years following Parnell's entry into parliament, Andrew Kettle noticed his particular interest in Tenant Right, recalling that 'he attended all our meetings'.[15] Before 1874, John Parnell recalled, he suggested that Charles take up politics and this cause, and enter parliament, and was told briefly 'I could not, because I would

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[11] Special comm. 1888 proc. ii, 694.

[12] J.H. Parnell, p. 129.

[13] Ibid., p. 131.

[14] Ibid., p. 131.

[15] A. Kettle, The material for victory, p. 19.

not join that set'. Barry O'Brien emphasised the importance of the Ballot Act and tenant right as formative influences on Parnell; probably from a conversation with John Howard Parnell, he describes Charles's reaction to his brother's encouragement to enter politics as saying: 'I dod not see my way. I am in favour of the tenants and Home Rule, but I do not know any of the men who are working the movement'.[16] The less diplomatic rejoinder recorded in John's book seems more likely; nor does O'Brien's further interpolation of Parnell as saying 'the whole question is English dominion. That is what is to be dealt with', ring true for 1872. It reads like an effort to link Parnell's decision back to the Fenian example; and the man who in the 1868 election had worked for Lord Milton's Liberal candidature[17] was not someone who had been fired with enthusiasm for nationalism by the Fenian rising of the previous year.

Nor is there any reason to look for such inspiration. Given that Parnell came from a family with a tradition of pub lic service, that he was interested in tenant right, that he understood the implications of the Ballot Act, that he found himself master of a sizeable estate and at a loose end in his personal life - a bachelor, not ready to embark upon another engagement - there is nothing incongruous about his sudden entry into politics. (The Ballot Act, it might be added, had a further result, noted by Dr Thornley and applicable to Parnell's circumscribed financial position: it 'greatly decreased the cost of political campaigning which faced a prospective candidate and at once reduced the disadvantage . . of

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[16] O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 57. The discrepancy between this answer and the pithy remark repeated by John Parnell in his own book could have been due to free interpretation on O'Brien's part, or characteristic tactfulness on John Parnell's, when being questioned by O'Brien. O'Brien also quotes an acquaintance of Parnell's from the 1870s as saying that Parnell then 'knew nothing about Home Rule' (i, 73).

[17] See Special Comm. 1888 proc., ii, 694 and H. Harrison, Parnell vindicated, p. 438.

a candidate of slender means'.)[18] The step was, as Harrison saw, 'a logical outcome'. The sort of politics he entered were not as untoward as they may seem. The trend of Parnell's later politics was unpredictable; at this later stage also, the Fenian influence on him became something to reckon with, But the development towards his entry into politics in 1874, if - as his brother termed it - 'a shrouded growth', was in no way an unnatural one.

II

Even Parnell's actual decision to contest an election, sudden as it was, does not seem to have stupefied those who knew him well. The circumstances of his decision, as described by John Parnell, are well known:

> His actual decision was a sudden and even a dramatic one. It took place one night early in 1874, when Charley and I were dining with our sister Emily and her husband Captain Dickinson at their house at 22, Lower Pembroke Street, Dublin . . The conversation at dinner itself was of a light nature . . Afterwards, however, it drifted into an argument as to tenant right and Butt's movement in general. Charley took little active part in the arguments advanced for either side. Suddenly, when we had discussed the situation from all points of view, Charley cried: 'By Jove, John, it would be a grand opening for me to enter politics!' This frank avowal by one who had always been so reticent as to his real views took our breath away for a moment. Then we all cried, carried away by the idea and the firm conviction of his words, 'Yes, it would. It is a splendid opportunity'. Once his mind was made up, Charley never wasted time in words . . Accordingly, we had hardly time to express our approval when, without any other words of explanation, he went on to say, betraying no excitement: 'John, will you and Dickinson come down with me to the Freeman's office?'[19]

As John told the story, he stayed behind while Parnell and Dickinson went off to see the editor; in two hours they returned crestfallen, having been told that, as Parnell was High Sheriff of Wicklow, he was ineligible to stand. Next morning, the Lord Lieutenant refused to accept his resignation

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[18] D. Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule (London, 1964), p. 210.

[19] J.H. Parnell, p. 121.

there and then, so Charles was too late to run in the election for his native county; his brother recalls his anger at 'what he conceived to be a slight on the part of the Lord Lieutenant', and his ensuing resentment.

Eighteen years earlier Barry O'Brien told substantially the same story, probably gleaned from conversations with John Parnell and Dwyer Gray, whose father had been proprietor of the Freeman at the time. According to O'Brien, Dickinson suggested to Parnell that he run for Wicklow, and it was John who accompanied him to the newspaper office; but such discrepancies do not affect the substance of the story.[20] Emily did not mention the incident in her book, though she was probably a witness of the scene; it is doubtful if much of value has been lost by her omission.

John, as I have mentioned elsewhere, ran in the Wicklow election instead of Charles, and did ingloriously.[21] A letter in the Freeman's Journal following the election tells why: O'Byrne and O'Mahony came into the field while John Parnell was 'consulting Sir John Gray as to the propriety of coming forward', both running on the Home Rule ticket. John backed down; however,on 31 January O'Mahony changed his mind (the writs had been issued on 27 January) and John Parnell published his address at short notice on 2 February. Thus, the writer (Richard Johnson of Arklow) continues:

> Those interested will see that no time was lost when the opportunity presented itself, that Mr Parnell could not, owing to the presence of two suitable candidates, have sooner come forward, and that to the late withdrawal of Mr O'Mahony and to no other cause must be attributed Mr Parnell's delay in appearing, when it was then difficult to organise sufficiently for the return of our two national representatives. That this was quite practicable, had the electors been properly informed, will be evident from a consideration of the large number of plumpers given the O'Byrne, and we may rest assured that such an anomaly as the return of our present Tory member for Wicklow is never likely to recur.[22]

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[20] O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp 70-71.

[21] See above, ch. 1, p.258.

[22] F.J., 5 March 1874, p.7; letter from Richard T.C. Johnson, Arklow.

O'Byrne headed the poll with 1511 votes; Dick, the conservative, followed with 1146. The unsuccessful candidates were Lord Fitzwilliam with 927 and John Parnell with 553.[23] O'Byrne, the successful Home Ruler, was, as I have said, a country gentleman of extensive connections;[24] he was also strongly in favour of tenant-farmers' Defence Associations.[25] Had Charles Stewart Parnell run against him, they would have presented very much the same political image.

Failure at the Wicklow election, however, did not exhaust the gamut of possibilities. Though Parnell told the Special Commission in 1889 that: 'I did not stand for any constituency in Ireland in 1874, for I was High Sheriff of my own county',[26] he was not telling the truth. His ineligibility as candidate for Wicklow did not extend to other constituencies; it only affected him in that county because he would have been in charge of counting his own votes. A month after the Wicklow election, he did stand for another constituency - the county of Dublin. Despite his resounding defeat, it is a campaign worth examining; many of the important issues concerning Parnell's entry into politics appear during its course.

The Dublin county seat had been held by the Rt. hon. T.C. Taylor for the Conservatives for 23 years in 1874, a record that was looked at askance even by 'a Conservative registered freeholder of the county' who wrote to the Freeman's Journal on 3 March asking why 'Colonel Taylor should be allowed to walk over the course without a question in the coming election

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[23] See McCalmont's parliamentary poll book, 8th ed. by J. Vincent and M. Stenton (Brighton, 1971).

[24] See above, ch. 2, p.299.

[25] See his letter on the subject in Wicklow Newsletter, 1 March 1873. Tenants' agitation was lively in Wicklow at this time; see reports ibid., 1 Jan. 1870, and 25 Dec. 1869.

[26] Special Comm. 1888 proc., ii, 694.

for the county.' Others evidently felt the same. The County Dublin Tenants' Association looked hard for someone to oppose Taylor, even consulting Cardinal Cullen about it, and eventually lined up Parnell at three days' notice.[27] Parnell undertook to pay the costs of the election, returning the £300 which the Home Rule League offered him; it was to cost him, according to several sources, £2000.[28] The Freeman carried a leader on 9 March which introduced Parnell as a candidate for the election, and set the tone of his campaign: an almost complete reliance on the Parnell family record and on the desirability of someone of Parnell's social position and religion, as broadening the base of the Home Rule party.[29] Sir John Parnell was eulogised as a genius of extraordinary debating power and cultural gifts;[30] his genius was equalled only by his integrity, and he refused all bribes to countenance the Union. Here the editor, overtaken by confusion, wrote that 'beneath the heart of the Rt. hon. Henry Parnell there throbbed a heart as patriotic and as incorruptible as that of the Martyr of Utica', and that 'he struggled to save from death that Irish Parliament in which he had so often and so fearlessly asserted the rights of his Catholic fellow-countrymen', but the message came through clearly:

> Today Charles Stewart Parnell, a grandson of Sir Henry Parnell's, comes forward to solicit on the ancestral platform the suffrages of the electors of the county of Dublin. Mr Parnell is a gentleman of fortune and position, and High Sheriff of the county of Wicklow. In his address he pledges himself to the full popular programme - Home Rule, security of tenure, denominational education, and Amnesty. He also promises to support the last demands of the Irish Civil Servants. He has received the unanimous support of the Home

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[27] A. Kettle, The material for victory, pp. 17-18. See below, p.329 for further references to the difficulty of finding someone.

[28] See O'Brien, Parnell, i,75, and A. Kettle, op. cit., p.18. A letter from Joseph McCarroll to J.H. Parnell (C.S. Parnell, p.291) also says Parnell met the expenses, but puts them at a fanciful £15,000. Also see Swift MacNeill, What I have seen and heard, p.145.

[29] See Freeman's Journal, 9 March 1874, first leader.

[30] 'In that age of intellectual giants, Parnell was a distinguished man. To great debating power, great culture and great abilities he added an exact knowledge of finance . . ' Ibid.

> Rule League and the County Dublin Tenants' Defence Association, and it only needs organisation and zeal to secure the return for the county of so eligible a candidate.

This important editorial thus emphasises two of what may be called the 'passive advantages' of the candidate, as they had little to do with his personal qualities: the myth of his family and the significance of his social position. The editorial goes on to animadvert upon a third passive advantage - the iniquity of Parnell's opponent. Taylor was seen as hand in glove with Disraeli, who had just made him Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,[31] and the Government's veiled threats about the 'confiscatory' Disestablishment Act and the undesirability of denominational education were the bane of the Freeman. Quoting a speech of the Chief Secretary, Hicks-Beach, the leader drew the moral that

> Ex uno disce omnes. From the language of the Chief Secretary, we can judge that the present government will, in its treatment of Ireland, follow in the old paths of coercion, obstruction and hostility.

Political meetings of the campaign show the same tendency to concentrate on Taylor's disadvantages rather than Parnell's advantages.[32] The similarly passive virtue of the advantage of Parnell's social position - the emphasis on what he represented rather than what he was - is also recurrent throughout the campaign. When summing up the election, the Irish Times admitted that

> the Home Rule Party could scarcely have found a more eligible candidate than Mr Parnell: a gentleman of property and influence in his native county and the holder of an office of high dignity, he was open neither to the suspicion of being a political adventurer nor of being actuated by revolutionary motives.[33]

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[31] This was why he was standing for re-election.

[32] See especially the Kingstown meeting reported in the Freeman's Journal, 12 March 1874; Galbraith's speech at Rathmines, 16 March 1874, reported in Freeman, 17 March; also leader, ibid., 12 March.

[33] Irish Times, 20 March 1874.

The second epigraph to this chapter shows that the Freeman was equally conscious of this; it was an advantage to be able to claim that 'Irishmen pay position and ancient lineage a deference which is equally free from deference and servility',[34] and to adduce Parnell's candidature as evidence. Even if he was a landlord, it was pointed out, he was a good one; A.M. Sullivan remarked at a Home Rule meeting that Parnell 'received today from the tenants of his extensive estates the identical amount of rent that the tenants paid his grandfather ninety years ago'.[35] The Conservatives did their best to discredit this image by circulating a broadsheet headed:'Parnell of Avondale and Tombay as a Landlord' which claimed - allegedly by order of the editor of the Freeman's Journal - that 'a gentleman by the name of Parnell' had been involved in many disputes with his tenants, and showed 'some sharpness' in his dealings with them.[36] The basis for this story was true, but it involved Parnell's brother, Henry.[37] Both the Freeman's Journal and Parnell himself angrily repudiated the charge, and attacked the unethical method of making it.[38] Many other references show that the opposition were highly conscious of the advantage to the Home Rulers of a candidate of Parnell's standing. The Evening Mail significantly saw Parnell's candidature as 'unseemly, unchivalrous and factious',[39] and Colonel Taylor made the same accusation of a lack of gentlemanly solidarity on Parnell's part when he told a political meeting at Rathmines: 'referring to his rival . . that he had been

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[34] Freeman's Journal, 11 March 1874.

[35] Ibid., 13 April 1874, reporting a meeting at Fairview on 12 April.

[36] See ibid., 17 March 1874, for details of this broadsheet.

[37] See also letter in Irish Times, 16 Oct. 1880, which makes a similar accusation. See also below, part 6, chapter 1, p.478.

[38] A letter from Parnell (ibid.) said 'It is unnecessary to characterise the motives and taste which suggested and sanctioned the publication of such a document, and I have no doubt the honourable and intelligent electors of the county of Dublin will treat it with the contempt it so eminently merits'.

[39] 9 March 1874. My italics.

at school at Eton with his father, and he was sure, if he now lived, his son would not be in the field against him'.[40] Another speaker said that he would only look on Parnell 'in the light of an adventurer'.[41]

Closely connected with this was the similar emphasis laid on the Home Rule candidate's religion. Canon Lynch of Blanchardstown, an influential Tenant Right priest, spoke on Parnell's platforms, saying 'he was delighted that it was a Protestant gentleman that was coming forward with a promise to get justice for Ireland';[42] T.D. Sullivan welcomed political meetings where he saw 'Catholics with their worthy clergy on the platform . . meeting under the shadow of the Catholic steeple to aid the candidature of a liberal Protestant',[43] and was roundly cheered. And, along with the advantage of his Ascendancy background, the aura of the candidate's family mystique was incessantly invoked. When the Freeman ran out of eulogies about Sir John Parnell, it filled a leader with details about Sir Henry's support of the Catholics.[44] At political meetings, Jonah Barrington's comments on Sir John Parnell were read - one presumes selectively - to an appreciative crowd.[45] In a flight of fancy and anachronism the Freeman stated that the Home Rule candidate 'carries in this context that good green flag under which his ancestors did yeoman service'.[46] Throughout, Parnell's family record was treated as one of

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[40] Freeman's Journal, 13 March 1874.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., 16 March 1874, a propos a Blanchardstown meeting.

[44] This time accurately, with the help of The life and correspondence of Bishop Doyle by J.W. Fitzpatrick. See 14 March 1874.

[45] Meetings at Blanchardstown and Clondalkin reported in Freeman's Journal 16 March 1874.

[46] Ibid., leader.

his prime recommendations - not least in his own election address.[47]

Apart from his election address, indeed, the candidate seems to have had little enough to say for himself; this reinforces the impression that what he represented merely by sitting on a Home Rule platform was considered enough. The address was a predictable one; I have given it in full in an appendix to this chapter.[48] At election meetings, Parnell seems to have taken little part; again, his presence was the main thing. Reports of these meetings often do not bother to quote his speech, merely noting that he 'reiterated the sentiments contained in his public address'.[49] The one modest speech of Parnell's quoted in the Freeman is, however, interesting:

> He /Parnell/ now believed they should poll a very considerable majority. As regarded his principles he put Home Rule first: because it embodied everything else. He thought it comprised everything that Irishmen wished for; because when they had Home Rule they would be able to make those laws for which the country had been yearning for years . . He believed that when they got Home Rule - and he was certain that they would get some part of it before long - they should have their manufactures encouraged; they should have their fisheries developed; they should have their gentry living at home and spending their money amongst them and coming forward on the public platform to represent the liberties of the country.[50]

The moderation of this speech speaks for itself; nothing could be further from the fire-breathing nationalism attributed to their opponent

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[47] See appendix 2. 'Neither are my name and family unknown in Irish politics. My ancestor, Sir John Parnell, in the old Irish parliament was the active and energetic advocate of the removal of the disabilities which affected his Catholic fellow-countrymen. In the evil days of corruption, which destroyed the independence of Ireland, he lost a great office and refused a peerage to oppose the fatal measure of Union. His successor, Sir Henry Parnell, rendered in the British Parliament services to the cause of Catholic Emancipation and of Ireland which the Irish people have not forgotten.'

[48] See below.

[49] Freeman's Journal, 17 March 1874, a propos a meeting in Rathmines.

[50] Ibid., 12 March 1874. The occasion was a meeting at Kingstown.

by Taylor's supporters. Moreover, this view of Parnell's corresponds very closely to his grandfather's sixty years earlier.[51] Where his grandfather passionately called upon the Irish country gentlemen to enter parliament and work responsibly for their tenants, and where he eulogised the betterment of living-conditions that followed independence, he used much the same language as Charles Stewart Parnell in 1874. It seems likely that at this stage the latter's opinions were not in essence noticeably more 'advanced' than those of his grandfather. On the large questions of nationalism and land ownership he did not commit himself very far; writing to Lord Howth to ask for his support in the election, he contented himself with saying that 'I think there is an important principle at stake',[52] and did not enlarge upon it. Significantly, his opponents saw him as a man out of his depth. Colonel Taylor told a meeting at Kingstown that

> he hoped they would support him against a stranger, and one who had been put forward by very violent and he might say very dangerous men. He had not the honour of knowing Mr Parnell (a voice: 'Who does?' - laughter and 'hear, hear') - but he could not help thinking that Mr Parnell was sorry for himself, or if he was not sorry for himself yet, then that he would be bye and bye, that those experienced and artful dodgers had seized hold of him and taken him in.[53]

In part this attitude was a reaction to Parnell's youthfulness and social background, but not entirely; there were other scions of 'the gentry' standing on Home Rule platforms in 1874. The League was certainly anxious

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[51] See William Parnell, Enquiry into the causes of popular discontent in Ireland, p. 59. Under Grattan's parliament, 'every gentleman built a palace and surrounded it with a paradise; the before-forgotten peasantry became objects of benevolence; their houses were made more convenient, their wages raised; agriculture was created and new enterprise given to commerce. No expression can give an idea of the improvements which took place in Ireland immediately on the development of its national dignity'. Also see ibid., p. 61, on the advantages of the gentry living at home.

[52] C.S. Parnell to Lord Howth, 14 March 1874 (N.L.I., Parnell Letters, MS 5934).

[53] Irish Times, 14 March 1874. Long afterwards Parnell was attacked by someone in the House of Commons who said that until the Dublin election, 'people had never heard of him'. This elicited the characteristic answer: 'Never mind: people have heard of me since'. (Justin McCarthy, Reminiscences, ii, 101).

to have him; Butt admitted having 'pressed' Parnell into accepting the Dublin nomination,[54] and the Evening Mail reported that it was only 'after a good deal of searching' that a candidate had been found to oppose Taylor.[55] But, at least in part, the idea that Parnell was being made use of by the Home Rule League without realising it must have come from his own reticence on public platforms. He was presented as a figurehead; and to a large extent he acted like one.

Figurehead or not, the League spared no effort on his campaign. The Irish Times sourly admitted that

> it is no exaggeration to say that the 'posters' on which Mr Parnell's address is printed are displayed in the relation of about six to one of Mr Taylor's; indeed, in many parts of the county one would almost totally be unaware of the candidature of Colonel Taylor were it not for the information afforded by the newspapers.[56]

Far more Home Rule League meetings were reported than Tory gatherings, even in the Conservative papers; the energy of the Parnellite canvassers was admitted by all.[57] Gray and the Freeman kept up a constant barrage of pro-Parnell leaders and anti-Taylor invective and shortly before polling day claimed enthusiastically that

> there's not a farmer's hearth in the Donegal hills, not a village gathering in the wave-washed valleys of Kerry, where the Dublin election is not the main topic of conversation and where the most ardent wishes are not breathed for the success of Parnell and Home Rule.[58]

But when it came to the point it was the voters of Dublin county and not Donegal mountain-men or Kerry farmers who were to decide the outcome, and their answer was unequivocal. Parnell received 1235 votes and Taylor 2183. It should be pointed out, however, that such a decisive result was not

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[54] Freeman's Journal, 12 March 1874; report of Home Rule meeting at Kingstown. Parnell's election address stated that he was standing 'in compliance with influential requests'.

[55] 9 March 1874.

[56] 19 March 1874.

[57] See summing-up of election, ibid, 20 March 1874.

[58] Leader of 16 March 1874.

expected. The morning after polling day the Freeman felt qualified to state that Parnell would win; he had a majority in Drumcondra and Coolock, and had done 'particularly well' in Kingstown, Dalkey and Blackrock.[59] On the same day even the Irish Times granted that

> it is admitted on all hands that the battle will prove to have been a most severe one and that if Colonel Taylor is not defeated he will be returned by the narrowest majority he has ever gained . . the supporters of Colonel Taylor have always admitted that they have a dangerous opponent in Mr Parnell, whereas the adherents of the Home Rule party have never ventured to predict that theirs would be an easy victory.[60]

But after the results the Conservative tone changed from cautiousness to jubilation. The Ballot Act, according to the Irish Times, had made no difference; Colonel Taylor's last opponent, in 1865, had received over three hundred more votes than Parnell managed to secure.[61] Despite the vigour of the Home Rulers' organisation, the same paper continued, they had failed because they frightened off Liberals and moderates; Parnell's advantages, enumerated in detail,[62] made no difference. The Freeman was as gloomy as the Times was jubilant after the polling. Admitting an emphatic defeat - 'it would be worse than puerile to try to disguise the real character of the result'[63] - it blamed the apathy of the Liberal voters, abuse of the ballot, Taylor's personal popularity, the traditional Toryism of Dublin, and, most of all, 'a disastrous want of organisation in the Liberal ranks'. Nonetheless, the conclusion looked on the bright side; Parnell's 1235 votes meant that 'the ballot . . has shown the way to brighter things . . and has given the present occupant notice to quit '.

This was a more optimistic view than circumstances should have permitted. Parnell had lost, and lost badly. But the Dublin election showed the strength of organisation that could be put at his disposal;

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[59] 19 March 1874.

[60] Irish Times, 19 March 1874.

[61] White received 1644 votes in the 1865 election.

[62] See quotation given above, p. 323.

[63] Freeman's Journal, 20 March 1874, leader.

between the Freeman's Journal and his energetic election agents, he had been given all the publicity and exposure he could desire. In a safer seat, he could do well; and a year later one was found for him.

III

On 29 March 1875 John Martin died from a chill caught at John Mitchel's graveside a few weeks before. Born in 1812, Martin had been a radical Young Irelander and had edited the Irish Felon; as 'Honest John Martin', he had been a greatly respected M.P. for Meath. Two days after his death the Freeman's Journal was speculating about probable contestants for the vacant seat: on 2 April Parnell's election address was published.[64] He had been, since the Dublin failure, waiting in the wings: a well-phrased letter from him to the Freeman in March 1875 had warmly pressed Mitchel's case as regarded the celebrated Tipperary election, and forwarded £25 for Mitchel's expenses.[65] Moreover, after Mitchel's death, Parnell himself had been interested in standing for the vacant seat. A letter from Father Richard Galvin, the parish priest of Rathdrum, to a Tipperary priest on 23 March 1875 declared that Parnell 'would contest Tipperary against any conservative'. Galvin praised Parnell as an excellent landlord, and described his family tradition as a liberal one - referring to Sir Ralph Howard as well as John Henry Parnell, and maintaining that Charles Stewart Parnell, whom he had known for years, would 'prove true to the traditions of his family'.[66] William Dillon wrote two days later to John Madden, (a Tipperary Home Ruler who

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[64] Substantially the same as his Dublin address. See Appendix 2.

[65] See F.J., 6 March 1875. Parnell carefully stated that he 'did not address you on the subject of Mr John Mitchel's political opinions', but thought 'it must become everyone to protest against the decision of an obscure legal question by a party vote, in hot blood, in the House of Commons'.

[66] Fr. Richard Galvin to Fr. Hickey, 23 March 1875 (Doran Papers, shown to me by Professor T.W. Moody).

twice stood for Monaghan without success) that he had had several long talks with Parnell, and though he had been at first 'inclined to distrust him rather, as I thought his publishing that letter sending £25 towards the expenses of Mr Mitchel's election looked very like an election dodge', he had now decided Parnell was 'a very thorough and sincere Home Ruler'. Dillon, however, doubted that the National party in Tipperary would support him 'even supposing he is all I believe him to be', and had in any case heard from John Dillon that they were not considering taking an active part in the election anyway. Dillon was, however, keen that Madden meet Parnell and advise him 'as to what priests he ought to call on', and so on. Parnell wanted to visit Tipperary; and though Dillon had his own reasons for not going with him, he asked Madden to assist Parnell in Clonmel on the following Wednesday, and to introduce him to Charles Doran of Queenstown - to whom this letter could be forwarded,[67] and who had helped canvass for Mitchel in Tipperary.

Madden wrote to Doran, enclosing Dillon's letter, after replying to the latter that he would meet Parnell but promised no support. The National interest in Tipperary did intend a contest, but had not yet decided upon a candidate.[68] The next day, however, John Martin died. Writing to Doran again, Madden decided to postpone a decision until after Martin's funeral; but he enclosed a letter from Kickham to the parish priest of Mullinahone, which 'spoke well' of Parnell while 'not advocating' him: presumably because of Kickham's more radical political views. However, as Madden prophetically observed, 'Parnell will now probably turn his attention to Meath', where a contest was more certain.[69] But the Tipperary negotiations show that influential channels of communication were being utilised on

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[67] William Dillon to J.F. Madden, 27 March 1875 (Doran Papers, shown to me by Professor T.W. Moody).

[68] J.F. Madden to C.J. Doran, 28 March 1875 (ibid).

[69] Same to same, 30 March 1875 (ibid).

Parnell's behalf, and that he was anxious to emphasise his 'honesty' and his difference from 'Whig Home Rulers'.[70]

Parnell's election address was followed three days later by a declaration on the part of J.T. Hinds, who had seconded Parnell's nomination for the Dublin seat a year before,[71] that he also was offering himself as a Home Rule candidate. There was a Conservative candidate as well, Mr James L. Napper of Loughcrew.

In the week that intervened between the announcement of the second Home Rule candidate on 5 April and the nomination meeting scheduled for 12 April, the Freeman made no secret of its preferences. Though Hinds evidently felt he had a right to the nomination and was not prepared to stand down, his canvassing went largely unrecorded; whereas Parnell's visits to Drogheda,[72] Navan,[73] Athboy[74] and Kells[75] were fully reported and his every utterance approvingly quoted. At the nomination meeting in Navan on 12 April Parnell was adopted as candidate and the Freeman had a stern admonishment to make against any possibility of internecine strife:

> Mr Parnell and Mr Hinds have little difference so far as profession goes; and it is enough for us that the county meeting just held has declared for Mr Parnell. Mr Hinds, no doubt, is fitted to sit in Parliament; but a man ought to have more than an absence of objections to qualify him to follow a man like John Martin . . It is to be hoped that there will be no contest of Nationalists. Such a calamity, apart from the unseemliness inseparable from the division, would add strength to a practice which it is a public duty to oppose. Mr Parnell

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[70] Both phrases used by Dillon and Madden.

[71] See Freeman's Journal, 16 March 1874.

[72] Freeman's Journal, 5 April 1875.

[73] Ibid., 6 April 1875.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., 10 April 1875.

> seems to have wooed the constituency with considerable success. His former appearance in the field of politics have /sic/ been all to his credit. His family ties are of the most attractive kind. His personal fitness is unquestioned. Under all the circumstances we sincerely trust that the right course will be adopted peacefully, pleasantly and speedily. There should be no division in the Liberal forces; and in the event of a patriotic resignation, there will be no contest worthy the name, and Meath will be well served.[76]

Napper was dismissed as 'in the list of the Liberal-Conservatives - a combination of ambition and half-heartedness',[77] and in spite of the fact that he was both resident in Meath and locally popular, his cautious approval of 'a paper Irish Parliament' was heartily ridiculed by the Freeman.[78]

The county meeting which nominated Parnell had, in fact, taken a stronger line against Hinds than the Freeman did. He had opposed Disestablishment, and was vilified by the influential Catholic clergy because of it. Despite the marshalling of forces against him, however, Hinds refused to back down. His nomination was entered on 15 April, despite a Home Rule League deputation who asked him to stand aside,[79] and his address continued to appear until polling day.

If the clergy opposed Hinds, they were overwhelmingly and vociferously behind his rival. As has been seen, Father Galvin had written to the Tipperary priests about Parnell's projected stand there; Galvin now circulated a similar letter to the Meath priests.[80] As early as 5 April Parnell was visiting local priests and the Bishop of Kells, Dr Nulty,[81] and the support he received was unquestioning. Reporting the county

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[76] Freeman's Journal leader, 13 April 1875.

[77] Ibid., 12 April 1875.

[78] Ibid., 13 April 1875.

[79] Ibid., 15 April 1875.

[80] Reprinted in the Nation, 23 Aug. 1879.

[81] See Freeman's Journal, 5 April 1875.

meeting which nominated Parnell, the Freeman remarked that 'the occasion was of particular interest from the fact that it was expected the clergy would express their views on the subject in question';[82] in the general election for Louth two months earlier, the contest had seen a conflict between priests and bishop over the former's work on behalf of the Home Rule candidate.[83] But on 12 April 1875 in the neighbouring county, there was no doubt about the direction in which clerical support lay. Wherever the subject concerned Mr Hinds's unsuitableness, the pastors waxed wrathful to the point of vindictiveness:

> Rev. Fr. Tormey said . . that Mr Hinds had before this set at nought the feelings of the people of the county and opposed the wishes of the priests, and they all knew what had been the result . . . When the established church was toppling to its final fall, the name of Mr Hinds figured amongst the defenders of that church, and he showed himself an enemy to the people.[84]

The same priest spoke glowingly of Parnell:

> In Mr Parnell, however, they had one to whose lineage they could look with pride, whose honesty and goodness shone from his very face. They knew what a gallant fight Charles Stewart Parnell had made against Colonel Taylor . . the men of Meath would recompense him for what he had done in the cause of liberty by returning him for their county. /He was/ a thorough and unmistakeable Home Ruler. The other candidate was surely not the man to expect support from them.[85]

Father Tormey proposed Parnell; another cleric, Father Lynch, also spoke for him, as did Father Behan, the local parish priest. There were several more of the local clergy in attendance.[86] T.D. Sullivan, speaking at this meeting, 'was delighted to see on the platform so many of the revered and faithful guides of the Irish people, for he knew, as

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[82] Freeman's Journal, 13 April 1875.

[83] See D. Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p. 180.

[84] Freeman's Journal, 13 April 1875.

[85] Ibid. See N.L.I., Parnell letters, MS 15,735, for a warm letter from Parnell to Tormey in 1879.

[86] This although, as Dr. Thornley has shown, 'nowhere in 1874 was the participation of the clergy as striking a feature of political activity as it had been in 1868'. (Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p. 180). The Parnell v. Hinds contest brought the Disestablishment issue back into local politics in this instance.

they all knew, that Ireland must ever be safe so long as her people and her priests act together'.[87] Clerical support for Parnell was kept up throughout the campaign, as the Freeman approvingly noted,[88] and on the day before voting 'in almost every parish and district an active canvass was made by the ever-faithful and watchful priests of the county;'[89] the paper went on to refer to 'our glorious Protestant patriots, including in the roll Sir John and Sir Henry Parnell.[90]

Parnell himself was, then as later in his career, more than careful about alienating the religious guardians of local opinion. In his speeches he spoke strongly for denominational education,[91] although, he told Davitt long afterwards, there was clerical disapproval of some of his references and he was informed: 'the priests of Meath know nothing about John Stuart Mill'.[92] Even before the Meath election, a letter in the Wicklow Newsletter from Rev. James Redmond, a Catholic archdeacon, shows that Parnell was cultivating the clerical element: Father Redmond approvingly quoted a letter he had received from Parnell, 'our patriotic

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[87] Freeman's Journal, 13 April 1875.

[88] 'The priests are now addressing the people in favour of Mr Parnell'. 15 April 1875.

[89] A letter of Parnell's to one Fr. George Taafe thanked him afterwards for his 'kind exertions on my behalf during the Meath election' (N.L.I., Parnell letters, MS 5934; letter dated 26 Jan. 1876).

[90] Freeman's Journal, 17 April 1875. In the Home Rule Party of 1874 Catholics outnumbered Protestants by 46 to 13 (Thornley, op. cit., p. 210). But see L.J. McCaffrey, 'Home Rule and the General Election of 1874' in I.H.S., vol. ix, no. 34 (Sept. 1954), p. 191, for the strong Protestant tradition in the movement.

[91] See a speech of his reported in Freeman's Journal, 13 April 1875 'For their sake and for the sake of their children and their children's children, the education of the country ought to be under the proper control of the clergy.'

[92] Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p.175.

High Sheriff', about the death of a prominent Catholic businessman in Arklow.[93] Hinds's chances were non-existent after his denunciation by the priests of Meath; Parnell's were immeasurably strengthened by their support, and their organisational importance - far greater in the Meath election than it had been in the Dublin campaign - was one of his strongest weapons.

Besides his religious incongruity, the other obvious anomaly of Parnell's position was that he was a landlord standing for tenant right. His supporters were conscious of this and Kirk, the Home Rule M.P. for Louth who seconded Parnell's nomination, drew attention to it openly:

> He reminded them that they were advocating the cause of a landlord, but a landlord who had never himself, nor his father before him, evicted a tenant or changed the rent-roll of his estate. This was more than could be said of the great majority of landed proprietors in Ireland. At the Land Conference in Dublin he defended the principle of fixity of tenure; and he (Mr Kirk) was a tenant-farmer himself and he need scarcely say he would not speak in favour of a landlord whom he did not believe to be a good man and true.[94]

At the same meeting, the candidate himself felt it the first priority to clarify this question, and opened his speech by saying:

> It might be thought because he was a landlord he had no interest in the tenant, or might try to prevent the tenant having his interest in the land recognised by the state. If it were the wish of any landlord to come forward and say that his tenant had not as just and as good an interest in his farm as the landlord, such a possibility was rendered impracticable and had been in fact removed by Mr Gladstone's Act of 1870. He was not going to praise Mr Gladstone's Act, for it had been proved to be miserably inadequate and had in some respects done harm to the tenants, having coverted some good landlords into

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[93] Parnell wrote: 'It must be said that the example and deeds of such men are of national importance; and we feel more acutely their removal by the hand of Providence from amongst us, since so many of kindred nature, the best of Ireland's sons, are compelled for want of a career at home to devote their talents to the service of other countries'. Wicklow Newsletter, 5 Dec. 1874. Again, the sentiment could be William Parnell's.

[94] Freeman's Journal, 13 April 1875. Kirk also referred to Parnell's good record as a landlord at an election meeting in Navan on 8 April. See Freeman's Journal, 9 April 1874.

> bad ones, and because it had not given the slightest protection to the tenantry over three-quarters of Ireland. He however, as a landlord, maintained that the tenant has property in the land as well as the landlord and they should hold fast to that principle and endeavour to pass a bill which would define what the interest of the tenant is and which would protect that interest. Without fixity of tenure and fair rents the tenants would never be happy, nor would the country be prosperous.[95]

It is interesting that this lengthy definition of his land policy was put first in Parnell's nomination-meeting speech, and that by contrast his profession of adherence to the Home Rule principle, which followed, seems almost perfunctory.[96] He did, however, warn that 'if she /England/ refuse to Ireland what her people demand as a right, the day would come when Ireland would have her opportunity in England's weakness', and was cheered for it. His supporters continued to describe him as a 'patriot', and to prove this, his ancestral record was adduced time and time again. In front of his progression from the station to the town centre of Navan for the nomination meeting were carried, according to the Freeman, 'two time-worn banners of the Irish Volunteers, the property of Mr Parnell, under which his ancestor had fought'.[97] Leaders in the same newspaper referred to 'his two ancestors who in old times upheld the national cause'.[98] This patriotic emphasis, as well as Parnell's own

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[95] Freeman's Journal, 13 April 1875. At this stage there was, of course, still a large landowning element among the Home Rulers - Dr. Thornley finds 18 who were landowners, 4 who were younger sons of landowners, and 1 who was an elder son (Isaac Butt, p. 207). But in 1874 only 29% of the new Home Rulers came from the landed class, compared with an influx of 46% in the previous election. The proportion was to drop further.

[96] 'Ever since he first could think of he had the principles of that movement fixed in his heart, for he always believed that the day would come when the voice of the people in this country would rule her affairs and make her laws, and that was what he understood by Home Rule.' Regarding the primary emphasis on the land question, see L.J. McCaffrey, 'Home Rule and the General Election of 1874', loc. cit., pp. 196-7; he finds that tenant right was 'the main issue in the contest' during the 1874 election.

[97] A total flight of the imagination. Freeman's Journal, 13 April.

[98] Ibid., 16 April 1875.

references to nationalism (more outspoken than in the Dublin campaign), were obviously dictated by the fact that both Hinds and Napper subscribed to the principle of some kind of native self-determination; it was to Parnell's advantage to be further left, and adopt the full orthodoxy. The Freeman's Journal described him as

> finally and above all . . an Irishman - Irish bred, Irish born, 'racy of the soil', knowing its history, devoted to its interests; no English interloper fishing for a seat in this island and too ready to swallow, with a wry face, of course, any pledge which might help him to it.[99]

But it should be pointed out that even his opponents never saw him as representing a 'dangerous' kind of nationalism. Even the Irish Times found some scant comfort, after he was elected, in the fact that

> the principles of which Mr Parnell is the exponent are thoroughly constitutional . . and it ought to be a source of satisfaction to those who are interested in the future of this country that a gentleman who is far removed from the suspicion of association with the disloyal has been chosen to advocate them in the House of Commons.[100]

The combination of family record, clerical backing, honourable experience in the field of battle, and the constant admonishments of the Freeman in his favour was invincible. Parnell received 1771 votes, Napper 902, and the stubbornly importunate Hinds, 133. The reaction of the Freeman's Journal was unashamedly crowing:

> The 'patriotic' attorney is nowhere; the good landlord but bad politician is hopelessly outvoted; the young Irish patriot is at the head of the poll. The election is in many ways full of important lessons.[101]

One of these lessons, significantly, was that

> with grateful Ireland ancestral services now, as at all previous periods, weigh most deeply; it is no offence to the hon. member for Meath to say that nothing so strongly recommended him to the electors of the great county for which he sits as the fact that those whose blood he inherits and whose name he bears in the old times loved and lived and laboured for Ireland.[102]

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[99] Freeman's Journal, 19 April 1875, leader.

[100] Irish Times, 20 April 1875.

[101] Freeman's Journal, 19 April 1875.

[102] Ibid.

According to the Freeman, the importance of Parnell's record in the Dublin election was only secondary. The Irish Times laid the same emphasis on the candidate's ancestral record: 'his name alone suggests the principles on which he appealed to the county'.[103] As far as simple facts are concerned, the family record - as I have previously concluded - had little to do with Irish patriotism: but the myth was what mattered. Nor was Parnell himself particularly knowledgable about the ancestors so frequently referred to; if his ideas approximated to those of any of his forebears it was to William Parnell's - like his grandson, a landlord in politics who believed in a better land system and home government, for the most pragmatic of reasons. But the myth, along with Parnell's adherence to the line approved by the clerics who were so influential in his election, was of primary importance. So was the strong backing afforded him by the Freeman. In all this, the candidate himself does not come through very strongly. He had entered politics from a position in life which presupposed public involvement of one kind or another, and had chosen the party whose platform and principles agreed most closely with is own. That he must have been at least ambivalent about several other facets of the Home Rule orthodoxy is implied by the last chapter in this section of my study. But the nature of the politics into which he entered - possibly from boredom as much as anything else, and from a sense of hiatus in his personal life - was to change dramatically in the next five years; and he himself was at first to assist, and then control this change. That he entered politics with any inkling of what was to happen is doubtful; there is no evidence for it in his previous conditioning. His commitment to nationalism - the extent of which always remained arguable - followed on his entry into politics; it did not antedate this. In April 1875, the squire of Avondale became the hon. member for Meath; the process was to a large extent aided by emphasising his family history, from great-

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[103] Irish Times, 20 April 1875.

grandfather on, and by playing down the Wicklow gentry background which had been equally important in his conditioning, but from which his peculiar upbringing had kept him slightly apart. A wheel had turned full circle; and the two early sections of my work here come together.

In time, Parnell's character as politician eclipsed and took over from the life of a country gentleman; but this was to come later. The final sections of my study will examine the connections he retained with Wicklow, with Avondale, and with his family until his death.

Appendix 1: Avondale auction inventories

Wicklow Newsletter, 30 July 1859: Preliminary notice of Avondale auction by Daniel Johnson, Auctioneer, Rathdrum.

Ibid., 1 October 1859: Inventory of auction to be held 11-12 October:

Cattle (62 head):

6 dairy cows

3 forward and one backward springers

13 3½ year old bullocks

14 Kerry heifers

25 high-bred heifers

1 bull

Sheep (22 head):

15 wethers

7 ewes

Horses (12):

5 year old bay mare

7 year old brown mare in foal

5 year old grey harness-horse

4 year old promising filly

3 farm-horses

5 colts and fillies

Agricultural produce:

1 stack old oats

5 acres prime potatoes

10 acres swede and Aberdeen turnips, mangolds and carrots

Farming implements:

3 drays and creels

2 farm cars

1 new timber carriage

Winnowing machine

Donkey cart and harness

Water cart

Farming implements continued:

4 wheelbarrows

Stone dray

Field and garden rollers

Beam, scales, weights

Long and short garden ladders

Crate of window glass

Fencing wire

2 ploughs and swings

1 double harrow

5 sets cart-harness

3 pairs backbands and traces

Farm and garden tools

Crowbars

40 sacks

Oat-bins

Stable appointments

Carriages:

1 travelling-chariot

1 phaeton

1 covered car

1 outside jaunting-car

Harness:

1 set brass-mounted double harness

1 set brass-mounted single harness

Tandem harness

Ladies' and gentlemen's saddles and bridles

Guns:

2 double-barrelled

1 rifle

1 revolver

Wicklow Newsletter: 20 October 1860: Announcement of the late Mr John Henry Parnell's oat crop - 60 stacks.

Wicklow Newsletter, 1 December 1860: Announcement of a further auction, to be held at Casino on 7 December inst.

'Rare old port wines, sherry, madeira, claret, champagne, liqueurs, casked whiskey.'
3 cows
A good deal of furniture and china.
2 jaunting-cars.
1 covered car.
Saddle and harness.
'A good cricket-ground tent, in perfect order.'

Wicklow Newsletter, 19 December 1863: A further auction at Casino advertised, of 'the property of Mrs Parnell'.
Much of the furniture listed is the same as in the auction of 7 December, but there are far fewer outside effects.

Appendix 2: Charles Stewart Parnell's election addresses

Freeman's Journal, 9 March 1874:

To the electors of the County of Dublin.

Gentlemen - In compliance with influential requests, I offer myself as candidate for your county at the approaching election.

Upon the great question of Home Rule I will by all means seek the restoration to Ireland of our domestic Parliament, upon the basis of the resolutions passed at the National Conference and the principles of the Home Rule League, of whose Council I am an active member.

If elected to Parliament I will give my cordial adherence to the resolutions adopted at the Conference of Irish Members, and will act independently alike of all English parties. The wishes and feelings of the Irish people are in favour of Religious Education. In these feelings I concur, and I will earnestly endeavour to obtain for Ireland a system of education in all its branches-Primary, Intermediate and University - which will deal impartially with all Religious Denominations by affording to every parent the opportunity of obtaining for his child an education combined with that religious teaching of which his conscience approves.

I believe security for his tenure and the fruits of his industry to be equally necessary to do justice to the tenant and to promote the prosperity of the whole community. I will, therefore, support such an extension of the ancient and historic Tenant Right of Ulster, in all its integrity, to the other parts of Ireland, as will secure to the tenants continuous occupation, at fair rents, and upon this subject I adopt the declarations of the Tenant Right Conferences held in Dublin and Belfast.

I think the time has long since come when a complete and unconditional Amnesty ought to be extended to all the prisoners, without distinction, who are suffering for taking part in transactions arising out of political movements in Ireland.

I am in favour of the Revision and Amendment of the Grand Jury Laws.

I will earnestly advocate a removal of the grievances of which the Civil Servants of Ireland so justly complain. I have seen with indignation of the rejection of their demand to be placed on an equality with those who are employed in England. I will use my best endeavours to obtain for them the advantages which they have asked for in vain, but to which they are so clearly entitled.

If I appear before you as an untried man, my name and my family are not unknown in Irish politics. My ancestor, Sir John Parnell, in the old Irish Parliament was the active and energetic advocate of the removal of the disabilities which affected his Catholic fellow-countrymen. In the evil days of corruption he lost a great office and refused a peerage to oppose the fatal measure of Union. His successor, Sir Henry Parnell, rendered in the British Parliament services to the cause of Catholic Emancipation and of Ireland which the Irish people have not forgotten.

If you adopt me I will endeavour, and I think I can promise, that no act of mine will ever discredit the name which has been associated with these recollections.

I am, Gentlemen, your faithful servant,

Charles Stewart Parnell

Parnell's address to the Meath electors was almost identical. It was published in the Freeman's Journal, 2 April 1875.

The first paragraph read:

Gentlemen - the untimely death of the single-minded and noble Irishman who so well and faithfully served you in Parliament has caused a vacancy in the representation for your County. I offer myself for your adoption as a candidate.

The main body of the address was as above, from 'Upon the great question of Home Rule . . ' to ' . . Revision and Amendment of the Grand Jury Laws.' However, the paragraph about the Civil Servants' grievances was replaced by the following:

> I do not appear before you as an untried man. In March 1874 I contested the county of Dublin against Colonel Taylor, the Government candidate, at the request of the Irish Home Rule League.

This was followed by a paragraph beginning 'Neither are my name or family unknown in Irish politics . . ', which read as the second last paragraph of the previous address; and the concluding paragraph was also identical.

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