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VOL. II

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Abstract of Ph.D. thesis 'Charles Stewart Parnell in the context of his family and social background'

This is a study of Parnell seen against his Wicklow environment and the influence of his family. The life and fortunes of the gentry of nineteenth-century Co. Wicklow are generally surveyed in the first section; following sections examine the history of Parnell's great-grandfather, Sir John Parnell, considering his contemporary reputation and latter-day mystique; his grandfather, a liberal Wicklow landlord and pamphleteer; and his parents. The main part of the work is concerned with Parnell's roots in the county and relationship with his family, and the connections he retained with Wicklow and with his family until his death. An epilogue deals with what became of Avondale and the Parnells after 1891.

Throughout, particular attention is paid to the financial fortunes of the family, in order to fix them more realistically in their contemporary context and elucidate some of the traditional conceptions about Parnell's estate and money. His position as local celebrity, apostate gentleman and industrial employer, and his anomalous situation as landlord, are examined; and the strength and idiosyncratic nature of his connection with Wicklow analysed. The Parnell family as a whole are also seen as an integral part of his eccentric Victorian Anglo-Irish background, and the interaction of their lives with Parnell's reputation examined. The conclusion sees him as a product of his environment and continuing to be influenced by it, rather than as a phenomenon or an enigma.

R.F. Foster

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Part 5

Parnell and Wicklow

1875-91

Introduction

A consideration of Parnell's connections with his Irish home during his parliamentary career must begin with some reference to the frequency of his visits there. It is a well-known truism that these remained regular up to 1882, but from 1883 become more and more infrequent - a phenomenon usually attributed to the influence of Mrs O'Shea. Barry O'Brien wrote regretfully:

> The rest and solace which he had once found in the old home in the Wicklow vale, he now sought in the new retreat of a London suburb... There were weeks, months, which he could have spent in Ireland, to the immense advantage of the National movement, but for his unfortunate attachment to that unhappy lady. [1]

Others were less restrained in voicing the same opinion [2]. William O'Brien subscribed to this theory, but maintained that Parnell 'never broke off that we would now call wireless communication with the front in Ireland' [3]. With regard to sojourns in Avondale, Mrs O'Shea herself had an explanation:

> He often went over to Ireland expressly to see how things were going there, but after 1880 he could never stay even a few days there in peace. The after-effects of the awful famine, in such terrible cases of poverty and woe as were brought to his notice the moment he arrived in his old home, made it impossible for him to remain there at all. No one man could deal charitably with all the poor people and live, and as time went on Mr Parnell's visits became necessarily shorter, for the demands were so many and the poverty so great that he could not carry the burden and continue the political life necessary to their alleviation. [4]

It should, nonetheless, be pointed out that such scruples did not prevent Parnell pouring thousands of pounds into mines and quarries on the estate, for very little return, until the end of his life (5)

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1 Parnell, ii, 164.

2 See for instance T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian (London, 1929).

3 W.O'Brien, Evening memories (Dublin, 1920), p.79.

4 O'Shea, ii, pp 49-50.

5 See below, Chapter 1, Part II.

A simpler explanation for his absences lies in the nature of the politics of the time. Up to 1882 the matrix of Irish politics was, so to speak, in the field; decision-making and policy originated in the land agitation in Ireland, and here Parnell concentrated his attention and energies. After his release from Kilmainham his politics revolved round the House of Commons; despite assertions by Frank Hugh O'Donnell and others[6], his attendance there was not as erratic as has been claimed[7]. His tendency to remain in London from this time was accentuated by the fact that he made his home at Eltham from exactly this period. Barry O'Brien, always judicious, placed 'health and public policy' second on his list of reasons for Parnell's absences from Ireland, though deciding Mrs O'Shea was the prime cause; but it is possible, and even plausible, to reverse his order of priority.

Moreover, Parnell did continue to return home. The chronicler of his movements is frustrated at this, as at all other, junctures of his life by the paucity of personal records available; but from data such as contemporary newspapers and the dates on autograph letters I have compiled an incomplete calendar of Parnell's movements from 1875 to 1891. This shows that before 1880 he was more or less continuously at Avondale during parliamentary recesses from August until November[8]; and after Kilmainham he spent some weeks at Avondale in the summer and autumn of 1882, coming back to Ireland again before Christmas. 1883 was one of the few years when he was not

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6 F.H. O'Donnell, History of the Irish parliamentary party (London, 1910), i, 289.

7 See a letter in the Weekly Freeman, 28 March 1891, from W.A. McDonald. Headed 'Has Mr Parnell neglected his duty?', it comprises a detailed study of Parnell's parliamentary attendance from 1886 to 1890, and shows it to have been both regular and active.

8 See also T.P. O'Connor, C.S. Parnell: a memory (London, 1891), p.18: 'He always returned there with delight during the Parliamentary recesses in the first days of his political life.'

in Aughavannagh for the opening of the grouse season; but he visited Ireland at least twice in June and July, and was there for much of December. In 1884 he was in Ireland in February and April, and visited Ireland in May, August and September; 1885 saw him there for most of January and almost continuously from August to November. In 1886 there were visits, mostly on political business, in the early part of the year, and the usual protracted stay at Aughavannagh in August. In 1887, the year when Parnell was 'dangerously ill', his movements are little recorded; but he was in Avondale on 30 August for an indefinite period. In 1888 there were visits in January and, as usual, August. In 1889 the parliamentary session carried well into August, with Parnell in regular attendance, but he visited Wicklow as soon as possible, being in Aughavannagh on 25 August. His movements are only scantily recorded for 1890, but he was in Wicklow during August, when some labour troubles at his quarries broke out; and, as is well known, from December of this year until his death ten months later he crossed to Ireland at least once a week. Few of these visits brought him to Avondale, however, or anywhere near it.

It is undeniable that his visits became less and less frequent; but to state, as he himself did in 1880, that 'since I forsook agriculture for politics I have not slept six nights in Avondale House',[9] is a gross misrepresentation; he was there for several consecutive weeks in the autumn of 1878 and 1879. Emily Dickinson recalled that the Irish Party used to meet at Avondale during the Land War[10], and Davitt describes such an occasion in September 1882[11]. Only in the

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9 Interview in the New York Daily World, quoted in the Nation, 4 December 1880.

10 E. Dickinson, p.110.

11 Davitt, Fall of Feudalism, p.372.

the late eighties, according to Mrs Dickinson, did her brother's visits become 'few and far between'[12]; and though a reporter from the World in 1880 found Avondale so 'barren and neglected' that 'one could fancy that the coverings had just been drawn off the furniture at the expiration of a Chancery suit'[13], this was at a particular juncture when his Irish visits rarely brought him near Wicklow. In 1882 a Nation reporter found that 'the mansion is being painted inside and outside, and arrangements are being made to restore the demesne and pleasure grounds to the order and beauty for which they were so distinguished before Mr Parnell devoted all his time and energies to public affairs'[14].

By the end of the eighties, however, the forlorn aspect of the place was being attested to on all sides. T.P. O'Connor found it with peeling paint and barely furnished interior[15], while yet another roving reporter (this time from the Spectator) decided in 1890 that it was 'a depressing house, with the master a long time away, the hall grate fireless, and the library the only room bearing any signs of use'[16]. But even though Parnell's visits decreased in frequency, the connection remained a close one. In Eltham, Brighton, or even the House of Commons,

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12 E. Dickinson, p.159.

13 Nation, 4 December 1890.

14 Nation, 8 April 1882.

15 C.S. Parnell: a memory, pp.18-19.

16 Quoted in the Nation, 25 October 1890. The article was probably by Katharine Tynan, who later recalled being taken to Avondale and writing about it in 1890. Her impression was one of 'unrelieved gloom...not helped by the fact that the man who was showing us over the house had an epileptic fit in the dining room.' (K. Tynan, Twenty-five years (London, 1913), p.330)

he was continually preoccupied with findings from his mines and quarries at home; the estate's finances and the large mortgage on it came to have a political importance in 1883;[17] and throughout his career the supposed anomaly of his position as a landlord at the head of a land reform movement was brought up again and again.

The connection between Parnell, Avondale and Wicklow forms the topic of this section of my work; for subject-matter I have drawn largely on newspapers and contemporary reminiscences, but many of my conclusions follow on directly from the previous chapters of this study.

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17 see below, pp. 424-6.

Chapter 1

Parnell and Avondale, 1875-91

'Gold, sport and the applied sciences were his subjects out of parliament.'

John Redmond to Barry O'Brien;
Parnell, i, 367.

We were walking down the road to the sawmills [at Avondale] when I noticed that some of his men working on a field near-by were taking things very easily, even for Irish labourers. I said to him: 'Why don't you call out to those fellows, Charley, and get them to hurry up? They look like being all day over that field if they go on like that.' He replied, with a shrug of his shoulders: 'I know that, but if I wanted to make them hear I should have to shout, and I dislike shouting.' We walked on in silence...

J.H. Parnell, p.176.

John Parnell told the above anecdote to illustrate his brother's dislike of bluster; it is, however, even more illustrative of his attitude to Avondale. Later, John goes on to say, Charles had a word with the workmen; but at the time it wasn't worth it. This, one feels, is closely connected with the fact that they were working 'on a field'. Had they been idling over the sawmills or the quarrying Parnell would have shouted, and shouted loudly.

Though knowledgeable about farming, Parnell's primary preoccupation remained with the industrial resources of his estate. He was, in this respect, a model nineteenth-century man.

> He often told me that Ireland had hundreds of industries lying idle for want of working, and he was particularly anxious to have them opened up. He also believed that Ireland was full of mineral wealth hidden beneath her soil.[1]

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1 J.H. Parnell, p.280.

The celebrated cattle-shed at Avondale which he designed, inspired by the new railway station at Brighton[2], was the only facet of dairying which is recorded as having preoccupied him. Even this remained roofless while the new sawmill and the house for its manager were completed[3]; the shed probably cost a fraction of the £3,000 laid out on the latter buildings[4]. There is no evidence that he actually neglected the farming of his land in favour of his industrial preoccupations; at the same time, he applied for a Public Works loan of £1,200 and built a number of cottages[5]. The fact that the estate supported so many people meant that he could not afford to let farming go by the board. In 1884 a newspaper reporter spoke of 'upwards of 150 employed on the place'[6] and even when the new sawmill was in its infancy it required 25 full-time workers.[7] Little wonder that he took up book-keeping in an attempt to check estate accounts, 'and many weeks sat immersed in double entry, estate account-keeping, commercial book-keeping, etc.'[8] In an appendix to his memoir John Howard Parnell gives a valuable account of his brother visiting Avondale in 1885 and checking up on the work in progress;[9] but, then, as ever, his chief interest was in the welfare of his industries.

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2 K. O'Shea, i, 183.

3 J.H. Parnell, p. 279.

4 Ibid., p.288. His mother later infuriated him by evicting the cattle and converting the shed for a dance (K. O'Shea, i, 183). See below, Part VI, Chapter 2, pp 501-2.

5 Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1885, 4.95; also Weekly Freeman, 6 September 1884. The cottages still stand, on the left before the entrance to Avondale, and are remembered locally as 'built by Parnell'.

6 Weekly Freeman, 6 September 1884.

7 J.H. Parnell, p. 279.

8 K. O'Shea, i, 183.

9 J.H. Parnell, p. 277.

The agriculture of his estate, however, could not be ignored; and until the end of his life he kept in touch with his agent, William Kerr, about comparatively minor points. Kerr, Parnell told Mrs O'Shea, was 'a duffer about anything except book-keeping'[10] and needed 'advising and admonishing all day'[11]; an example of this advice is a letter of Parnell's in May 1890 which tells Kerr to 'take necessary legal steps to obtain compensation from Saunders anent the heifers' and instructs him in detail about a new brand of cabbage:

> I find that 'Thousand-headed' is the name of the cabbage, and that the seed need not be sown until the end of June; it will then be fit to transplant after the oats have been reaped and will be first-rate food for ewes to yean [sic] upon early in February - it would be well to prepare the upper half of the garden to transplant some of the plants into in September or August.[12]

If an industrial engineer by inclination, circumstances had, after all, made him a farmer. On a visit home in 1883 his brother recollected him entering into 'a long consultation' with his herd, Henry Gaffney, about cattle[13], and T.P. O'Connor gives a lively picture of the Irish leader instructing Tim Healy in the mysteries of general agriculture:

> Mr Parnell had been a practical farmer during a portion of his life and would talk learnedly about the rearing of pigs, the calving of cows, and the top-dressing of land. Tim, reared in town and offices, was, like most of the other leaders of the agrarian movement, unable to tell the difference between a horse and a cow, or between a field of potatoes and oats. Parnell quite gravely answered all the questions that Tim put to him, explaining all these mysteries in very simple and intelligible language.[14]

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10 K. O'Shea, ii, 53.

11 Ibid., ii, 134.

12 Parnell to W. Kerr, 19 May 1890 (N.L.I., Parnell letters, MS 15, 735).

13 J.H. Parnell, p. 278.

14 T.P O'Connor, C.S. Parnell: a memory, p.22.

This question of Parnell's agricultural knowledge vis-a-vis Healy's ignorance comes up when considering an interesting article in the North American Review of April 1880, under Parnell's name[15]. Nothing was less typical of Parnell than to write a magazine article, and in fact the article was written by Fanny and signed by her brother.[16] But much of the article concerns itself with purely agricultural matters, and gives a pithy and logical explanation of the decrease of grazing-land in Ireland; where the author writes of the effects of dampness and non-fertilisation, he knows exactly what he is talking about. It seems likely that Parnell provided his sister with the facts, and they are well substantiated. Andrew Kettle, himself an experienced farmer, often talked of agriculture to Parnell and was impressed by his knowledge of cattle: 'he had done a good deal in the stock line, but not much in tillage; one of his comments was that anyone could sell cattle but that it takes a good judge to buy them'.[17]

The traditional aspects of the estate and its economy, however, were treated cursorily by him. No individual trees or plantations at Avondale are ascribed to him, although he depleted the surrounding woods for his sawmills[18]; and though he encouraged his mother to improve the terracing and views around the house, he himself 'had no time' to do so.[19] His agent stated that Parnell believed in 'the great value of timber in adding to [scenery]... I have known a tree

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15 Titled 'The Irish land question'; vol. cxxx, pp. 381-406.

16 See T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders of my day, i, 87: T.M. Healy to Maurice Healy, 20 March 1880. Healy had just been in America with the Parnells. Also see M.M. O'Hara, Chief and Tribune, p.150, for an anecdote where Parnell tells Fanny: 'They'll all know it isn't mine, it's much too good!'

17 A. Kettle, The material for victory, p.26. See also ibid., p.84. Kettle thought that the reason why he and Parnell got on well was because both had 'a strong streak of mysticism', but it seems more likely to have been based on their mutual agricultural interests.

18 See a report in the Evening Press (Dublin), 25 May 1966.

19 J.H. Parnell, p. 281.

to be felled here, in rather a prominent position, and his grief was so great that he told me he would prefer to lose one hundred pounds'.[20] Generally speaking, however, the financial consideration seems to have carried the day. The turf bog he owned on Blackrock mountain at Aughavannagh held great attraction for him, and he sometimes walked there with John (once at two in the morning) to inspect it[21]; he also rented a 'peat-litter industry' in Kildare[22]. His whole interest in his peat was, as John said, 'to get a market for it', and the revenue would probably have been diverted to his quarries, or, later, his mines. Avondale had, according to John, a fine orchard; but he regretfully recorded that his brother had all the trees cut down 'because he did not like apples'[23]. He was not a sentimental farmer; it is more than likely that he wanted some wood to try on his sawmill.

This sawmill remained a preoccupation all his life. From his early days as squire at Avondale he had operated a small one, as did his friends Captain Bookey at Derrybawn and Charles Barton at Annamoe[24]. In 1876, visiting the Philadelphia Independence Centenary Exhibition, he studied the Machinery Hall, and the new suspension bridge in the same town; he was still, as when he had sketched the Warrior River bridge in 1871, planning a new sawmill. This was completed by 1885[25]. It was situated by the river, 'under Kingston', near the main entrance to Avondale, and was built of wood and iron. Parnell also designed the water-way, race-lock and dam in the river, which ran the mill;

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20 W. Kerr to Wicklow Newsletter, ibid., 1 February 1890.

21 J.H. Parnell, pp. 259, 282.

22 C.S. Parnell to P.J. McGough, 24 June 1891, regarding evidence in Cambpell v. Cork Herald libel case. Nation, 4 July 1891.

23 J.H. Parnell, p. 180.

24 See part IV, Chapter 2, p.285, note 57.

25 J.H. Parnell, p. 147.

the turbine-wheel was brought in America and in supervising its fitting Parnell nearly lost a finger[26]. John noticed in 1885 that his brother worked in the mill himself along with the men 'and, I was told, planed harder than anyone there'[27]. When Andrew Kettle visited Avondale a year later Parnell demonstrated the sawmill turbine in action, starting up the machinery himself - 'and this', Kettle added, 'on a Sunday.'[28] The old, smaller sawmill remained in operation, helping to produce beech paving-setts for Dublin corporation; later stone setts became more popular, and these were produced in the Parnell quarries. A reporter from the Nation visited the Avondale sawmill in its early days:

> The sawmill, from its foundation to the erection of its machinery, I was informed, was constructed from the plans and under the direct supervision of Mr Parnell himself. When I entered there were some half-dozen saws at work, and as many lathes, the motive power being a turbine-wheel turned by a water-race from the Avonmore and equal to fifty horse-power. The wood being sawn and turned was oak, thinned from the woods of several miles' extent surrounding Avondale House, The men and youths at work were, a few years ago, ordinary farm labourers. They all seemed exceedingly active and skilful; their industry is stimulated by a rate of wages increasing by a certain amount each year, with piece-work rates in very busy times. Several of the lads whom I saw were engaged in turning and painting brush-heads, while their elders were sawing up the trees sent in by the wood-ranger and cutting them into appropriate lengths.[29]

Ten years later, at the beginning of 1891, the Avondale sawmills were producing heavier articles, such as pavement-blocks and railway sleepers. 'Beech blocks from these mills', recorded the Freeman, 'have been used in the laying down of Grafton Street and Suffolk street in wood pavement, and have been considered of great service and utility'; but William Kerr would have preferred to have 'first subjected them to the hardening process called "creosoting"'.[30]

As Parnell knew, however, wooden paving blocks were rapidly becoming outdated by stone setts, which he himself produced at

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26 See Nation, 4 December 1880.

27 J.H. Parnell, p.279.

28 A. Kettle, The material for

29 'Mr Parnell as landlord' in the Nation, 20 November 1880.

30 Weekly Freeman, 10 January 1891.

Arklow.[31] The sawmills, like everything else at Avondale, had declined when John Parnell took over the estate in 1891; arriving there, 'Charley's workmen all gathered round me in a body, imploring me with tears and outstretched hands, to do something for them'[32]. The only hope was in the sawmills; and, instead of oak brush handles or beech paving setts, John Parnell found there was a market for elm coffin-timbers, out of which 'grew quite a thriving business'.[33] The coffin-timbers seem to have had a gloomy appositeness; the estate continued to sink further into debt, and was sold off at the end of the decade. Had the superstitious Chief been alive, he would have expected no more. His delight at seeing his beloved sawmill revived would certainly have been negated by the ill-omened use to which it was put.

II

By the mid-eighties, at any rate, a new industrial resource had taken over Parnell's imagination. This was his celebrated stone-quarrying venture. He had been interested in using the stone on his estate since the 1870s; on his visit to the Philadelphia exhibition 'he took special interest in the stone-cutting machinery'[34]; by 1882 he was working a quarry rented from a neighbour without much return, but in this year wrote excitedly to Katharine O'Shea that he had 'discovered several quarries on my own land, much nearer to the railway station than the one we are working on, and for which we have to pay a very heavy royalty'[35]. Production increased after this, and in June 1883 it was decided at a Dublin Corporation meeting that 'a small order on trial' should be given to Parnell for stone paving setts[36]. 100 tons

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31 See below p. 360.

32 J.H. Parnell, p.256.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 K. O'Shea, ii, 53.

36 Nation, 9 June 1883, See Irish Times, 3 August 1882, for a letter from one O'Henry Kinahan urging Irish enterprise in quarrying whinstone setts and mentioning locations in Wicklow where the ideal material occurs.

at 24 shillings a ton were ordered. The Lord Mayor announced his pleasure at this sign of the exploitation of the natural resources of the country; Mr McEvoy sharply remarked that he was 'glad to find Mr Parnell turning his attention to matters of practical interest to the welfare of the country instead of those to which he had hitherto devoted himself'; Mr Shackleton countered by hoping 'it would not divert his attention from his more important work'. By the beginning of the next year the city engineer, Parke Neville, had inspected the granite setts produced by Parnell's men at Ballinaclash, and pronounced the stone good:

> But the dressing of the stone was most defective, and such as that it would be impossible to make close joints or even courses in pavements executed with them. This defect could be remedied by the employment of skilled and experienced sett dressers, and I gave every information in my power to Mr Kerr (Mr Parnell's agent) how to overcome this difficulty.[37]

When the Nation published this report by Neville, Kerr wrote in to say that the engineer had visited the quarries in September 1883, at their inception; they now, in January 1884, employed several top-quality dressers and could turn out from70 to 200 tons weekly. He also stated that Neville had subsequently ordered 800 tons of setts for O'Connell Bridge, 700 tons of which had already been delivered. Production at Ballinaclash was up to and above the standard of the Welsh quarries hitherto patronised by Dublin Corporation, and they gave a great deal of local employment.

John Parnell states that the stone at Ballinaclash was too brittle to be really suitable: but if this was an important drawback, the Corporation would hardly have favoured the quarry with such a large order. John goes on to say that his brother employed at least twenty men at one quarry alone (near the Avonmore River)[38]; he also had another in

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37 Nation, 26 January 1884.

38 J.H. Parnell, p. 279.

Mount Avon wood. The stone he needed was whinstone, a volcanic or basaltic product, which was used by his Welsh rivals. John believed that, despite the unsuitability of his brother's quarries, 'those whom he consulted advised him to continue quarrying it, with the result that he lost many thousands of pounds'[39]. A flag quarry also lost money, and had to be abandoned. Kerr's report, however, suggests that the stone was more usable than John Howard remembers.

In 1884, in any case, an engineer named Patrick MacDonald told Parnell of an entire hill of whinstone near Arklow - Big Rock, on Lord Carysfort's land. Parnell, hearing who the owner was, said 'he won't let me have it, because he disapproves of my politics', though MacDonald felt that Carysfort would care only whether he got his royalties or not. As it turned out, Carysfort later said that he would have rented the quarries directly to Parnell, 'if only to provide work for the people.'[40] Be this as it may, Parnell inspected

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39 J.H. Parnell, p. 282.

40 Ibid. Though Carysfort later co-operated with Parnell to the extent of lending the quarry a stonebreaking machine (Wicklow Newsletter, 24 August 1889), he cannot generally have been noted for his benevolence. He was so unpopular that a well-known Wicklow story tells of his falling into the sea while fishing off a boat in Arklow harbour; no-one made a move to help him until Lady Carysfort arrived and offered first five, and then ten pounds to anyone who would rescue him. At this someone went out in a boat and towed the corpulent earl in to shore 'like a shark'. Lady Carysfort was so furious at the mode of rescue that she did not keep her side of the bargain - which cannot have augmented the family's popular reputation.

the location secretly, and approved of it; Joseph Hetherington of Manchester, a granite merchant, leased the hill from Carysfort for 31 years in December 1884, and then assigned the lease to Parnell.[41]

Production began at Big Rock in 1885, and the whinstone proved suitable; but the initial outlay was over £10,000 and - probably because he had to keep prices down to competitive Welsh levels - Parnell found that 'sett-making by itself did not pay' and had to spend a further £5,000 on machinery to convert the refuse into by-products like macadam and cement dust.[42] This, according to John, 'began to pay almost immediately it was adopted.' Even more ambitious was the inclined railway line Parnell built from Big Rock to Arklow harbour; it was a mile and five-eighths long and cost £1,200,[43] and was intended for exporting the finished stone. He imported advisors from Wales, and also skilled stone-cutters, who were 'housed on the mountain-side, in a number of little huts'.[44] According to his wife, Parnell experimented with profit-sharing among the workers to increase production, and found it successful[45]; we have already seen that he tried out a piece-work incentive among his sawmill workers.[46]

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41 See Reg. of Deeds, mem. for 1895, 5.203, which records Mrs Katharine Parnell's assignation of the lands to John Parnell for £2,230. John's book states that Patrick MacDonald took a twelve-year lease from Carysfort, but the Registry of Deeds records Hetherington as the middle-man.

42 J.H. Parnell, pp. 283 and 287.

43 Built January-February 1891. See Weekly Freeman, 10 January 1891.

44 J.H. Parnell, p. 282.

45 K. O'Shea, ii, 53.

46 See above, p. 358.

Finally, on 20 August 1885, Parnell had the satisfaction of showing a sub-committee of the Paving and Lighting Committee of Dublin Corporation round the quarry at Big Rock. The party included the Lord Mayor, the professor of natural experimental philosophy at Cambridge, Dr James Dewar, and the previously dissatisfied City Engineer, Parke Neville. Parnell met them at Rathdrum and brought them to Arklow, where a celebratory bazaar had been organised by the local priest, Father Dunphy. The quarries were inspected and all agreed that the setts produced there were equal to anything English. At the bazaar in the evening Parnell spoke on the promotion of native industry: his own 'little industry', he said, would never have got this far without the encouragement of Dublin Corporation, and he related this to the function of a native parliament in patronising home industries. He told how he had given a lower quotation than the Welsh quarries to the Corporation, and how the Welsh had then combined to undercut his price again; but the Corporation had spurned their offer, knowing that once Parnell's quarries were eliminated the Welsh would raise their prices again. He thanked the Corporation for this, and the evening wound up with mutual expressions of appreciation and good-will.[47]

There was, however, an opportunity for criticism here; and one of the few parliamentary appearances made by Parnell in early 1886 was on 18 March, when, 'still looking very ill', he came down to the House to hear a question from a Welsh member who accused the Dublin Corporation of jobbery with respect to their preference for Parnell's stone[48]. The questioner felt that in the circumstances the Corporation

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47 Nation, 29 August 1885. The Weekly Freeman of 10 January 1891 said that the Welsh price had been 26 shillings a ton, and Parnell's 24 shillings a tone.

48 See report in Nation, 27 March 1886.

had forfeited their right to the £100,000 they had received from the Local Government Board. John Morley replied on behalf of the Government that this loan was not subject to any condition about the way the work was carried out; and in any case, he stated that when tenders for paving setts had been invited the previous autumn the best tenders were from Ballintoy (22 shillings a ton) and Arklow (24 shillings), which, taking into account the greater specific gravity of the former stone, were about equal. The Welsh tenders had uniformly been 27 shillings. The Parnellites cheered, and Morley affirmed that setts were now being ordered from both Ballintoy and Arklow.

Not all local opinion was favourable to the Big Rock quarries. In 1889 Owen Fogarty, an anti-Parnellite member of the Arklow Harbour Commission, accused the quarries of owing shipping dues to the harbour, with a good deal of publicity; this drew an angry letter from William Kerr to the local paper.[49] Kerr claimed that Fogarty's real intention was to 'scandalise' and bring in religious-political issues which he - Kerr - had hitherto avoided; in a further letter he stated that there had been a deliberate policy hatched at 'a sort of cabinet council' of anti-nationalist elements on the Commission to blacken Parnell's name.[50] Certainly, religious-political issues were to arise before long in the question of quarry administration, with a great deal of attendant publicity; I deal with this elsewhere.[51]

By 1891, the Freeman recorded angrily, the Corporation had switched their entire order to the Antrim quarry, due to 'jobbery' and

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49 See Wicklow Newsletter, 21 September 1889. Fogarty had claimed Parnell's quarries owed £50; Kerr said it was £16, and had been awaiting collection at the quarry office for weeks.

50 Letter in Wicklow Newsletter, 12 October 1889. See also a letter from James Doyle, harbourmaster, in ibid., 5 October 1889.

51 See below, pp 402-6.

Tory influence.[52] By this time, however, Parnell's men were capable of producing polished granite ornaments of exhibition standard,[53] and he was exporting macadam to Birkenhead, Swansea, Cardiff, Newport, and as far abroad as Gibraltar and North Germany.[54] A newspaper report said that the supply of stone at Big Rock was 'inexhaustible, and the further in the excavations of the rock go, the better the quality becomes; the largest orders in paving setts can be executed, and Mr Parnell means to leave nothing undone to develop the industry to the fullest extent'.[55] The quarries became celebrated as a local 'sight'; staying at Glenart Castle in 1890, Lady Alice Howard was driven 'to Arklow Rock after luncheon, and saw Parnell's quarries',[56] and as late as 1916 Joseph McCarroll of Wicklow wrote to John Parnell:

> The Parnell quarries remain, a standing proof of his fostering of industrial development. There was a huge rock that Lord Carysfort, though a man of unlimited capital, never thought of developing. It remained to Parnell to make it the centre of industries giving much employment to Arklow and the neighbourhood.[57]

But by 1891 it was the need of employment that kept the quarries going rather than the commercial demand. Writing to the Freeman a propos a labour dispute in this year,[58] William Kerr stated that, though the quarries paid out £5,000 to £10,000 a year in wages and had relieved distress greatly, 'at the present moment we have about fifteen thousand

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52 Weekly Freeman, 20 January 1891.

53 K. O'Shea, ii, 53. A vase and a Celtic cross from the quarry workshops were exhibited in London and Cork.

54 Weekly Freeman, 20 January 1891.

55 Ibid.

56 Diary of Lady Alice Howard for 1890, entry for 9 September (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 3608).

57 J.H. Parnell, p. 292.

58 4 July 1891. For details of the dispute, see below pp 402-6.

tons of setts and macadam on hands and the greater part of this was made so as to keep employment going and people from starving'. Kerr estimated this stock as worth £6,000. Both he and Parnell[59] made it clear that if wages were raised from 13 and 14 shillings a week to 15 shillings, the quarry would be unable to keep operating. At its height, it had employed over 200 men[60]; but in 1891 only eighty were working there[61]. In August 1891 a letter from Kerr to the Wicklow People mentioned that production had temporarily stopped because of over-stocking and export difficulties. 10,000 tons of macadam and 6000 tons of setts were lying at Big Rock. His attempts to arrange a steamer for the quarries' own use had almost been successful, but were temporarily abandoned because the harbour was not safe enough[62]. Further difficulties arose over a landing-stage Parnell proposed building for his own use at the termination of his railway-track in Arklow harbour. The anti-Parnellite element on the Harbour Board insisted upon several 'hedging' clauses before allowing this; they wished the stage to be their property, and insisted on several important rights over it. Kerr angrily threatened to take away, not only the quarry custom from the harbour, but also Parnell's offer of free stone for harbour improvement works.[63] The disagreement became bitter, with broad-sides delivered from Kerr at Avondale[64], and a special meeting of the Board on 3 October where tempers ran high.[65] A compromise was arranged, with both sides backing down; but by then, Parnell was

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59 See Parnell's speech at Carlow on 28 June 1891, reported in the Nation, 4 July 1891. Katharine Tynan was told long afterwards that the strike was because of two big new contracts, which it was felt could push up wages; but what the men claimed 'represented the profits.' (Twenty-five years, p.320)

60 Letter from Kerr in Weekly Freeman, 4 July 1891.

61 Parnell's speech at Carlow; see 59 above.

62 See Wicklow Newsletter, 29 August 1891.

63 Letter in Wicklow Newsletter, 19 September 1891.

64 See Ibid., 26 September 1891.

65 Held on 28 September 1891; see Wicklow Newsletter, 3 October 1891.

dead.[66]

Despite such disputes, and the labour troubles mentioned below,[67] he had nonetheless remained sanguine about the quarries to the end of his life. A month before his death he wrote optimistically to his wife that Kerr was 'getting up a small company to buy a steamer, and I think he may succeed'.[68] The quarries, however, were not lucrative enough to pay Parnell's debts after he died; in 1895 John Parnell purchased the lease and equipment from his sister-in-law, together with 'the goodwill of the business there', but he was forced to sell Avondale four years later.[69] The Parnell quarries, as McCarroll wrote, remained; and John Parnell emphasised:

> how engrossing this hobby was, few of those who only knew him [Parnell] as a politician ever guessed. He took a great pride in his industries, which formed really quite a separate part of his life; but his shyness prevented his talking about them to any but very intimate friends, especially as, on the whole, they did not prove a financial success. Still, their influence upon his character must be taken into consideration when forming a general estimate of the man as he really was beneath his mask of ice.[70]

This is no more than the truth. Parnell was preoccupied with his stone-works to the point of obsession. It is significant that he used his political 'drawing-power' to encourage publicity for the Arklow quarry when the Dublin sub-committee visited it, although he usually kept private and public life rigourously separate; and it is even more telling that, though ill and politically inactive at the time, he exerted himself to attend parliament to hear the reception of a question about his stoneworking contract. The quarries preoccupied him even more than the sawmills; the only facet of his 'estate industries" which held more fascination for him was the more glamorous, but less

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66 See Wicklow Newsletter, 17 October 1891, for the belated reconciliation.

67 See below, pp 402-6.

68 Parnell to Katharine Parnell from Avondale, 1 September 1891; see K.O'Shea, ii, 262.

69 See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1895, 5.203.

70 J.H. Parnell, p. 285.

productive, mining operations which he carried on all through his political career.

III

Mining in Wicklow throughout this period was not a preoccupation of Parnell's alone. In January 1882 a talk on the 'Industrial Resources of Ireland' given by G.P. Bevan to the Society of Arts in London emphasised the potential of copper and iron mines in Wicklow and the decrease in their exploitation over the past few decades;[71] a select committee meeting on Irish industries a few years later discussed pyrites and gold in Wicklow, and a member said 'there were grounds for encouraging further work for the discovery of gold in the Wicklow district'.[72] It is not clear when Parnell's obsession with mine-working began; but an article in the Nation of 20 November 1880 recorded that 'for years past he has been making borings for lead and in his latest attempt he has succeeded in striking the lode.' By then, a mine-shaft sunk near the Avonmore was connected by a steel rope to the sawmill machinery which thus supplied power for a water-pump as the boring was in an extremely wet location. Parnell, according to the newspaper report, was 'sanguine that the recently-discovered lode will become a commercial success; he has expended a large sum of money on these mining investigations, but hitherto he has met with no pecuniary reward.'

This mineshaft by the river near Kingston had been sunk by Parnell himself, and had another purpose: to rediscover the copper seam worked by the Connoree Copper Company years before, and reopened by accident

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71 The meeting took place on 11 January. See Wicklow Newsletter, 14 January 1882.

72 House of Commons, 2 July 1885. See Wicklow Newsletter, 4 July 1885.

when the railway bridge was built across the Avonmore.[73] There were also, however, disused lead mines already bored on the estate, and it was in connection with these that Parnell wrote to Mrs O'Shea, in 1881:

> I have satisfied myself by two separate tests today that there is a good deal of silver in the dark stone of which there is so much in the old mine. In fact, nearly the whole lode consists of this (the miners are working on it in the North level). I cannot say how many ounces there will be to the ton until I get it assayed, but if there should be six or eight ounces to the ton it ought to pay to work.[74]

In 1883, however, John Parnell found his brother still indefinite about the actual location of the supposed copper seam near Kingston;[75] four years later, his examinations of the old lead mines had still not yielded any information as to whether the seam might run across his own land, though 'one of his tenants told him that his father, whilst driving his cattle across the mountain, found that one of them, while cropping the short grass, had scraped bare a vein of lead; the man, however, had forgotten the exact place where this was believed to have occurred...'[76] Such impreciseness did not daunt Parnell; on the contrary, it encouraged him. At this time, John tells us, Charles explained his pet scheme to him - an idea to which he recurred again and again:

> 'When I am able, I will get the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway, in conjunction with the Great Southern Railway, to build a line from the Meeting of the Waters right through Glenmalure to the Kilkenny coalfields, tapping the lead and iron mines on their way.' His great idea was to connect the iron at Avoca and Rathdrum with the coal at Kilkenny.[77]

By this time - 1887 - Parnell had sunk the first shaft in his search for gold, having found gold traces

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73 See J.H. Parnell, p. 278.

74 C.S. Parnell to Katharine O'Shea, 4 October 1881; K. O'Shea, i, 201.

75 J.H. Parnell, p. 278.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid., p. 285. John supposed that his brother formed the idea on his tour of the Alabama coal and iron mines in 1871.

gold, having found gold traces in a quartz vein located in a field rented from him by one Nicholas Devereux. In 1888 he told Davitt that he had been looking for gold 'for fourteen years', but his searches seem to have been desultory until this 'breakthrough'.[78] The same field contained yellow ochre, and he expected to find an accompanying vein of copper; this never materialised, but the search for gold was in any case his predominant interest.

Questioned by Barry O'Brien about shooting trips with Parnell to Aughavannagh, John Redmond recalled: 'He /Parnell/ was always looking for gold in Wicklow. Gold, sport, and the applied sciences were his subjects out of parliament'.[79] From the mid-eighties began his passion for assaying, when samples of ore were constantly arriving from Kerr at Avondale for analysis by Parnell in his workshops at Eltham and Brighton;[80] in 1885 he diverted a troublesome South African encountered on the Irish Mail by showing him some iron pyrites specimens which he was carrying 'in his trouser pocket'.[81] The lack of definite results never worried him; his operations were carried on beyond all reasonable proportion to what they yielded. In August 1887 he wrote to Mrs O'Shea that 'the new mine is improving, so I have been tempted to continue it for a short while longer';[82] by the time of the Special Commission hearings Parnell was convinced that at last he had struck gold, and this preoccupation possessed him to the exclusion of all else.

He was not the only person to believe in an imminent gold rush in the Wicklow hills this year; a letter in the Wicklow Newsletter in January 1889 enthusiastically described the incalculable amount of

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78 Davitt, Fall of Feudalism, p. 597.

79 O'Brien, Parnell, i, 367.

80 See K. O'Shea, i, 184.

81 O'Brien, Parnell, ii, 112.

82 K. O'Shea, ii, 133.

gold around Croghan Mountain,[83] and in June a Freeman correspondent excitedly reported 'considerable quantities of floating gold' in the river near Aughrim.[84] The Wicklow Newsletter jeered at this claim, pointing out that '"the difficulty of pitching upon the particular spot where it lies" has been recognised, unfortunately, in the county since the days of King O'Toole;[85] but in October 'Mr Doyle, an expert gold-finder' was investigating likely localities at Ballymanus and by January 1890 had decided that working them would pay.[86] However, Parnell, equally convinced, had more opportunity to carry through his plan, and all through the Special Commission hearings he thought of it:

> The commission by this time was in the second month of its labours. The following morning Russell's first question on entering the court was 'Is he coming?' 'Yes. He will be here presently', was replied, and shortly afterwards the desired visitor sauntered in and took his usual seat. There was an important witness giving evidence, but Parnell's attention was given exclusively to a small brown-paper parcel which he extracted from his coat-pocket. He began to untie this, and after divesting the contents of four or five sheets of white paper he turned out a small piece of gold, about quadruple the size of a pin's head, on a sheet of paper and said to me: 'After fourteen years' search for gold at Avondale, thus much has at last been found. I got it out of a parcel of stone sent to me two days ago by my agent.' Then he carefully wrapped it up in a piece of tissue-paper, put it into his cigar-case, and turned a leisurely attention to what was going on around him.[87]

Davitt thought this obsession of Parnell's eclipsed his interest in all that was happening; indeed, at the far more dramatic moment of the of the publication of Pigott's forgeries, he had insisted on completing some assaying before going up to London from Eltham.[88] Henniker Heaton met Parnell when he appeared in the House that evening:

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83 From James Hall of Arklow; Wicklow Newsletter, 19 January 1889.

84 Freeman's Journal, 19 January 1889. Near Croghan is the optimistically named Goldmine River.

85 Wicklow Newsletter, 22 June 1889.

86 Ibid., 5 October 1889 and 11 January 1890.

87 Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p. 597.

88 K. O'Shea, ii, 130.

He walked into the lobby and engaged me in earnest conversation. Everybody thought he was telling me of the awful political event which was then exercising men's minds. This is what he said to me: 'I have just read in the afternoon papers that a mountain of gold has been discovered in Western Australia and that some tons of the specimens have been sent home to you.' I said it was true, and that I had in my locker in the House some of the crushed specimens. I gave him a wineglassfull of the crushings and he took it away with him, and to the bewilderment of this party no-one saw him for a week. On that day week, almost at the same hour, he again appeared in the lobby. Walking up to me he said smilingly: 'I have analysed the specimens and they go 32 ounces of gold to the ton.' I said he was wrong. He then took from his pocket a scrap of paper and read: '25 ounces of gold, 5 ounces of silver.' I replied that that was indeed remarkable, for it exactly coincided with the analysis of Johnson, Matthews and Co., the famous metallurgists. Parnell then showed me the small pinpoint of gold he had obtained. I expressed surprise at his work. He said: 'The fact is, I take an interest in the matter. I have a small workshop to test minerals in the mountains of Wicklow, some portion of which I own.' The astonishing thing is that, while his hundreds of thousands of adherents were fulminating against The Times, he was quietly working away, testing minerals in his laboratory.[89]

By February 1888 Parnell was sufficiently encouraged by his findings to apply to the Commissioner of Woods, Forests and Land Preserves for a licence 'to search for, raise, mine, and wash gold or gold ores or gravel in the county of Wicklow'.[90] He had found gold, he wrote,

> in two of the tracts coloured blue [on an accompanying map] both in the gravel and in quartz lodes, not much in the latter, but sufficient to give good hopes from further explorations. I have found gold in the gravel in such quantities in several places as to make believe that it could be washed for under the hydraulic system as profitably as in any place in California, and in this my opinion is supported by a mining engineer of large Californian experience.[91]

Six months later he acknowledged the grant of a twenty-one-year lease empowering him to raise gold, and asked for the right of following mineral lodes discovered on his property 'across the river Avonmore in an easterly, and across the river Avonbeg in a westerly, direction'.[92] This too

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89 From an article by Sir John Henniker Heaton in Leisure Hour, quoted by St John Ervine in Parnell, p.231. Heaton, who owned land and newspapers in Australia, was M.P. for Canterbury, 1885-1910.

90 C.S. Parnell to Commissioner for Woods, etc., 8 February 1888 (MS at Avondale; part of a collection of Parnell Letters and memorabilia kept in storage there; cited below as 'MSS at Avondale'.

91 Ibid.

92 C.S. Parnell to George Gully, Department of Woods and Forests, 20 August 1888 (MSS at Avondale).

was granted, and in December 1888 Parnell asked for the lease to be extended to lands west of the Avonmore, as he had 'discovered' several gold-bearing lodes in this additional area.' Moreover,

> I have spent a good sum in assaying and prospecting them, and if you regarded the matter as an alternative, I should prefer it to the original area coloured blue in your map, which I have not yet examined; I have drawn the boundaries so as to exclude cultivated land, the area being entirely composed of wild mountains and valleys.[93]

This latter consideration did not mean that no one was inconvenienced by Parnell's mining operations. Writing, probably to Kerr, in May 1890, he gave instructions to 'divide your force of miners and start on Ballycapple at once - Boyle will know the most likely spot, and it is probable the tenant may be induced to dispense with the month's notice'.[94] The extension of mining operations in this year bore fruit, though not in relation to the gold he searched for, In March 1890 the Wicklow Newsletter reported that Parnell's Ballycapple investigations 'hae been eminently successful and there is every likelihood of a profitable return upon the investment',[95] and in December Parnell told a reporter from another paper that he

> heard today of the successful issue of some mining operations. The letter I received relates to the search for the continuation in depth of the great lode of magnetic iron ore which was worked last about two hundred years ago for the supply of the iron furnaces at Clash, near my native home.[96]

He had started searching for this a year before, and had now located a 30-foot wide seam a hundred feet down; its composition was 60% metallic iron and 10% manganese, 'thus proving it to be in the very first rank of the iron ores of the world'. He was unable for the moment to smelt it locally, but should like to do so; already his quarries and mines were

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93 C.S. Parnell to George Gully, 3 December 1888 (N.L.I., Parnell letters, MS 15, 735)

94 Letter of 19 May 1890 (N.L.I, Parnell letters, MS 15, 735). My italics.

95 Wicklow Newsletter, 29 March 1890.

96 Weekly Freeman, 20 December 1890. The Wicklow Newsletter of the same date approvingly noted the intelligence as well.

employing over 250 men. Parnell then enlarged in expansive terms upon his plan to connect the Kilkenny coalfield by rail with the iron ore of east Wicklow, via the iron ore deposits centred round Shillelagh; he also prophesied the utilisation of the river Barrow and the sea-port of Waterford. Using existing services, only thirty miles of new railroad would be needed to complete the linkage. With 'public money and private capital', the coalfields of Tyrone could similarly be connected with the Antrim iron mines. Parnell spoke of these plans at length and with passion; the Freeman reporter who wrote that he was 'almost as ardent a miner as an Irish politician' understated the case.

This reporter travelled round Parnell's mines with him a week later[97] and recorded his minute knowledge of the geography and geology of the terrain. 'His mind appeared to have banished all thoughts of the thrilling scenes through which he had passed'; in fact, he probably looked upon the political embroilments of the time as an unwelcome interruption, although his eye was still bandaged from the quicklime thrown at Kilkenny a few days before.

> Indeed, it was strange to watch the individual as he climbed fences and made his way through rough and hilly fields and to reflect occasionally that he, apparently with undisturbed mind, was the man about whom the whole world was talking. At one point he conversed with men who were above the group, at another he explained some technicality in the art to your representative, and throughout showed how completely he had mastered the subject, and how completely he was absorbed in its various workings and speculations.[98]

Parnell had come down on the 8 a.m. train from Dublin and was met by Kerr at Glenealy station, whence they drove to Ballycapple and Ballard. After two hours' consultation with the miners and an inspection of the newly-discovered lode, he drove on to Arklow. Here he was recognised,

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97 Weekly Freeman, 27 December 1890; additional details in Wicklow Newsletter, 27 December 1890.

98 Weekly Freeman, 27 December 1890.

and arrived at Father Dunphy's house surrounded by a friendly crowd. Here he lunched, before inspecting his quarries, where construction on the inclined railroad was about to begin. In the evening he dined with his sister Emily at Bray; by seven o'clock he was on board the mailboat for England.

Thus at the busiest time of his life, and the most desperate stage of his career, he still returned to his mines as often as possible. At the Leinster Hall convention in 1891, Katharine Tynan noticed him absorbed in conversation with a mining expert while enthusiastic adherents attempted in vain to attract his attention;[99] and, once in Wicklow, he lost himself completely in their administration. He was back at Ballard and Ballycapple on 3 January 1891;[100] but neither at this time, nor at any period after the euphoria of 1889, did Parnell mention his gold 'finds' to reporters or anyone else; his widow took the balanced view that 'the working was far too laborious and expensive to be profitable otherwise than as a hobby'[101] and possibly Parnell came to share this opinion. His iron mines continued to obsess him all through the frantic last year of his life. In a passage which is as striking as William O'Brien's celebrated description of the Chief materialising in the fog at Greenwich Observatory in 1886,[102] Standish O'Grady wrote:

> I saw him twice during the last year of his life. Once, while driving in the county of Wicklow on the coldest day which I had ever- experienced, the day of a tremendous blizzard in England, on a lonely hillside, I came full-tilt on him. He too was driving. He sat on one side of an outside car drawn by a white horse. The agent of his Wicklow estates was on the other. The driver was on the box. Parnell was muffled in the most copious manner, quite

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99 K. Tynan, Twenty-five years, p.320.

100 See Weekly Freeman, 10 January 1891.

101 K. O'Shea, i, 184.

102 W. O'Brien, The Parnell of real life, p.125: 'The apparition of a poet plunged in some divine anguish, or a mad scientist mourning over the fate of some forlorn invention.' See C. Cruise O'Brien. Parnell and his party, pp 246-7.

103 S. O'Grady, The story of Ireland, p.203.

> a hill of rugs, cloaks and shawls. The agent, Kerr, now dead, stopped to talk with me. I knew him slightly. Then he suddenly introduced me to his companion; I had not previously recognised him. There, on the hillside, I had some ten minutes' conversation with Parnell who, however, did nearly all the talking. He talked almost altogether about his mines and quarries; on that subject he was almost cracked. He had men in his employment for many years, probing and boring over all those mountains. A good deal of his fortune must have been spent on that hobby. On the day I met him he was on his way to inspect some such borings. He believed that at last he had struck iron, and was going to do great things in the bowels of the earth. His boyish enthusiasm about these holes had something in it half diverting, half pathetic. At that time he was in the full career of his campaign against his revolted followers.[103]

There is much in this evocative anecdote which recalls O'Brien's view of Parnell in 1886. The muffled-up dress, almost amounting to a disguise; evidence of eccentricity, to the extent that one questioned his sanity; and the mystique of a leader who was already almost a fable, symbolised by his appearance in a mounting storm, drawn by a white horse. But equally significant are details like Parnell doing 'almost all the talking', which was not characteristic behaviour of the man - except where mineralogy was concerned. It is also interesting that, although Parnell repeated the news of an iron strike, he made no mention of gold; this chimera must have been regretfully abandoned by 1891. O'Grady implies that the iron strike was also more in Parnell's mind than anywhere else; how far this is true is impossible to ascertain (Katharine Tynan heard that 'whenever he showed signs of closing down the mines they were "salted" by someone interested in keeping them going');[104] but others believed in it as well as he. More than twenty years later, when John Parnell was writing his memoir of his brother,

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103 S. O'Grady, The story of Ireland, p. 203.

104 K. Tynan, Memories (London, 1924), p.5.

Joseph McCarroll of the Wicklow Town Commissioners wrote to him:

> It was singular that, with his /Parnell's/ life swallowed up in political convulsions, yet he always manifested a keen interest in industrial questions. The large sums which he spent in exploring for lead in Avondale, and the Ballycapple copper and iron ore mines, illustrate this. Had he been spared, these latter mines of Ballycapple would now be giving employment and diffusing wealth over a large area. There is no question whatever of the ore /not/ being there and in abundance. With motor lorries the difficulty of transit to the port of Wicklow would vanish.[105]

Such optimism would have been after Parnell's own heart. His insouciant attitude towards the unproductive mines recalls Maria Edgeworth's Sir Ulick O'Shane: '"How do your silver mines go on, Sir Ulick? I hear all the silver mines in Ireland turn out to be lead.' 'I wish they did,' said Sir Ulick, 'for then we could turn all our lead to gold."'[106] In Parnell's time Avondale became neglected, and the demesne, once an arboreal showpiece, was denuded of much of its timber; it was left to a British ministry in 1904 to plant seeds and seedlings from all over the world and to restore the plantings in the tradition of Samuel Hayes. Parnell, on the other hand, would have been happy to see Wicklow, Carlow and Kilkenny become a model Black Country, and to run railways through the loveliest mountain valleys in the area. Nowadays the visitor to Wicklow thinks of Parnell as he drives from Laragh down the beautiful vale of Clara to Rathdrum; it would be far more apposite to remember him as one continues from Rathdrum through Avoca to Arklow. The road goes by Castle Howard, Ballyarthur, Shelton Abbey and Glenart Castle, the strongholds of county magnates in Parnell's time; but the river is dead and the air foul, due to an intensive chemicals industry in the region. Parnell would have felt the price was worth paying; had he lived, and been successful in his mining operations, there would be little enough left of County Wicklow, as we know it, today.

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105 J.H. Parnell, p. 293.

106 Maria Edgeworth, Ormond (2nd ed. London, 1857; Tales and novels, 10 vols, ix, 274).

Chapter 2

Parnell and His Tenants, 1875-91

> Does he /Parnell/ wish to extricate himself from an anomalous position, so that, being disembarrassed by any connection with landlordism, he may be free to take any line of action he pleases in a new and more revolutionary agitation? Time will tell.
>
> Editorial in The Times headed 'Mr Parnell selling his estate,' quoted in Wicklow Newletter, 16 December 1882.

The anomaly of Parnell's position as a landlord at the head of a land reform movement, though most marked in the 1879-81 period, remained obvious all his life. Political opponents rarely let slip an opportunity of drawing attention to it; efforts to prove that the Land League leader did not practise what he preached were frequent throughout Parnell's career. Such accusations had the effect, useful for my purpose, of provoking a spate of letters to newspapers and general resolutions; they also inspired more than one newspaper editor to send a roving reporter to Rathdrum to see what he could glean. Thus there is more evidence available regarding Parnell's relations with his tenants than any other sphere of his activities as a landlord.

The political importance of this relationship was seen from the beginning of Parnell's career; I have mentioned the emphasis laid upon his status as landlord in his first election campaigns,[1] and the circular about Parnell sent by the parish priest of Rathdrum to the Meath clergy in 1875 declared that 'all his tenants here are comfortable and independent, with good long leases.... I have never heard of a case of oppression or extermination attributed to him'.[2] Many secondary

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1 See Part IV above, Chapter 3, p.337.

2 See the Nation, 23 August 1879. This 1874 circular letter was quoted after the 'papist rats' controversy, as evidence of Parnell's good relations

records of Parnell's life claim that his tenants were not insensible of the delicacy of his political position as regards his private affairs, and acted accordingly. His brother recalled that tenants on the estate 'very often took advantage of his good nature and not only did not pay their rents, but almost denuded his Aughavannagh shooting of game';[3] elsewhere, when explaining Parnell's penury at the time of the National Tribute, John wrote:

> During the famine years very few of the tenants of the Avondale estate paid their rents, and even after the famine was over they kept up this custom largely, finding that he was an easy-going landlord and could not bear the idea of eviction.[4]

Whatever Parnell's personal attitude towards eviction, his political position after 1879 could not have borne it. There is no evidence that he would have evicted in any case; but the anecdote which John goes on to recount implies that his brother felt some resentment at the leniency he was compelled to practise.

> You do not wonder, under these circumstances, at his occasionally showing the attitude described in the following anecdote, which I believe to be perfectly true. He had addressed a crowded meeting one day in his own county of Wicklow and was driving away to another meeting some distance off, when a friend who was with him in the car noticed one of the men, who had been cheering Charley's speech most enthusiastically at the meeting, following his car with dog-like devotion, mile after mile. The man kept on following, cheering and waving his hat as he went, but Charley sat upright and expressionless in the car. His friend, taking pity on so much unrequited loyalty, said to Charley: 'You might just say a word of encouragement to that poor fellow; he has followed you for seven miles and hasn't so much as got a word from you.' 'Let him run a little longer,' said Charley, 'seeing that I have let his rent run for seven years.'[5]

Sir William Butler, shooting with Parnell in 1889, remarked on the people coming out of cottages and saluting 'the Chief'; but, he added, 'it seemed as though they were not there, and when one of our party said that one of the most effusive cap-wavers had not paid any rent for five years, Parnell paid no more heed to the remark than to the waving.'[6]

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3 J.H. Parnell, p. 154.

4 Ibid., p. 287.

5 Ibid.

6 Sir William Butler, An autobiography (London, 1911), p. 354.

He was not always as impassive; and he usually recollected where arrears were owed. At Aughavannagh in 1882 John Redmond heard him call a tenant to task for failing to keep the game preserves clear in August:

> 'Whitty,' said Parnell, 'you have been on the land for many years, you never pay me any rent, and all I ask you is to keep the sheep off the mountains when I am out shooting, and, you old villain you, you don't even do that.'[7]

But, if he was well aware when his tenants 'took advantage', he was always on good terms with them. Everyone attests to this[8]. Part of the reason may have been that Parnell was always absolutely at ease with working-men; never an egalitarian, he would not have seen any reason why he should not be. This lack of constraint followed naturally from his aristocratic attitude - not, as might initially be supposed, from the reverse. Rather ingenuously he told Barry O'Brien: 'I like looking at working-men. A working-man has a pleasant life, when he has plenty to do and is fairly treated';[9] whatever capital his opponents might make out of his seignorial position at Avondale, he felt totally at ease there. When St John Ervine was writing his biography of Parnell, a correspondent informed him:

> I know...a rabid Unionist who to this day loves Parnell. He says that Mr Parnell was not a talkative man, but that he would chat freely and laugh heartily with the people about Avondale, and the quarrymen and the miners; but that with upstarts he would have nothing to do...[10]

Political colleagues like T.P. O'Connor and William O'Brien noticed the unforced familiarity with which he treated his tenantry;[11] Justin McCarthy also recorded this, and told an attractive story in illustration:

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[7] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 366.

[8] Except R.B. Cunninghame Graham in 'An Tighearna: a memory of Parnell' in Dana (November 1904), pp.183-99 - and he never visited Parnell in Ireland.

[9] O'Brien, Parnell, ii, 180. See also K. O'Shea, ii, 243.

[10] St.John Ervine, Parnell, p. 217.

[11] W. O'Brien, The Parnell of real life, p.57; T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs of an old parliamentarian, i, 98, and C.S. Parnell: a memory, p.28.

> I have heard some of the kindliest stories told about his dealings with his Wicklow tenants. One I venture to repeat, because it was told me by an English lady who could personally vouch for its truth... She paid some visits to Ireland and took a deep interest in the cottier tenants. Among other places she visited the Wicklow estate of Parnell, and was charmed to find the kindly relations which existed between the landlord and the tenants. She went into one house which was newly built and had every appearance of comfort, enough even to satisfy the eyes of an English visitor who was accustomed to look at the homes of English tenants. The woman who owned the house told my friend that it had been built for her by 'Master Charles' because the house she formerly occupied was quite uncomfortable and he had noticed the fact and said that he must provide her with a better home. My friend noticed during her stay in this cottage that the chimney of one of the rooms sent its smoke downward instead of upward and she made some remark on the subject. 'But why don't you speak to Mr Parnell about it?' was the natural answer. 'Sure, my lady,' was the reply, 'I've been trying to keep it a secret, for Masther Charles would be so disappointed if he found out that everything hadn't turned out as well as he wanted it to be.' There was a charming simplicity about the answer which touched the heart of my friend, who rightly thought that it spoke as well for the nature of the landlord as it did for that of the tenant.[12]

(This house may well have been one of the six labourers' cottages which, according to Wicklow tradition, the Grand Jury ordered to be built upon Parnell's land to spite him when he fought for labourers' dwellings to be erected out of public funds. Parnell, so the story goes, took over the building of the cottages at his own expense and situated each one on its own half acre).[13]

The esteem in which Parnell's tenants held him was attested to by the celebrated Avondale ploughing matches, which I deal with elsewhere.[14] Begun during his stay in Kilmainham, the habit of working the Avondale lands in concert became a sort of tradition for the people about, with bands, speeches and hundreds of participants; the names recorded are those of the local tenantry, and there is no question of the enthusiasm with which they entered into this tribute.

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12 J. McCarthy, Reminiscences (London, 1899), ii, 94.

13 See Irish Press, 19 July 1937.

14 See below, pp. 443-7.

II

In Wicklow as everywhere else, however, the landlord-tenant balance was upset by the Land War; I intend briefly to consider the history of this period in Wicklow before considering in detail Parnell's position vis-a-vis his tenants.

Wicklow had a tradition of good, if conservative, landlords and a prosperous tenantry;[15] even in the distressed year of 1879, feeling in the county did not run as high as elsewhere, as a letter in the Wicklow Newsletter of 21 June 1879 complained. 'In this year of depression...why is this county particularly, I had almost said shamefully, silent?' The anonymous correspondent went on to denounce landowners, 'many of them M.P.s professing "Home Rule" and advocating tenant-right', for hanging back from rent reductions on behalf of their 'highly rack-rented and impoverished peasantry'. Another letter in the next issue agreed completely, while pointing out that there were some good landlords in Wicklow nevertheless; again, landowning M.P.s were particularly singled out for attack. This began a correspondence in the newspaper which shows on the one hand a feeling that Wicklow was particularly fortunate in its landlords, and, on the other, a sense that the county was hanging back from its duty.[16] By September the controversy had reached the deliberations of the Rathdrum Board of Guardians, to whom a resolution was presented calling for rent reduction petitions to be generally adopted; the chairman, Colonel Tighe, a landlord, deprecated the introduction of class conflict into the proceedings, and nervously eulogised the traditionally good landlord-tenant relations

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15 See Part I of this study.

16 See letters in Wicklow Newsletter, 19 July and 27 September 1879.

in the county. He was, however, opposed by the radical element and eventually left the meeting with other 'ex officio' guardians like Colonel Tottenham and William Kemmis. The rump of the Board (who did not number any scions of the landowning Wicklow gentry) triumphantly passed the resolution, and looked forward to some militant local action.[17]

By December, few landlords had taken the heavy hints about abatement dropped in newspaper correspondence and committee meetings all over the county, or been encouraged by the Wicklow Newsletter's practice of printing the names of abating landlords whenever possible.[18] January saw the first 'large and enthusiastic' tenant-right meeting in Rathdrum, addressed by W.J. Corbett, M.P. for the county, as well as Sexton and Davitt. Andrew O'Byrne the other Member, and a 'nominal Home Ruler' implicitly denounced for not reducing his rents, did not attend; but the name of Parnell, 'whom Wicklow claimed for her own', was cheered, and Davitt called for the formation of a Land League branch in the town to 'meet Mr Parnell at the railway station and conduct him back to Avondale' when he returned from America.

O'Byrne was by now a marked man, and despite anxious letters denying that he had purposely avoided attending the land meeting[20] and a hasty abatement of all his rents,[21] he stood down at the 1880 election;

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17 Wicklow Newsletter, 27 September 1879.

18 See, for instance, Wicklow Newsletter, 15 November and 20 December.

19 The meeting took place on 1 January 1880. See Wicklow Newsletter 3 January 1880.

20 Wicklow Newsletter, 10 January 1880.

21 See letters in ibid., 28 February, 6 March, 13 March.

the connection between landlord and politician had been spelled out too clearly for his comfort. In the election W.J. Corbet and J.C. McCoan, Home Rulers, beat the Conservative candidates W.W. Fitzwilliam Hume-Dick and Robert Gun-Cunningham, Wicklow landlords of the old school;[22] on the night of the election a crowd in Rathdrum stoned the residence of the Conservative agent there.[23] The way seemed clear for widespread land agitation.

This was not, however, what happened. Corbet, himself a Wicklow landowner, was at the head of most demonstrations, and was always moderate; when a zealous supporter mentioned that the landlords 'wanted lead', he threatened to step down unless such language ceased.[24] Moreover, despite Davitt's invitation, no Land League branch was formed in Rathdrum, or anywhere in the county, until November 1880.[25] Another was founded, at Tinahely, in December.[26] But even landlords as important as Lord Brabazon soon became prepared to reduce rents up to 50%;[27] the only cause célèbre at this time took place, predictably enough, on the Fitzwilliam estate, where an old man died following his eviction.[28] Land meetings increased in number throughout January 1881;[29]

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22 See ibid., 10 April 1880.

23 Ibid.

24 At a demonstration in Rathdrum. See ibid., 13 November 1880.

25 Ibid., 4 December 1880. Mr Lawlor, Moncha, was appointed president and Mr Byrne, Ballinderry, vice-president, of the Rathdrum branch.

26 6 December 1880. See ibid., 11 December 1880.

27 Wicklow Newsletter, 18 December 1880.

28 See a letter from Corbet in ibid., 25 December 1880.

29 There were meetings at Barndarraig, Rathdrum, Roundwood, Arklow and Tinahely in this month.

but Corbet 's speeches extenuated many landlords, while execrating Fitzwilliam. In February 1881 even W.F. Littledale of Whaley Abbey, who had provoked wild scenes at an earlier eviction, abated his rents.[30] Organisation continued; the Ladies' Land League had formed three branches in the county by March 1881.[31] A county meeting of the Land League at Wicklow on 25 March drew a crowd that even the hostile Wicklow Newsletter (which approved of abating landlords but could not abide the League) admitted numbered 4,000.[32] But at such meetings the tone remained unfailingly moderate.[33] A later meeting at Rathdrum emphasised proudly the absence of violent crime in the county.[34] Moreover, the second Home Rule member for the county, J.J. McCoan, was no extremist; he voted against the Parnellites on the second reading of the Land Bill and was shortly afterwards censured by the organisation.[35]

A prime cause of the moderate attitude taken by Wicklow opinion was that the landlords seem to have come some of the way to meet land agitation demands. Father Dunphy, the parish priest of Arklow, was a well-known nationalist and land Leaguer; but even he wrote, while specifically describing the case-histories of ill-treated tenants in other counties:

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30 See Wicklow Newsletter, 19 February 1881.

31 In Rathdrum, Barndarraig and Kilbride - ibid., 19 February and 19 March.

32 Ibid., 26 March 1881.

33 At Wicklow, Corbet spoke of the 'respect' that both he and Parnell entertained for the constabulary.

34 Meeting on 20 April 1881. See ibid., 23 April 1881.

35 See ibid., 28 May 1881 and 4 June 1881, and McCoan's unrepentant letter in ibid., 18 June 1881; also a speech he made in Tinahely on 16 May 1883, reported in ibid., 19 May 1883; and finally, for his letter of resignation from the party, ibid., 2 June 1883.

> The local landed proprietors...have come forward at this critical time and given their tenants substantial reductions in rent, some even less than Griffith's Valuation...Such landlords have never forfeited the traditions of their families, always kind and considerate to those who held under them. Surely the present peaceable state of the country is due in great part to ther kind and indulgent treatment of the tillers of the soil.[36]

This seignorial sense of duty did not mean sympathy for land reform; on the Rathdrum Board of Guardians the landlord element continued to oppose such motions, and sometimes to win hard-fought victories.[37] But the peaceable state of the county was generally remarked upon.[38] Though Baron Dowse noted at the summer assizes of 1881 that six out of the ten cases before him 'had reference to the present condition of the county', none of them involved personal violence.[39] The Wicklow Newsletter continued to give most prominence to events like the Wicklow and Bray regattas, the Delgany cottage-garden show, and cricket fixtures at the great houses of the county - with no sense of fiddling while Rome burned. At a Wicklow Land League meeting a visitor from the central branch made a point of asking whether it was true that 'in this neighbourhood they had not much reason to complain of bad landlords?' The rather defensive answer was that 'to an extent', this was true.[40] The visitor, Mr Heffernan, went on to give a slightly admonishing address upon the necessity of condemning all landlords; he seems to have felt his audience needed reminding. Nonetheless, complaints like that of one of the Mount Kennedy tenants, who remarked imaginatively that Colonel Gun-Cunningham was 'a modern Pharaoh', remained infrequent;[41] and

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36 Letter in Wicklow Newsletter, 9 July 1881.

37 See meeting reported in ibid., 16 July 1881.

38 See report of Land League meeting at Wicklow in ibid.

39 See ibid., 30 July 1881. The 6 cases were of incitement, intimidation, forcible possession (2), prevention of duty, and obstruction.

40 Ibid., 13 August 1881.

41 Letter in ibid., 27 August 1881.

speaking at Rathdrum in December 1881, John Redmond remarked that 'within the last month he had heard a statement that in the county of Wicklow the spirit of the people was not as high or as determined as it ought to be';[42] not all his audience can have agreed with his subsequent contention that the Avondale ploughing-match gave the lie to this statement.

It is necessary, however, to distinguish between the east of the county and the west, where land was poorer, model estates fewer, and landlords harsher. The Land League meetings at Carnew and Baltinglass were correspondingly more extreme. Fitzwilliam was vilified by the parish priest of Clonegal as the worst of landlords;[43] the first arrests when County Wicklow was proclaimed in October 1881 were those of the president and secretary of Baltinglass Land League.[44] It was in the same area that Wicklow landlords first felt it necessary to band together; on 31 October 1881 the Shillelagh Mutual Defence Association was formed under the aegis of the Hon. John Fitzwilliam.[45] The following February, when Corbet asked the Chief Secretary why the county continued to be proclaimed despite the peaceable conditions there, Forster's reason was the intimidation in West Wicklow, especially round Baltinglass.[46] In September of the same year a magistrates' meeting made the same distinction between the state of the county east and west;[47] the Grand Jury in November 1882 still referred to Baltinglass as a centre of intimidation.[48] By 1883 the Wicklow Newsletter triumphantly

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42 Wicklow Newsletter , 7 December 1881.

43 See ibid., 8 October 1881.

44 On 24 October 1881 - ibid., 29 October.

45 Ibid., 12 November 1881.

46 Ibid., 10 February 1882; also see ibid., 22 July 1882.

47 Ibid., 2 September 1882.

48 Ibid., 4 November 1882.

pointed to the peaceful nature of the county as evidence that the Land League never really appealed to Wicklowmen except in 'the extreme west'. By 1885, however, even Fitzwilliam was giving up to 50% abatement on a half-year's rent;[49] and the land question had been shelved long before this.

Even at the height of the agitation, East Wicklow never had a particularly active record. Although a thousand people massed in Wicklow on the night of Parnell's arrest, and the shops of Rathdrum were closed in mourning,[50] the height of seditious activity was the illicit posting of No Rent Manifesto notices;[51] landlord organisations were not formed at Rathdrum and Newtownmountkennedy until two months after the Shillelagh meeting, and no landlord in the east of the county equalled Fitzwilliam's donation to the Mutual Defence Fund of £1,000.[52] Henry Monck mentioned at a Rathdrum branch meeting that several landlords had refused to join on the grounds that boycotting did not happen in the area;[53] large rent reductions continued to be granted. In the troubled month of December 1881 Corbet announced:

> The people of Wicklow have been remarkable all through these trying times for the quiet way in which they have conducted themselves; and I am informed that the constabulary authorities have thought it unnecessary to bring an additional force of police into Rathdrum on this occasion.[54]

A year later, the Wicklow Newsletter satirically described Corbett's political image:

> ...bland and deliberate, as is his habit [and] much less violent than his compatriots... The gentleman and the man of culture could not wholly lose himself in the agitator and the party-

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49 Ibid., 19 December 1885 and 14 May 1887.

50 Wicklow Newsletter, 15 October 1881.

51 Ibid., 3 December 1881.

52 Ibid., 12 December 1881.

53 Ibid.

54 The occasion was the Avondale ploughing match: Wicklow Newsletter, 17 December 1881. Also see a speech of J. McCarroll's at a Wicklow land meeting Wicklow Newsletter, 6 May 1882.

politician.[55]

But Corbet had reason for moderation. East Wicklow landlords reduced their rents drastically; in February 1881 Lord Powerscourt and his tenants arranged to decide rents by each side appointing a rent valuer, and a disinterested third party umpiring the findings; good relations were thus preserved, and none of his tenants appeared in the Land Courts.[56] Expediency was an important motive; the landlords continued to fight their corner, and when a Home Rule candidate named John Gaskin attempted to get on to the Rathdrum Board of Guardians (whose meetings had taken on an increasingly political complexion), the aristocratic Truell-Dick-Cunningham faction used all their proxy and property votes to keep him out - so energetically that when Gaskin demanded a re-count it was discovered that their influence had been exaggerated and Gaskin won the ensuring re-election.[57] But the land-agitation, never revolutionary, was nearly over. In the summer assizes of 1882 Baron Dowse admitted the small incidence of crime in Wicklow except for threatening letters;[58] rents were being paid promptly to Lord Fitzwilliam's agent at Coolattin in September,[59] and by the end of 1884, according to the Newsletter, Wicklow had seen 'the last of the Land Act', the sub-commissioners having held only one sitting which heard very few cases: 'the rent question in Wicklow may be considered as settled'.[60] Rent reductions continued to be made, even by the most conservative of landlords;[61] but the demand for abatement was not as urgent as it had been, and the Plan of Campaighn fell noticeably flat on the one local estate where it

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55 A propos of a nationalist meeting at Bray. Ibid., 6 January 1883.

56 See ibid., 15 April 1882.

57 See Wicklow Newsletter, 17 June, 5 August, 19 August, and 12 September 1882.

58 Ibid., 29 July 1882.

59 Ibid., 23 September 1882.

60 Ibid., 27 December 1884.

61 See ibid., 19 December 1885, 16 October 1886, 26 February 1887. and 7 December 1889.

was tried upon any scale.[62]

III

Even in the context of this moderation, however, the landlord of Avondale was still head of the Land League, and it was inevitable that some capital should be made out of his position. His name was among those of the first Wicklow landlords to give a universal abatement in November 1879, when he gave a reduction of 20% and bog leave to all tenants;[63] in December 1880 he lowered the rents of his Glenmalure lands to Griffith's valuation.[64] But on 5 October 1880 a letter appeared in the Irish Times from 'A Constant Reader' which drew attention to what quickly became known as 'the Parnell lease'. The letter stated simply:

> The following extract, taken from a memorial in the office of the Registry of Deeds, may be interesting to your readers and to the Land League: 1880, B.44, no.199, memorial of lease dated 18th August, Charles Stuart [sic] Parnell of the one part and of the other part ----, in consideration of the surrender of a former lease and in lieu and bar of all claim for improvements, past or future, disturbance or otherwise, by the said ----, the said Charles Stewart Parnell demise, etc.

The implication was clear: Parnell, champion of radical land reform, had denied one of his own tenants a fair lease. This letter was followed by another communication two days later, signed 'A Tenant':

> What has Mr Parnell done for his tenants, or what does he intend to do for them? Will he make them a present of their farms, or will he lower their rents? .... Talk is cheap, but acts are of some weight. Perhaps Mr Parnell will condescend to give us tenants this information.[65]

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62 The Brooke estate at Coolgreany. See ibid., 1886 and 1887, for many reports on the experiment.

63 Wicklow Newsletter, 15 November 1879.

64 Wicklow Newsletter, 18 December 1879.

65 Irish Times, 7 October 1880.

Few of Parnell's tenants could have been in the habit of sending letters to the Irish Times; it seems likely that this letter came from the same source as the first, and that both had to do with the other party to the 'Parnell lease' - Charles Mathew West of Mount Avon, who had written rather prematurely to the Wicklow Newsletter on 5 October that he would not, as rumoured, be 'the first applicant to come before the Land Commission with reference to a lease made to me by Mr C.S. Parnell, M.P.'.[66] Nor would this have been the first disagreement between the two; in 1869 West had taken Parnell to court over money owing to him, half of which was still outstanding in 1880.[67]

In any case, the 'exposure' had its desired effect. A week later the Irish Times recorded with satisfaction that at a meeting of the Westport Town Commissioners, a member remarked that 'he /Parnell/ certainly sets a very bad example to the Irish landlords; I saw a copy of the lease in a Dublin paper and its clauses are the most stringent I have ever seen... they are worse than those of the Duke of Leinster's lease'.[68] The paper did what it could to encourage such widespread discussion, devoting an editorial to the subject which asked: 'Who has not now heard of the Parnell lease?' and emphasised the universal nature of the controversy. This leader went on to quote a letter from Alfred MacDermott, Parnell's solicitor, who raised the points that the lease was to a 'gentleman', not a tenant farmer; that the improvements clause had not been object to at the time; and that the holding (23 acres and a house) was not a farm. But, the Irish Times pointed out, West's solicitor contradicted this: the holding was a farm, and the only reason his client did not object to the improvements clause was because it would affect, not himself, but a purchaser of the lease from him.

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66 Wicklow Newsletter, 8 October 1880.

67 See above, Part IV, Chapter 2, p.311.

68 Irish Times, 12 October 1880.

This refutation of MacDermott was heavily underlined by the Irish Times, which went on to remark disingenuously that 'we shall not allow ourselves to assume that there is no way out of the maze; if there be, we shall be delighted to be the means of letting the public see it.' But if Parnell could not explain the anomaly, then the Land League must require him to repudiate the lease, and not let such an arrangement occur again.[69]

Thus the political conclusion was drawn speedily and categorically: if Parnell himself was open to question as a landlord, then his authority over the League was flawed. Nor did the pressure cease here. Another letter in the same paper during this month claimed maltreatment of tenants at Carrignamuck and Corrignameel in Glenmalure, part of the Avondale estate. Parnell had supposedly induced these tenants, Shiel and Kavanagh, to grant him possession of the mountain pastures for shooting in return for being allowed to run sheep on it; but in 1872, when the tenants sowed out crops there as usual, he charged them with wilful trespass and summoned them before Hacketstown Petty Sessions to try and dispossess them. The case was, however, dismissed. The writer of this letter also claimed that Parnell let out Blackrock mountain at £60 per annum, while its poor law valuation was £20-10s; and, finally, that Parnell had, as his brother's agent, speculated in property in Carlow. Clonmore had been bought by his father on mortgage for £56,000; Parnell had raised rents, evicted those who didn't pay, and then sold off the estate at enough profit to buy an estate in Kilkenny. The letter was, like the rest, anonymous, being signed simply 'Inquirer';[70] it shows evidence of research in the Registry of Deeds, and thus is likely to have come from the same pen as the letter 'exposing' the Parnell lease.

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[69] Editorial, Ibid., 16 October 1880.

[70] Irish Times, 26 October 1880.

The Irish Times, strangely, did not draw attention in its editorial to 'Inquirer's' letter, or publicly investigate any of the assertions therein. Possibly, having tested the ground, the paper found it would not bear much weight. The Carlow transactions were, of course, Henry Tudor Parnell's; his brother's only connection with these dealings was to act as trustees for one day during a conveyancing.[71] The rent of Blackrock is not recorded individually upon the Avondale rent schedule,[72] but had Parnell really trebled the Poor Law valuation the Irish Times would not have left the matter there; and in a letter to the Nation a month later the Blackrock tenants indignantly affirmed that they were only required to pay Griffith's valuation.[73] And the anecdote about Shiel and Kavanagh contains its own contradiction; Parnell may have allowed them graze sheep on the shooting, but no arrangement was made about sowing crops there. The dispossession attempted would have referred to the mountain territory only; the tenants obviously had other farms for their livelihood. Moreover, for Parnell to claim mountain for shooting in 1872, a comparatively easy time, was not unreasonable; especially if he conceded grazing rights to the tenants.

Thus the hostile press did not seize on this evidence to bolster up their case; and at the end of October, vindication for Parnell in respect of the Parnell lease had come from the unlikely quarter of a Protestant clergyman in Dingle. On 30 October the Nation published a letter sent by Rev. C. McCarthy, C.R.A.M., ex-siz. TCD., to the Kerry Sentinel on the 15th. McCarthy, a warm supporter of Parnell, had been

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[71] See Part IV above, Chapter 3, p.325; also T.M. Healy, Letters and Leaders of my day (London, 1928), i, 261-2. Healy attributed these accusations to Walter Long.

[72] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1869, 27.67.

[73] Nation, 27 November 1880. See below, p.399 for full quotation.

'greatly startled by the lease at first'; but he had lived in Rathdrum, and 'knew a litlle of the Mr West to whom Mr Parnell has given the lease so long talked of.' McCarthy went on to point out a vital fact, unmentioned by MacDermott: a year before, West had attempted to sell his interest in Mount Avon, but since the lease was nearly expired, no-one would buy it.[74] The place was beautifully kept up, wooded, landscaped, and in a fine position above the Meeting of the Waters; it was not in Parnell's own interest to renew West's lease to enable him to sell it off; but all the same, when West requested a renewal, after his unsuccessful attempt to sell, Parnell granted it to him. It was not in Parnell's power to grant a longer lease than 31 years, as Mount Avon was legally in settlement, and could not be let in perpetuity, by the law of entail. Moreover, the rent West paid for the land, all meadow, was only £1 an acre. Therefore,

> Mr Parnell had done what no other landlord in Ireland would do in the interest of the tenant. He has cancelled in his interest an unexpired lease in order that the tenant may be in a position to realise a handsome sum from the sale which otherwise he could not realise; and as to his giving the tenant only 31 years, this the present existing law compels him to do... I may add that the place is not, strictly speaking, an agricultural farm at all. It is in every idea and essential a gentleman's place. Mr West has, however, another farm in the county by many times larger, and the sum he would be able to realise by the sale of Mr Parnell's place would fully stock and crop it, and leave him a good sum in addition in his pocket. The whole matter I have written on ought to be placed before the public by the Land League, and I feel surprised that they allow the fair and unsullied reputation of their chief to be severely criticised by an inimical press without an attempt at its vindication...

McCarthy more or less waived the question of the restrictive improvements clause in the lease, except to point out that Parnell and his father had been responsible for the plantings and landscaping of Mount Avon. But his letter nonetheless illuminates the case, since it seems conclusive that Parnell was, as McCarthy reiterated, granting the lease

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74 Mount Avon was advertised for sale in the Wicklow Newsletter of 13 and 20 September 1879; the renewal lease was dated August 1880.

as a favour to West to help him sell Mount Avon. It seems at first paradoxical that Parnell should thus have facilitated a man who had taken him to court eleven years before;[75] but on that occasion West had obtained judgement against Parnell for £7,000, and in 1880 £3,500 was still outstanding.[76] West held a mortgage on some of Parnell's property for this sum, and was thus in a position to demand such a concession as a lease renewal in his favour. He had been appointed agent of the estate and receiver of the rents in 1859, and had had to have his receivership verified by a court of law;[77] he cannot have been on good terms with Parnell, and if he did not actually instigate the campaign about 'the Parnell lease', and he did nothing to clarify the position.

At any rate, McCarthy's letter stopped the controversy, although the Irish Times reported another contretemps at the Westport Town Commissioners meeting on 4 November; after an acrimonious debate on the subject of the lease, Mr Egan, an anti-Parnellite, was left in possession of the field when his opponent, Mr Muffeney, 'rushed out of the room' in a rage.[78] By now, however, Parnell's seignorial position had begun to attract general attention. On 1 November another anonymous correspondent of the Irish Times attacked Parnell, this time from the Left. Why did Mr Parnell not hand over his land to his tenants, asked the writer, 'and come forward with clean hands? His lease tells his integrity.' 'X' then went on to call upon all landlords to renounce their right to ownership. Nor was this the only interest inspired by the Lease controversy. The London Standard sent a reporter to Avondale, and

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75 See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1869, 24.134, and above, part 4, Chapter 2, p. 311.

76 It was not paid until September 1883; see marginal note, ibid.

77 See section 4 above, p.8.

78 Irish Times, 4 November 1880.

the result was a long and absorbing article on 'Mr Parnell as landlord'.[79]

The article began with a reference to West's notorious lease, stating Parnell's side of the case:

> Mr West's health being delicate, he desired to change his abode, and, having made considerable improvements on the property, he applied to Mr Parnell for a renewal of the lease, there being only a few years to run, in order that he might sell his interest in the place to an incoming tenant. I made personal enquiry from Mr Parnell on the following point, and his statement to me was that 'he consented to Mr West's proposal, although he knew his life [sic] was bad, in consideration of the improvements he had effected, and wrote to his solicitor authorising a renewal of the old lease, without knowing it contained these restrictive convenants, and being at the same time aware that the place was worth, and could easily be let at, double its present- rent. He added that the covenants referred to could not in any case have affected the position of the tenant.[80]

McDermott, in other words, had inserted the improvements clause; he was, according to T.P. O'Connor, 'of different political opinions' to Parnell.[81] The lease thus disposed of, the reporter went on to describe his eight visits to tenants on different parts of Parnell's estate. He found that two owed over three years' rent, and two over one years's. Rents were near the government valuation, and one tenant had bought out his lease for £170, building three cottages on his four acres of land. This last tenant had complaints to make, but the reporter did not set much store by them:

> He [the tenant, George Warren] said that he had never seen him [Parnell] or at least not for a long time. He had made a hundred complaints to the woodranger about a rotten tree that he feared would fall on a little outhouse he had built, and no attention had been vouchsafed. him. He thought the land was high-rented - £12-10s for about four acres - but it is below the Government valuation, which is £14, and besides contains the two cottages mentioned which let for £9-2s yearly, and the larger of the two is divided into separate tenements. Mr Warren is anxious to

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79 Reprinted in the Nation, 20 November 1880.

80 The rent was £61 p.a. for abat 50 acres; the valuation was £58.

81 T.P. O'Connor, C.S. Parnell: a memory, p.27.

> sell his new interest
> for £500, and I was told Mr Parnell thinks of purchasing the plot for the purpose of erecting a hotel on it, to accommodate visitors to Wicklow's scenery.[82]

Warren was, in other words, by no means a subsistence-level tenant. However, visiting two neighbouring farms, the reporter found 'an air of misery and discomfort', and three years of rent unpaid. One farm, of 25 acres, was held by a widow who 'saw no prospect of paying any rent for a long time.' The neighbouring farm, of 35 acres, was in as bad a state; outhouses were crumbling, living-conditions filthy, 'and', concluded the reporter, 'not a penny of rent paid for three years from a combined farm of 60 acres of the best land in Ireland, let at 30s an acre, with a reduction of 20 per cent.' By implication, Parnell was, if anything, too lenient a landlord.

On the other hand, Peter Byrne, who held 50 acres on a 200-year lease, 'seemed very prosperous' and was 'an intelligent and active farmer'; he had undertaken to pay Parnell the government valuation, although his lease only stipulated half of this amount. Lawrence McGrath held a farm under a similar arrangement, and the positions of both men indicated more than ordinarily good landlord-tenant relations. John Kavanagh, who rented 80 acres, also held land from another landlord, W.F. Littledale of

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82 Warren was well aware of the tourist potential of his plot, having, the reporter said, disfigured 'Thomas Moore's tree' by nailing up a board on it which read:

> Tourist Read
> Moore's name in letters of gold
> Who made Avoca's sweet vale
> To be a name of praise around the world.
> His tree he wrote under is here.
> Ne plus ultra;
> Vice versa.
> Cead Mile Falthe.

Mr Warren, the reporter added, had 'some local reputation as a poet'.

Whaley Abbey. Kavanagh had no complaints about Parnell, and was 'very much dissatisfied' with Littledale; but, significantly, while he had paid Littledale in full, he owed Parnell a year's rent.[83] Good landlord relations did not seem to be conducive to prompt payments; John Parnell's claim that Charles's tenants took advantage of his leniency as well as of his principles seems here substantiated.

The Standard also inspected one of the Avondale labourer's cottages and found it 'exceedingly damp'; but all in all, the survey was what the Nation jubilantly pronounced it to be: 'A Remarkable Vindication'. As regards West's lease, 'Mr Parnell would - to consider the matter from the lowest point of view - hardly have been fool enough to do privately what, when done by others, he had publicly denounced'; and the Standard had shown that in this case he had in fact 'behaved with a generosity that has been badly repaid'.[84]

This seems to have held true for his general rent policy. In October 1890 a case was brought against Parnell by William Smith of Leeson Park, Dublin, who had a claim on one-fifth of two-thirds of the rent yielded by Tyclash, on the Avondale estate - probably the outcome of one of the provisions in Samuel Hayes's will.[85] Kerr's defence was that by 1890 so few of the Tyclash rents were being paid that Smith's portion of the income was only £7, which he had refused to accept.[86] The Land League landlord had by then, as the Wicklow Newsletter implied, been thoroughly hoist by his own petard. His rent policy at Avondale was consistent with his views from 1880 on. This contention is borne out by a letter sent to the Freeman in that year by twenty-two of Parnell's tenants. Its message was unequivocal:

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83 A reference to W.F. Littledale in the unpublished diary of Alfred Webb (now in the Soc. of Friends' Library, Eustace St., Dublin) describes him as 'a crusty conservative concerning Ireland...a type of excellent men, landlords, blind to the necessities of the situation in Ireland.' (vol.ii, 316-7)

84 Editorial in the Nation, 20 November 1880.

85 See Wicklow Newsletter, 4 October 1890.

86 Irish Times, 4 October 1890, and Wicklow Newsletter, 11 October 1890.

> We hereby declare that Mr Parnell is treating us, his tenants, exactly according to his public declarations made at public meetings attended by him.
> We are only asked to pay Griffith's valuation and are not asked for arrears. If the reductions in rent given us of late years have not reduced our rent to Griffith's valuation, we will be allowed the difference at next payment of rent.[87]

Two of the signatories were Shiel and Kavanagh of Corrignameel, the tenants whom Parnell had been accused of ill-treating over the shooting-rights; another was James Whitty, the old man whom Redmond heard Parnell admonishing about not paying rent and not clearing the coverts.[88] Such altercations do not seem to have affected the esteem in which Parnell was generally held by his tenantry. Moreover, in the affairs of an estate the size of Avondale, tenants' business could easily be misrepresented to outsiders. Thus when the Irish Times gave prominence in 1882 to 'an ejectment process against three tenants named Ebbs, Kavanagh and Brennan, for non-payment of rent of a farm... on Mr Parnell's estate',[89] the Nation was able to point out that there were two middlemen involved in the arrangement, and that Parnell had nothing to do with it.[90] Parnell let 80 acres to Mrs Courtney at ten shillings an acre; she sublet to Daniel Kavanagh at £1-15s an acre; he in turn let the land to Peter Brennan at £2-6s an acre. The ejectment suit was in Kavanagh's name against Brennan. The Wicklow Newsletter covered the case in detail to furnish an attack against Kavanagh, who had been a prominent Land Leaguer; but incidental to this point was a complete vindication of Parnell, who was in fact owed large arrears by Mrs Courtney and head-rents by both Kavanagh and Brennan.[91]

In 1884 an American visitor found Parnell's standing immensely high in the Rathdrum area: 'the only fault found apparently amongst

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87 Reprinted in the Nation, 27 November 1880.

88 See above, pp. 390, 392.

89 Irish Times, 31 October 1882.

90 Nation, 4 November 1882.

91 Wicklow Newsletter, 15 July 1882.

the people in this neighbourhood is that "Master Charles" does not marry and settle down on the place, instead of flying about the country as if he had no intention of perpetuating the honoured name of Parnell'.[92] The same year saw a large demonstration at Avondale when 50 acres were ploughed up by local farmers as a gesture of esteem. But although the Land War was over, and Parnell's attention increasingly diverted from land to political issues, any tenant of his claiming unfair treatment was usually sure of a publicised hearing.[93] When the Irish Times and Daily Express published in 1887 Thomas Kennedy's complaints of rack-renting and evication at Avondale, the Freeman remarked:

> If our Tory contemporaries exhibited a tithe of the interest which they have shown in this fictitious case of Mr Kennedy in the real and terrible hardships of the poor people under Lord Clanricarde in Galway, Lord Lansdowne in Queen's County, the Ponsonby tenants in the south or the Shirley tenants in the north, the Land Question would be hastened instead of impeded, as it now is by them, on its way to the inevitable settlement.[94]

In the same issue a long letter from William Kerr appeared, refuting Kennedy's allegations and giving an account which is notable both for evidence of Parnell as a thoughtful farmer and for Kerr's long-suffering tone with regard to the Avondale tenants. Kennedy had been temporarily let 20 acres of the demesne, for grazing only, at £75 - 'probably the very best piece of land in Mr Parnell's hands'. Parnell had manured and limed it, at considerable cost. In 1882 a new arrangement was made whereby Kennedy paid £55 and delivered a hundred pounds of manure annually

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92 Weekly Freeman, 6 September 1884. The visitor was Miss Jennie Byrne.

93 J.A. McClintock of Kingstown wrote to Michael Davitt on 7 July 1885 complaining that he had read of an eviction suit of Parnell's brought against tenants of Ballysax, Co.Kildare in April, and pointing out the anomaly: however, I can find no newspaper reference to this, I am indebted to Prof. T.W. Moody for this reference from the Davitt papers.

94 Ibid., 4 June 1887. The allegations had appeared in the Irish Times and Daily Express of 26 May 1887 - the latter newspaper noting the contradiction between Parnell's political image as 'the tenants' intrepid champion and devoted friend' and his private character of 'a landlord ...as unyielding and exacting as any of them.'

as top-dressing on the land. After two years, Kennedy ignored the manure duty. Significantly, Kerr went on to generalise: 'we put up with this for a couple of years, when we found it judicious to take into our own hands all lands let in this fashion; because the people took advantage of Mr Parnell's political position and gave us, as in Kennedy's case, considerable trouble.' By 1886, Kerr continued, Kennedy had received a 25% rent reduction, so was only paying £40 for the lands at Casino. Kerr decided to ask him to vacate the farm and offered him land at Garrymore for a year's grazing. He did not, as Kennedy claimed, drive cattle off Casino. Kennedy had damaged and impoverished the land; and Garrymore was not a second-best farm, but had been manured and limed by Parnell. Kennedy moved there, but tried to back out of the arrangement after six months, only paying half the rent; 'he also used most unnecessary observations'. Kerr offered to settle for £40; Kennedy refused and deserted Garrymore, leaving it neglected and 'a perfect common'.

In conclusion, Kerr added:

> Kennedy in years gone by had been taken by the hand by Mr Parnell, during which time he and his sons received large sums of money for work done, and in every possible manner he was encouraged by Mr Parnell, who indeed made a man of him; besides, the Casino farm complained of as so very dear was the means of making much money for him. This is gratitude with a vengeance for all past favours.

There seems no reason to doubt Kerr's lengthy account, which went uncontradicted. Casino was part of the demesne, standing inside the gates and including the 'dower house'; it would only have been let as a temporary measure. Moreover, Kennedy was not a poor tenant, nor even, strictly speaking, a farmer; the Wicklow Newsletter mentioned that he owned a shop in Rathdrum.[95] What is interesting is the general way Kerr's Letter refers to such treatment of Parnell by his tenants; he states categorically that Kennedy was not the only one to behave thus, and his

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95 Wicklow Newsletter, 28 May 1887.

own patience seems to have been strained to the utmost.

Another publicised case in the same year involved, once more, the vexed question of the Glenmalure shooting.[96] Parnell summoned Matthew Kavanagh, for trespass of cattle. Parnell's case was that Kavanagh surrendered his holding in 1869 and was re-let it at the same rent but without a free grazing right; Kavanagh denied having made such an arrangement. The case, heard at the Hacketstown Petty Sessions, was left to the parties concerned to come to an agreement; and the hostile Wicklow Newsletter made what little it could from the evidence.[97]

Thus throughout Parnell's career, political capital was made of tenants' complaints. But during the Split, when there was a greater opportunity than ever for an attack of this sort, none of his tenants seem to have used it, or let themselves be used. Possibly an older loyalty than that conducive to immediate advantage came through; and exploitation of a landlord whom circumstances as well as principles forced to be easy-going became less fair game. In any case, there was better capital to be made by the anti-Parnellites elsewhere: Parnell was by 1891 a large-scale employer of industrial labour.

In June 1891 at Carlow, during the by-election campaign there, two of Parnell's workmen from the Arklow quarries appeared on the platform at a meeting. They attacked their wages and working-conditions and alleged religious discrimination in the quarry administration. The two men, Larkin and Hughes, were leaders of a strike at the quarries; they were introduced to the meeting by Mr Condon, M.P. They claimed they were given 1/8d a day when the quarries opened, and when they demanded more, they were threatened with closure. Parnell, it was alleged, sacked an English Catholic foreman in favour of a Belfast Orangeman, who

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96 See above, p. 392.

97 Wicklow Newsletter, 5 November 1887.

raised the wages for workers from Belfast to 1/10d a day and operated a shop which the employees were forced to patronise. The working-day was ten hours long, and conditions extremely hard.[98]

Once again the Avondale agent had to take up the cudgels in the national press. The Weekly Freeman of 4 July 1891 published a long letter from Kerr. After pointing out that 'the object of importing into the election contest a stray labourer from Mr Parnell's quarries is obvious', he went on to give details of the organisation at Arklow. The amount of wages paid out over the last ten years had been from £5000 to £10,000 a year; the benefits to the locality were well attested to, and the works had relieved a good deal of distress. Kerr himself organised the wages; and until 15 June 1891, no one demanded any raise. On this date Parnell visited Arklow and a few workers, 'by some notorious enemies of his put in motion', demanded 15/- a week. They were already getting 12/- and 13/-; such a rise would, Kerr said, compel the closure of the quarries. Larkin had already struck before, with his brother, but had asked to be reinstated. He had left the quarry a couple of weeks before he appeared on the Carlow platform. As for Hughes, he had been discharged frequently 'owing to his own behaviour'. There had been others from the quarry at the Carlow meeting, but these had 'a few days afterwards applied to be re-engaged and admitted their folly in being led away'.

With regard to working conditions, Kerr stated that the malcontents had been engaged in loading wagons with twelve hundredweight each of stones and transporting them fifty yards to a stonebreaker. Wages for this were 13/- and 14/- a week. Kerr said that he had 'personal knowledge of several quarries and of other classes of employment throughout Ireland, and in no place were wages paid in a country place so high as ours.'

As for the religious discrimination alleged, Kerr wrote:

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98 Ibid., 27 June 1891.

> We have had three foremen (two Catholics and one Protestant) and the present man is a Catholic. I only refer to this religious point owing to Larkin's remarks. Then all the employees, even when over 200 were at Arklow, were Catholics save a few, and at no time out of so large a number had we over a dozen Protestants. Larkin added 'the Belfast foreman' (whom he calls Orangeman) 'did his work before he went, for he gave the Belfast Orangemen' (employees) 'good wages, and to the poor Catholics he gave nothing for their labour'. This is a deliberate falsehood. The fact is that no person in the works at Arklow ever had any authority to advance wages a penny weekly, or to settle any man's rate of pay, except myself.

By now, Kerr continued, the quarries were producing a surplus; but Parnell was keeping production going to provide maximum employment and was himself losing by it, as well as having paid out a great deal of money on equipment. The hours worked, which Larkin objected to, were from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, with an hour off for dinner; Saturday was a half-day. He concluded by pointing out how Parnell had lavished money on the Arklow harbour works and helped the unemployment situation there - not to mention his mining operations, where 'thousands of pounds have been spent upon the workers'. Parnell was, his agent stressed, if anything too indulgent an employer.

Kerr may here have been claiming too much. The strike of 1891 was not the first of the labour troubles at Big Rock. Before the Split, in August 1890, a strike began when the Northern foreman (Samuel McAllister) was accused of being involved in planning an Orange march in Arklow for the twelfth of July (Arklow being at this time rocked by religious riots sparked off by open-air Protestant evangelical meetings). The main instigator of the strike was, according to the Wicklow Newsletter, 'a quarry labourer, a man possessed of much more than the ordinary intelligence of his class'.[99] He induced his fellows to go out on strike on 11 August; the strike lasted a week. Parnell promised a full investigation, during which McAllister was to

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[99] Wicklow Newsletter, 13 September 1890. There are numerous references to the religious animosity in Arklow in issues of the Newsletter from May to September.

be suspended, and the men resumed work. The Wicklow Newsletter believed that McAllister, who was not re-employed, was sacrificed to 'priestly favour and mob popularity'; but Kerr denied this, alleging that McAllister had 'many faults'.[100] These faults can be guessed, for Kerr also wrote to the Newry Telegraph, which had attacked Parnell's quarry administration, and in his letter he castigaged the Protestant bigots whose proselytising had wrecked the hitherto peaceful relations between the two religions in Arklow.

But the labour difficulties at Big Rock went deeper than religion. The un-named 'quarry labourer' may have been connected with union activity in the area, which was pronounced at the time. Unionisation difficulties led to strikes among Arklow dockers in November 1890,[101] and by the end of the following January a Labour Union had been formed in Wicklow.[102] Nor were all the strikers in the following summer merely political tools of the anti-Parnellite party. During the 1891 difficulties a meeting was convened at Arklow 'of the men at present on strike at Mr Parnell's quarries at Arklow and the carters employed at the works...in the rooms of the local branch of the Labourers' Union.'[103] This meeting protested against 'the statements made by Larkin and others' at the Carlow meeting, 'with a view to prejudicing the minds of the labourers of that county against Mr Parnell', and passed a resolution of support to be sent to the head of the local Parnell Leadership Committee. These men were, therefore, politically sympathetic to Parnell; but they were nonetheless out on strike. There must have been cause for dissatisfaction beyond that stirred up by anti-Parnellite agents provocateurs. There had been agitation for wage increases before this, contrary to Kerr's assertion. Parnell admitted this during the Carlow campaign:

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100 Letter in Wicklow Newsletter, 1 November 1890.

101 Wicklow Newsletter, 29 November 1890.

102 Ibid., 31 January 1891.

103 Weekly Freeman, 4 July 1891.

> There was, undoubtedly, a dispute between a section of his labourers and himself. 24 out of 80 or 90 wanted an increase of their wages from 12/- to 15/- a week. 12/- was the minimum. Some of them were getting more, none of them less. The wages of these men, through the representation of the local Labourers' Union, had been a month previously increased...[104]

Parnell went on to state that those now demanding more 'had been incited to act in that matter for political purposes, in order to damage him, by some of the seceders in the town of Arklow'; this is contradicted by the strikers' meeting which repudiated the political use of their cause. Parnell concluded that he would not give the extra rise 'under these circumstances'; but he also held that 'in any case' the work could not afford it. He was already employing only a third of the 250 labourers who had worked the quarries at their peak, and Kerr stated that a large surplus of produce was accruing. The stone-workers would have had reason for discontent without outside instigation.

It is likely that Parnell viewed his relationship with the quarry-workers differently from that with his tenants. Many of the former were imported from Wales or the north of Ireland; there was not the same tradition at work. He disliked the land system, worked against it publicly, and seems to have treated his tenants accordingly; rents were let run, and their interests looked after. But with this view of the estate went a correspondingly modern attitude to its resources, whether timber, stone or iron. Here Parnell looked for efficiency and profit, and was prepared to stand his ground. He had, after all, told Davitt in 1890 that he 'would not tolerate' trades unions if he was as the head of a government: 'they are opposed to individual liberty and should be kept down as Bismarck keeps them under in Germany'.[105]

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104 Speech at Carlow, 28 June 1891. See Nation, 4 July 1891.

105 Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p. 636. Davitt, however, felt that Parnell might have been overstating his case so as to deflect the conversation away from the divorce case.

But for a tenant family like the Gaffneys, who were closely connected with him from 1880 until his death, he had nothing but consideration. Mrs O'Shea recorded how he invariably brought Fortnum and Mason's tea for Norah Gaffney when he returned to Avondale. Her son, Hugh Gaffney, had been an unofficial messenger for the Ladies Land League, and was arrested as a suspect; Katherine Tynan remembered Parnell worrying about the effect of this on Mrs Gaffney's health.[106] Hugh became steward and head gardener and managed Avondale after Kerr's death; as an officer of the Rathdrum branch of the Land League, he identified with Parnell's politics to the end of his life. One of the best-educated men in the parish, he became local secretary of the National League and then the United Ireland League down to 1918; he worked on the Avondale demesne until two years before his death in 1937.[107] Hugh Gaffney's aunt by marriage, Mary Gaffney, had been Parnell's nurse and was later the cook at Avondale; her husband, Peter Gaffney, had been valet to John Henry Parnell. Connections like this went far back into Parnell's life, and into his parents' lives; it would have been strange if his attitude to Avondale had not been close and warm.

Before leaving the subject of tenant relations on the estate, I must look specifically at rent policy. Parnell told Andrew Kettle in 1879 that his tenants were 'paying him badly';[108] the quotations from the Standard report in 1880 show that rents on the holdings visited were not excessive, and had been let run for several years. Patrick Moore paid £28-5s for 16 acres, valued at £20; John Warren paid £12-10s for

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106 K. Tynan, Twenty-five years, p.88.

107 See his obituary, Wicklow People, 20 August 1937. He was born in 1864. His wife died in July 1946; see ibid., 6 July 1946.

108 A. Kettle, The material for victory, p.21.

4 acres, valued at £14; John and May Carroll paid 30s an acre, and Peter Byrne paid the government valuation of 20s an acre for his 50 acres. The rents had been reduced by 20% that year[109] and the letter from Parnell's tenants to the Freeman stated that only Griffith's valuation was required of them.[110] This is verified by a circular Parnell issued to his tenants about this time, stating:

> In order to obviate any error on the part of anyone representing him, henceforth until the Irish Land Question is settled on the basis of the Land League principles, no farm tenant shall be asked to pay higher rent than the poor-law or Griffith's valuation.[111]

In 1882, asked how the No Rent Manifesto was working, Parnell replied grimly: 'All I know about it is that my own tenants are acting strictly up to it';[112] as I have mentioned, this trend continued. By 1888, as has been seen, stories about lengthy and unclaimed arrears on the estate were beginning to proliferate[113]. In 1887 William Blunt heard from Davitt that 'nobody suffered more from the land agitation' than Parnell, and that many of his tenants 'pay him no rent to the present day';[114] and by 1890 some areas were yielding hardly any rent at all.[115]

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109 See E.I. O'Reilly, 'Charles Stewart Parnell' in Celtic Monthly, vol. iii, no. 1 (January 1880), pp. 80-82; also Nation, 20 November 1880.

110 Nation, 27 November 1880, See above, pp. 398-9.

111 Ibid.

112 O'Brien, Parnell, i, 335.

113 See above, p. 379.

114 W.S. Blunt, The land war in Ireland, p. 276.

115 Above, p. 398.

Only one case, in fact, is recorded where Parnell took a tenant to law for arrears - and this tenant was the widow and executrix of his old adversary, Charles Matthew West, who had created such difficulties over the Mount Avon Lease. By 1884 West was dead, and £168 of rent were outstanding on Mount Avon. Parnell had brought an action for recovery of the sum during West's lifetime, but had not proceeded with it. By 1884, however, he had paid West the £3,500 he owed him; and in April of that year he entered an action against Mrs West for three years' rent. Mrs West claimed that her husband has sold the lease to a man called Dalton when Parnell was in Kilmainham; but she produced no legal evidence, and the judgement of the court went against her. Her solicitor attempted to make Parnell attend the hearing, but this was over-ruled.[116]

No political capital was made out of the case. Part of the reason may have been that Parnell was no longer at the head of radical land agitation; but it was by now well-known that West's position was not that of a simple tenant farmer, and this must have been equally influential. The incident suggests that Parnell was not averse to prosecution for rent when the tenant could afford it - and had made things as difficult for Parnell as West had done. Parnell never at any time saw landlords as the diabolical creations visualised in his sister Fanny's poetry. The article upon which they collaborated in the North American Review in 1880 referred only to absentees as 'bloodsuckers'; and he refuted accusations that the Land League was 'communistic' by saying that 'it was no more communistic than to compel the owner of a private hoard of provisions on board a wreck to share it with his starving companions.'[117]

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116 Nation, 26 April 1884, and Weekly Freeman, 22 March and 26 April 1884.

117 C.S. Parnell, 'The Irish land', in North American Review, April 1880.

This analogy was consistent with the position of his poorer tenants in the early eighties, but it did not exclude the determined pursuance of Charles West for the rent which he owed Parnell, and which Parnell knew he was able-to pay. His feelings on land nationalisation are well known. Even as regards land purchase, when someone asked him why, since he was in favour of the principle, none of his tenants had been granted purchase, his answer was characteristic: 'They have not asked me'.[118] In fact, one of Parnell's tenants was engaged in purchasing part of the estate when he died.[119] But in practical terms, a tenant at Avondale would have gained little by purchase, given their strong position with regard to letting rents run. To sum up, even a detailed examination of Parnell's relations with his general tenantry (if not those with his industrial work-force) does nothing to contradict T.P. O'Connor's assertion:

> For some years Mr Parnell attended to his estate with great assiduity... whatever may have been the record of his brother [Henry] his own, I believe, was perfect. He never evicted anybody; he attended to his estates; he was very popular.[120]

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118 M.M. O'Hara, Chief and tribune, p.119. The questioner was John Sweetman.

119 See below, p. 431.

120 T.P. O'Connor, C.S. Parnell: a memory, p. 28.

Chapter 3

Avondale and Parnell's life-style, 1875-91

When the character of Mr Parnell is assailed, I would be wanting in my duty if I did not state to the country at large what I know. I will give you my opinion, or rather the opinion of his housekeeper at Avondale, who told it to Father Galvin, who told it to me. She told exactly his mode of living, and here it is. When Mr Parnell goes to Avondale for a little rest he gets up at seven o'clock and after a light breakfast he takes his hatchet or his saw and goes out, and comes in in the evening at six o'clock to his dinner, and then, if the housekeeper forgot to put a glass of wine on the table, he would not think it worth his while to say a word about it. Now, sir, she said for a fact that Mr Parnell never put his foot inside Dublin except on very special business. Do you mean to tell me, if he is the man he's reported to be now, that that's the career he would carry on?'

Alderman Ryan, at a Cork Corporation meeting called to consider the O'Shea divorce petition; quoted in Wicklow Newsletter, 18 January 1890.

I

Parnell's visits to Avondale became, as has been seen, more and more frequent;[1] there is, therefore, little evidence of his life-style when he was there during the eighties. During the latter part of his life, his visits seem to have been primarily concerned with overseeing the mines and the quarries; if Avondale had ever been a centre of hospitality and socialising, as Emily Dickinson and her mother liked to recall, these days were long gone by 1880. In this year a newspaper interview with Parnell at Avondale recorded:

> Mr Parnell is very abstemious, drinking little but water and tea. He smokes a great deal, and is never in want of a good 'weed', which he proffers very liberally to his friends. At the same time he keeps a neat little wine-cellar and can, when the occasion arises, regale his friends with a choice vintage. In other respects his style of living is very homely. His only retainers are the venerable matron we have already seen, and a man who looks after

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1 See Introduction, above.

> his horse, the garden, and the general affairs of the house. In the intervals of agitation he is a great rider, a moderately keen sportsman, something of a farmer, and often speaks of himself as a Cinncinnatus who has been regretfully compelled to relinquish his cabbages. Mr Parnell has always been a more or less solitary man, seeing little company and leading a rather introspective life.[2]

Parnell must have cut down on his heavy smoking when he came under the strict regimen of Mrs O'Shea in the early eighties; otherwise, these details are borne out elsewhere. The 'venerable matron' would have been Mary Gaffney, Parnell's old nurse, who was still housekeeper at this time; elsewhere in the same article she is described as 'floating out of a side apartment' into the hall, expressing surprise at the master's return, and vaguely offering something to eat. John Parnell gives a similarly haphazard picture of life at Avondale. Parnell rose late (the attribution to him in the epigraph of early-morning rising is certainly inaccurate), and had a large lunch-breakfast at noon - porridge, a chop, oatmeal toast - and for his next meal had dinner, at any convenient hour, preferring mutton or trout. As for routine:

> ... While anything in the nature of a fixed timetable for meals was absolutely unknown in Avondale, his visitors were always free to have whatever they liked whenever they liked, and the result was that the dining-room saw one long succession of meals like the Mad Hatter's tea-party in Alice in Wonderland. As was the case with hours, he never sought to impose the nature of his meals upon his guests, or even upon his brothers and sisters. The rule at Avondale was that you could have what you liked, exactly when you liked. These habits he continued right through his political life, with the exception that, if anything, his meals became more irregular as years went on.[3]

Those who were entertained at Avondale recall it as the essence of simplicity. T.P. O'Connor would not have affirmed that 'you could have what you liked when you liked'. When Parnell suggested a picnic at Glendalough, 'T.P.' naïvely expected hampers of cold chicken and

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2 From the Irish World, quoted in the Nation, 4 December 1880.

3 J.H. Parnell, p. 178.

champagne, but the Chief went into the kitchen at Avondale, made two sandwiches of oatmeal bread and butter, wrapped them up, and so they set off.[4] While Parnell stayed at Avondale, O'Connor recorded, 'all the necessities in the way of food and drink were supplied from the hotel in Rathdrum' - and Parnell owed them a bill of several hundred pounds by 1883.[5]

This is not to say that he was a careless or a casual host. In London he sometimes entertained colleagues at dinner-parties, and Justin McCarthy recalled:

> He was always a charming host, and, although nobody could have had less personal interest in eating and drinking, viewed as branches of the fine arts, no one could have taken greater pains to make sure that their guests had everything to their taste and comfort.[6]

McCarthy repeated this judgement in a letter of July 1885 to Mrs Campbell Praed, writing that 'the only social enjoyment Parnell has, so far as I know, is a dinner of this sort given to his own personal and political friends, and he is a most charming host.'[7] But such occasions were not his <u>métier</u>. According to Mrs O'Shea,

> his dislike of social life was so great that he would never accept any invitation that could be in any way avoided; and if sometimes I absolutely insisted upon his going to any reception or dinner-party, he would go with the grim determination of one fulfilling a most unpleasant duty.[8]

There was one sphere of entertaining, however, which Parnell loved and at which he shone: shooting-parties at Aughavannagh in August. Here he could dispense both with formality and with unnecessary conversation; and here he himself was happiest and most at ease. In 1879 a letter to his wine merchant shows him ordering five dozen claret and a gallon

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[4] T.P. O'Connor, <u>Memories of an old parliamentarian</u>, i, 99.

[5] T.P. O'Connor, <u>Memories of an old parliamentarian</u>, i, 373.

[6] Justin McCarthy, <u>Reminiscences</u>, ii, 93.

[7] J. McCarthy and Mrs Campbell Praed, <u>Our book of memories</u> (London, 1912) p. 15.

[8] K. O'Shea, ii, 245.

of whiskey to be sent to Avondale in August;[9] a party generally convened at Aughavannagh for the latter part of the month, and Parnell himself spent as much of the autumn there as circumstances allowed. He was shooting at Aughavannagh with J.J. O'Kelly on 8 October 1881, the day before the Wexford speech for which he was jailed,[10] and when William Corbet, his friend, colleague and neighbour, visited Parnell in Kilmainham he found that the prisoner's chief concern was that a projected shooting expedition together 'had been rather rudely interrupted'. He insisted that Corbet go by himself, and furnished him with a letter to the Aughavannagh gamekeeper.[11]

Parnell's companions on these shoots were generally close political colleagues. In 1882 John Redmond was with him[12] and in 1884 his brother William;[13] in 1886 the party included Henry Campbell and Corbet,[14] and in 1889 Sir Thomas Esmonde, Timothy Harrington, J.J. O'Kelly, Corbet, and Sir William Butler, who then lived at Delgany.[15] It was a habit of Parnell's to send back birds to some of his colleagues in London; McCarthy recalls this 'graceful little courtesy'[16] and Barry O'Brien quotes a letter of Parnell's which bears him out.[17]

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9 C.S. Parnell to Messrs. Twigg and Brett, 17 August 1879 (N.L.I., Parnell letters, MS 10, 416).

10 T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders of my day (London, 1929), i, 136.

11 W. Corbet, 'Parnell as a prisoner in Kilmainham' in Irish Weekly Independent, 7 October 1893.

12 O'Brien, Parnell, i, 366.

13 See an article by William Redmond in Irish Weekly Independent, 6 October 1894.

14 J.H. Parnell, p.281.

15 Weekly Freeman, 25 August 1889.

16 J. McCarthy, Reminiscences, ii, 94.

17 O'Brien, Parnell, ii, 97. C.S. Parnell to J. McCarthy, 15 August 1886: 'We have been having some nice weather here the last two or three days, and some sport; I am sending you a brace of birds by parcel post this morning.'

Life at Aughavannagh was simple. According to T.P. O'Connor, 'the household arrangements were extremely primitive and everybody had more or less to cook for himself after the manner of soldiers on a campaign.'[18] William Redmond described the house as having 'only a very few habitable rooms' and being 'in very bad repair'.[19] Mrs O'Shea insisted on 'getting together hampers of provisions for him to take over with him [to Aughavannagh] as the arrangements he had been used to before I met him were decidedly primitive and very trying to his health'.[20] A particularly interesting description of an expedition to Aughavannagh is given by Sir William Butler in his autobiography, and is worth quoting at some length. Butler dates the anecdote as 1888, but the Freeman records his shooting with Parnell at Aughavannagh in 1889, and he does not seem to have visited there twice.[21]

> Parnell was at this time at the summit of his power. His mountain home at Aughavannagh lay some twenty miles distant from us at Delgany. When the grouse-shooting began in August I got a letter from the Irish Leader in London asking me to join him at Aughavannagh I accepted with delight.... [The Times Commission] had kept Mr Parnell in London for a few days after the 12th of August, and it was on the 16th that he arrived at Aughavannagh... When he arrived at Aughavannagh no outward manifestation was visible that the master and owner of the place and shooting had come. Things went on as usual among the five or six guests - all political members of his own party except myself. No part of the large mountain area which was his property had been reserved for him. We had shot over it in detached parties on the previous days. The weather was glorious.
>
> The building in which we lived was an old three-company barracks built in 1798 at a cross-roads in the lower part of the valley, which was then a rallying-point for the insurgents, Holt and Dwyer, and their daring bands. It was a gaunt, bare, stone structure, half-ruined, its central portion, the quarters for the officers, being still habitable. It stood about nine hundred feet above sea-level; and although not much of a view was obtainable from the old square limestone windows of the house, the moment one quitted the door great sweeps of heathery hill could be seen curving upward to Lugnaquilla to the west or mixing themselves with lower mountains to the north and east.

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18 T.P. O'Connor, C.S. Parnell: a memory, p.13.

19 Irish Weekly Independent, 6 October 1894.

20 K. O'Shea, ii, 150.

21 See Weekly Freeman, 29 August 1889.

From the shoulders of Lugnaquilla the eye was able to reach into great distances to the south-west. The air was of indescribable freshness. The day following his arrival, Parnell asked me to shoot with him on a mountain to the south of the old barrack. We rode to the ground; the walking was exceedingly rough, the ground being full of tussocks in which grouse lay well but men fell easily. Parnell, who at this time was on a special regimen of food and liquid and looked far from strong, nevertheless crossed these hummocky uplands with a light and easy step, shot surely and quickly, and seemed thoroughly to enjoy the sport. At halts he talked freely, sometimes of a parish priest in the neighbouring county who seemed to imagine that political support in the constituency carried some collateral right of poaching his (Parnell's) bog. 'As I knew that he would be out on the 12th I sent -- (one of my friends) down to join him a year ago, so that I might get a few of my own birds; but the result of that attempt was that the reverend sportsman lodged a good deal of the shot of one of his barrels in my friend's knee, laying him up for six months'.

In the evening we had pleasant conversation. He spoke little of politics; said no ill of anybody... The quality in Parnell that impressed me most was the entire absence of sense or thought of superiority. Even in the most trifling details of life this was apparent. When he opened his gun-case the gun was found rusty; but he would take no help in the cleaning of it; he did it himself. He did not seem to be self-conscious in anything.... If anything occurred to call for the exercise of his courtesy as host and master, it was given instantly. I was obliged to leave the party in the afternoon, and the car which was to take me home was on the road some distance away from the ground we were shooting over. When I had to say good-bye, he stopped shooting, took three or four brace of grouse from the bag, and, carrying them himself to the car, put the birds in the 'well' of the vehicle with a courteous message to my wife.[22]

This account of Butler's presents a picture of Parnell 'off duty' which is available nowhere else except in his brother's memoir, chapters of his wife's biography, the recorded reminiscences of Henry Harrison, and occasional chapters in the recollections of William O'Brien. Butler illuminates Parnell's kindness, ease of manner, lack of presumption, and the attractive sense of humour (seen in the story about the priest) which more superficial observers denied him. These are qualities which John and Katharine Parnell, William O'Brien, and Henry Harrison, who knew him best, are alone in recording. Aughavannagh was not a particularly good preserve; during the Land War, according to John Parnell, the tenants almost denuded it of game[23] and Parnell told Mrs O'Shea that

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22 Sir William Butler, Autobiography; p. 351.

23 J.H. Parnell, p. 155.

'three or four days broke the back of that little shoot, anyhow'.[24] But the pleasure it gave him was completely disproportionate to the value of the game. Aughavannagh and the grouse season there represented the one part of the country gentleman tradition with which Parnell never lost touch.

In other areas of Avondale life, a combination of lengthening absences and the exigencies of his political career separated Parnell from the pastimes associated with his position. One of these was hunting. He was always a keen horseman; Mrs Dickinson recalled long rides together through the mountains[25] and Mrs O'Shea said he was a 'fine horseman', though 'not a man who had very much knowledge of horses.'[26] This may have been so by her standards - she had helped run a stud farm in the early days of her marriage to O'Shea - but others vouched for Parnell's expertise in this field.[27] He knew Youatt's The Horse 'very well',[28] and Sir William Butler remembered from his visit to Aughavannagh:

> When we were riding to the shooting-ground he drew my attention to an occasional movement of one ear of the animal on which he was mounted, an oldish white horse. That particular movement of that particular ear of the animal, he said, indicated incipient lameness, and he went on at length to explain from the anatomy of the horse why this was so. Both horses and mechanism of all kinds seemed to be favourite studies with him.[29]

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24 K. O'Shea, ii, 151. Nevertheless, in a week's shooting in 1889 the party bagged 'over 200 grouse and a number of hares' - Weekly Freeman, 25 August 1889.

25 E. Dickinson, p. 159.

26 K. O'Shea, ii, 76.

27 Except R.B. Cunningham Graham, who talked to Parnell of horses and thought he 'knew little' about them - ('An Tighearna'in Dana, November 1904, p.195). But Graham never saw him at Avondale.

28 O'Brien, Parnell, i, 53.

29 Sir William Butler, Autobiography, p.353.

Parnell once surprised William O'Brien by remarking to him, on a visit to Mallow, that 'the only good things the Irish landlords have to show for themselves are their hounds and perhaps, in the Roscommon country, their horses'.[30] It was an observation which may have been prompted by the fact that the Land League chose to carry the war into the landlords' camp by picketing their meets and obstructing their hunting, and in this respect Parnell's own position had a degree of ambivalence. The president of the League being one of the gentry and fond of riding could be used by opponents much as his position as landlord was; and a letter from the parish priest of Durrow in the Leinster Leader of 24 September 1881 shows that this was so:

> I was authorised by Mr Parnell at the National Convention to make two public announcements, in which we are all immediately and deeply concerned.
> 1st. He never expressed directly or indirectly any intention whatsoever of hunting this county, or any other county. He even manifested his surprise that any Irishman could for one moment suppose him guilty of such frivolity in the present state of the country - mocked, disappointed, but not duped by this lawyers' bill of 999 mythological sections. Such hunting on his part would unmistakably be a reverse step in that emancipation of the people from a dominant, worthless, insulting class, to which his life is consecrated. 2nd. The total suppression of fox-hunting in this county has his entire unqualified approval. This, again, I have been expressly commissioned to announce to you.
> The Land Leaguers - that is, the farmers with whom entirely rested the permission of hunting over their lands - might easily have anticipated such action on the part of their leader, C.S. Parnell. But the statements to the contrary in the Leinster Express, the Daily Express, the Kilkenny Moderator, the Irish Times, the Sporting Times, and other landlord organs, ever ready at any cost to bolster up the tottering fabric of unscrupulous plunder and national serfdom, called, notwithstanding, for this public disavowal.
> The plain question at issue was - will the farmers allow a privilege to the very class that, by aid of military and police, and in defiance of the laws of humanity, seeks to play their heels upon their necks, to grind them into the very earth, or else to drive them out of their own country? It was easy to foresee Mr Parnell's answer to that question.[31]

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30 W. O'Brien, The Parnell of real life, p.14.

31 Letter from Rev. Fr. Rowan, Durrow, in Leinster Leader, 24 September 1881.

Parnell's attitude to hunting was, however, less inflexible than that attributed to him by the zealous Father Rowan. In the Freeman of 12 November 1881 there appeared a Central News Agency telegram which stated that Parnell had 'written from Kilmainham to the leading members of the County Wicklow Hunt, enclosing a cheque for his subscription towards the hounds, and stating that he is strongly in favour of maintaining hunting and hopes it will not be stopped'. This was not altogether accurate, and Parnell himself clarified his position by writing to the newspaper two days later:

> I notice a paragraph in the Freeman of yesterday that I have written from Kilmainham to the leading members of the County Wicklow Hunt... I wish to say that my letter was not written from Kilmainham, but from Avondale the day before my arrest, and that it had sole reference to the County Wicklow Harriers, to which I had been in the habit of subscribing, and which have not been rendered unpopular by the acts of the Master, or, so far as I know, of anyone who hunts with them. No opinion whatever was expressed in the letter as to the expediency of maintaining hunting in general, nor any hope that it would not be stopped.[32]

But Parnell did not condemn the practice either; and the fact that he himself subscribed to the local hunt showed a different attitude to Father Rowan's. Eight years later he could raise a laugh at the Special Commission hearings by courteously explaining a suspicious cheque-stub as his subscription to the Harriers; but in the fiercer days of the Land War and afterwards, the Nation carried weekly reports of hunts 'stopped', and a great many agitators shared the feelings of the parish priest of Durrow. This was, moreover, no less true of Wicklow than of anywhere else; in 1884 the Rathdrum National League passed a resolution unanimously to 'stop the hunting of the local pack of harriers',[33] and in the western part of the county the Shillelagh branch took similar action.[34] Parnell did not feel this way; but the

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32 Freeman's Journal, 14 November 1881.

33 Wicklow Newsletter, 22 March 1884.

34 Ibid., 8 November 1884.

whole issue, small though it seems, serves as an illustration of the impossibility of becoming leader of the Land League while remaining the squire of Avondale in any traditional sense.

II

In the previous section of this study I emphasised Parnell's shaky financial position in 1875. He owed a loan of £13,000 which he had had to borrow to pay off a family debt to his uncle by marriage, and two mortgages of £1,500 and £3,500 on his property.[35] None of these encumbrances were paid off before 1883, when the National Tribute brought him temporary relief; but by his death in 1891 he was once more steeped in debt. According to his brother, Charles had been left 'Avondale and £4,000 a year.'[36] This may be an exaggeration. The Nation believed in 1879 that 'his property does not bring him in more than £1,500 a year';[37] the rent roll was in fact £1,789 a year, and there were additional properties in Kildare and probably some investments.[38] In any case, the interest alone on Parnell's debts was £1,100 a year and he also paid Emily and Delia £100 a year each. He would have had to live carefully and manage his affairs astutely to pay back what he owed.

This, of course, is exactly what he did not do. In 1878 he must have been attempting to manage carefully, for he was asking for extensions on debts as small as one of £20 to his wine-merchant.[39] But political life

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35 See Part 4, above, pp. 310-14.

36 J.H. Parnell, p. 303.

37 Nation, 8 November 1879.

38 He became, for instance, by 1891 the third largest shareholder in the Freeman's Journal, after Caroline Agnes Grey (11,260 shares) and Dr Croke (510 shares), being in possession of 300 shares. See Weekly Freeman, 26 September 1891, account of shareholder's meeting.

39 C.S. Parnell to Messrs. Twigg and Brett, dated 'August 1879' (N.L.I., Parnell letters, MS 10, 416). The letter asks for an extension on a debt of £19-17s, which was eventually paid in November.

proved expensive,[40] and Parnell's rent policy decreased his income from Avondale. Finally, according to his brother:

> Charley's financial embarrassment reached a head in 1881, after returning from America. He was very anxious then to find money to send to his mother in New York, as owing to the loss of the property her brother had left her in the Black Friday panic, she was practically destitute. He wrote to me saying that if I would mortgage my National Bank shares he would back bills for £3,000, which I agreed to do. This shows that he had actually no money left, not even to help his own family.[41]

This is not altogether surprising. Since his majority, besides contracting the large debt already mentioned, he had paid out at least £4,500 to purchase the head rent of the Kingston lands on his property;[42] his election expenses for Meath had been £2,000, paid for by himself;[43] he had spent, according to John, 'at least £3,000' on his celebrated sawmills and cattle-shed. He had also spent on mining what the Nation cautiously described as 'a large sum of money...with no pecuniary reward';[44] John Parnell put it at several hundred pounds. It was little

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[40] See below, pp 422-4.

[41] J.H. Parnell, p. 286.

[42] C.S. Parnell to W. Mills King, 13 October 1870 (N.L.I., Parnell letters, MS 15, 735), Parnell offered £4,500; King was looking for more. John Parnell thought his brother paid only £3,000, but he attributed another £1,500 spent at this time to 'doing up Mount Avon House' - p. 287. See above Part 4, p. 284.

[43] See above, Part 4, p. 323.

[44] Nation, 20 November 1880.

wonder that his capital debts remained undiminished.

There were, moreover, the expenses of his new political career. As early as January 1880 the London correspondent of the Irish Times wrote:

> I may add...a noteworthy fact of Irish politics, which I have from a very good authority. It is this - that Mr Parnell, since he assumed a leading place as an Irish representative in the Imperial parliament, has in one way or another spent three thousand pounds in merely helping the movement of which he is chief. This outlay was, of course, independent of his ordinary disbursements.[45]

Nor is this uncorroborated. T.M. Healy wrote to his father in 1879 that Parnell had guaranteed to stand his election costs for contesting Ennis,[46] and John Parnell claimed that financial support from his brother did not stop at such expenses:

> Once he became Leader his expenses, of course, increased enormously. A great number of the members of the Irish Party had no money of their own, and he had not only to finance them in their election campaigns, but in many cases actually to keep them.[47]

In 1889 the Nation declared that investigation of Parnell's bank account by the Special Commission 'disclosed the fact that after the collapse of the Land League agitation and when the subscriptions from America had almost altogether ceased, Mr Parnell's own private purse supplied the sinews of war'.[48] About the time referred to, Justin McCarthy wrote to Mrs Praed of 'a subscription made up at his /Parnell's/ suggestion for a very deserving Irishman who has ruined his business and his prospects for the sake of trying to advance the Irish Cause...most of the contribution came from Parnell'.[49] The picture of Parnell using his own resources for the salaries of his

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45 Quoted in ibid., 31 January 1880.

46 T.M. Healy to his father, 17 July 1879; quoted in the former's Letters and leaders of my day, i, 68.

47 J.H. Parnell, p.209.

48 Nation, 11 May 1889.

49 Letter (undated) quoted in Our book of memories, p.22.

followers is one that recurs; F.H. O'Donnell referred to him paying 'his diadoichi... 8 to 10 pounds a week',[50] and John Parnell told an uncharacteristically bitter story in this respect:

> To illustrate how largely his private money went in financing his party, I distinctly recall a remark he made to me once when driving from Rathdrum to Avondale. We passed on the road a couple of M.P.'s, both prominent members of his party, making their way on foot to Avondale. To my surprise, Charley drove straight past them, with a curt nod but no slackening of speed. I asked him why he had not stopped and offered them a lift, as there was plenty of room in the car. He replied grimly 'Let them walk, it'll do them good; they are only coming up to put their hands in my pockets and get some more money.' This showed that, lavish as he was towards his party, he was only too aware that advantage was very often taken of his generosity.[51]

It seems likely that the money Parnell spent on politics escalated greatly during the last years of his life. Though Henry Harrison, who entered politics in 1890, recalled that candidates 'rich as well as politically robust' were preferred wherever possible,[52] this was not a common combination; and Barry O'Brien quotes a letter written to him by Parnell in 1891 asking him to stand for Parliament- and offering to pay his expenses, although he had 'wanted a man with money'.[53]

How much of the money Parnell spent on politics was actually his own is debatable. Dr Cruise O'Brien confirmed John Howard Parnell's belief in an article in 1946,[54] but in his book Parnell and his Party he rescinded this judgement; from a sworn affidavit by T.M. Healy, it is evident that Parnell personally drew the income of the no.1 fund in Paris and used this money to finance individual members as well

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50 F.H. O'Donnell, History of the Irish parliamentary party (London, 1910), i, 134.

51 J.H. Parnell, p.289.

52 See C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and his party (2nd ed., Oxford, 1968), p.139, note. Also see ibid., pp.136-40, for the whole question of party finance.

53 O'Brien, Parnell, ii, 290.

54 C.C. O'Brien, 'The machinery of the Irish Parliamentary Party', in I.H.S., March 1946, p.73,n.2.

as the National League.[55] Thus John Parnell, examining his brother's financial records after the latter's death, would have assumed such debits on his personal account to represent his own money.

Healy, however, dates Parnell's use of the fund income 'from 1882 to 1890'; before the setting up of the Paris Funds and after the Split, there is no reason to doubt that his own money was used for political expenses. But the implication added by John Parnell, that this was the reason for his brother's constant financial trouble and eventual colossal debts, is unsubstantiated and unnecessary; bad management and personal expenses account more than adequately for that.

In December 1882, the newspapers first carried the announcement that Parnell had filed a petition for the sale of Avondale to clear its incumbrances.[56] An editorial in the Nation, while admitting that there was a mortgage of £13,000 on the estate, stated that this was 'not regarded as constituting any great burden on the estate, and the reasons for the intended sale, it is said, must be sought elsewhere'; the writer suggested 'pressures from without', but did not define them.[57] The leader went on to call on the Irish people to 'take practical steps in the matter'. In the next issue, however, a hasty qualification was added:

> No action of this kind is deemed to be necessary by friends of Mr Parnell, who have taken all the circumstances into consideration, and who mean to give them still further attention. The repugnance felt by the hon. gentleman himself to any such movement accounts for much in their view of the case.[58]

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55 Quoted in C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and his party, p.139, n.3. Healy's affidavit was dated 26 April 1892.

56 A notice to claimants on the estate was placed in the Wicklow Newsletter of 10 March 1883 by Alfred MacDermott.

57 Nation, 16 December 1882.

58 Ibid., 23 December 1882. This 'repugnance' may provide a reason for Parnell's cavalier reception of the cheque, referred to below.

The petition for sale had been filed on 29 November 1882; the order was made absolute in the following February.[59] In the next month the Nation was once more emboldened to return to the question of a public subscription fund. While admitting Parnell's initial reluctance, the newspaper claimed that 'circumstances... have altered materially within the last few weeks';[60] the reference was to the efforts of English politicians, especially Forster, to heap opprobrium upon Parnell in the House of Commons. A demonstration of trust was called for. From this time, the newspapers carried a weekly record of the subscription fund to date; the Papal attitude was declared in May, and subscriptions flooded in; in December, as is well known, the immense cheque for £37,011-17s was handed to a taciturn Parnell by the Lord Mayor of Dublin.[61] His financial troubles must have seemed over.

This was, however, not so. According to John Parnell, in an appendix to his book which bears the rather defensive title of 'Where the Tribute went to',[62] the £10,000 which Parnell owed because of the debt to Wigram remained outstanding 'and I had finally to pay it off';[63] the Tribute money went into mining operations.instead of clearing liabilities, and even the bills which Charles persuaded John to back in 1881 for their mother went unpaid; for this John had 'to sell what little capital I had'.[64]

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59 Nation, 10 March.1883.
60 Ibid., 17 March 1883.
61 O'Brien, Parnell, ii, 27-8
62 J.H. Parnell, p. 286.
63 Ibid., p. 289.
64 J.H. Parnell, p.209.

On this topic, however, John's word is not entirely reliable. A memorial in the Registry of Deeds shows that by an arrangement of December 1882 John admitted responsibility for half the money owed to Wigram under their grandfather's will; and, this £10,000 having been 'paid out of his own proper money borrowed for that purpose' by Charles, a 'compromise had been entered into' in respect of Charles's ensuing claim of £5000 from John. John was to pay Charles £2,500 down, with 4% of this sum computed from 1870 (the date when Charles had paid off Wigram). Furthermore, John Parnell was also indebted to his brother for £1,515, which was the balance of a sum of £4,000 borrowed from the Hibernian Bank by Charles for John's use. John Parnell owed Charles £5,065; £2,500 capital, £1,050 interest on this, and £1,515 outstanding on a previous debt; and Charles waived the other half of the £5,000 due from John to him for the Wigram debt. John made over to Charles a mortgage on Collure, and covenanted with him to pay £1,500 on 1 July 1883 and the remainder in equal half-yearly payments.[65]

This may have been the reason why Charles never cleared the bills backed by John in 1881. Possibly he was simply cancelling out the amount of John's debt to him - a debt which John never mentioned in his book. John is, moreover, not strictly accurate in stating that the debt to Wigram was never paid. It was paid in 1870, by a loan raised for the purpose; and the loan thus raised, owing to Paul Askin and W.C. Hobson, was paid- off in September 1883, as was Parnell's debt of £3,500 to C.M. West.[66] But the mortgage was not

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[65] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1882, 12.284.

[66] Ibid., 1883, 37.27 and 39.1.

cancelled: Askin and Hobson transferred it to the trusteeship of Henry Tudor Parnell.[67] This means that the money with which Parnell paid them must have been borrowed from his younger brother, in whose interest the unpaid mortgage subsequently stood. As was evident to anyone who cared to read the relevant column in the Nation, the Tribute had reached £15,000 by September 1883; Henry Parnell knew his loan was safe. But he may have been too sanguine. There is no reference in the Registry of Deeds to the mortgage being cleared; and we have John's word, usually reliable, that he had to clear the debt incurred by the £10,000 left by William Parnell to his daughter Catherine so many years before. By 1883, however, the debt was no longer payable to Catherine's heirs, but to her nephew Henry - the only son of John Henry Parnell who made a financial success of his life.

Charles's debt to Henry may not have been for the full £13,000 he owed Askin and Hobson; John mentions that Avondale was 're-mortgaged' for £6,000 after 1883,[68] and the arrangement with Henry is the only one legally recorded - although Parnell was planning to raise another mortgage on the estate when he died.[69] He may have paid off the remaining £7,000 with the tribute money, and left £6,000 outstanding on the mortgage. In any case, the evidence is that the estate remained in debt even after the Tribute; one is compelled to wonder what Parnell's expenses were from 1883 to 1891.

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67 Reg.of Deeds, Mem. for 1883, 39.1. There is further reference to this in the Land Commission Records, as regards Peter Brennan's purchase of his farm at Ballyknockan (L.C. Box 902, Sched. D. no.6, Record 1159). C.S. Parnell is defined as 'owner in fee, having paid off all charges and incumbrances and taken an assignment thereof to his brother Henry T. Parnell.

68 J.H. Parnell, p. 209.

69 K. O'Shea, ii, 269.

John stated unequivocally that his brother spent £10,000 upon establishing the Big Rock quarries at Arklow, and a further £5,000 on machinery before they began to pay.[70] Kerr recorded that wages at the quarries varied from £5,000 to £10,000 a year;[71] in 1888 Parnell estimated the average amount he spent yearly upon wages in the quarries and mines as £8,000.[72] There were also the wages of the workers at Avondale which, according to John Parnell, cost £50 a week. Thus Parnell's outgoings in the eighties were enormous; he had good reason to claim in 1890 that the Tribute had been 'spent by me in Ireland, amongst the working-men of Wicklow'.[73] Considering that the Dublin Corporation sett contract had lapsed[74] and a large production surplus was collecting at Big Rock, and that the mining venture never really passed beyond the exploration stage, the returns for this huge outlay were infinitesimal. By 1888, Parnell stated privately that he 'could show by my books that I have spent upwards of seven thousand pounds prospecting for minerals in Wicklow';[75] with the increase of such operations in 1890, costs must have advanced far beyond this. Nor did his industrial expenses stop at his own operations; he donated £2,000 to the Arklow Harbour works as well as supplying them with free stone[76] and declared in 1891 that he had spent £5,000 altogether on public works in Wicklow.[77] In January 1891 he spent a further £1,200 on the railway connection from Big Rock

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70 J.H. Parnell, p. 287.

71 Letter from W. Kerr in Weekly Freeman, 4 July 1891.

72 C.S. Parnell to Commissioner of Woods, Forests and Land Revenue, 8 February 1888 (MSS at Avondale).

73 Weekly Freeman, 20 December 1890.

74 See above, p. 365.

75 C.S. Parnell's letter quoted in n.72 above.

76 Letter from W. Kerr in Weekly Freeman, 4 July 1891.

77 Speech at Wicklow on 31 May 1891; see Nation, 6 June 1891.

to Arklow.[78] When the Tribute had been used to pay off £3,500 to West, £7,000 of Askin and Hobson's debt, and £1,500 owing from Parnell to his guardians' heirs, the remaining £25,000 had yet to cover further personal debts, the £15,000 used in setting up Big Rock, and £7,000 spent on mining by 1888, with a large additional outlay on the Ballycapple mines in 1890. Avondale was by now producing a good deal less than its original £1,789 p.a., and Parnell's small share in some Dublin property added little to his annual income.[79] He had an improvident mother and impoverished sister to support, as well as an expensive political career and a London establishment to keep going. It would have been extraordinary if he had not got as swiftly into debt as he was extricated from it.

Nor did he make much effort to do otherwise, Though he was careful about some expenses, where his own foibles were concerned his extravagance was unbounded. T.P. O'Connor's judgement may here be quoted:

> Parnell himself was a poor man, and his poverty was increased by his absolute indifference to money. He was not an extravagant man; on the contrary, he was what the Irish call a rather 'near' man; but he was slatternly, never answered letters, took no notice of bills, and ran up accounts unconsciously and for years at a time. He used to take many of his meals at a hotel in Wicklow, quite close to his ancestral home; I believe none of his lunches was paid for during a period of nearly a quarter of a century, and when he died one of the claims on the estate was the unpaid bill of his hotel. Once he gave a rather luxurious lunch to his colleagues at the Cafe Royal; he gave half a sovereign to the head waiter - which we all thought excessive - but the bill was never paid.[80]

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78 Weekly Freeman, 10 January 1891.

79 See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1879, 17.9; 1884, 5.234; and 1884, 41.232.

80 T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, ii, 60-61. T.M. Healy (Letters and leaders, i, 307) tells the same story of the unpaid Cafe Royal bill, but states it was a dinner given by Parnell in honour of General Collins, the American Consul. William O'Brien said the dinner was for Senator Jones of Florida and when O'Brien reminded of the expense, Parnell asked him to 'settle it with your own cheque...I hate to give my signature to people I don't know' (Evening memories, p.120). Mrs O'Shea denied that he was 'near', but said he was 'careful' about small expenses (O'Shea,ii,248).

Despite the Tribute he applied for a loan of £1,200 in 1885 to improve his estate,[81] and his brother recalled him as being 'in financial trouble' in 1887.[82] He got £5,000 damages from The Times in 1889, and it was claimed that he kept £5,000 of the £10,000 subscribed by Cecil Rhodes to the Home Rule Party.[83] His enemies further claimed that he kept the balance of the money raised to pay the costs of the Special Commission legal defence, amounting to £10,000.[84] Parnell denied these charges in a speech at Wicklow on 31 May 1891.[85] He said the balance from the Commission fund was a small one, nothing like £10,000, and he was 'keeping it in hand'; £5,000 of Rhode's money had gone to William O'Brien for the evicted tenants and most of the remainder of party expenses; he was again keeping only a small balance 'in hand'. Whatever about the accuracy of these studiously vague assertions, Parnell's financial position in 1891 was worse than it had ever been. In August he was ordered to pay O'Shea's divorce case costs, amounting to £700.[86] In September he arranged a loan from the Hibernian Bank, promising his wife ' the first thousand' of it for immediate demands;[87] in October, just before his death, he wrote to MacDermott, his solicitor, about raising a speedy mortgage.[88] Moreover, earlier in the year he

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81 Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1885, 4.95.

82 J.H. Parnell, p. 288.

83 See Swift MacNeill, What I have seen and heard (London, 1925), pp 264-6; J. McCarthy and Mrs Praed, Our book of memories, p. 216, and T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders, i, 195, 343-4.

84 T.M. Healy, op.cit., i, 343. A letter from Healy to his brother Maurice dated 15 December 1890 reads: 'Lewis's bill, including all expenses, was £31,000. Parnell put the balance in his pocket, amounting to £10,000.'

85 Speech reported in Nation, 6 June 1891.

86 Wicklow Newsletter, 1 August 1891.

87 K. O'Shea, ii, 262.

88 Ibid., ii, 269.

began preparations to sell part of Avondale - the lands of Ballyknockan, 131 acres of the demesne. A memorial in the Registry of Deeds shows Emily Dickinson releasing these lands from liability for her annuity as the remainder of the estate was 'of ample security' and Parnell was 'desirous to sell' the land in question.[89] Land Commission records show that the arrangement was to sell the Ballyknockan farm to the occupying tenant, Peter Brennan, for £900; in March 1888, before the arrangement was made with the Land Commission, Brennan and Parnell had reached a private agreement regarding the price and terms of sale. The arrangement was completed by Mrs Katharine Parnell as administrator in 1892.[90] Perhaps this transaction was intended merely as the first in a policy of selling out Avondale to those tenants who wished to purchase; but Parnell died before it could go further, and he realised no money in this way. John Parnell in 1916 stated that the debts accumulated by his brother by 1891 amounted to £50,000, 'a figure which I have just verified'; Sir Henry Lucy was told by 'an intimate friend of Parnell's' that 'his premature death was contributed to by actual poverty'.[91] Between 1881 and 1891, his brother added, Parnell had spent £90,000.[92]

There is, as I have noted, no need to attribute this to politics. Standish O'Grady thought that 'a good deal of this fortune' must have gone on his 'holes in the ground',[93] and these indeed seem to have

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89 Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1891. 22.53. The land was 131 acres, 3 roods, and 33 perches, let at a fee farm rent of £42.

90 Land Commission Records: Box 902, Sched. D, no.6, 1159.

91 J.H. Parnell, p.288; Henry Lucy, Diary of a journalist (London 1920-1), ii, 56.

92 J.H. Parnell, p. 288.

93 Standish O'Grady, Story of Ireland, p. 203; see above, p. 374.

swallowed up all that was put into them without yielding much in the way of profit. Parnell himself gave the lie to the idea that politics dissipated his fortune; in fact, he claimed the reverse was true:

> I remember him in 1887, [John Parnell wrote,] complaining of the financial difficulties in which he again found himself involved, and saying to me: 'Well, John, politics is the only thing I ever got any money from, and I am looking for another subscription now'. I think he was quite serious when he said it, but, of course, a fresh tribute was not forthcoming.[94]

The cynicism of this remark, coupled with his previous casual acceptance of the £37,000 in 1883, seems breathtaking. But it was in essence no more than the truth. As has been shown in the last section of my study, he entered politics heavily in debt. Whatever money came Parnell's way in the years after 1875 did not come from his rent-roll, which is to his credit; but neither did it come from his mining or his quarrying, which never testified to his common-sense.

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94 J.H. Parnell, p. 288.

Chapter 4

Parnell and Wicklow, 1875-91

We are all willing to believe that Mr Parnell is not guilty. Although he seldom comes home he is a Wicklow man, and one has what is known as a grá for one's old neighbour, no matter what political banner he fights under.

Editorial in Wicklow Newsletter, 4 January 1890, about the O'Shea divorce petition.

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> Such associations [with the 1798 Rising] perhaps explain partly why Mr Parnell revolted uneasily against the lot of a country gentleman. In some ways, he was admirably fitted for that quiet lot. He loves animals and outdoor pursuits, and with his taste for the exact sciences he would have been a revolutionary farmer of a fine type. When he came home from his English training he seemed to fall well into that life, becoming a magistrate and High Sheriff of his county, and captain of the Wicklow Eleven at cricket. Well would he have administered his estate, with his keen sympathy for his own folk, for whom his coldness changes to a simple kindliness.[1]

Thus an English newspaper in 1890 analysed the social context from which Parnell chose to abdicate; and, as the epigraph to this chapter shows, even Unionist opinion in Wicklow recognised that Parnell had some sort of stake in the county. It is true that his position in local affairs did not become what his background would have led an observer to expect; but his connection with Wicklow remained a strong one, and it had its own character.

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1 From an article about Parnell in The Speaker, quoted in the Nation, 25 October 1890.

As early as January 1880 Thomas Sexton prophesied that 'a day would come when people would come to Rathdrum like pilgrims' because of its association with Parnell;[2] indeed, the flow had already started, since excursions to Avondale became from an early date a popular outing for nationalist and semi-nationalist organisations.[3] It was also in 1880 that Rathdrum mounted a triumphal reception for Parnell on his return from America, complete with a band, bonfires and a triumphal arch erected over the entrance to Avondale.[4] He was, by then, the local celebrity.

The local duties of the squire of Avondale, however, preoccupied him less and less. He attended some meetings of the Rathdrum Board of Guardians, although not officially on the board,[5] but only up to 1878.

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[2] At a Land League meeting in Rathdrum. See Nation, 10 January 1880.

[3] See Nation, 29 May 1880, for a Whit Monday excursion by the St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Total Abstinence League, Dublin, to Avondale (where they cannot have been welcomed by Arthur Dickinson); Weekly Freeman, 11 August 1883, for the plans of the C.S. Parnell branch of the National League to visit Avondale on 12 August - later abandoned because the railway could not accommodate the large number of people who wanted to make the journey; the Wicklow Newsletter, 8 April 1882, for a request from the Aid Society for the Commercial Young Men of Dublin, to visit Avondale; ibid., 3 June 1889 for 'a picnic visit from the Commercial United Prisoners' Aid Society'. On the largest scale of all were the 'Avondale Athletic Sports and Pony Races' held on August 14 and 16 1887 in connection with the Sisters of Mercy Bazaar.

[4] Nation, 3 April 1880.

[5] See Wicklow Newsletter, 19 August 1876, 16 December 1876, 30 November 1878.

This was also the last year to see him as a steward of the Wicklow steeplechases.[6] In 1878 as well his name appeared on the donation list for the Wicklow Regatta[7] and he chaired a Relief Fund Committee composed of 'the principal inhabitants of Rathdrum parish.'[8] But these are the last records of Parnell as active in the context of the county establishment.

One official link, however, remained with the heritage to which he had been born; though 1876 was the last year to see him sworn on to the Grand Jury,[9] he remained a J.P. This is not to say he was active ; he sat at Rathdrum Petty Sessions only once after his entry into politics.[10] But the involvement led to some raised eyebrows comparatively early in his career. After he told the celebrated anecdote from his American tour about the donation of '$5 for bread and $20 for lead' at the meeting in the Rotundo on 30 April 1880[11] a correspondent wrote to the Nation, demanding; 'Is this gentleman a justice of the- peace for Co. Wicklow?[12] The same question occurred to Earl Fortescue in August of the following year, when he asked in the House of Lords whether Parnell was still a magistrate. Whe the answer was 'yes',

> Lord Stanley of Alderney said it was singular that the Government should retain Mr Parnell in the commission of the peace, considering the part he had taken in an agitation which the government had denounced, and after they had prosecuted him in a state trial.[13]

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6 Ibid., 6 April 1878.

7 Ibid., 31 August 1878.

8 Ibid., 28 December 1878.

9 Ibid., 25 March 1876.

10 On 17 August 1876; his fellow-magistrate was the ubiquitous C.M. West. See ibid., 26 August 1876.

11 See O'Brien, Parnell, i, 224.

12 Nation, 8 May 1880.

13 Ibid., 27 August 1881.

1881 was the last year of Parnell's magistracy; the dichotomy of his position became absolute with his arrest in October.

His connection with Protestant parish affairs is less easily traced. In 1875 his name headed the list of donors to the Rathdrum Parochial Fund,[14] and in 1879 he was recorded as one of the two synodsmen of Rathdrum Parish.[15] But no Parnells are ever recorded at the many Rathdrum parochial functions described in detail by the Wicklow Newsletter. In 1890 a hostile M.P. asked: 'What has Mr C.S. Parnell, M.P., done for Protestantism, that would entitle him to claim to belong to that religious denomination?'.[16] This seems a not unreasonable question, especially in view of Mrs Katharine Parnell's later statements about her husband's religious beliefs;[17] but it drew an angry letter from Bernard Manning, the secretary of Rathdrum Parish Vestry.[18] Manning wrote:

> /Mr Parnell is/ one of the largest contributors to the sustenation fund of the parish of Rathdrum...and a regular subscriber to the funds of our parochial school.../he/ always evinces a readiness to aid in any object brought under his notice for the benefit of the parish. I may also add that it was mainly due to Mr Parnell's action in the Diocesan Synod that the salaries received by parish rectors who discharge the duties of chaplain to workhouses are not now reckoned against them in computing their stipends.

The Wicklow Newsletter added sourly that in the last statement of Rathdrum Parish accounts Parnell had given £10 to the sustenation fund and £2 to the school fund, out of a total collection of £170; this seemed to the editor little enough, considering that 'his residence and most of his property is situate...in the centre of the parish'. Manning's letter

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14 With £17 - Lord Fitzwilliam being next, with £10. Wicklow Newsletter 17 June 1876.

15 Ibid., 19 April 1879.

16 Mr Russell, M.P. His statement was quoted in the Irish Times, where Manning saw it (see below).

17 K. O'Shea, ii, 246-7.

18 See Wicklow Newsletter, 1 February 1890.

probably owed more to loyalty than a desire to clear the name of an unappreciated philanthropist.

Without officiating directly, however, Parnell continued to be interested in the affairs of the county, especially where they touched upon his own preoccupations. It was largely through his influence in the county and in London that the Wicklow Town and Harbour Commission obtained a loan from the Treasury to build a breakwater and steamboat pier.[19] In 1880 a government loan of £50,000 was secured;[20] the improvements were completed in 1883. Corbet (who came to be known as 'the local question member'[21]) had pressed strongly for the harbour scheme in parliament, backed by Parnell; the scheme took on a larger importance and a political complexion because of comparisons with the Arklow harbour works which Lord Carysfort instigaged at the same time. The issue was more than a not-so-friendly rivalry between the two neighbouring ports. Parnell consistently emphasised the fact that the Wicklow scheme had been the result of local initiative and enterprise, whereas the Arklow plan was the preserve of Lord Carysford and the Board of Works, and correspondingly was dogged by failure and inefficiency.[22] From the anti-nationalist side, the Wicklow Newsletter jeered at Parnell's uncharacteristically flowery assertion that 'as long as the foundations of the earth last these piers will stand,'[23] with regard to the

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19 See letter from J. McCarroll to J.H. Parnell, quoted in J.H. Parnell, p.292.

20 See Wicklow Newsletter 29 May, 4 September, and 25 December, 1880.

21 Wicklow Newsletter, 13 June 1885.

22 See especially a speech of Parnell's at a St Patrick's Day banquet in 1885, reported in Wicklow Newsletter, 21 March 1885.

23 Ibid.

Wicklow harbour. The Newsletter claimed that the Arklow works were uncompleted, and anyway not a parallel case; the issue rapidly became a party one. At the convention to nominate M.P.s for the county in October 1885, Parnell's speech was almost entirely taken up with the question of the respective harbour improvements, and Corbet faithfully returned to the same point again and again.[24]

The two schemes did not, however, continue to remain political rivals. The history of the Arklow plan had initially been completely Lord Carysfort's preserve: in 1876 he secured a government grant for £3,000 towards it and was accordingly eulogised by the Wicklow Newsletter, always suitably unctuous where the gentry were concerned.[25] But the land surrounding the harbour was owned by the Wicklow Mining Company, who refused to surrender their lease,[26] and though the storms of the following winter finished off the old harbour,[27] the scheme had by June 1877 'definitely fallen through.'[28]

When Corbet and Parnell began to press for the Wicklow harbour scheme in 1880 Carysfort objected, stating the priority of Arklow's claim;[29] while Corbet professed sympathy for Arklow's case it was the Wicklow scheme which was ratified, and Carysfort recorded his

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24 See for instance a speech of his quoted in the Wicklow Newsletter, 1 May 1886.

25 'Let Arklow cherish the name and memory of him who risked his life for her poor in time of sickness and distress, and who incessantly labours for her advancement'. Wicklow Newsletter, 8th January 1876.

26 See letter from Carysfort in ibid., 22 July 1876.

27 See ibid., 6 January 1877, and Nation, 18 January 1877.

28 See letter from M. Shea in Wicklow Newsletter, 30 June 1877. Also a statement of Parnell's in H. of C., 18 July 1878 - see Newsletter, 20 July 1848.

29 See his letter to the Wicklow cesspayers in Wicklow Newsletter, 16 October 1880.

regret in a strongly-worded letter to the Wicklow Newsletter;[30] for his opposition he was assaulted by a group of ill-wishers in the streets of Wicklow.[31]

Corbet now, however, took up the cudgels on behalf of Arklow[32] and secured a government loan of £20,000 in 1881 to buy out the mining company's lease and start harbour works.[33] He also obtained a free grant of £15,000. Work began under the aegis of Carysfort, and led to an increase in the rivalry between the two schemes, described above. In 1885, however, Carysfort was voted out of the chairmanship of the Arklow Town Commissioners, and replaced by the president of the local National League branch;[34] and from this point, Parnell began to adopt the cause of the Arklow harbour. In 1887, the Wicklow Newsletter was delighted to announce the co-operation of Parnell and Lord Carysfort over the issue; a phenomenon which marks the beginning of a completely new attitude on the part of that paper towards the Irish Leader, now seen as a local benefactor- and thus, it might be said, acting once more like one of the gentry.

The harbour works in 1877 were unfinished and unsatisfactory; by the beginning of 1890, Parnell and Carysfort had each offered £2,000 towards them and Parnell was pressing for a government loan of £5,000; Kerr told an Arklow ratepayers' meeting that his employer 'had had frequent interviews with Mr Jackson at the Treasury about this.'[35] The new alliance, however, was not an easy one. Parnell did not refrain from referring to the work hitherto done on the harbour scheme as useless, and the money spent thereon simply wasted; the political

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30 Wicklow Newsletter, 25 December 1880.

31 Ibid., 26 November 1881.

32 Ibid., 21 May 1881.

33 See ibid., 26 November 1881.

34 See Weekly Freeman, 7 November 1885.

35 See Wicklow Newsletter, 1 February 1890; also ibid., 18 January 1890.

nature of the question was only just submerged. In March 1890 the Wicklow Newsletter printed a long correspondence between William McPhail, editor and proprietor of the paper, and William Kerr. Kerr had accused the Newsletter of discriminating against the Parnell interest by printing letters from Edward Kearon, a Unionist member of the Arklow Harbour Commission, who had taken issue with Parnell over the latter's denigration of the previous harbour works. Kerr felt keenly the degeneration of the harbour issue into party politics, especially since his own political ideas were very different from his employer's, whose interests he nonetheless defended with passionate loyalty. 'You know', he wrote plaintively to McPhail, 'that I am quite as good a Conservative as yourself, or Kearon.' But Parnell, he went on, was large-minded enough to put the town's good above politics, and they should do the same.[36]

This was not strictly true; Parnell's remarks about the chequered history of Arklow harbour invariably made the most of the comparative failure of the scheme under Carysfort's control. Moreover, his efforts were not without a tincture of self-interest; the successful growth of his quarrying venture near Arklow depended upon an efficient outlet. Nonetheless, his efforts were greatly appreciated. When, after Parnell's and Corbet's activity throughout the summer session of 1890, £3,500 was made available to the Harbour Commission as a free grant and another £3,500 as a loan, the Nation pointed out:

> Arklow's prosperity and the promise of its future progress are to a considerable extent the creation of Mr Parnell. He has nursed and managed its industrial resources in a way that gives a rare earnest of his success in the management of a wider field.[37]

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36 Wicklow Newsletter, 1 March 1890. Kerr and Kearon had first crossed swords in the Irish Times; McPhail only printed Kearon's missives, but in reply to Kerr's lengthy attack, he blandly denied all question of bias.

37 Nation, 23 August 1890.

Parnell's speech to the Arklow Town Commissioners on 23 August 1890, in which he made the offer known, brought him great kudos; and neither Carysfort's name nor his exertions were so much as mentioned, even by the faithful Wicklow Newsletter, which so far forgot its allegiances as to remark that 'this is real Home Rule'.[38]

Parnell's involvement with the harbour did not stop there; he now interested himself in the mechanics of the task, writing to the Arklow Town Commissioners with advice about the location and material of the piers and offering 'dry rubble and material at 3d a ton, the royalty payable by me', from his quarries - the value of this being calculated at over £2,000.[39] A local Harbour Board took over from the Board of Works, and work was scheduled to begin early in 1891. Also at this time began the construction of Parnell's railway from his quarries to the sea; the same engineer was to oversee both,[40] and he followed Parnell's ideas and plans closely.

The relationship between the patron and the Harbour Board was not to be the happy one that events seemed to presage. The close connection between Parnell's private industry and his interest in the Arklow harbour was resented; attempts were made to prevent him having a landing-stage for his own use, and Kerr was goaded to the point of threatening to withdraw the offer of free stone.[41] Most important of all was the re-surfacing of the political issue - no longer the simple alignment of Parnell's sympathisers versus those of Carysfort, but the muddier and more backstabbing ethics of the Split. At first an effort was made

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38 Wicklow Newsletter, 6 September 1890.

39 See Weekly Freeman, 13 September 1890 and 10 January 1891; also Wicklow Newsletter, 13 September and 27 December 1890.

40 Mr Strype, C.E. Weekly Freeman, 10 January 1891.

41 See above, p.366.

to preserve a superficial amity; when Parnell visited Arklow on 27 January 1891 accompanied by a Freeman reporter, the latter found:

> There is something very touching in the regard entertained for Mr Parnell by his neighbours. He has lived amongst them and worked for them and, knowing him, they esteem him. The practical interest which he takes in the development of the country's resources has been abundantly evidenced in Arklow and the vicinity.[42]

The reporter went on to eulogise Parnell's 'delicacy of feeling' in avoiding political allusions while replying to the addresses of welcome presented by trades bodies and other local organisations; but the Harbour Board, less delicate, had noticeably absented themselves from all receptions held for Parnell since the party Split.[43] The chairman of this body, Daniel Condren, was particularly anti-Parnellite and at a subsequent meeting the plans of Parnell and Strype, the engineer, regarding which pier to start work on first, were disagreed with with acrimoniously for the first time.[44] At the end of Parnell's life, as I have mentioned, his agent was embroiled in a bitter quarrel with the Commissioners about their obstruction of his plans for a landing-stage; his exertions on behalf of the scheme were but little mentioned.

It is unlikely, however, that politics were much in his own mind where the subject was concerned. In Arklow and its harbour Parnell could see some material result of his industrial plans for Wicklow; and these were closer to his heart than anything else. His personal fortunes were involved in these plans, but his vision was essentially a broader one than that. Wicklow, its minerals, stone-quarries and sea-ports, was to him a microcosm of the sort of industrial potential he visualised in all of Ireland; this is evident throughout his career, from the time when in Kilmainham in 1881 his first enquiries of a visitor were about

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42 Weekly Freeman, 31 January 1891.

43 See Wicklow Newsletter, 31 January 1891; also editorial in ibid., 3 January 1891.

44 Ibid., 31 January 1891.

the progress of Wicklow Harbour,[45] to the time and attention he devoted to the Arklow works in the last frantic year of his life.

Nor was the appreciation of Arklow businessmen the only tribute paid by Wicklow opinion to Parnell. The affectionate relationship between him - as land leader and local celebrity rather than squire - and the farmers round Rathdrum is well attested to by the celebrated Avondale ploughing matches. This tradition began when Parnell was in Kilmainham, and unable to administer his estate. In December, 1881 the following notice was posted up in Rathdrum:

> The crops of our leader, the illustrious Charles Stewart Parnell, are to be put in on the 15th December. Assemble in your thousands with carts, ploughs, and horses, and show by your presence that you are not unmindful of the benefit conferred by him upon the Irish people.[46]

One of the signatories, Patrick Byrne, was a tenant of Parnell's;[47] but the other names (Nicholas O'Brien and Thomas Flinter) do not appear on the Avondale rent-roll, and general newspaper opinion held the affair was organised by the Land League.

The ploughing and manuring on 15 December of Parnell's fields at Garrymore (near Rathdrum) and Avondale was on a scale far larger than the announcement - despite its casual reference to 'thousands' - implied. Volunteers came from Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow and even as far as Tipperary;[48] 600 carts were available for carting manure, with 183 ploughs decortated by green ribbons and laurels and a 'multitude' of labourers; local industries like Comerford's mills and Cronybyrne tanneries gave their workers the day off to attend,[49] and special trains were laid on from Dublin.[50] The work, which according to the Wicklow Newsletter

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45 'Parnell as a prisoner in Kilmainham' in Irish Weekly Independent, 7 October 1893.

46 Nation, 7 December 1881.

47 See letter signed by him in Nation, 27 November 1880.

48 Wicklow Newsletter, 17 December 1881.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

involved only a dozen acres, was completed in two hours, and though it 'was of the most unromantic kind it bore the appearance more of a festivity than a labour';[51] the celebrations were out of all proportion to a mere agricultural task. Tents were erected and provisions marketed; the Gorey Brass Band and 'Parnell's Own Band' from Rathdrum provided music. A dung-cart bearing an effigy of 'the last landlord' caused considerable amusement; it made a circuit of the fields, and then a four-pronged fork was driven through the 'landlord's' heart. On a more sedate note, a select group was shown around the house and behaved, remarked the Wicklow Newsletter irreverently, 'as if the corpse of the master were lying in state in one of the rooms above.'[52]

William Kerr supervised the affair, but the agricultural nature of the meeting was quickly taken over by politics. The attendance list was headed by W.J. Corbet, M.P., J.E. Redmond, M.P., Andrew Kettle, M.P., and 'Professor' Henry George;[53] the speedy ploughing and manuring were followed by speeches and resolutions. The Land League had been proclaimed since 1880; the affair gave it a golden chance for a 'legal meeting'. Redmond's speech emphasised the political nature of the gathering: 'It had another and greater significance besides that of an expression of the affection and constancy of a people towards an individual man. It was a demonstration in favour of the principles for which this man and his friends are suffering.'

Other speeches on the same occasion mentioned the Parnell family myth, still potent and by now well established in the orthodox Home Rule canon of belief:

> He [the speaker, Joseph McCarroll] had seen that day in Parnell's home the banners of the glorious Volunteers of 1782. Looking at them and knowing the blood which flowed in the veins of their leader,

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51 Wicklow Newsletter, 17 December 1881.

52 Ibid.

53 Nation, 24 December 1881.

> and that his days of childhood had been spent among the relics and associations of so glorious a history, he felt that it was impossible for Parnell to be anything but a patriot and a leader.[54]

Though the crowd numbered thousands it remained orderly, and only three constables were in attendance.[55] Nor was this to be the only such occasion; Corbet announced in concluding the meeting that another 'Avondale ploughing match' would be held in the spring.

Two months later, on 16 February 1882, 500 ploughs broke up 50 acres of pasture for tillage, before -according to the Nation - fifteen to twenty thousand spectators, and taking only four hours.[56] Many encamped at Avondale overnight, but there was no confusion; and, although there were musical bands in attendance, there was no drinking. A few were shown over the house; no speeches were made; and 'much effort had been made to prevent the demonstration in any way assuming a political character'.[57] (The Wicklow Newsletter stated that this was 'in compliance with strict injunctions from Kilamainham'.)[58] The Irish Times was not convinced by the meeting's ostensibly innocent nature:

> Although going by the name of a 'ploughing match' on a large scale, it was to all intents and purposes a monster Land League display, in which the strength of the organisation and completeness of its discipline were as much sought to be shown as gratitude to its leader.[59]

The next demonstration was on 30 March 1882, when 70 teams saw to the ploughing and harrowing of the demesne farm; Kerr and Andrew Kettle supervised them.[60] There were no speeches and the Wicklow Newsletter put the attendance at 'a few dozens only', since 'the affair was not intended to bear the character of a demonstration'. Moreover, and

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54 Quoted in Wicklow Newsletter, 17 December 1881.

55 Nation, 24 December 1881.

56 Nation, 18 February 1882, and T. Sherlock, Charles Stewart Parnell (Dublin, 1882), p.97.

57 Nation, 18 February 1882.

58 Wicklow Newsletter, 18 February 1882.

59 Irish Times, 18 February 1882. The Wicklow Newsletter of the same date gloomily concurred.

60 Nation, 8 April 1882.

significantly, 'several of the farmers of the neighbourhood who are not identified with the Home Rule Party sent their teams to assist in the preparation of the land for the sowing'.[61] Parnell's local position had by now become the prime cause of the ploughing matches, rather than the opportunity for political expression which they afforded.

A similar undertaking was planned for the turnip-sowing in May, but if it came off it was not recorded in the newspapers; the next occasion mentioned was a reaping-party of 'some hundreds' who harvested fifty acres of oats on 5 September, helped on by the Rathdrum Brass Band.[62] Andrew Kettle lent two machines and attended the work; otherwise the attendance was mainly of local people, and no speeches were made.[63]

January 1883, however, saw a return to large-scale agricultural demonstrations at Avondale. On 17 January, once more organised by Andrew Kettle, 150 ploughs worked 30 acres at Avondale and 60 ploughs were operated on 20 acres at Garrymore.[64] Speeeches were made by Joseph McCarroll of the Wicklow Town Commissioners, and others; Kerr entertained a large group to lunch at Avondale. On this occasion a field of Parnell's neighbour, Mrs Lambert, was also ploughed; she was the sister of a local clergyman associated with political movements. But the attendance did not exceed 700, and there were no special trains laid on or prominent politicians involved, as in the headier days of 1881.

The local newspaper summed up:

> As an agricultural demonstration and a proof of the 'comfortable case' of the Wicklow tenant farmer, and the excellence of their cattle, the affair was very successful, but as a political demonstration, or even as a 'show', it was a failure.[65]

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61 Wicklow Newsletter, 1 April 1882.

62 See the Nation, 9 September 1882.

63 See also Wicklow Newsletter, 9 September 1882, which also played down the importance of the gathering.

64 Nation, 20 January 1883.

65 Wicklow Newsletter, 20 January, 1883.

This trend continued. The following March, 30 acres of oats were sown and harrowed by 40 teams,[66] but there was no further demonstration until January 1884, when 50 acres were ploughed and 6 acres of potatoes gathered.[67] 160 ploughs and 100 carts performed the work; Andrew Kettle and James F. Grehan of Cabinteely were the principal organisers. The Freeman recorded:

> In its extent and the warmth of the zeal shown by the farmers to participate in the work it recalled the memorable occasion when many farmers and labourers took part in a similar work when Mr Parnell was in Kilmainham as a suspect.[68]

But it was, in practice, a different kind of affair. Most of the names recorded in attendance were local people, and the majority were from the Parnell lands like Carrignameel, Ballyknockan and Ballinderry; Andrew Kettle was the only M.P. there, and there were no speeches. The land agitation had become subdued, and this is the last 'ploughing match' recorded at Avondale.

The Rathdrum area had, nonetheless, been active during the era of advanced agitation - at least in the context of Wicklow's peaceful history in the period.[69] Evictions had occurred on the Littledale estate nearby which had resulted in respectable farmers' wives assaulting policemen and being jailed for nine months.[70] When the Mooney family at Newbawn were to be evicted, eight or ten Land Leaguers helped them barricade the house and 200 police had to be called in. All concerned received prison sentences.[71] Hugh Gaffney, an employee of Parnell's, was an officer of the Land League and was responsible for plastering

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66 On 27 March 1883. See Nation, 31 March 1883.

67 Nation, 26 January 1884.

68 Weekly Freeman, 26 January 1884.

69 See above, pp. 382-90.

70 See Wicklow People, 27 June 1927.

71 Ibid.

Rathdrum Police Station with copies of the No Rent Manifesto one memorable night; before the Land League was proclaimed he helped to organise meetings where Dillon, Redmond and others spoke; he was also influential in the ploughing matches.[72] He and other Parnellites canvassed strenuously for Parnell's candidates in 1891. The 1892 election in Wicklow saw the defeat of the Parnellites, W.J. Corbet in East Wicklow and John Parnell in West Wicklow; both seats were won by the offical Irish Party candidates, John Sweetman and James O'Connor. But Rathdrum, it is held, remained Parnellite to the end; the tradition of supporting the local squire probably helped to reinforce adulation of the fabled chief who recalled the epic days of the Land War. The ploughing matches, at all events, bear witness to a local support that partook of both elements.

II

Parnell, remarked Captain O'Shea to Sir E.T. Cook 'was a pariah, and none of his own class would have a word to say to him.'[73] But the attitude of Parnell's own class towards him in Wicklow life is not as easily charted as that of his tenants, or the Arklow townspeople; there is no specific record of opinion to draw upon. A good gauge is provided by the redoubtably Tory Wicklow Newsletter; but while always adopting a reverent tone towards the gentry, this journal catered for a lower level of local interest, and so cannot be taken as a measure of 'county' opinion. The opinion of the county is, however, easily redoned: Parnell was de facto a class traitor, and should be treated as such.

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[72] Ibid; for him also see above, Chapter 2, p.407.

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

The importance of Parnell's upper-class background was never underestimated by his own supporters. An address presented to him in 1883 declared that 'in a time of national prostration you stepped out of the ranks of selfish aristocracy and flung youth and fortune into the service of the Irish cause;[74] and when times were more malicious, in May 1891, the Nation claimed:

> The 'Bantry Band' may come in for some blame for introducing Mr Parnell into Irish politics and for making him the leader of the Irish Party. But these men never proclaimed that it was the great personal attraction of the man that was his qualification. It was the peculiar surroundings of the Protestant Squireen that caused him to be selected by Mr A.M. Sullivan as a man who would have some attraction for the mild Tories and who might lead many waverers into the National Movement if he were received himself.[75]

The same accusation had been made by Parnell's opponents in the very first election he fought.[76] A similar point was raised by an English opponent of his, who wrote to the Cumberland Press in June 1891:

> Mr Parnell is a landlord of Cromwellian descent, whose ancestors, like others of the several 'plantations', became through time more Irish than the Irish themselves... [he became leader] by the help of able men of Celtic blood.[77]

Frank Hugh O'Donnell amplified this idea: 'I doubt very much if Mr Parnell saw for a considerable time the attractions which his personality offered to a huge class of agitators in Ireland. They wanted a "county gintleman". They got him.'[78]

Though the idea of Parnell as figurehead will not stand up to examination, the frequency of such accusations shows that his background was an issue very much in people's minds. Nor did his supporters see it as any less important. Gladstone listed 'advantage of birth' as a reason for Parnell's ascendancy[79] and Sir William Butler, an ardent admirer of Parnell, endorsed this:

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74 National Tribute Address from the people of Dublin (T.C.D., MS no.2576).

75 Nation, 30 May 1891.

76 See above, Part 4, Chapter 3, p.326.

77 Quoted in the Nation, 20 June 1891.

78 F.H. O'Donnell, History of the Irish parliamentary party, i, 256.

79 Writing to Barry O'Brien on 11 December 1895. See O'Brien, Parnell, ii, 354.

> Despite the clamour of the modern Firbolg in Irish politics, the Irish people possess an instinctive knowledge of the attributes which go to make a great leader of men, and they will no more eliminate the factor of birth from this catalogue, when they can get it, than they would strike it from the pedigrees of their racehorses.[80]

Certainly, an upper-class conditioning had formed a great deal of his character. But the people amongst whom he grew up rejected him when his politics diverged from theirs. I have referred to his belief that Lord Carysfort would refuse to rent him his quarry 'because he disapproves of my politics';[81] yet Carysfort was Parnell's father's first cousin, and had been a companion of John and Charles on shooting parties in Wicklow before the latter's entry into politics.[82] The Carysforts were one of the few families actually named by Mrs Delia Parnell as close friends of hers in Wicklow society.[83] Parnell's alienation from Carysfort cannot have been total, for they co-operated over the Arklow harbour scheme in the late eighties,[84] though not closely; and Parnell, as I have noted, made a point of drawing comparisons between the ill-favoured 'improvements' carried out under the aegis of Carysfort and those affected by the locally organised Wicklow Harbour Board.[85]

With other neighbours, the estrangement was complete. Charles Barton of Annamoe was a close contemporary of Parnell's; only two years younger than he, like Parnell, he built an ambitious sawmill on his demesne, and he shared Parnell's enthusiasm for cricket. As a young man Parnell often came to play cricket on the lawn in front of Glendalough House, a fine neo-Gothic pile built at Annamoe in 1838 by Barton's father; here, local tradition has it, a boy emptied a claret-cup into Parnell's boots before a match and was soundly

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80 Autobiography, p. 354.

81 J.H. Parnell, p. 282; see above, p. 361.

82 J.H. Parnell, p. 117.

83 Delia T.S. Parnell, to T.D. Sullivan, 21 January 1880 (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237/6).

84 See above, p. 439.

85 Speech quoted in Wicklow Newsletter, 21 March 1885. See also above, p. 439.

thrashed for his ill-conceived jape. Barton was an enlightened man, a good landlord and employer, and a close contemporary of Parnell's in every way, as well as a neighbour; but he was also a Unionist, and when Parnell entered Home Rule politics, Barton simply never spoke to him again.[86]

This was, it appears, just one instance of what became a general practice. An obituary notice of W.F. Hume-Dick, at one time Conservative M.P. for Wicklow, described him significantly as 'a near neighbour and one-time friend' of Parnells.[87] John Parnell mentions that the Parnells became estranged from the Brookes of Castle Howard, friends since childhood, because of politics;[88] and Emily Dickinson, who described high life among Wicklow society in her youth with the regret of one morning Saturn's Golden Age, wrote that after her brother's name became identified with Home Rule ,

> social life wore a very different aspect; cold looks and distant bows took the place in many cases of the hearty and friendly cordiality of happier times; therefore invitations were not at all so plentiful as of yore.[89]

Even after Parnell's death, she expected to be '"shelved" on account of politics' in Dublin society.[90] This was not, in the event, the case; and it appears unlikely that the Wicklow gentry visited the sins of the brother upon his non-political sisters. Lady Alice Howard was the strongest of Tories, and never mentioned the name of 'Charlie Parnell', who had once attended shooting-parties with her at Shelton Abbey, after 1875; but when she visited Paris in 1882, one of her first

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86 Reminiscence of Mr R.C. Barton of Glendalough House in 1973. The claret-cup jester was named Erskine Booth.

87 Wicklow Newsletter, 24 September 1892. The italics are mine.

88 J.H. Parnell, p. 24.

89 E. Dickinson, p.173.

90 Ibid., p. 231.

actions was to pay a call on his sister, Delia, who had never deserted the social fold.[91]

Moreover, even with regard to Parnell himself, a certain class solidarity remained. He was, as I have said, no believer in social equality;[92] and a perceptive reporter from Tinsley's Magazine, who heard an extremist speech of Parnell's in 1881, noted:

> A strange feeling took hold of me after he had concluded. It was that it would be a grave error to suppose him to be a great lover of the farming class. I could not even think that he disliked his own class, the landlords, though his words about them were strong and the reverse of complimentary.[93]

Enough fellow-feeling remained for Standish O'Grady, who knew Wicklow well, to be able to remark that 'even the gentry of Leinster, his neighbours, liked him and watched his strange career as their enemy with a certain amused and affectionate interest'.[94] St John Ervine said the same thing.[95] And when a fund was opened in 1888 for Parnell's legal expenses arising out of the Times Special Commission, the Earl of Bessborough was one of the first subscribers: 'He knew Parnell well when living in the county Wicklow, and always found him in business and other matters to be a truthful man; and he forwarded £10 "as a proof of my reliance on his word"'.[96]

But the mainstream of county opinion was heavily against the renegade in their midst. When Hugh Gaffney, an ex-steward of Avondale, looked for employment at Guinness's after Parnell's death he was refused on account of his connection with 'that rebel';[97] the Guinness family owned much land in county Wicklow, and represented county

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91 Lady Alice Howard's diary for 1882, entry for 23 February (N.L.I., Wicklow papers, MS 3604).

92 See above, p. 380.

93 Quoted in Nation, 8 April 1882.

94 Standish O'Grady, The story of Ireland, p.211.

95 St John Ervine, Parnell, p.61.

96 Nation, 1 September 1888.

97 Reminiscence of Mr Hugh Gaffney of Roundwood in 1973.

conservatism at its strongest. And it was not only in the House of Commons that Parnell had to learn to put up the impassive mask to hostility, so tellingly described by Henry Harrison;[98] Davitt tells of how Parnell had to sit in the Irish Mail train from Holyhead to London listening to someone in the same carriage declaring that 'Parnell was a renegade to his own class and ought to be shot for stirring up the country against the landlords'.[99] Though a neighbour like Sir William Butler at Delgany could admire Parnell fervently, Butler was not in a position analogous to those who 'ran' the county and owned estates there; he could, in a sense, 'afford' to admire Parnell, and he also had a good deal more intelligence and breadth of view than the average county magnate. As he mentions, he was the only member of the shooting-party at Aughavannagh, which he recorded, who was not a member of the Home Rule Party.[100] The rift between Parnell and his neighbours among the county gentry was unbridgeable by 1888.

The strength of their feeling is testified to by the language used by those who attended a meeting in Molesworth Hall, Dublin, on 23 October 1885 to form an 'East Wicklow Loyalists' Union' as a branch of the I.L.P.U..[101] The meeting was chaired by the Earl of Meath, Lord Lieutenant of Wicklow; the attendance reads like the roll of magistrates for the county. Lords Wicklow, Carysfort and Powerscourt were prominent, along with two Fitzwilliams; names like Howard-Brooke, Casement, Tottenham, Saunders, La Touche, Acton and Erck follow. Out of the 67 named in attendance, 21 were J.P.s.[102] Some were Liberals and some

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98 H. Harrison, Parnell vindicated, pp. 63-4.

99 Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p. 189. My italics.

100 See above, p. 415.

101 Irish Times, 24 October 1885 and 7 November 1885; Weekly Freeman and Wicklow Newsletter, 31 October 1885.

102 Thom's Directory, 1885.

Conservatives, and they made it clear from the first that their political allegiances differed widely;[103] but Liberals and Conservatives united when 'dismemberment of Empire, with certain already proclaimed socialistic violences included in the deed' was at issue.[104] The committee formed included members of both parties. Significantly, the most remarkable feature of the meeting, and the one upon which newspapers of all political hues concentrated, was the opening speech by Lord Meath - a blistering personal attack on Parnell as a 'dictator' and an 'anarchistic communistic revolutionary'. Meath spoke with the voice of the Wicklow gentry against the apostate they had spawned, and his fellows cheered his every word.

Such was the beginning of the gentry's counter-organisation. A much smaller meeting at Baltinglass on 25 October 1885 established a West Wicklow branch of the I.L.P.U., presided over by W.W. Fitzwilliam Hume-Dick, Tory candidate for the division;[105] but support was less forthcoming. West Wicklow had far fewer landlords and its record in the Land War was far more active.[106] The gentry in the west of the county may have felt more beleagured, and been correspondingly more extreme in their Unionism; a Loyalist meeting in Baltinglass on 17 July 1885 was held under the auspices of a Belfast Orange Lodge.[107] But there were far fewer of the gentry to support the movement, and they had less money at their disposal.

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[103] For instance, when Lord Powerscourt said that 'a measure of local legislative power' was possible for Ireland, Colonel Tottenham felt bound to disagree. In the year to come, Powerscourt was to describe himself as a 'Home Ruler' - see the Nation, 19 June 1886.

[104] Irish Times, 24 October 1885.

[105] See Irish Times, 26 October 1885.

[106] See above, p.387.

[107] Wicklow Newsletter, 25 July 1885.

The Wicklow I.L.P.U. met in force several times before the 1886 Home Rule Bill was introduced;[108] on 6 May 1885 Lady Alice Howard recorded in her diary a visit to Kulruddery 'to begin a Ladies' branch of the Loyal and Patriotic Union in Bray',[109] and in the previous month a branch of the Union had been formed on Parnell's own doorstep in Rathdrum.[110] But the Unionist candidates went down badly before Corbet and Garret Byrne, the Home Rule candidates, in the elections of 1885 and 1886[111] and their meetings became more and more rare.

This does not mean that the county attitude to Parnell softened with time; feelings went too deep for that. A telling letter in the Nation of 27 November 1880 from Parnell's tenants in West Wicklow protested 'in the strongest possible terms against the false statements and cowardly slanders constantly uttered from the bench in Hacketstown court and from the chair in Baltinglass Board-room by a J.P., Colonel Dennis' about their landlord; and the Freeman recorded five years later that the '"Loyalists" of East Wicklow' were by far the most virulent of the anti-Parnell element in Ireland.[112] He was, as the man in the railway carriage remarked, 'a renegade to his own class' - or, more accurately, to what appeared to be the interests of his own class - and he was treated accordingly. When he died, the unionism of, for instance, William McPhail, proprietor of the Wicklow Newsletter, could allow that Parnell

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108 See ibid., 27 March 1886, 3 April 1886, 24 April 1886.

109 Lady Alice Howard's diary, entry for 6 May 1885 (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers MS 3604).

110 Wicklow Newsletter, 3 April 1886.

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1885 East Wicklow:	Corbet -	3,385	and Tottenham - (C.)	1,000
West Wicklow:	Byrne -	3,721	and Hume-Dick - "	871
1886 East Wicklow:	Corbet -	3,101	and Tottenham -	984
West Wicklow:	Byrne -	3,531	and Hume-Dick -	856

- Wicklow Newsletter, December 5 and 12 1885; and ibid., July 10 and 17 1886

112 Weekly Freeman, 31 October 1885.

was a benefactor to Wicklow and state that 'how much his heart was centred here, and how deep an interest he displayed in the home of his childhood, was little thought of.'[113] but Lady Alice Howard, who had once known him well, merely noted in her diary that 'C. Parnell died...They gave him a tremendous public funeral and buried him at Glasnevin.'[114]

It is unlikely that Parnell returned the implacable enemity he received from the people he had grown up among; as the Tinsley Magazine reporter noted, he did not seem to dislike his own class, and he was no egalitarian. But he had to face this attitude, and it may have shaped his impassive public persona at least as much as did the vituperation he received from the opposing parliamentary benches.

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113 Wicklow Newsletter, 10 October 1891 (editorial).

114 Diary of Lady Alice Howard, entries for 6 and 10 October 1891 (N.L.I., Wicklow Papers, MS 3609).

Chapter 5

Wicklow and the fall of Parnell

This survey of Parnell and Wicklow during the years of his political ascendancy has not held to any chronological scheme; I have preferred to consider facets of his involvement with the county as they arose. But it is appropriate to conclude with a brief look at opinion in the county following the party split, and the echoes that Parnell's last battles raised in Wicklow.

By 1891 the county had two newspapers, McPhail's Conservative Wicklow Newsletter and the Wicklow People, which had begun life as a National League broadsheet in 1883 and was put on a commercial basis by Joseph Smyth in 1886.[1] The Newsletter was invariably hostile to Parnell, the People fulsome in his praises. By 1890, however, the Newsletter had swung to grudging praise of Parnell's efforts on behalf of the county's ports, and his largesse as an employer; as the epigraph to the last chapter shows, he was seen as an 'old neighbour', albeit an apostate one,[2] and McPhail's reaction to the divorce case was non-commital - except that he stated unequivocally as early as February 1890 that Parnell would let the case 'go by default' so that he could marry Katherine O'Shea.[3] When this happened, the Newsletter remained uncharacteristically silent; but the People rounded both fast and furiously upon the erstwhile local saint. Partly because it was a chance to take

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[1] See Wicklow Newsletter, 19 June 1886.

[2] See above, p. 433.

[3] Wicklow Newsletter, 22 February 1890.

a different line from his rival, but also as a continuation of his support for Parnell as a local benefactor, it fell to McPhail to take on the incongruous task of defending the disgraced national leader. He attacked the Arklow Town Commissioners for snubbing the man who 'from his sickbed dragged himself to the House of Commons and kept his weary vigils to vote and assist at the passing through the different stages of the Arklow Harbour Bill';[4] he appended critical editorial notes to anti-Parnellite letters in the paper;[5] he gave full coverage to the activities of the Parnell Leadership Committee in the county,[6] and he attributed large attendances to Parnell's political meetings.[7]

There was, in any case, only one anti-Parnellite organisation in Wicklow, predictably enough located in Arklow. Joseph McCarroll, chairman of the Wicklow Town Commissioners, headed the Parnell Leadership Committee in the town of Wicklow; perhaps the rivalry between the two harbours carried over into Split politics. Both Wicklow M.P.s were Parnellites, Corbet passionately so; though himself a Catholic, he was not afraid to attack local priests publicly on the issue.[8] At a large meeting in Wicklow inJune 1891, Parnell spoke warmly of his native county, 'where I lived for fifteen years amongst you',[9] but he tailored his speeches to traditional Wicklow opinion, and while attacking Gladstone and calling for 'legitimate freedom', he hastily added: 'I don't mean separation from England, or anything of the kind.' He knew of old that his support in Wicklow did not come from hillside men.

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4 Wicklow Newsletter, 3 January 1891.

5 Ibid., 17 January 1891.

6 Ibid., 28 March 1891.

7 Ibid., 31 May 1891.

8 See ibid., 6 June 1891, for his speech traducing Fr. Francis McEnery for switching his allegiance after Gladstone's dictation, after having supported Parnell in the aftermath of the divorce.

9 Ibid.

It came, in fact, from older loyalties, to the potency of which even the Newsletter was not immune - though McPhail had to remind his readers (and, one feels, himself) in July 1891 that 'to all true Unionists the cause of Mr McCarthy and Mr Parnell is the same.'[10] The Wicklow People, on the other hand, published any and every calumny about Parnell and his new wife, often relating the statments to Wicklow - he was bringing 'Mrs O'Shea' to Aughavannagh, he had taken a house at Bray for her to entertain her London friends, and so on.[11] which brought the faithful Kerr, in a fever-pitch of rage, to threaten the editor with 'a good thrashing';[12] but the Newsletter never entered these grubby lists.

Support for Parnell at Wicklow political meetings often recurred to the Parnell family's 'patriotic' record[13] and Parnell's own munificence to the county:[14] two uncontroversial local issues, one mythological and one referring purely to Parnell's personal life, but both potent. The issue of English dictation was rarely mentioned; when Wicklow supported Parnell, it was on the basis of the themes of family history and local position, which I have tried to illustrate throughout this study.

The Wicklow Newsletter gave him its non-political support until the end. A grief-striken editorial of 10 October 1891 mourned the death of a benefactor who was too little appreciated in his lifetime:

> What he has done for the people of the county, and what he intended to do, will never be adequately realised....How painful it is to reflect that the implacable animosity that pursued him to his death grew luxuriantly and was fostered industriously where he should have been most looked up to. We are not now speaking in a political sense, but in a purely local and personal vein...

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10 Ibid., 11 July 1891.

11 See Kerr's indignant letters in Wicklow Newsletter of 29 August, 5 September and 12 September 1891.

12 Ibid.

13 See addresses at Wicklow meeting of 31 March - ibid., 6 June 1891.

14 See Joseph McCarroll's speech at a Parnellite meeting in Wicklow on 11 August 1891 - Wicklow Newsletter, 15 August 1891.

McPhail went on to attack those employees of Parnell's from Arklow who had 'denounced a generous and affectionate employer at the Carlow election'. Both these men and the politicians who instigated such back-stabbing deserved every execration. 'Mr Parnell's life was sacrificed for Ireland. No matter how we may condemn his policy, he lived to aid her progress.' It was with every truth that he had told the Archbishop of Cashel that the inhabitants of Arklow could explain what he had done with the Tribute; and, the editor added accurately, 'it was known to be a fact in Wicklow that the profits of his labours were but little commensurate with his outlay.' In conclusion,

> We hope his memory will be long revered, and that those who thwarted his progress in local enterprise will be among the first to render him the homage that his memory deserves.

The editorial was followed by a biographical note which made full mention of the Parnell family's long connection with Wicklow, and their relation to the Howard and Carysfort families. The whole obituary could be that of a Wicklow gentleman and local benefactor who had never stepped out of his proscribed sphere. Family tradition and local position had had much to do with Parnell's entry into politics; and it was these elements in his career that local opinion recurred to at his death.

Part 6

Parnell and his Family

1875-1891

Introduction

'That's the fascination': soliloquised Leopold Bloom when struck by the sight of John Howard Parnell walking up College Street, 'the name; all a bit touched . .'.[1] 'Touched' or not - and to this day one is told in Wicklow that 'The Parnells were all mad' - the fascination of the name held good before Bloom's day as well as after it. As Parnell's fame grew, the character and doings of his family became almost as much of a public preoccupation as did his own; and when he died and his reputation became mythologised, the Parnells took on the status of family figures in a Greek tragedy.

But the reputation of, and interest in, the Parnell family was not solely and simply as a function of the great man; they made their own reputations. This was not, of course, true for all of them; and the discrepancy has dictated my treatment of Parnell and his family in this chapter. Attached as he may have been to Theodosia, or even Henry, the public knew little of these 'non-political' Parnells; they kept, probably by design, well clear of the limelight. Thus I have dealt sparingly with the members of the family who had no part in public life, both because the records of their quiet careers are scanty, and because their own reputations had little part in forming or fortifying their brother's myth. But the lives of Mrs Delia Parnell and of Fanny, Anna and John have a different kind of significance in relation to Charles Stewart Parnell, as well as having an interest of their own; therefore, in this section it is upon these members of the Parnell family that I will concentrate.

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[1] James Joyce, Ulysses (Random House edition, New York, 1961), p.165.

Chapter 1

The non-political Parnells

I

Discussing the Parnell children in their childhood, I drew a distinction between the 'two strains' amongst them. The strong-minded, individualist group were Charles, Emily, Fanny, Anna and Hayes; these, except for Emily and Hayes (who died aged fifteen) were politically-minded, close-knit, and stayed single or married late in life. The other stream included Delia, Sophia, Theodosia and Henry. All married young, were more self-effacting and conventional, and all except Sophia chose to live outside Ireland. John Howard alone combined some attributes of both groups; his temperament belongs to the second, but his career places him among the first.[1]

Of the non-political Parnells, Delia, Sophia and Theodosia may be first - and briefly - considered. Sophia did not live to see her brother achieve prominence. She had, as I have told, married Alfred MacDermott secretly in 1862 and publicly on 22 May 1866.[2] She lived at 43, Fitzwilliam Square, and according to Emily 'her early marriage to a rather ordinary man made her very conventional'.[3] She lectured Emily upon indiscreet friendships with men other than her husband, gave up social life to devote herself to her three children, and 'never confessed to' repenting of her headlong marriage.[4] Throughout her account of Sophia's life, Emily's strong bias against MacDermott manifests itself;[5] it is

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[1] See above, Part 3, chapter 3, p.211.

[2] See above, Part 4, chapter 1, pp 259-60. Also Burke's Baronetage and Peerage (1970) under Congleton.

[3] E. Dickinson, p.94.

[4] Ibid., pp. 91-2.

[5] See above, part 4, chapter 1, pp 259-60 for a discussion of this antipathy.

unfortunate that we have only her word to rely upon, especially where Sophia's early death in February 1877 is concerned. This was brought on by nursing her chidren through scarlatina while herself pregnant; Emily states contradictorily both that Sophia 'insisted' upon doing this and that she was forced to because MacDermott refused to hire a nurse which she requested.[6] Sophia was only thirty-two when she died; MacDermott's 'remorse' was such, Emily tells us, that he was pitied even by 'his worst enemies' - by whom she probably meant herself. Nonetheless, she vowed never to forgive him.

Other members of the family were less intractable. The memorials in the Dublin Registry of Deeds show that MacDermott continued as solicitor for John and Henry Parnell as well as for Charles - despite the conservative politics attributed to him.[7] A family connection remained as well as this professional link; when John Howard Parnell and his mother came to Ireland the winter after Parnell's death, it was to MacDermott's house in Fitzwilliam Square that they first made their way.[8] The family friendship with MacDermott had begun before his precipitate marriage to Sophia; it continued after her death. He had, after all, been solicitor to John Henry Parnell as well as to his sons.[9] Emily may have blamed her brother-in-law for Sophia's early death, but it seems unlikely that any other member of the family did. There were, in any case, Sophia's four children to consider;[10] they were half Parnell. And the connection was

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[6] E. Dickinson, pp 99-101.

[7] See T.P. O'Connor, C.S. Parnell: a memory (London 1891), p.27, for a reference to MacDermott's politics.

[8] J.H. Parnell,p. 256.

[9] See his legal Affirmation in Land Commission Records, Box 902, Schedule D no 6, Record 1159, re the sale of Ballyknockan farm in 1890.

[10] The child that Sophia died giving birth to, a girl, survived. See E. Dickinson, p. 101.

strong enough for one of them, Tudor MacDermott, to earn himself a niche in Irish history by administering a horsewhipping to T.M. Healy after one of the latter's more foul-mouthed references to Parnell's widow in 1891.

Of Delia, who died not long afterwards, there is little to record - and most of the information available comes from the unsteady memory of Emily Dickinson. Delia's hardheaded marriage to Livingston Thompson continued to turn out badly; his jealousy reached the point where he forbade her to go out riding, whereupon she attempted suicide,[11] and was only rescued by the intervention of her sister Anna, staying in Paris at the time. She was, Emily admits, 'of a very undemonstrative, and of an apparently cold temperament', but her husband's jealousy remained undimmed; and we have more than Emily's word for it that she was beautiful, for she was accorded the doubtful privilege of being considered 'the most strikingly beautiful woman he had ever met' by no less worldly a judge Willie O'Shea.[12]

Unhappy as she was, Delia concentrated her affection upon her only son Henry, who was born in 1861. She does not seem to have left Paris often, although her husband had relaxed in his attitude since her attempt to do away with herself. John Howard mentions that she was in America in the late 1870s,[13] but he may have meant Theodosia, who was living there at the time; he confuses the two sisters elsewhere.[14] In April 1882 Henry Thompson, by then a music student living alone in Paris, died of typhus fever, undiagnosed till it was too late; this provided the occasion for Parnell's celebrated parole from Kilmainham, when he travelled to Paris to console his sister. From here he wrote to Emily that Delia was 'much cut up by her dreadful loss, but is somewhat better now; my being here has

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[11] E. Dickinson, p. 102.

[12] K. O'Shea, ii, 45.

[13] J.H. Parnell, p. 148.

[14] Ibid., p. 195.

done her a great deal of good';[15] he wrote in similar terms to Mrs O'Shea.[16] Delia was, however, inconsolable; she became a recluse after her son's death and died, according to John Howard, in 1882. It seems likely that whatever neurotic tendencies she already had were accentuated by her loss. The exact date and place of her death are unrecorded, as are the other details of her unhappy life; in the recollections both of Emily and her mother she figures more as the provider of a suitably glamourous background than as a person of any intrinsic interest. The newspapers did not report her death, and neither Katharine Parnell nor John Howard Parnell mention the event as being the sort of upheaval that, for instance, Fanny's was; it is likely that her influence upon her great brother did not carry far beyond childhood.

Between Parnell and his youngest sister, however, a closer connection seems to have existed. John Howard, who spent summer holidays with Theodosia in the fashionable fastness of Newport, R.I., described her as 'a real society belle, though of a very quiet disposition';[17] a contemporary portrait of her in the Celtic Magazine shows a strikingly attractive blonde girl, smartly dressed, with more delicate features than the other Parnell women.[18] In the late eighteen-seventies she lived at Bordentown, New Jersey, with her mother and sisters Fanny and Anna. She was active enough in her support of her sisters' work for the Irish cause to earn praise from the Celtic Monthly,[19] and accompanied her mother and brother upon the latter's American speaking tour in 1879-80; but it was said that 'though an ardent Land Leaguer too, she lacked the practical, untiring methods of her sisters Fanny and Anna'.[20] It seems

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[15] C.S. Parnell to E. Dickinson, 17 April 1882 (N.L.I., Parnell letters, MS 15,735).

[16] K. O'Shea, i, 245-6.

[17] J.H. Parnell, p. 80.

[18] See Celtic Monthly, vol. iii, no. 2(Feb. 1880), p. 104.

[19] Ibid., p. 197.

[20] 'Fanny Parnell' (author anonymous) in the Celtic Magazine, vol. i, no. 2(Sept. 1882), p. 286.

likely that her aid was dictated more by good nature than anything else; her name was not linked with Irish politics after her marriage in July 1880.

Theodosia returned to Europe with her mother, sister, and brother Charles in March 1880. T.M. Healy, who was on the same ship, was interested to notice that, although Parnell had told him Fanny was his favourite sister, 'he often paced the decks with Theodosia'.[21] Healy also wrote, more outspokenly, to his brother Maurice: '/Parnell/ is sublimely indifferent /to his mother and Anna/ . . I was surprised, therefore, to see that he showed a great deal of attention to his youngest sister while on board'.[22] This, to Healy, was all the more remarkable because of the cavalier attitude the family had towards one another's doings:

> She /Theodosia/ announced her intention of going to Paris the night we got to New York, and neither of the others, nor the mother, seemed in the least surprised, or to care a damn, and Parnell himself said 'Ah!' although none of them had ever heard of the project before.[23]

But the casual relationship between them, especially where travel plans were concerned, was only to be expected after the haphazard and geographically scattered way that Mrs Parnell had brought her children up.[24] Parnell certainly seems to have felt a real warmth for his youngest sister; he travelled to Paris for her wedding at a busy time in 1880,[25] and writing to Emily from Paris in 1882 he mentioned: 'I shall be sure to call to see Theodosia and Claude before I return to Ireland', adding a worried postscript - 'I am sorry to hear Theodosia is not looking at all strong'.[26]

Theodosia married Claude Paget, a naval officer two years older than she was, on 21 July 1880. Born in 1851, he had the sort of impeccable

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[21] T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders of my day (London, 1929), i, 85.

[22] Ibid., p.87.

[23] Ibid.

[24] See above, part 4, chapter 1, pp235-9.

[25] K. O'Shea, i, 136; C.S. Parnell to K. O'Shea, 17 July 1880.

[26] C.S. Parnell to E. Dickinson, 17 April 1882 (N.L.I., Parnell letters, MS 15,735).

family connections which delighted his mother-in-law; his father, Colonel Leopold Grimston Paget (1824-92) was grandson of the first Earl of Uxbridge and nephew of the first Marquis of Anglesea. Claude entered the Navy in 1864 and became a lieutenant in 1875; he was to retire as Commander in 1896.[27] Writing in 1891, Mrs Parnell frankly avowed her pleasure at the match:

> My daughter Theodosia married Claude Paget, who is in the employ of the British Navy, and is now with his ship in the British fleet at Hong Kong. His wife, with her infant son, is visiting among his relations. 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. The wedding of Mrs Paget took place from my daughter Delia's house in Paris, and all the near relatives of his family went from England to it, and thought themselves fortunate in being allied to the ancient family of Parnell.[28]

Besides the pleasure of being allied to the Parnells, the lieutenant had the more concrete good fortune to marry someone who was, according to a memorial in the Registry of Deeds, 'entitled in her own right' to ten thousand dollars in American railway stock and twelve thousand dollars invested in a coal company;[29] she also had an annuity of £100 from the Collure estate, by her father's will.[30] There was one son born of the marriage in 1891, named Cyril Nevil. The couple bought a house on the Thames at Weybridge, where - after Paget's early retirement - their time was taken up, according to Emily Dickinson, 'with horses and cycling, cultivating roses and peacocks':[31] a picture of an English upper middle-class idyll far removed from the more stormy and star-crossed fortunes of the rest of the Parnell family.

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[27] Debrett's Peerage (1900).

[28] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell (incorporating reminiscences of Delia T.S. Parnell), p. 48.

[29] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1880, 49.209.

[30] Ibid.

[31] E. Dickinson, p. 191.

II

Emily, though equally non-political, is a case in point. By 1875 her husband was a committed alcoholic, and they were largely dependent upon Charles for support.[32] In February 1882 her mother described her as 'living at Avondale';[33] Emily tells us that she went there about this time with her daughter Delia at Charles's invitation 'for a few months', when proceedings were brought against Arthur for assault and he had to leave the country.[34] He was gone for six months. Theodosia and Claude Paget came for a summer at Avondale, with an entourage of dogs and horses;[35] Emily stayed on into the winter. At this juncture, she received an unexpected legacy from 'my uncle, Mr Bligh' - or so she tells us.[36] Emily certainly had no 'uncle' called Bligh; her father's first cousin, Emma, the youngest daughter of the first Lord Congleton, married the fifth Earl of Darnley, whose family name was Bligh, and another of John Henry's cousins, Emma's brother, the third Lord Congleton, had also married into the Bligh family; his first wife, Sophia, was a sister of Lord Darnley's. But she was long dead in 1883. The legacy is un-mentioned in a public statement of Emily's finances published after her death - although inheritances from Sir Ralph Howard and her husband, which date from this time, are. Nor is there any mention of the legacy in the Registry of Deeds. According to Emily, it was 'a few thousand pounds'; but its authenticity, as well as the name and relationship of the testator, must remain dubious.

In any case, Emily could now afford to pay off the plaintiff in Arthur's assault case; and, better still, Arthur had managed to stop drinking

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[32] See above, part 4, chapter 1, pp 253-4.

[33] In an interview quoted in the Nation, 4 February 1882.

[34] E. Dickinson, p. 141.

[35] Ibid., p. 142.

[36] Ibid., p. 146.

[37] See Irish Times, 27 May 1918.

during his sojourn abroad. At this point, her quiet life at Avondale, enlivened only by the Leveresque escapades of a permanently drunken groom[38] and 'occasional visits from neighbouring county families,[39] was suddenly brought to an end: not, however, by the expected return of the prodigal, but by a telegram announcing his sudden death in Brussels. Emily believed this to have been caused by the shock to his system induced by unaccustomed abstinence. The event, undated by his widow, is reported in the Wicklow Newsletter as having taken place on 12 December 1883.[40]

Emily had still retained a house in Dublin - or, more probably, the lease on one. She now gave it up and relapsed into melancholy at Avondale, She was horrified that among the messages of condolence she received after Arthur's death were some which tended to thoughtless but understandable congratulation; and she refused to entertain the advances of old beaux.[41] 'The next winter' - probably 1884 - she moved back to Dublin for a few months, then to London, then Richmond, the Jersey, and finally spent an unhappy winter in Guernsey, where her relationship to Parnell meant that the unfriendly natives 'visited their disapproval and wrath on the head of his unoffending sister'.[42] In the early spring (probably of 1886) she returned to Ireland. Her daughter Delia had left boarding-school and needed taking care of; Mrs Parnell was in financial trouble, and Arthur's debts had swallowed all of Emily's money (she does not mention what part of her travels of the past two years played in this process). Permanent residence at Avondale was no longer a mere question of choice, but absolutely indispensable'. Here she lived regularly with her headstrong and discontented daughter until the end of Parnell's life.

Thus, despite the grandiose and inaccurate style of Emily's memoir, her account is one of particular interest: because she was the only

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[38] E. Dickinson, pp 143-6.

[39] Ibid., p. 149.

[40] Wicklow Newsletter, 15 December 1883.

[41] E. Dickinson, chapter xii.

[42] Ibid., pp 168-9.

member of Parnell's family who occupied a fixed position in his life. The others, to whom he was in many ways more closely connected, only crossed his path at intervals; they lived abroad or did not move in his circle at home. Emily, however, was at Avondale more or less throughout her brother's political career; she had the sort of consistent view of him which was shared by no one else except Mrs O'Shea. It is, therefore, still more of a pity that her account places so little value upon consistency, or accuracy.

Moreover, their relationship, at least according to Emily, was close:

> Charles and I were not of the same politics. This, however, did not make us the worse friends, but perhaps rather the contrary. We agreed to differ and by a tacit understanding we never discussed politics when together .. he would often exclaim to me: 'How nice it is to be with someone I can depend on not talking shop! It's such a relief to escape from it for a while!'[43]

He came straight to Avondale upon hearing of Arthur's death; at this point, Emily says, 'my brother's affection shone out in full lustre'.[44] He organised the removal of Arthur's body from Brussels, settled his affairs there, and attended the funeral of the unfortunate Captain at Ballinatone - incidentally promising the ever-anxious Mrs O'Shea that 'I am going in a closed carriage, and shall be careful not to expose myself, or stand about in the churchyard'.[45] Parnell stayed on with his sister, consoling her and attempting to distract her.[46] After she took up residence in Avondale, whenever he returned there on his brief visits they used to take long rides together and explore far into the mountains; on these 'we talked of every subject under the sun except politics'. Andrew Kettle, visiting Avondale in 1890, watched them returning from such an expedition,

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[43] E. Dickinson, p. 158.

[44] Ibid., p. 154.

[45] K. O'Shea, ii, 53-4; C.S. Parnell to K. O'Shea, undated.

[46] E. Dickinson, p. 155.

[47] A. Kettle, The material for victory, p.84.

and remarked 'they both looked to advantage on horseback'.[47]

Even before Arthur's death, they had been closely connected. Parnell spent the day before his arrest in 1881 with Emily and her daughter at Avondale;[48] she was one of the first visitors allowed him in Kilmainham, and 'constantly' called on him there.[49] She was, she states, never searched and 'had quite the run of the prison'; but when she offered to carry letters for her brother he 'chivalrously refused'. Here Emily's account is probably inaccurate; Parnell wrote to Mrs O'Shea that it was not until March 1882 that he was allowed to see Emily in private.[50] And it is hard not to suppose that chivalry had less to do with his refusal of her services than apprehensiveness about Emily's tendency to garrulity and self-glorification. She also claims that she often stayed in the room when Parnell was discussing political tactics with his political colleagues at Avondale, and that when Davitt once complained about her presence he was told by Parnell: 'She is quite safe'. If 'safe' with political matters, however, which were probably largely above her head, Emily would have been decidedly risky with letters to Katharine O'Shea; and this is most likely to have been what was in Parnell's mind when he refused to use her as courier.

As far as appearances went, the relationship between the two was not as warm as might be supposed from Emily's memoir. Barry O'Brien was told of their reunion after Kilmainham by a companion of Parnell's on his return to Avondale:

> When we arrived at the place all the old servants rushed out to see him. They were crying with joy. I was horribly affected, and began to cry myself. Parnell was absolutely unmoved. I thought he was the most callous fellow I had ever met. An old woman rushed out and seized him by the hand, kissed it, covered it with tears, and said: 'Oh Master Charley, are you back to us again?' He was like a statue. He made some casual remark as if he had been out for a morning walk and passed through them all into the drawing-room, where

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[47] A. Kettle, The material for victory, p. 84.

[48] E. Dickinson, p. 104.

[49] See ibid., chapter viii.

[50] K. O'Shea, i, 238; C.S. Parnell to K. O'Shea, 16 March 1882.

> Mrs Dickinson was. I hung back, as I did not like to be present at the meeting between brother and sister, but Parnell said 'Come along'. Mrs Dickinson was as icy as himself. She got up calmly as he entered and said quite casually: 'Ah, Charley, is that you. I thought they would never let you back again.'
> Parnell: 'Well, what did you think they would do to me?'
> Mrs Dickinson: 'I thought they would hang you'.
> Parnell (smiling): 'Well, it may come to that yet'.
> That was the whole greeting. They then talked about family affairs.[51]

It is tempting to infer from this that Emily wildly exaggerated her brother's closeness to her; but I believe such an inference is unwarranted. For one thing, O'Brien does not mention that Parnell had seen his sister often in Kilmainham; they were not meeting after an unbroken absence, as he implies. Furthermore, much of the 'lack of feeling' implicit in the passage may be attributed to Parnell's social manner. As I have previously shown, it is incontestable that the feelings between Parnell and his estate workers were the warmest possible;[52] and their reaction at his homecoming shows this. Yet he treated their welcome, if O'Brien's anecdote be taken at face-value, as casually as he did Emily's cool greeting. But they knew him too well to expect anything else; and so did Emily.[53]

Her closeness to him does not presuppose a great understanding of his personality, his life, or his politics - significantly, her account of the O'Shea liaison is fanciful garble.[54] She evidently knew next to nothing about it. And she was, as she states, opposed to his politics; at one point, indeed, she claims that after Kilmainham he set to 'working towards the broader tenets of socialism'![55] Where it suits her dramatic purpose she is capable of referring to 'the promised land of Home Rule' and 'the

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[51] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 349.

[52] See above, part 5, chapter 2, pp380-81, 406-10.

[53] On this point, see K. O'Shea, ii, 244: 'He had much pride of family and family affection, but he was utterly undemonstrative and shy . . I do not think his family ever realised how strong his affection for them was.'

[54] E. Dickinson, pp. 137-41.

[55] Ibid., p. 136.

great structure of his /Parnell's/ life-work';[56] but there seems little doubt that her general attitude to his politics was disapproval, further coloured by the unpleasant difference she found that his reputation made to her own social life in Dublin.[57]

She was, however, furious about the secession in Committee Room Fifteen[58] and determined to see him through his last campaign. She had intended to spend the winter away from Avondale:

> But on Charles declaring he would not stop at Avondale unless I stayed there too, I altered my plans, so as to be able to look after his comfort during his weekly visits to Ireland. So it happened that he and I were more thrown together this year, which was destined to be Charles's last on earth, than we had been since the days of our childhood.[59]

When he went to meetings near Wicklow, she attended them; when he spent a night at home, she kept him company. She describes his outward cheerfulness and his desire for companionship - and the one time she found him alone 'with a look on his face . . of a despondency which saw no ray of light far off'.[60] Barry O'Brien has written of the same thing;[61] and Patrick O'Brien told him of Parnell asking if he could come to the theatre with himself and Emily in 1891,[62] when he was almost pathetically anxious for company. Most of what she writes of this period has the ring of truth; as has the account of the last time she saw him. Emily and Delia took rooms at Bray to attend the Cabinteely meeting; Parnell drove to the meeting with them, and the carriage went past Khyber Pass, Dalkey, where they had lived as children immediately after their father's death.[63] They reminisced enthusiastically about this; but the easy tone of the evening was

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[56] E. Dickinson, p. 177.

[57] Ibid., pp. 173-4.

[58] Ibid., pp. 176-7.

[59] Ibid, p. 178.

[60] Ibid., p. 179.

[61] O'Brien, Parnell, ii, 341-4.

[62] Ibid., ii, 342.

[63] See above, part 4, chapter 1, pp. 236-7.

spoiled by the shattering of the carriage windows by the over-eager crowd at the meetings - to both the superstitious Parnells, an act of great ill-omen. After the meeting they dined at the Royal Marine Hotel at Kingstown; Parnell walked with his sister and niece to the Bray train and said goodbye. The Creggs meeting was two weeks later; and he did not come to Avondale again.

It is significant that about the Creggs meeting,which she did not attend, Emily supplies irrelevant and totally imaginary details, such as Parnell swaying and falling senseless at the end of his address. It is equally typical that of her dash to Brighton after his death (also mentioned by her mother)[64] she says nothing except that she was not allowed view Parnell's remains by 'his small band of followers';[65] one longs to hear more. But in her account of Parnell following her from room to room in Avondale during 1891, uncharacteristically 'making conversation', in her memory of him deliberately forgetting politics on their long rides together in the Wicklow hills, in the kindness and sympathy he showed to her when Arthur's unexpected death left her stranded at Avondale in 1883, Emily's book bears witness to a closeness between brother and sister which lasted from childhood, through deep-rooted differences of conviction, attitudes and character. Emily lived too long; in old age she was to become that saddest of sights, a 'character' round the streets of Dublin, and to write a book which in many ways travestied her dead brother's reputation. But what is worthwhile in her memoir is easily discernible from the mass of chaff which surrounds it; and even the inaccurate or simply fanciful aspects of the book themselves tell us something of the unfortunate woman who wrote it. For all her differences from her brother, she was still a Parnell - and one who was closer to him than many others of the family.

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[64] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.49.

[65] E. Dickinson, p. 186.

III

Henry, the youngest Parnell son, remains a shadowy figure throughout this period. He had, as I have discussed, made money out of his inheritance,[66] selling off most of the Clonmore lands by 1875; in this year he was admitted to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn.[67] He never, however, practised as a barrister, though giving this as his profession on legal documents; John Howard tells us that Henry never took his degree examination at Cambridge because he was 'too nervous',[68] and possibly this inertia was due to the same reason. Other records state that he spent much of his time travelling because of his delicate health.[69]

He married Penelope Jane Luby on 21 October 1882; the wedding was not mentioned in the Dublin papers, although the bride's father had been a well-known Fellow of Trinity College. It probably took place in London; Penelope's address, as well as her mother's, was given as the Grosvenor Hotel on Buckingham Palace Road,[70] and her father had died in 1870.[71] Penelope was a cousin of the celebrated Fenian, T.C. Luby, but this interesting link does not seem to have meant that Henry Parnell had leanings towards Irish nationalism; Thomas Clarke Luby was if anything an even more anomalous product of his background than Charles Stewart Parnell.[72] There were three children born of the marriage: Henry Maurice Stewart (in 1884), Maud Yolan Howard (in 1886) and Harold de Mowbray (in 1889). The last-named

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[66] See above, part 4, chapter 1, pp 262-4.

[67] Register of Admissions to Lincoln's Inn (London 1896), ii, 352.

[68] J.H. Parnell, p.11.

[69] P.J. Hanway, 'Mrs Parnell', in Celtic Monthly, vol. v no. 4 (April 1881), pp. 326-9. See also above, part 4, chapter 1, p. 265.

[70] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1882, 36.27.

[71] His library was auctioned in this year. See a Catalogue of books for auction by J. Fleming Jones in Dublin (Dublin 1870).

[72] See F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland since the famine (London 1971) p. 115; also J.O'Leary, Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism (London, 1890) for numerous references.

was slightly simple-minded; in later years he lived with John Howard Parnell at Glenageary. But up to 1891, little enough is known of Henry Parnell's family. They lived, ironically, at the sort of watering-places on the south coast of England so favoured by Henry's brother and Mrs O'Shea at the same time. In 1884 Henry was living at Folkestone,[73] in 1891 at Ramsgate,[74] and T.P. O'Connor records him as being resident at Brighton;[75] while Parnell, looking for a discreet retreat in the early 1880s, rented a house at Eastbourne with a view to purchasing it only to discover to his surprise and chagrin that Henry was living in the same town.[76]

This reaction, as well as the ignorance it shows on Parnell's part about his brother's wherabouts, implies that there was not a close link between him and Henry. T.P. O'Connor states (though without corroboration) that Henry had a persecution mania and suffered from the delusion that he was constantly being followed[77] and this may provide an explanation for his shadowy life-style as well as clarifying what John Parnell meant by his casual reference to Henry's nervousness.

The only record we have of Henry is, appropriately enough, contained in his land dealings. With the profits of his Clonmore sales he had bought a six-hundred acre estate in Co. Kilkenny;[78] he also retained about three hundred acres of the Clonmore estate.[79] He used these assets as the most absentee of landlords; we find him raising money on the security of the Carlow lands in 1884 and 1891,[80] and putting part of the Kilkenny estate in the trusteeship of his mother-in-law and Alfred MacDermott as security for

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[73] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1884, 39.86.

[74] Ibid. for 1891, 50.145.

[75] T.P. O'Connor, C.S. Parnell: a memory, p. 25.

[76] K. O'Shea, ii, 72-3.

[77] T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian (London, 1929), ii, 330.

[78] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1874, 47.27. See above, part 4, chapter 1, p. 264.

[79] Ibid for 1891, 50.145.

[80] Ibid for 1882, 36.27.

£6000 which was advanced to him when he married Penelope Luby.[81] He seems to have managed these Irish lands through a middleman; and it has already been seen how his harsh reputation affected his brother's career, both in the Dublin election of 1875, when the Conservatives circulated a broadsheet proclaiming 'Mr Parnell's many disputes with his tenants at Tombay',[82] and in an anonymous letter to the Irish Times in 1880 which accused Parnell of being party to the Clonmore land speculations.[83] Whether or not the accusers were completely ingenuous in mistaking the identity of the landlord, the effect was strong enough. A correspondent of Michael Davitt's in 1885, complaining that Parnell was not condemned as roundly as any other landlord, added: 'I have heard it said that his brother is as bad a landlord as any other';[84] Davitt himself remarked to W.S. Blunt in 1887:

> He /Parnell/ has a brother who is a fierce landlord, and Parnell gets the credit for evictions which are ordered by the brother; he himself has never evicted anybody.[85]

Both T.P. O'Connor and St John Ervine describe Henry Parnell as a strong conservative, though without stating their authority.[86] It seems that his attitude as landlord did not suggest any sympathy with his brother's political activity; and although he made some effort to defend his brother's reputation when Emily wrote her fanciful account of Parnell's Cambridge love-life in 1906,[87] this is the only record we have of his attitude towards Parnell's public image.

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[81] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1882, 36.27.

[82] See above, part 4, chapter 3, p.325.

[83] Irish Times, 26 Oct. 1880. See above, part 5, chapter 2, pp 392-3.

[84] J.A.McClintock to M. Davitt, 7 July 1885 (Davitt papers). I am indebted to Professor T.W. Moody for this reference.

[85] W.S. Blunt, The land war in Ireland (London, 1912), p. 270.

[86] T.P. O'Connor C.S. Parnell: a memory, p.25; St John Ervine, Parnell (London, 1925), p. 98.

[87] See above, part 4, chapter 2, p.304.

Withal he remains, as I have said, elusive. The one record of a personal appearance in the period under review is at a strangely appropriate time. Katharine Tynan, standing in the crowd at the City Hall during the lying in state of Parnell's body on 11 October 1891, was suddenly shocked 'to come face to face with Mr Henry Parnell, who bore a striking resemblance to his brother'.[88] During Parnell's lifetime his younger brother never appeared as one of the family, even taking into account the extreme looseness of their relation to each other; at his brother's death, Henry simply makes a shadowy appearance as one of the public filing past the bier. It is fully consonant with his unrecorded and slightly enigmatic life.

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[88] Katharine Tynan, Twenty-five years (London, 1913), p. 348. T.P. O'Connor also remarked the resemblance, noticing Henry in a café in Germany (Memories of an old parliamentarian, ii, 330).

Chapter 2

Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell, 1875-91

Woman's mission is chiefly to pity and aid the feeble, the suffering, and in her sons, how wide it may become! History shows that, for good or evil, often as is the mother, so is the son, and private life shows too often that as is the mother for nullity, frivolity and selfishness, so is the son. Many a man who could respond on some angelic mission to Béranger's lines

> plaignez le peuple, il souffre, et tout grand homme
> Auprès du peuple est l'envoyé de Dieu

has surely felt and acknowledged a mother's sacred influence.

Delia T.S. Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 21 Jan. 1880.

Except in that he derived from her, I doubt that she influenced him very much. In old age she was a flamboyant person, very American, obviously 'a handful' who must have been a trial to her grave and dignified son.

Katharine Tynan, Memories (London, 1924), p.5.

I

In the early 1870s, Mrs Parnell returned to America, where she lived for most of the rest of her son's life. In her long letter to T.D. Sullivan she gives the date of leaving Ireland as 1874.[1] She lived at Ironsides, Bordentown, New Jersey, the Stewarts' family home. This was a large, gabled house - three stories including an enlarged basement - near the road at Bordentown, but surrounded by trees; the back of the house looked out over the river Delaware. There was a farm attached. Furnace-heated within, Ironsides was judged by Davitt 'the best-appointed house he ever visited'.[2] Delia Parnell left it only for sojourns in the New York Hotel and brief trips to Europe. Early in 1878 she visited England;[3] in 1880 she accompanied Parnell on his return to Europe, probably to attend Theodosia's wedding in Paris;[4] the newspapers of February 1882

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[1] Delia T.S. Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 21 Jan. 1880, (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237(6)), p.3. For the rest of this chapter quoted as 'Letter to Sullivan'.

[2] Interview with Mrs Parnell in Boston Pilot, reprinted in the Nation, 10 May 1884.

[3] T.M. Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, 62.

record her leaving New York for a visit to Ireland;[5] she visited Avondale after Arthur Dickinson's death, in 1884; and in September 1886 she came to Avondale again and stayed there until late in 1887.[6] She was back in America in 1889,[7] and did not return to Ireland until some months after Parnell's death.

Thus for most of the period under consideration her background was American. But she remained nonetheless in the news, as far as Irish opinion was concerned. Her political dabblings, which I will deal with separately,[8] were only one of the reasons for this; her own eccentricity and the instability of her personal fortunes were at least as influential. Reports of her ill-health were given prominence in the early 'eighties;[9] when her health was not newsworthy, there were still such episodes as her narrow escape from death when walking on the railroad track near Bordentown in October 1883; a signalman had to lift her aside as a train rushed by, Mrs Parnell being inexplicably 'unaware' of its approach.[10] In early 1884 she was in the news owing to a number of acts of vandalism and persecution carried out against her at Bordentown - her farm animals had been poisoned and outbuildings destroyed.[11] Always ready to speak her piece, Mrs Parnell gave an interview to the Boston Pilot in which she

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[5] Nation, 4 Feb. 1882.

[6] Ibid., 2 Oct. 1886; Wicklow Newsletter, 3 Dec. 1887.

[7] Wicklow Newsletter, 23 Nov. 1889.

[8] See below, pp 492-501.

[9] See Nation, 5 Nov. 1881; also a letter to Patrick Egan quoted in ibid., 7 April 1883, where she refers to 'my long illness, delicacy and debility'; also ibid, 7 July 1883.

[10] Nation, 13 Oct. 1883.

[11] Ibid., 22 March 1884, 3 May 1884, 10 May 1884.

spoke of the many depredations carried out by people hostile to 'the inmates of this house'; but she cut short the surprised interviewer's questions by remarking obscurely 'I do not care to talk about these things, though; they do not trouble me much; perhaps my cat and the dogs gave offence and merited their death - who knows?' and preferring to show him round the house instead.[12]

In this and in other interviews, Mrs Parnell shows herself as always more than ready to receive the gentlemen of the press, but less prepared to be pinned down to coherent facts; this is especially true of her political pronouncements.[13] But increasingly throughout the 'eighties she became reported less for her political attitudes and more for the vicissitudes in her personal fortunes. Money always seems to have been a problem with her; and in her position, financial embarrassment could become a distressingly public predicament. She does not seem to have found such publicity disturbing; but there is little doubt that her famous son did not accept it so easily.

Though undergoing financial crises in 1873 and 1881,[14] the first major publicity Mrs Parnell's precarious finances received was in July 1885, when 'a number of New York ladies resolved to initiate a movement for a testimonial to Mrs Delia T.S. Parnell, in recognition of her services to the Irish cause and on account of her present financial embarrassments'.[15] Ellen Ford was the moving spirit behind this, and the evidence of Mrs Parnell's penury which inspired her was the announcement that the house at Bordentown was going to be put up for sale.[16] Thus not only the idea of a testimonial, but the actual reason for such a subscription, were closely

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[12] Nation, 10 May 1884.

[13] See below, pp. 495-7.

[14] J.H. Parnell, p. 138; T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, i, 217.

[15] New York Herald, 15 July 1885; Nation, 1 August 1885.

[16] New York Herald, 22 July 1885; Weekly Freeman, 8 August 1885.

analogous to the way the 'Irish people' had shown their appreciation of Parnell two years before.[17] No more was heard of the New York ladies' testimonial; but I do not think it fanciful to believe that Mrs Parnell herself was conscious of the parallel with the Parnell Tribute and hoped by the accouncement of the sale of Ironsides to reap a similar reward. She told a reporter about this time that she 'felt rather bitterly towards the Parnell Fund people and the Irish "patriots" generally, who, she thought, had treated her shabbily'.[18] Moreover, even when the subscription-fund idea was not pursued, there was no further mention at this time of the proposed sale of Ironsides.

There was, however, further mention of Mrs Parnell's pecuniary embarrassments, as publicly as possible. On 20 February, 1886 a Washington Post journalist reported:

> In a common tenement fourth floor, over a liquor store, in a crowded portion of the city, lives an old lady of seventy, whose condition is a reproach to her American countrymen and Irish partisans. She is Mrs Parnell, mother of the popular Home Rule Leader of Ireland . . Your correspondent called on her today. At first the people in the vicinity declared that no such woman lived thereabout, but the liquor dealer handed him a key and said 'unlock the door and go to the top of the the house'. The directions were followed, after pulling the bell-handle in vain, and at the top of the fourth flight of narrow stairs the invalid lady was found. The halls smell like Constantinople, and evidently plumbers are much needed. The tenement in which Mrs Parnell is confined consists of four small rooms, and the family, whose guest she is, numbers a man and his wife and son and two men boarders. Mrs Parnell has been confined to her room for four months with neuralgia and gout, only climbing to the roof three or four times in that period for a breath of air. She was so low a month ago that she was believed to by dying, rheumatism having attacked the heart, but she rallied . . [19]

The same reporter had met Mrs Parnell in palmier days during the early 'eighties, when she lived at the New York Hotel and moved in 'society'; but 'at this time the old lady does not seem to have one dollar she can call her own'. She informed him that she could no longer afford to live

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[17] See above, part 5, chapter 3, pp424-5.

[18] Washington Post, 20 Feb. 1886. Quoted in Wicklow Newsletter, 20 March, 1886.

[19] Ibid.

at Ironsides, which may have been true; but she also said that she had bequeathed it to Charles, which patently was not. Other pathetic details followed:

> 'I am quite comfortable with my good friends here', said Mrs Parnell from her bed in the front room. 'Yes, I hear from Charley often, but he only writes an affectionate family letter; no politics, you know'. Some of her letters were opened once . .
> The large sums recently raised for Parnell were mentioned by the writer and the landlady said 'Yes, yes, I know; and the American people may have raised so much for Mrs Grant and Mrs Hancock, why can't they give Mrs Parnell something?' As the visitor left, a tenant on the lower floor, in answer to questions, said: 'Yes, the poor woman hain't got nothing. She sometimes sends down word as our soup smells good, and we send her up a bowl on it.'[20]

The inevitable conclusion followed, worded to carry an implication of hypocrisy on Parnell's part similar to the many reports of supposed maltreatment of his tenants during the Land War:[21] 'Mr Charles Parnell ought to know that were it not for charity, there would be some danger of his mother being evicted and made the victim of rent-rack'.[22]

This lengthy report was publicised, in one form or another, in Irish and English newspapers;[23] though he made no public statement about it at this stage, Parnell must have been worried enough about his mother to insist that she come to Ireland, for she arrived in Dublin the following September and stayed at Avondale for well over a year.[24] 'Notwithstanding her recent illness', a reporter noted, 'Mrs Parnell looked well and sprightly'; she stated that she had not been in Ireland for a dozen years (despite the visit which, according to Emily, she made after Arthur's death in 1884) and that her stay was to be 'purely a domestic one'.[25] A spectator at her leavetaking at New York found her 'almost entirely

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[20] Wicklow Newsletter, 20 March 1886, quoting from Washington Post.
[21] See above, part 5, chapter 2, section III.
[22] Wicklow Newsletter, 20 March 1886, from Washington Post.
[23] See London Daily News, 15 March 1886, and Nation 20 March 1886.
[24] See Nation, 2 Oct. 1886, for a report of her arrival.
[25] Ibid.

recovered . . . /with/ much of the old energy that has always marked her life'.[26] On her way through Dublin she visited the Lord Mayor and spoke to reporters; but a witness of her arrival at Rathdrum saw her as a less impressive figure:

> After staying a few minutes at the Fitzwilliam Hotel she hired a jaunting-car and drove off to Avondale, the residence of her son, whither she was accompanied by Mr. P. O'Brien, M.P. Mrs Parnell, who seemed to be in feeble health, wore a dark straw bonnet, profusely trimmed in blue ribbon, a mantle of broche velvet, and a dress of the same sombre hue, while her entire luggage consisted of two very small boxes. After the long journey there was no-one to meet her at the station, not even the 'Uncrowned King', and as the car left the precincts of the railway, not a solitary cheer was raised. The bystanders, some dozen in number, seemed to gaze upon the lady as if she were a curiosity.[27]

It is hard not to feel that this picture - unfriendly as it may be - is more consistent with the lady who gave erratic newspaper interviews with newspaper reporters and made inconsequential speeches in public whenever the occasion demanded.[28] 'Curiosity' or not, she settled in at Avondale, deciding to re-plan the terracing round the house,[29] receiving a complimentary address from the Wicklow National League in July 1887,[30] distributing prizes at a bazaar at Avondale the same summer,[31] and the following Christmas presiding over the sort of grandiose but haphazard entertainment in which she had delighted during her Temple Street days.[32] But she must have returned to America at some point in 1888-9; for in November 1889 statements about Mrs Parnell's finances, personal debility, and the threatened loss of the Stewart family home appeared once again in the New York Herald and Standard.[33] The Freeman's Journal received anxious

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[26] Weekly Freeman, 2 October 1886.

[27] Ibid.

[28] See below, pp 495-501.

[29] J.H. Parnell, p. 281.

[30] Wicklow Newsletter, 2 July 1887.

[31] Ibid., 16 August 1887.

[32] See below, pp 501-2; also above, part 4, chapter 1, pp. 237-8.

[33] See Wicklow Newsletter, 23 November 1889.

enquiries about her;[34] and John Boyle O'Reilly quoted a typical letter to the Boston Pilot: 'I am surprised to see that the Pilot has not opened a public subscription for the relief of the venerable mother of Mr Parnell. I am one who wish to subscribe. It is scandalous that she should be left in want'.[35] The Pilot, however held that there was no need for such a subscription, 'at least for the present', and warned about the unfair political capital that was being made out of the issue:

> Mrs Parnell need not have suffered want, had she informed her sons and daughters of her condition. There is a tone about the letters and words of those who urge the subscription, some of them addressed to Mr Parnell through the press, that gives warning of a motive other than benevolence, When money is needed, the Pilot is ready to give, and to receive; but we are not used to being hurried into unnecessary generosity. Mrs Parnell's family have attended to her condition.[36]

Boyle O'Reilly lived in America, and does not seem to have taken Mrs Parnell's crises as seriously as others did; he may have known her better. But political capital ahad already been made of the matter in England. Justin McCarthy wrote to Mrs Campbell Praed in the same month:

> . . Some of the Tory Unionists took up the report and wrote as if Parnell, wallowing in wealth, had deliberately consigned his aged parent to starvation. The St. James Gazette was particularly brutal about 'son Charles' and asked why did not the poetess Parnell do something for her aged parent and where has the poetess disappeared to? - and remarked that the members of the Parnell family had an odd way of disappearing now and then. The poor poetess, alas! has disappeared in the common way of flesh - she has been dead this many years. But is it not pitiable the ignoble depths to which Party feeling will make some of our journals sink down? Luckily, Parnell reads hardly any newspapers and so will not see most of the attacks against him and his family.[37]

Parnell, was,however, affected enough to give a long and uncharacteristically forthcoming interview on the subject of his mother's much-publicised penury; it deserves a lengthy quotation.

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[34] Weekly Freeman, 14 December 1889.

[35] Quoted in ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] J. McCarthy to Mrs Campbell Praed, November 1889, in Our book of memories (London, 1912), p. 209.

> The hon. gentleman stated that he had been very much surprised by the intelligence, and had at once cabled to his agents in New York to supply Mrs Parnell with funds. He had had no reason to suppose that his mother was pressed for funds, as on previous occasions she had always applied to him and he had always promptly remitted the sum she required. Since his last remittance, however, although she had frequently written him, her letters did not complain of any want of funds, or contain any application for money, but, on the contrary, indicated that she was in good spirits and spoke of her intention to realise the crops of the Bordentown estate, which had been stored during the last three or four years for a rise in prices, and which she anticipated would realise six or seven hundred pounds.
> Mr Parnell thinks that his mother's income and crops may have been attached to await the issue of some legal proceedings, and that the present alleged pressure may have arisen from this circumstance. With regard to the threatened sale by foreclosure of her Bordentown estate, Mr Parnell does not think there is any risk of such a contingency, as some years ago he had given instructions to his American bankers to guard against this by making the necessary advances if they were at any time required. He has always found it very difficult to obtain exact information as to the condition of his mother's affairs and health . . Mrs Parnell has always declined to reside anywhere but in America, although her son has frequently tried to induce her to live at Avondale, where he would have more chance of taking care of her.[38]

There is a strong implication in this statement that Mrs Parnell's money troubles were largely of her own making. She had been left a good deal of property by her father and brother in 1869 and 1873,[39] but much of this was lost, according to John Howard Parnell, in the Black Friday stockmarket panic of 1873.[40] There must, however, have been something left, for in the succeeding years Mrs Parnell continued to play the stockmarket. In an article about her by P.J. Hanway in 1881, for which much of the information seems to have come from the lady herself, he states: 'Mrs Parnell, having inherited various descriptions of property, was forced to study finance. Her knowledge of the subject, in all its ramifications, coupled with a keen natural perception, enabled her to save a share of her fortune from the wreck and ruin wrought by the panic of 1873'.[41] This was one way of looking

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[38] Wicklow Newsletter, 30 November 1889.

[39] See above, part 4, chapter 1, p. 240.

[40] J.H. Parnell, p. 138.

[41] P.J. Hanway, 'Mrs Delia T.S. Parnell', in Celtic Monthly, vol. v, no. 4 (April 1881), pp. 326-9.

at it. Staying in New York in the same year, T.P. O'Connor heard that 'she was an incessant gambler on the stock exchange';[42] he was astounded at the change in her appearance during his visit there, from having been 'very well-dressed' to wearing 'shabby clothes' and claiming she had 'become almost a pauper'. He heard that this decline was due to losses in stockmarket speculation. There is also the evidence of a court case heard in March 1892, during which it was disclosed that Mrs Parnell had been entrusted in 1876 with a sum of $4,538 by a Miss Smith, 'to be used at her discretion in speculating in stocks for the benefit and at the risk of the owner'.[43] Mrs Parnell lost the money, and 'did not communicate the fact to Miss Smith, but attempted to retrieve the losses by using her own money. After further losses Mrs Parnell remitted over £3000 to Miss Smith, allowing her to believe that the sum was the proceeds of her investment'. The court case was brought by the administrators of Miss Smith's estate after the latter's death; they sought the return of the sum of money originally entrusted to Mrs Parnell, but they lost their case.

This seems a strange way to conduct the tricky business of investment; but whatever about the wisdom of her stockmarket dealings, Mrs Parnell evidently imagined herself an adept at it. She had, moreover, some money to invest, besides what was left over of her family fortune; the House of Representatives voted her a pension of $1200 a year on 9 May 1880.[44] This was reduced by an amendment to $600; but small as it was, this pension should have been enough, with her other resources, to keep her out of the squalor of the liquor-store tenement. Yet it was only a year afterwards that she told T.P. O'Connor that she had become a pauper; and at the same time Parnell asked his brother John to back bills for £3000 for their mother, who was 'practically destitute'.[45] It seems likely that this was

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[42] T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, i, 217.

[43] See Wicklow Newsletter, 26 March 1892.

[44] Nation, 21 June 1880.

[45] J.H. Parnell, p. 286.

to provide the £3000 paid over to the unsuspecting Miss Smith. A weakness for the stock market would explain the recurring crises in Delia Parnell's financial life, as well as her refusal either to return to Avondale or to stay permanently at Bordentown. Emily Dickinson refers to the 'total failure' of her mother's affairs in 1886 through unfortunate speculations;[46] her losses were not simply a result of the 1873 panic. It seems likely that a similarly unlucky flutter caused her sudden and unexpected destitution in 1889. Her weakness for this pastime, unfortunate enough in any case considering her circumstances, was doubly unpleasant for Parnell; besides placing his mother in unsavoury circumstances, the results of her financial peccadilloes, as I have shown, more than once provided ammunition for hostile public opinion in his political career.

Thus the life-style for which Mrs Parnell was notable before her son's entry into public life - which I have described before as 'rackety'[47] - did not change substantially when he became a world figure. Nor is this altogether surprising. Much of the reason must lie in Mrs Parnell's own character, which could be kindly described as 'erratic'. Henry Harrison took furious exception to St John Ervine's description of her as 'deranged' or even as 'outspoken, strong-minded and silly'.[48] But even if Ervine was working from secondary sources, so to a great extent was Harrison; he only met Mrs Parnell 'on two or three occasions'[49] and he was, moreover, a fiercely chivalrous judge. (Even the lady herself would not have liked Harrison's well-meant judgement that she had 'very considerable, if untrained, intellectual powers';[51] in P. J. Hanway's article, largely based on the information Mrs Parnell herself sent to T.D. Sullivan a year earlier, she

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[46] E. Dickinson, p. 171.

[47] Above, part 4, chapter 1, p.238.

[48] St John Ervine, Parnell, pp. 24,38,37,40. Harrison attacks these contentions in Parnell Vindicated, pp. 47-50, 427.

[49] Parnell vindicated, p.50.

[50] Ibid. My italics.

figures as a person of 'marvellously intellectual development' and 'an extraordinary taste for study', being versed in history, mathematics, music, drawing, chemistry, astronomy, and attaining 'the rare accomplishment of speaking and writing in all the modern languages of Europe, besides Latin and Greek'). Those who met her as early as 1880 had strong doubts about her mental stability. In this year Tim Healy wrote to his brother from America:

> They are the most extraordinary family I ever came across. The mother, I think, is a little "off her nut" in some ways, and, for that matter, so are all the rest of them! . . The mother supposes that Parnell is constantly dogged by spies, and that her own correspondence is opened by the Government. She used to wire Parnell that she had a detective of her own, detecting the Government detective! She gave me a huge code which she advised should be used in writing or telegraphing to her, arranged somewhat in this fashion: "The main street must depend for support on the Irish vote, which holds the balance of power - Rugose'. She remarked, smilingly but in the greatest confidence, that if that happened the main street would look rather rugose! About which I said there was little doubt - seeing that it might be looking that way all the days of its life before I should know any difference, or what was the matter with it! Did you ever hear such a word? She is a very aimable old lady, but why she imagines such a vain thing as that her son or I were going to write or telegraph to her is more than I can understand, as she had no previous warranty for such a supposition.[52]

Another Irish Party member who knew Mrs Parnell was T.P. O'Connor. In his hasty and over-sentimentalised C.S. Parnell: a memoir, written in 1891, he wrote that 'underneath her impassivity there was the keenest appreciation of all that was going on, and while she seemed to dream the long dream of the self-centred sphinx she was really watching everything with an intensity of gaze that came from the depths of her own soul and sought the depths of the souls of others'.[53] But later, writing his own memoirs long after Parnell had died, he was far less circumspect:

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[52] T.M. Healy to Maurice Healy, 20 March 1880; Letters and leaders of my day, i, 87.

[53] T.P. O'Connor, C.S. Parnell: a memoir, p. 17.

> I settled down in a hotel in New York in 1881 largely because Mrs Parnell, the mother of my chief, resided there . . I found her a very strange being. She talked slowly and deliberately, but almost perpetually . . It was hard to say whether she could be described as wholly sane. She had unlimited powers of speech. As a rule she spoke for an hour at a time; I never knew at the end of her speech what she had said, except that once she told a story of two men testing each other's power of holding their legs in a bucket of hot water, and how when one man conquered it was discovered that he had a wooden leg.[54]

O'Connor, like everyone else who met her, emphasised the extreme physical likeness between Parnell and his mother; Swift MacNeill, meeting her at a dinner some years later, was struck by the same thing but did not, it is only fair to add, notice any particular eccentricity.[55] But the combination of her erratic life-style, the accounts of Healy and O'Connor, and the extraordinarily florid, grandiose and rambling style in which she expressed herself (seen in her letter to T.D. Sullivan and the reminiscences she wrote for McWade's book)[56] suggests a mind that can fairly be judged not quite in balance. Her self-absorption, which led easily to self-delusion where her importance in political matters was concerned,[57] enabled her to confide the most trivial and pathetic facts about herself to both Sullivan and McWade; perhaps reaching some sort of apotheosis in a lengthy and embarrassingly bad poem which she quotes proudly in McWade's book as having been written by her when ill in 1889.[58] The other marked characteristic in her writing is an overwhelming preoccupation with social standing and an obsession with the rather fuzzy by-ways of 'noble' genealogy;[59] St John Ervine was exercising unaccustomed restraint when he wrote that 'she loved the assemblies of the rich and influential'.[60] The impression left is inescapable: that anyone so full of confused self-importance and so

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[54] T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, i, 217 and ii,330.

[55] What I have seen and heard, p. 147.

[56] See above, part 3, chapter 2, p.186.

[57] See T.M. Healy's letter quoted on previous page; also below, p. 496.

[58] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, pp. 65-6.

[59] See above, part 3, chapter 2, pp195-6.

[60] St John Ervine, Parnell, p.40.

prone to rambling dissertation in her writing (both in 1880 and 1891) could only have been yet more so when encountered in person.

II

Up to this my conclusions about Mrs Parnell have been based upon evidence regarding her personal life; but they are, I believe, reinforced by a consideration of her political involvement throughout the 'eighties. I have shown that the reputation of a Fenian firebrand of the eighteen-sixties, which Parnell's biographers have attributed to her, seems to be based upon the most nebulous evidence;[61] her political activity in the later part of her life only seems to have post-dated her son's rise to eminence, and to have mainly consisted of lending her presence on party platforms. In 1878 she approached Davitt in New York and gave him messages for Parnell, but these seem to have been of a purely domestic character,[62] during her son's American tour in 1880 she figured upon platforms at receptions.[63] Her first public speech, however, was not until the foundation of the American Land League;[64] and her first real activity came in October 1880 with the foundation of the Ladies' Land League in America by Fanny.[65] Though John Howard describes his mother as simply 'an enthusiastic supporter' of this organisation,[66] she was in fact the titular president of it; but this does not seem to have connoted a position which required either policy-making powers or organisational aptitude, both of which were supplied by Fanny and by Ellen Ford.[67] Mrs Parnell's attendance at Irish-American meetings in 1881 was, according to T.P. O'Connor, dedicated in the extreme:

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[61] See above, part 4, chapter 1, pp. 197-200; also 242-8.

[62] J.H. Parnell, p. 153.

[63] Ibid., p. 158.

[64] Ibid., p. 269.

[65] See below, p. 493.

[66] J.H. Parnell, p. 154.

[67] See below, p. 512.

and she generally spoke 'for an hour or more, patiently and indefatigably'.[68] When she first spoke at a Ladies' Land League meeting in New York, Mrs Parnell herself recalled, she was 'greatly frightened'; she states that it was her first public appearance since the 'Originals' tea-party in Dublin many years before,[69] although John Howard believed that her first speech was at an American Land League meeting. She practised assiduously for the Ladies' meeting, trying out her speech on Fanny in their room at the New York Hotel.[70] She also travelled with Ellen Ford on organising tours for the Ladies' League; but recalling her political involvements for McWade, she mentioned only one speech, reprinted in the Irish Nation of New York in the middle 'eighties, and an article she wrote for the New York Daily News in 1883. 'Most of my public life and my public speeches and writing I deem it unnecessary to refer to', she added; 'I deem it unnecessary to say more of myself'.[71] This was not strictly true; she went on to reminisce a great deal about herself, but in the familiar vein of her childhood literary triumphs and distinguished family connections - not in the context of political activity, which probably stretched very little further than the references she had already given, and in which she was never really at home.[72]

Her political reputation, in fact, seems to have coincided with the rise to eminence of her daughters, and to have ended with the decline of the Ladies' Land League in 1882. In the hectic days of 1880 and 1881 she achieved the status of a celebrity; the Nation on New Year's Day 1881 carried a front-page portrait of her, and many branches of the Ladies' Land League in Ireland and America were named after her. By 1883, such public appearances as her speech at an Irish meeting in Jersey in December[73] were rare, and her political assertions becoming increasingly

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[68] T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, i, 217.

[69] See above, part 3, chapter 2, p. 199.

[70] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, pp. 63-4.

[71] Ibid.

[72] See below, p. 499.

[73] Nation, 29 Dec. 1883.

vague.[74] In the same year she summoned Patrick Egan, recently arrived in America, to visit her in order to bring 'good tidings and elucidation of the actual crisis in Irish affairs';[75] there is a strong impression that she had retired to the wings and was playing Cordelia as sympathiser and inspiration rather than leader of the fray. A similar impression is gained from her Delphic utterances at Liverpool en route to Ireland in 1886[76] and by the letter she wrote to William O'Brien in the same year, congratulating him and his colleagues on their work for the evicted tenants and asking him to pay 'a weak and suffering old woman a visit at Avondale'.[77]

In August and September of 1884 she made some announcements about a project of Parnell's to encourage the duty-free importation of Irish goods,[78] and she declared that the Irish vote in the coming Presidential election could be used to support whichever candidate would embrace the idea;[79] but although she met the leaders of the Irish National League in America to discuss the project, it seems unlikely that there was much to it. Significantly, Alexander Sullivan consistently refused the presidency of the Irish National League in America at this time because he was going to canvass for Blaine and felt that the Irish-American vote should not be promised to either party; it is probable that this was a generally-held attitude.[80] Mrs Parnell's last entry on the political stage was after the Parnell Split. She spoke about 'my son and Mr Gladstone' at Irish National League meetings in America, where her 'strong personal epithets with regard

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[74] See below, p. 497.

[75] Nation, 7 April 1883.

[76] See below, p. 497.

[77] William O'Brien, Evening memories (Dublin, 1920), p. 96. He dates this as 'about 1885', but Mrs Parnell does not seem to have been in Ireland that year.

[78] See Weekly Freeman, 23 August 1884.

[79] Weekly Freeman, 6 September 1884.

[80] Ibid. In 1888, Mrs Parnell was an unequivocal supporter of Cleveland's, and they appeared together on a New York platform. See E.P. Oberholzer, History of the U.S. since the Civil War, V, p68.

to Mr Gladstone . . were received with applause'.[81] But her interest here was primarily personal; her speeches limited themselves to the personal rather than the political issues involved, as did her letters on the subject to John Howard Parnell.[82] And in her episodic political appearances throughout the period, it was the personal connection with Charles Stewart, and to a lesser extent with Fanny and Anna, which both motivated her and provided her with a ready-made political reputation.

This thesis is supported by an examination of her political pronouncements over the period under review. Where her speeches are reported verbatim, they are at best vague and disconnected and at worst, almost incomprehensible. She generally spoke, she told McWade, 'from very few notes, which nobody could understand but myself';[83] the same, unfortunately, was often true of her actual speeches. Speaking, for instance, upon ladies and the Irish land question in New York in March 1881, she continually recurred to 'the land question in America'; she seems to have been under the impression that this was her subject. Then she digressed cryptically into unrelated matters, of which she evidently felt she could speak with more authority: 'A great change has come over the financial world; and if you heard it as I do, you would be surprised'. The English Government, she added obscurely, 'has transferred its allegiance from the land to the landlord'. In an aside of elephantine coyness, she told the ladies in the audience: 'I trust you not only have a good many strings to your beaux, but a good many beaux to your strings; that was my habit when I was a girl, and it was an agreeable one'. And her conclusion was equally incongruous:

> We are all born here on earth; the air,sunlight and water were created for the use of every one of us on this globe. I trust that the women here will do their utmost to make the land as free as the other two /sic/ . . This question appeals to everybody -

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[81] At a meeting in Cinncinnati. See Weekly Freeman, 18 April 1891.

[82] J.H. Parnell, pp. 132, 252-3; also below, p. 499.

[83] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.65.

> to the hope and aspirations which a mother entertains for her son. Go to lectures on religion, education and industrial matters. There is nothing more interesting in the world than the industrial matters of this enormous country, and they will form the great centre of everything in this world when they will throw the industries of Great Britain out of the field altogether.[84]

What any of this had to do with the Irish land question is uncertain. She was nonetheless applauded throughout. As T.P. O'Connor wrote of her at this time,

> her speeches, without any disrespect, appeared to be somewhat rigmarole . . but the immense respect felt for her personally, and for her son, always secured her an attentive, though a puzzled, audience.[85]

She saw herself, moreover, as a person of political significance. I have quoted Healy's mystification at her belief that he and Parnell would be constantly telegraphing and writing to her in code;[86] and at a land meeting in April 1881 she told her audience that if her son was arrested 'she would go to Ireland herself and see if a daughter of "Old Ironsides" and a grand-daughter of Washington's aide-de-camp would be arrested'[87] - considerations which would hardly have weighed too heavily with Dublin Castle. In the same month she told a Brooklyn land meeting, in all seriousness, that 'Mr Gladstone had made overtures to her son and also her and had said 'only let your son pull with us and he will be the saviour of Ireland'[88] - an assertion which can reasonably be accounted a delusion. Later in 1881 the Washington National Republican went to interview Mrs Parnell and Ellen Ford about the Ladies' Land League; Mrs Parnell talked incessantly, while Miss Ford, the reporter added ironically, 'believed in work - not mere talk'. Where large issues were concerned, Mrs Parnell became eloquent: 'If England does not soon become alive to a decent sense

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[84] Nation, 19 March 1881.

[85] T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, i, 217.

[86] See above, p. 490.

[87] Nation, 2 April 1881.

[88] Ibid, 16 April 1881. My italics.

of what is just and right, forces are actively at work calculated to arouse their /sic/ victims to resistance. But the time is not yet. At present our revolution must be a revolution of ideas'.[89] When asked, however, about the forthcoming Land Bill and its prospects Mrs Parnell's answers became briefer and more evasive; she eventually said 'but come, let us talk about the - about livelier topics, in short'. The recorded interview ended here; but it is a fair guess that the 'livelier topics' included herself and her family history.

As I have said, her political appearances became infrequent after 1881, though on her way to Ireland she spoke at a meeting of Father Sheehy's in Liverpool; here Mrs Parnell declared hyperbolically that 'Ireland was the keystone of the universe and on it depended the future of the world'. The democratic principles of Home Rule should be introduced into England, Scotland and Wales, as 'they would ensure their prosperity and peace; for if those principles were placed there they should eventually have no wars, and they would bring about a state which might justly be described as a millenium'[90] - a truth which her listeners were expected to accept as self-evident, for Mrs Parnell enlarged upon it no further.

Just before leaving America at this time, she had attended an Irish-American convention in Chicago and magnanimously 'expressed great satisfaction at the manner in which /it/ was conducted';[91] as she departed from New York, an old friend told a reporter from the New York Herald: 'There is no better-informed woman on either side of the Atlantic today than Charles Stewart Parnell's mother ; she reads without glasses and translates four languages'.[92] But, however admirable, these qualities are not necessarily indicative of political acumen; and appearances on public plat-

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[89] Washington National Republican, 4 August 1881; quoted in Nation, 27 August 1881.

[90] Nation, 2 October 1886. The meeting was held on 27 September.

[91] Weekly Freeman, 2 October, 1886.

[92] Ibid.

forms with her daughters, pronouncements to newspaper correspondents, or even her title as president of the Ladies' Land League are no stronger arguments. Mrs Parnell's position in Irish-American politics cannot, as Healy's and O'Connor's reminiscences show, have been of practical importance. The Celtic Magazine told of how, when Gordon Bennett was awaiting a decision from Parnell whether he would accept Bennett's offer of a place on the Distribution Committee of the New York Herald Famine Fund and stop his American campaign, Mrs Parnell mounted a seven-hour vigil outside the Herald office to find out her son's answer. Besides showing a lack of political perception on Mrs Parnell's part - no one else who knew Parnell could have expected him to accept Bennett's ludicrous offer - this incident suggests that she had little part in her son's political confidence.[93] As O'Connor stated, it was respect for her position and connections that guaranteed her position in nationalist politics, rather than any ability or acumen of her own.

What ideas she had appear to have been alarmingly contradictory. She warned a National Republican reporter about revolutionary forces 'actively at work',[94] and Wilfrid Scawen Blunt was told by Dr Duggan, the Bishop of Chicago, about a 'curious conversation' he had with Mrs Parnell in 1886, during which he was told 'there were half a dozen men in America ready to produce half a million each, but not for a land campaign or a campaign in parliament'[95] - which seems to imply a sympathetic connection with extreme nationalism. But she also ingenuously presented as a point in Mrs O'Shea's favour in 1891 that 'her immediate family were on terms of the closest intimacy with Queen Victoria, and the members of the Royal Family were proud to recognise her as their friend';[96] and she wrote to

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[93] See 'Fanny Parnell' (anonymous), in Celtic Magazine, vol. i, no. 2 (September 1882), pp 280-92.

[94] See above, p. 497.

[95] W.S. Blunt, The land war in Ireland, p. 419.

[96] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p. 403.

John Howard Parnell in the 'nineties:

> 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 . . The Queen is wise and good; find out her opinions. Her ministers are not infallible.[97]

These exhortations, remarks John Howard, 'she must often have addressed to Charley as well during his lifetime'.[98] If she did, they went strangely with the more extreme political stance which she sometimes adopted. But, like many strong-minded old women, consistency probably seemed of little account to her.

There is also a suggestion that as the 'eighties progressed her political interest failed to keep up with events. It is significant that, when listing her son's achievements in 1891, she fixed on a strange collection of facts, some vague, some inaccurate, and all related to the early part of his career:

> He compelled the English Government to make a grant of £170,000; he caused the passage of the Seed and Potato Bill and the Irish Relief Bill; he called into existence the Mansion House Committee, the Marlborough Committee, and the Land League Committee.[99]

She adds that he alleviated the lot of the evicted tenants and presented the Irish cause poignantly to the American people. But, in what purports to be a summing-up of her son's entire career, she relies entirely upon 'these facts, published in 1880'[100] to define his achievement. There is no mention of land purchase, or the creation of an unparalleled kind of political party, or even of the changing of the English political balance and the adoption of a Home Rule platform by the Liberals. It is tempting to wonder how much of Parnell's later career was actually grasped by his mother.

The dark days of 1891 brought her onto public platforms once more,

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[97] J.H. Parnell, p. 129.

[98] Ibid.

[99] McWade, op. cit., p. 55.

[100] Ibid., p. 55.

where she attacked Gladstone and those who had 'betrayed Parnell with a kiss'.[101] Her alignment with her son meant some contradiction of her previous attitudes. In 1882 she had written to the New York Herald that the Irish Catholic priests 'exemplify on earth the sublimest relations between God and man . . It is just that the Irish Catholic priests should feel that whatever in the least touches the welfare of their people touches the apple of their eye'.[102] In 1891, however, she confided to John Howard:

> The Roman Catholic organisation has become an abomination to man and to God, Knowing how ill he /Parnell/ had been for years, instead of healing his wound, his griefs, they had not mercy on him - they vowed his death. God will render to them full measure for their murderous, fiendish thoughts and actions.[103]

Even allowing for natural partisanship, the volte-face is remarkable. Her letters to John Howard at this time are extremely strongly expressed:

> Your brother is the only gentleman in the whole set - so high-principled, so strictly delicate and correct-minded. I swear by him. Hear all the Billingsgate of the others. Your brother never called them by any foul names. He only told facts, and only called Davitt a political jackdaw. He is a close follower of Biblical morality . . I swear by his strong and scrupulous morality, and even spirituality. What a good man he has been! That is enough for me. I wonder what Gladstone sinned in when a young man.[104]

It was, naturally enough, the personal aspect of the Split which absorbed her: the future of Parnell rather than of Home Rule or the Irish Party. And when Parnell died, her invective knew no bounds. Although, she wrote to John Howard Parnell, 'the cruel blow prostrated me almost irrevocably - left me all but dead', she still, characteristically, was 'kept up enough to see two or three reporters to tell what I thought'. She continued:

> I would have died rather than not denounce poor, poor Charley's murderers and called /sic/ down vengeance on them. Gladstone will suffer for his knavish, brutal wickedness to his dying day . . The widow, the mother, is heard in heaven. Your brother's blood cries aloud for vengeance.[105]

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[101] She said this at a meeting at Cinncinnati, reported in the Weekly Freeman, 18 April 1891.

[102] See Nation, 8 July 1882.

[103] J.H. Parnell, p. 253.

[104] Ibid., p. 132.

[105] Ibid., p. 252-3.

The role of Cordelia had given way to that of Hecuba. As in a happier period of her life, Mrs Parnell's opinion became newsworthy because of the relationship to her son; and, as she had always done, she was prepared to utilise the opportunity for publicised self-expression to the full.

III

In conclusion then, what influence did Mrs Parnell have over her son during his political career? I have quoted a comment of Katharine Tynan's as an epigraph to this chapter, because I believe it to be nearer the truth than the vague assertions usually made about her effect on Parnell's political development and the inspiration she provided during his short, meteoric career. She was certainly, as Katharine Tynan supposed, 'something of a "handful"'; it also seems likely that she was indeed a trial to her son.[106] He was, naturally, fond of her; even Healy, while amazed at the nonchalant attitude of the family towards each other's movements, felt that Parnell was 'certainly very fond of his mother' - to the extent of sending her a telegram, carefully worded in French, simply to tell her of his safe arrival at Toronto in 1880.[107] (Healy did not mention, however, that this was only a reasonable step to take, since there had been threats to Parnell before his visit from Orange lodges in Canada.)[108] It seems probable that Mrs Parnell was someone who had to be humoured; she could certainly be exasperating. Mrs O'Shea was amused to hear that Parnell's mother, on her visit to Avondale during 1887, had taken over the celebrated new cattle-shed for 'an entertainment', evicting the occupants and laying down a temporary floor:

> Parnell did not see that this expensive and troublesome eviction of his cattle for so frivolous a reason was in the least funny,

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[106] Besides the fact that Katharine Tynan knew the family in Dublin, it is significant that both of her parents were Wicklow people and she had heard much of the Parnells from them.

[107] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 205.

[108] J.H. Parnell, pp 160-61.

> and was very greatly annoyed at the whole proceeding. He was always most chivalrously kind to his mother, however, and his protest on this occasion was very gentle, though coupled with firm insistence on the instant restoration of the cattle-house to its tenants.[109]

In the cattle-shed or not, the entertainment went on. It was duly advertised in the Wicklow Newsletter in December:

> Miss Bessie Byrne, the distinguished American actress, assisted by the Gasparro brothers and some local friends, will give a dramatic and musical entertainment at Avondale on Tuesday, the 16th inst. Mrs Delia T.S. Parnell will also give an address.[110]

It would be intriguing to know more. But the only account is in a slightly jaundiced letter from Parnell to Mrs O'Shea, after his arrival in Avondale a few weeks later:

> Miss B.B. was very old, very ugly, and very vulgar; in fact, E. /Emily/ says, the worst sponge that ever got hold of my mother. She drank nothing by whisky, and took it to bed with her. There was dancing after the theatricals till six in the morning.[111]

Even had this gaiety not affected his cattle-shed (where a reporter visiting Avondale three years after Parnell's death saw the decorations and garlands still in situ, withered and decayed),[112] it would not have been to Parnell's liking. The language he uses is revealing: his mother was evidently prone to being 'got hold of' by 'sponges'. Perhaps he was thinking back to the Fenian 'tramps' he used to kick down the steps at Temple Street.[113]

There is every evidence that he had great patience with his mother; his wife reiterates that 'to all his brothers and sisters, and most of all to his mother, Parnell was most generous and affectionate',[114] and John Howard Parnell corrobarates this judgement,[115] But it is difficult to believe that he wrote the letter to her attributed to him, shortly before

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[109] K. O'Shea, i, 184.

[110] Wicklow Newsletter, 3 December 1887.

[111] C.S. Parnell to K. O'Shea, 4 January 1888; quoted in K. O'Shea, ii, 134.

[112] Irish Weekly Independent, 6 October 1894.

[113] See above, part 4, chapter 1, p. 247.

[114] K. O'Shea, ii, 176.

[115] J.H. Parnell, pp. 255, 281.

his death:

> I am weary, dear mother, of these troubles, weary unto death; but it is all in a good cause . . The statements my enemies have so often made regarding my relations with you are on a par with the endless calumnies they shoot upon me from behind every bush. Let them pass. They will die of their own venom. It would indeed be dignifying them to notice their existence![116]

This letter is quoted by Barry O'Brien, and the originals of most of the other letters he uses are to be found in the National Library of Ireland: but not this one. There is no facsimile of it in his book,nor in Mrs Katharine Parnell's memoir, which also quotes it. Of the letters which Parnell did write, not one is couched in this awkward and formal phraseology, nor embodies anything approaching such nauseating pomposity. He wrote as he spoke, whether in a letter of businesslike farming advice to William Kerr,[117] a friendly note to Justin McCarthy,[118] or his love-letters to Katharine O'Shea from Kilmainham.[119] Indeed, a fault universally found with these latter letters, when the recipient published them to a scandalised world in 1914, was that they were not highflown or carefully phrased.[120] The letter Mrs Parnell claimed to have received from her son just before his death is in a style diametrically opposed to his own - which is to say that it exactly resembles the way she wrote herself. She must have been O'Brien's authority for this unlikely and atypical letter; I believe that, given the odd balance of her mind, it is on the same level of authenticity as her claim in 1881 that Gladstone had told her that her son could be the saviour of Ireland.[121] Where reality did not come up to the mark Mrs Parnell expected of it, she was capable of making the necessary adjustment herself.

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[116] O'Brien, Parnell, ii, 348.

[117] See above, part 5, chapter 1, p.355.

[118] As in the one quoted in O'Brien, Parnell, ii, 97.

[119] See K.O'Shea, i, chapters 23-24.

[120] See for instance the Standard,19 May 1914, where a review of Charles Stewart Parnell referred scathingly to the banality of the Kilmainham letters, saying they resembled 'letters from a love-sick clerk of twenty-two'.

[121] See above, p. 496.

The image she presented to the general public was not that of an erratic, slightly unbalanced, rambling old woman with a weakness for making pointless speeches to captive audiences and gambling on the stock exchange. When it was announced in 1886 that Parnell was ill with 'a gastric attack and complications' and under his mother's care, Frank Hugh O'Donnell wrote a spluttering satire called 'The Leader's Mamma' which pictured a weakling Parnell attached to his mother's apron-strings.[122] However, in the real state of affairs, it was not his mother who was nursing Parnell, but the woman who lived with him as a wife; and in 1886 Mrs Parnell was in no condition to nurse anybody, even herself. She had, moreover, a rather unreal view of her son - as when, in the same year, having written a poem about the evicted tenants, she asked him if it should be published under his name or hers.[123] To entertain the idea of Parnell's name appearing under some of his mother's execrable verse in a monthly magazine shows a very vague grasp of his personality as well as of his carefully preserved public persona. Only slightly less unrealistic is her assertion elsewhere that in 1886 he planned to set up house with herself and Emily 'near London, where we might have spent together our remaining days and assisted him in his labour'.[124] Mrs Parnell may have cherished this idea; her son, living only for his suburban haven at Eltham,never could have done. This lack of realism was something she had in common with her son Charles, who could delude himself that the money poured down mines in Wicklow year after year was well spent; a consistent lack of realism, it can be argued, motivated him through the last wrecking year of his life. But it was not the sort of common characteristic which made for a close bond between mother and son. Fond of his mother Parnell certainly was; but during his political career her effect upon his life was either to provoke attacks from the

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[122] This appeared on 21 December 1886. See T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders, i, 266-7.

[123] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p. 53.

[124] ibid., p. 55.

hostile press upon his hard-heartedness whenever her most recent financial scrape came into the news, or to visit upon him, either at Avondale or in London, her latest erratic scheme or self-delusion. What she was in the 'eighties is the logical development of the discontented and self-glorifying Boston belle who accepted John Henry Parnell and Avondale in 1835 and found it more than she could cope with.[125] She took the pleasure that most women would in having a famous son; and her own life reflected a larger share of his fame than that of most mothers. But so many of her characteristics were antithetical to his that the way she lived her life under this refracted limelight cannot have pleased him greatly.

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[125] See above, part 3, chapter 2.

Chapter 3

The Muse of Bordentown: Fanny Parnell, 1875-82

> Such perfect beings die young. Their path is one of undiminished lustre which can end only in heaven, and that soon.
>
> Mrs Delia Parnell, of her daughter Fanny, in R.M. McWade's Life of Stewart Parnell, p.80.

I

Fanny Parnell held a unique place in the pantheon of Irish nationalism during the nineteenth century; in a way, she holds it still. She was often compared to 'Speranza', but her life was more ardently committed, and her political involvement far more profound, than her predecessor's; and unlike Speranza, she died at the height of her mystique. I shall deal primarily with Fanny's politics and poetry during the late 1870s and early 1880s in this chapter; but before this/a brief consideration of her life and character is necessary.

In 1874 she had accompanied her mother to America.[1] Her health first began to fail at this stage; but it was Fanny rather than her mother who organised the house and farm at Bordentown, and she helped Mrs Parnell through the financial reversals attendant upon the Black Friday panic of the previous year.[2] From 1879 Fanny added to this the labour of organising relief funds and the Ladies' Land League in America; she also managed to produce countless poems, and a pamphlet called Hovels of Ireland which went through several editions in a few months of 1880.[3] Breakdowns in her health became increasingly frequent; in October 1880 she was too ill even

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[1] 'Fanny Parnell' (author anonymous) in Celtic Magazine, vol. i, no 2 (September 1882), pp. 280-92; in this chapter cited as 'Fanny Parnell'.

[2] Ibid.

[3] T.M. Healy to Maurice Healy, 20 March 1880, in Letters and Leaders, i, 87.

to attend the inaugural meeting of her Ladies Land League,[4] and from October of the following year until her death in July 1882 her literary output almost stopped - which could only have been an indication of debility. The actual cause of her death is uncertain. Emily Dickinson believed that Fanny died of rheumatic fever after a bout of malaria;[5] her mother repeated this.[6] Barry O'Brien was told by Willie Redmond, who was staying at Bordentown when she died, that Fanny died very suddenly in her sleep.[7] T.P. O'Connor implied that there was a possibility of suicide;[8] Tim Healy declared unequivocally but without any substantiated authority that 'she died of an overdose of a sleeping draught'.[9] This seems pure conjecture - possibly based on the fact that, according to her mother, 'Fanny's nerves gave way' while in America.[10] Certainly her last poems show a gloomy preoccupation with mortality and bear titles like 'After Death' and 'The End of All'; but this could simply have been a reflection of the lengthy illness which all the newspaper accounts of the time attribute to her. When she died, at all events, she had become a national figure both in Ireland and America.

On the surface, she was an unlikely celebrity. 'You could not help thinking', wrote a friend, 'that she felt as if it were amusing that she should be expected to possess any influence'.[11] She found, in fact, a great deal in life amusing, and seems to have had a sense of humour which goes

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[4] 'Fanny Parnell', p. 289.

[5] E. Dickinson, p. 121.

[6] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p. 72: 'Here she got malaria . . Here she died of exhaustion and a weak heart'.

[7] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 373, n.1.

[8] T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, i, 219.

[9] T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders, i, 81.

[10] R.M. McWade, op. cit., p. 72.

[11] 'An appreciation of Fanny Parnell' by 'J.M.' in the Nation, 5 August 1882.

strangely with the bathos of her worse poems. John and Emily describe her as a lively, spirited girl; those who met her when she had a reputation for writing intense poetry were surprised by her gaiety.[12] She was capable of smart repartee, as when a deputation came to tell her that the Ladies' Land League were to be toasted at James Redpath's farewell dinner in the words 'the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world'; Fanny refused to attend, replying tartly that 'the Ladies' Land League could not properly respond to that toast, since it was so recently organised by two single ladies who had given up all hope of ever rocking a cradle'.[13] But with her lightness went a deep intellectual commitment to nationalism, and more than a dash of the Parnell eccentricity, as Tim Healy noted in 1879:

> When I first met her she was gay and feminine, without a trace of the poetess or bluestocking. She chaffed about Dillon because, she said, he left his slippers in one hotel and his high-shirt in another. . . Then she complained that John Devoy had failed to obey her mandate to steal a black cat from the New York Herald office, which, she maintained, brought Gordon Bennett all his luck. I gasped, but she was serious . .[14]

She could, of course, have simply been succumbing to the temptation to pull the sober Devoy's leg. John Parnell, however, recalled that she was addicted to spiritualism;[15] and all who knew here were struck by her nervous tension. A spectator at her first public appearance recalled:

> Those who heard her will never forget the impression she made, as she stood in Delmonico's banqueting-hall, with intense, austere face, quivering, slight figure, and thrilling voice, full of all-consuming earnestness. Her mind and her emotion were too much for her strength, and at the end of her appeal for Ireland she sank into a chair, shrinking and overcome. Since then for three years she has worked here unceasingly for the Land League, performing an amount of labours far beyond her powers of endurance; and it was undoubtedly the strain upon her that brought her to an untimely grave.[16]

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[12] See T.M. Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, 81, and 'Fanny Parnell', p. 286.

[13] Proceedings of a farewell dinner for James Redpath, 1 June 1881 (pamphlet, New York, 1881: Bradstreet Press). The 'two ladies' were herself and Ellen Ford. In the same spirit, Fanny once remarked to T.P. O'Connor that 'man proposes and God disposes' was in her experience inaccurate; she found that man never proposed at all.

[14] T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders, ii, 81.

[15] J.H. Parnell, p. 116.

[16] Nation, 12 August 1882.

William O'Brien thought of her as 'one with all the Promethean passion and the Promethean unhappiness of the poet';[17] a friend who wrote a post-humous appreciation of her felt that she was more withdrawn than she seemed. Leaving the domestic circle was 'an extreme wrench' and 'her appearing in public was so much out of her line that every emergence gave her a fresh shock'; she could only be induced to give very brief speeches. For this the author blamed a 'highly strung nervous system'.[18]

This nervous tension was probably what enabled her to produce a prodigious amount of intellectual work, as well as leading to her physical breakdown. She was also gifted with a strong intelligence, as evinced in her articles and pamphlet[19] - and, above all, with a charm and attractiveness which must have greatly smoothed her way long the thorny path of political organisation.[20] In 1879 someone who had read her work but never met her

> . . . expected to find her a lady of mature years and serious manner, but was agreeably disappointed . . to behold in her a beautiful lady in all the enjoyment of youth, with large, speaking eyes, above the medium height, of willowy form, joyous in spirits, lively in expression. . .[21]

A picture of her in the Celtic Monthly of February 1880 shows a determined-looking, handsome girl with the strong Parnell chin and an attractive half-smile; a contemporary attributed to her 'several of the elements of beauty'.[22] Added to personal attractiveness was a thoughtfulness of manner; arriving in America, the young Tim Healy found her 'womanly in providing "creature comforts" after my voyage, and loud in the praise of oyster soup, which she ordered for me',[22] and an anecdote dating from shortly before her

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[17] W. O'Brien, Recollections (London, 1905), p. 332.

[18] Nation, 5 August, 1882.

[19] See below, p. 518.

[20] See J.H. Parnell, p. 163, where he says as much.

[21] 'Fanny Parnell', p. 286.

[22] Appreciation by 'J.M.' in the Nation, 5 August 1882.

[23] T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders, i, 81.

death shows her in a particularly likeable light. The United Land League of Philadelphia sent a deputation to reap the harvest at Bordentown, as had recently been done as a tribute to her brother at Avondale. Fanny thanked them gracefully but declined: 'There are', she said 'a number of poor people around me that I employ every year. I have always employed them, and your doing the work would deprive them of their means of living'.[24] Her mother, one feels would have accepted the tribute and gloried in it; but Fanny was a lady of very different qualities.

II

Fanny's politics were of a no less different order. The enthusiasm with which she had attended the Fenian trials in youth stayed with her in later years; she witnessed the beginnings of parliamentary obstruction on a visit to England, and during the twenty-six hour sitting of 31 July 1877 she stayed in the Ladies' Gallery all night.[25] The element in Irish politics of the time with which she was most connected was the Ladies' Land League. The operations of this extraordinary and endlessly absorbing movement in Ireland are quite correctly associated with the name of Anna Parnell; I deal with these below.[26] But the movement had its inception in America, from an idea of Fanny's in the summer of 1880.

Previously to this, she had thrown herself into the welter of organisation connected with her brother's American tour and the Famine Fund begun in 1879. Fanny was an indefatigable correspondent and organiser as well as writer of verse; Davitt called her 'a practical as well as a poetic reformer'[27] and from 1879 on, references to her in John Devoy's correspondence become regular.[28] Her importance to Parnell at this time

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[24] 'Fanny Parnell', p. 290.

[25] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 136.

[26] See chapter 3, below.

[27] Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p. 256.

[28] See below, p. 516.

was not, as with her mother, largely imagined; in February 1880 William Dillon wrote to Devoy:

> He /Parnell/ was in a great hurry at the time and had a lot of things to attend to, but he gave his sister full instructions as to what he would wish done. So, if you have not seen him and if you are uncertain what to do about the committee . . Miss Parnell would be able to give you some information.[29]

Probably as a result of this Fanny wrote to Devoy shortly afterwards, giving him details of her brother's itinerary and plans, and adding:

> My brother wants you therefore to form ward committees at once, to canvass N.Y. and so head off the Herald. He says let the Committee at once meet and organise itself, if it wishes to do so; he himself cannot be present till a much later date. Mr Haltigan has allowed my ballot box business to fall through. It would have been a good thing if I could have got it done before the Herald had its boxes done, but it will be a lesson to me to do a thing for myself, when I want it done.
> Please tell Mr O'Rourke that I should be much obliged if he would kindly send to Mr John Berry, Newark, at once, the names of the executive committee for Newark - that Mr Berry is expecting them daily.[30]

Devoy blamed Fanny for the rumours in 1879 that the Land League was receiving assistance from the Skirmishing Fund,[31] and his correspondence contains many uncomplimentary references to her which his answers seem to have let go uncontradicted. Possibly the affair of Bennett's cat still rankled; but there were more profound differences than that between them.[32] Fanny nevertheless continued to organise. A constant preoccupation of hers was the failure of the Land League in Ireland to acknowledge American subscriptions, thus ensuring a good deal of unnecessary pique and alienation. She wrote angrily to T.D. Sullivan in 1881:

> The mischief is now done and cannot be undone, but I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that owing to my brother not having brought a secretary out with him to answer letters and telegrams, and owing to the extreme discourtesy of the Land League in not writing acknowledgements of contributions and in not answering kind letters, fully one hundred thousand dollars have been lost to the Land League.[33]

She goes on to give examples, and to castigate Parnell and Dillon for their

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[29] Devoy's post bag, i, 481; W. Dillon to Devoy, 1 February 1880.

[30] Ibid., i, 487; Fanny Parnell to Devoy, 10 February 1880.

[31] See ibid., i, 468.

[32] See below, p. 516.

[33] Fanny Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 5 May 1881 (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237 (4)).

dilatoriness. Many letters in the Land League papers bear out her accusations.[34] Fanny keenly felt this cavalier acceptance of American donations; she had organised such expedients as the collecting-boxes in post offices all over the United States[35] to which she refers in her letter to Devoy, and she resented the deflection of funds to the Marlborough Committee or, more pernicious still, to Gordon Bennett and the New York Herald.

At this time, she and Anna lived entirely in the New York Hotel, working for the famine relief organisation 'at least ten hours a day', according to an observer.

> We often marvelled at the strength and assiduity of those frail girls at that time. They appeared to be always at work, and yet they were ever anxious for more. They never grew tired. Their great minds over-matched their bodies for the time, and carried them along in one continuous effort. They worked, too, in such a way that the actions of one nearly always fitted into and supplemented those of the other. Occasionally, though, some of Anna's plans would run foul of those of Fanny, or some of Fanny's machinery would stand in the way of one of Anna's pet projects. Then there would be a momentary pause and a little debate. It was delightful to hear them, in the parlours of the New York Hotel, set those things straight and again branch off on their respective lines with fresh impulse and new resolve.[36]

At this stage, the sisters were working on the Famine Relief Committee; but shortly afterwards, in the summer of 1880, a particular brain-child of Fanny's was brought into being. The Ladies' Land League reached its apotheosis under Anna in Sackville Street the following year; but in the beginning the idea was completely Fanny's. She wrote to Mrs M.F. Sullivan when the latter was writing Ireland of today in 1882:

> As nobody could possibly give you as correct an account of the Ladies' Land League in America and Ireland as myself, and as I have seen many garbled and untrue accounts published, I hasten to supply you with as brief a sketch as possible . . The idea first occurred to me in July 1880. The funds of the Land League, which had increased so rapidly when Mr Dillon and my brother were here in this country, had fallen off to almost nothing, a few hundred

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[34] See Land League material in N.L.I., MS 8291 (1).

[35] See 'Fanny Parnell', p. 285.

[36] Ibid., p. 286.

> dollars a week; and it occurred to me that by setting the women at work much needed stimulus would be given to the men. I mentioned the idea to Mr Davitt a few days afterwards and he was delighted with it . .[37]

Fanny thought about the idea 'for several weeks' and then launched an appeal to Irishwomen in America. On 12 August 1880 she wrote a letter to the Irish World and other newspapers, emphasising the extreme nature of the situation developing, calling for added support for the Land League, and exhorting women to found a sister organisation.[38] Weeks passed without a response; finally an answer came from Miss Jane Byrne of New York, and a trickle of others followed. A New York Ladies' Land League was set up by Fanny and Jane Byrne. The first meeting was held at the New York Hotel on 15 October 1880:

> The constitution I had drawn up was accepted. We selected an executive, nominated my mother for president, and took up a collection for $100, which was sent to Patrick Egan the next day.[39]

The Ladies' Land League was under way. All over America branches sprang up; 'I was overwhelmed', wrote Fanny, 'with applications for copies of our constitution, for letters to be read out at meetings, for advice how to organise, etc. For two months I wrote letters incessantly, day and night'.[40] It was not long before the idea of organisation in Ireland, 'where the real work would soon lie', began to preoccupy her. The Nation in December 1880 quoted a letter written by Fanny the previous month to three sisters who wished to organise a similar movement in Ireland.[41] Fanny told them the ladies must take over if the men were imprisoned. A month later she wrote a public letter in similar terms.[42] Requests for advice came back across the Atlantic:

> I gave them as minute instructions as I could, but not having any leader they remained feeble and obscure, till it became evident that the Coercion Act would be passed and that all the members of the Irish

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[37] M.F. Sullivan, an article in Redpath's Weekly, quoted at length in 'Fanny Parnell', p. 288.

[38] Reprinted in the Nation, 28 August, 1880.

[39] 'Fanny Parnell', p. 289.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Nation, 25 December 1880.

[42] [illegible] January 1881. Fanny's letter was dated 14 December 1880.

National Land League would be in danger of being arrested.[43] At this point, the end of 1880, Anna was asked to take over the organisation in Ireland; the continuation of the tale is part of her story, and I will deal with it accordingly.[44]

The extension of the new organisation to Ireland added to Fanny's fund-raising work; public speaking was now added to her exhausting paper-work, and in the summer of 1881 she made a tour of the north-eastern states and Canada to raise money for the League. She was by now a political celebrity. Of her speech at Montreal on 5 July a reporter wrote: 'It is simply impossible to adequately describe the scene . . .the entire audience arose to its feet and appeared to be positively carried away by enthusiasm'.[45] In Ireland, lockets containing her portrait were hawked for a shilling each; her poetry was given prominence in every nationalist journal. Her relationship to her brother may have helped to bring her to prominence; but her political activity by 1882 earned her a position as a political force in her own right.

What, then, were her own views? It is difficult to define the attitudes of those connected with Irish land agitation at this time; whether they leaned to Fenianism or parliamentarianism, the urgency of the land question and the runaway success of the League often seem to have relegated these issues to the background at the time, and it is only in retrospect that any kind of considered stance can be attributed. Thus it was with Fanny Parnell. She had been a sympathiser with Fenianism in the eighteen-sixties; her poetry for the Irish People and her attendance at Rossa's trial show this conclusively. But her later attitude is less clear-cut. An obituary remarked that she was uninterested in parliamentary tactics because she was 'a pronounced rebel to British rule in Ireland';[46] but American Fenians

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[43] 'Fanny Parnell', p. 290.

[44] See below, chapter 3.

[45] Nation, 25 July, 1881.

[46] 'Fanny Parnell', p. 285.

like William Carroll were caustic about the extent of her nationalism as early as 1879, when Carroll wrote to Devoy:

> I suppose you got and noted the Evening News I sent you with Miss Parnell's opinions about the Fund and the Fenians, which indeed are not given as mere opinions, but as facts patent enough to her. It will be news to all the Fenians that I ever met to learn that they would be satisfied with a Home Rule government and a British Queen. However, it is not Irish to contradict a lady, and so we leave Miss Parnell to see what she will see of Fenians' love for British Queens before she adds another twenty-two years to her present record of summers.[47]

Carroll put Fanny's age as eight years younger than it was, but his chivalry stopped there; Fanny and the Land League became the bane of his political life, and he finally resigned from the chairmanship of the executive board of Clan na Gael over the question of supporting them. Plans like the mooted 'Irish-American Land League' which Parnell and Dillon were organising when suddenly recalled to Ireland in March 1880 were anathema to such hard-line Fenians; in connection with this scheme, Carroll fulminated against 'the party of "respectables" Miss Fanny invited to the family gathering'.[48] Nor could his mind have been eased by speeches of Fanny's like one in Montreal where she emphased that 'the English government was not by any means the worst enemy the Irish people had . . it was the feudal government in Ireland that had created so deplorable a state of affairs in the country;'[49] thus, she implied, the government had to be improved rather than destroyed. She emphasised the Land League's non-violent nature in the same speech; and in August 1880 she wrote to the Irish World:

> My own individual opinion is that the Land League is right to confine itself to 'the inch beyond the saw' and to employ nothing but moral force means as long as they are of use. When things arrive at such a pitch that moral force measures will be no longer of any use, then let the Land League disband.[50]

She went on to call upon the Irish 'of every shade of nationalist opinion' to support the League; this seems to have become by now her priority, the

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[47] W. Carroll to Devoy, 5 December 1879; Devoy's Post bag, i, 466.

[48] Ibid., p. 522.

[49] See Nation, 25 July 1881.

[50] Letter of 12 August 1880, quoted in the Nation, 28 August 1880.

issue of parliamentarian tactics versus physical force having become a secondary issue. One of her contemporaries supports this contention:

> She was perfectly at ease in all Irish organisations. It mattered little to her whether they were of the physical or moral force doctrine. Her thorough knowledge of all Irish struggles and the Irish question in its every phase enabled her to speak with authority to the advocates of every plan. She had a use for every man and every idea, and with all the ease in the world assigned every organisation its place and gave it full credit for its work. In this way she exercised great influence in uniting the various contending elements which went to make up the Land League.[51]

She did not always find this an easy path to follow. John Parnell, after paying a tribute to her ability to resolve friction, went on to describe her anger and annoyance at overhearing 'some very nasty remarks made both about our brother and herself' when she was visiting a house in Providence, Rhode Island; the offending people were members of 'the extreme section of Mr Ford's party'.[52] A good sample of the way hard-line Irish-American nationalists looked upon Fanny's work is to be found in the letters of William Carroll to John Devoy, some of which I have already quoted. An interesting characteristic of Carroll's letters is that he seems to have resented the Parnell family connection at least as much as the constitutional politics that the League stood for:

> Mr Parnell and family and family retainers having set up in business for themselves should now be left to enjoy their mutual admiration party while Irishmen attend to the business on their hands, now more pressing than ever . . As for the N.Y. meeting on the 18th, I see no evidence that Miss Fanny Parnell and Mr Dillon have relinquished, or intend to relinquish, their plan of running it in the family interest, which is now a decidedly anti-Irish interest, and as pro-English as if prepared in Downing Street . . To make the movement at all representative, Irish and American, it will be necessary for Miss Fanny and 'her brother' and Mr Dillon to drop out of sight. . .[53]

Like Devoy, Carroll thought Fanny indiscreet in her public statements about the aid given by the Skirmishing Fund to the Land League;[54] he also thought that she and her friends were 'building up a concern to crush V.C. and

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[51] 'Fanny Parnell', p. 287.

[52] J.H. Parnell, p. 164.

[53] W. Carroll to Devoy, 29 April 1880; Devoy's Post bag, i, 521.

[54] Same to same, 11 May 1880; ibid, i, 530.

I.R.B.' and that the end result would be that Ireland would once more 'find herself deceived by spouters' - a scarcely veiled reference to Fanny's fervid poetry.[55] Carroll was further infuriated by the personal adulation received by Fanny and her brother; he felt that Clan na Gael should be 'placed again on its feet in the dignified position it is entitled to assume, instead of cringing at the feet of Miss Fanny and "her brother".'[56] Parnell, he felt, would set up 'a new C.O.I.R. - ship with all the family and family servants as assistant C.O.I.R.s'.[57] Such attacks cannot have been restricted entirely to private correspondence; she seems to have been especially sensitive to criticism of the family. Mrs Parnell told R.M. McWade that the day before Fanny died, after a talk with Davitt, she said to her mother 'with extreme distress and terror: "Oh, Mamma, Davitt hates Charlie!"'.[58] 'Oh no, my dear', Mrs Parnell replied, 'you mistake'. This cannot have been great comfort to Fanny, who had listened to backbiting Fenian resentment in the house at Providence, and by now had had three years of constant political organisation and manoeuvring to contend with. Others must have thought much as Carroll did, and not kept their opinions to themselves.

What her own political opinions were remains a question hard to answer. Had she outlived the Land War, it would be easier to define her political stance. The trend of her social thought was certainly more radical than her brother's; though he put his name to the introduction of her pamphlet Hovels of Ireland, it is unlikely that he subscribed to many of the opinions therein:

> All through history it is the mob (so-called) that really ends by winning. In the warfare of plebeian against patrician it is the plebeian that scores the final victory. The blind instinct of the multitude, often wrong but much oftener right, is one of the most powerful of God's instruments of civilisation. It reminds the minority, the upper classes, of what it would be only

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[55] W. Carroll to Devoy, 23 April 1880; Devoy's Post bag, i, 530.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Same to same, 29 April 1880; ibid, i, 522.

[58] R.M. McWade, p. 73.

> too glad to forget: that with the accidental privilege of greater education, intelligence, wealth, go stern duties; that if it neglects to perform its duties, if it begins to fancy that its gifts are to be used for its own good alone, the great threatening majority everywhere around it will inflict terrible punishment on it.[59]

Fanny continues this passage from Hovels of Ireland with an interesting analysis of the enormous crimes of British government in Ireland - among which she emphasises the distortion of the Irish image through what would nowadays be called the media. The doctrine of Irish inferiority, she felt, was broadcast so publicly that it had become an article of faith, believed in by the Irish people themselves; Irish literary figures, for instance, went to England, and earned credit for England, too often ending up by maligning their real country. Such influences go deep:

> Theories instilled in our childhood have ever been, and ever will be, the great stumbling-blocks to progress. To many it would be like tearing the body and soul asunder to force him to give up some fallacy, loved 'not wisely but too well', which has grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength, till his whole being is impregnated with its poison. The influence of such a upas-plant America has seen on a gigantic scale when many of her best and greatest men arrayed themselves in favour of slavery - when in the heart of Boston Wendell Phillips was mobbed, and Garrison compelled to fly from an aristocratic rabble headed by Edward Everett.[60]

Thus she skilfully enlisted America's sympathy for the similar perversions of thought practised in Ireland. Her case is sharply and cleverly put (sagaciously relying for evidence upon the reports of English officials and agricultural commissions in Ireland); it would be interesting to know more about Fanny's social thought. A qualification should be added, however, about the question of her progressivism; she wrote to T.D. Sullivan in 1881 and left no doubt about her opinions regarding both the Irish World school of thought and radical social theory:

> It is being said that the Dublin Land League is being turned into an advertising bureau for the Irish World! For my own part, I consider it a great misfortune that the Land League ever had any connection with the Irish World. The I.W. has sent to the Land League some $50,000. It would have paid the Land League to have given the I.W. $50,000 to say nothing about them. It is the

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[59] From Hovels of Ireland; quoted in 'Fanny Parnell', p. 287.

[60] Ibid.

> recognised organ of the Communists in America and has been excommunicated by all the Catholic clergy. I have read this paper regularly for the last four years, as I like to see everybody's views of a question, and my deliberate conclusion is that, while the paper is safe enough for educated people and contains some very excellent ideas, it is a paper calculated to do much mischief in the hands of an only partially-educated and simple-minded peasantry.[61]

There speaks Parnell's sister; and this impression is borne out by references in her letters to Sullivan, where she states roundly after Philip Callan's election in 1881 that 'Louth should be disenfranchised as far as representation by honest men goes'[62] and refers to 'the pernicious influence of Mr Dwyer Gray'.[63] But enough of the Parnell enigma remains around Fanny's political stance to preclude a pat judgement. She was for the Land League in the most unequivocal manner possible; where she stood on larger political issues is not so clearly seen. Mrs M.F. Sullivan recalled:

> The practical work of the women of Ireland and America within the agitation was not, in her understanding of its nature and scope, political; it was purely humane, charitable, Christian. It was 'pure womanly' . . Woman's duty towards the law-maker in Ireland was simply to cheat him out of his victims.[64]

She was certainly, where the League was concerned, politically detached; as she wrote to Sullivan, she 'liked to see everybody's views of a question'. This was never the approach of the Clan na Gael stalwarts, and cannot have brought her any closer to them. She was, in any case, something of an anomaly in Irish-American politics; not only because, like her brother, her background and vested interest in the Irish status quo argued against it, but also because of her social and literary gifts. Her mother wrote, with barely-concealed regret:

> /There was/ certainly a great difference between her happy, peaceful time in Dublin, her brilliant time in Paris and London, and her time of devotion in aiding her brother's movement, often doing the work of friends in additionto her own. She threw herself out of her social sphere, like her brother, just at the time when she might have made a great home, had loving ones about her, and chosen enjoyments, interests and occupations wherein her great talents, which amounted to genius, would have shone pre-eminent and gained

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61 Fanny Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 4 February 1881 (N.L.I., Sullivan papers, MS 8237(4)).
62 Same to same, 5 May 1881; ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 'Fanny Parnell', p. 288.

celebrity for her . .[65]

The 'social sphere' meant more to her mother than it did to Fanny; and the 'celebrity' she gained in Ireland reached a pitch it never would have achieved in the more refined air of international salons. Her political activity brought Fanny prominence; her poetry ensured it. And an examination of some of her celebrated verse clarifies both the reasons for the extent of her fame and the uncertainty surrounding her political prejudices.

III

Time has not dealt kindly with Fanny Parnell's poetry. Only one poem of hers was included by Lennox Robinson when compiling his Golden treasury of Irish verse, and this was not one of her typical products, but the introspective and gloomy 'After Death'.[66] But her martial and violent verses/ring out in issue after issue of the Boston Pilot and the Nation which from 1879 to 1882 had a life all their own, and an effect that was unparalleled - even if their mediocrity is more apparent to us than to a readership which identified closely with Fanny's subjects and revelled in her gothick imagery. To discuss the poems even briefly it is necessary to be able to refer to a fair sample of them in their entirety; but since a twenty-syllable line and a sixteen-verse poem were nothing unusual for this poet, I have gathered a representative selection of the poems of Fanny's I came across and placed them in an appendix, to which references in footnotes relate. (Only one collection of her poems was published, in an American pamphlet edition after her death;[67] and I have not been able to find a copy of this).

Before examining Fanny's poetry, it should be pointed out that even in her lifetime the more literary of Irish nationalists never over-rated

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[65] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p. 80.

[66] See appendix, p.606.

[67] According to the D.N.B., vol. xv, p. 342.

her poetry. Charles J. Kickham wrote waspishly to T.J. McCrean in 1881:

> Miss Fanny Parnell wrote some nice pieces for the Irish People - for which she insisted upon being paid. Now she writes like this:
> 'Gladstone is sunk supine
> To quivering slush'. [68]

This was in fact a misquotation; the complete extract, from 'To England; or, the Land Bill of 1881', is even more distasteful and runs thus:

> You, Gladstone, sunk supine to quivering slush -
> You, Forster, with the seal of Cain in breast and eye -
> You, Bright, whose slopping tongue can gloss and gush -.[69]

Even when writing her obituary in the Nation, T.D. Sullivan, who himself wrote poetry, could not bring himself to praise Fanny's verses unequivocally:

> Whatever the topic she took up, she treated it with great power, and there is scarcely one of her poems in which lines remarkable for strength of thought or poetic expression are not to be found. Some of them occasionally showed a certain want of finish, She seems either not to have cared about or not to have studied the minor but still indispensable requirements of metrical composition.[70]

John O'Leary, a careful and courteous critic, wrote: 'All /the verses/ I have seen from that lady's hand are, I think, rather rhetoric than poetry, though very vigorous and sonorous rhetoric indeed'; he went on to quote some lines from Fanny's first poem for the Irish People and added:

> /The story/ was one of men who, at the call of their leader, first slew their wives and children and then themselves rather than yield themselves prisoners and consequently slaves. The moral was, of course, everything we could desire, though the example is one that can scarcely be followed in later times, when conquest involves moral rather than material enslavement.[71]

Fanny would not have argued with this; it was a habit of hers to over-state her case when presenting it poetically. Although she believed the Land League should be non-violent,[72] her verses addressed its members in the

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[68] C.J. Kickham to T.J. McCrean, 23 Nov. 1881 (MS in possession of Mr James Cusack of Clonmel), quoted in J. Maher, The valley near Slievenamon (Mullinahone, 1942). I am indebted to R.V. Comerford for this reference.

[69] See appendix, p. 605.

[70] Nation, 29 July 1882.

[71] J. O'Leary, Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism, ii, 29-31.

[72] See her letter to the Irish World in Aug. 1880, quoted above, p. 515.

most violent martial language. This, of course, was at the heart of her effectiveness. To illustrate the point, it is necessary only to look at her most celebrated poem, 'Hold the Harvest'. It is also probably her best work - and certainly the quintessence of what made her reputation. It appeared in the Nation during the summer of 1880, and seized the national imagination at once. It was attacked in the Daily Telegraph, praised by George Augustus Sala, and finally ensured immortal fame by being read aloud by Attorney-General Law in court during the State Trials of 1880. Davitt described this scene memorably:

> Every pulse in court beat faster and eyes glistened and hearts throbbed as, in the finest elocutionary manner and with a feeling which seemed to be carried completely away in the fire and meaning of the ringing words, he read . . It was the 'Marseillaise' of the Irish peasant, the trumpet-call of the League to the Celtic people to remember the hideous crimes of an odious system, and with trust in God's eternal justice to rise and give battle to the death against this imported curse of their country and their homes. The reading electrified the crowded audience, and applause which could not be suppressed burst forth as the last stanza, with its fine appeal to the God of the poor, gave expression to Ireland's awakened hope to wrench the soil in one supreme struggle from the hands of the heirs to confiscation.[73]

The stanza about the God of the poor is not, in fact, the last in the poem; there are twelve verses in all, and they are quoted in full in the Appendix.[74] It deserves to be read; Davitt's judgement is no exaggeration. There is passion in it, as well as the more obvious qualities of rhythm and eloquence. If some of the imagery is overdone, such as the corpses of murdered peasants providing 'ghastly compost' for their descendants' crops, it is still hard to fault the lines on the poor man's God, whose 'angels stand with flaming sword on every mount and moor'; there are flashes of feeling in the poem which can evoke for us the transfigured, epic quality of the Land League struggle like no other literary record of the time.

'Hold the Harvest' made Fanny's name famous. She was rebuked for her

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[73] Davitt, Fall of Feudalism, pp. 291-2.

[74] See Appendix, pp 594-5.

'outburst of poetical licence', for her 'strong vocabulary of abuse', and for 'turning viciously' upon emigrants (whom she had categorised as 'lucre-loving wretches' and 'sordid churls').[75] A weighty article in the Edinburgh Review on 'Irish discontent' itemised her poetry as a prime cause of nationalist unrest.[76] G.A. Sala, while professing himself 'thousands of leagues apart' from Fanny's politics, admired 'Hold the Harvest' as 'peculiarly eloquent, nervous, and, after a manner, "cogent"', he compared it to Julia Ward Howe's 'John Brown's Body'.[77] Fanny herself seems to have enjoyed the mixture of bouquets and condemnation suddenly showered upon her. She wrote to T.D. Sullivan in February 1881:

> You really are too kind to say so many flattering things about my 'verses'. But I have been more flattered still by receiving the distinction of some half-dozen anonymous and chastening letters from various parts of England and Ireland, elicited by the 'unspeakable indignation', as one writer phrased it, 'of every woman in Great Britain at my villainous, vulgar and unfeminine lines'. So you see, honours have come thick upon me.[78]

She never wrote anything quite as effective as 'Hold the Harvest' again; but her position was assured.

Her poetry remains of compelling interest. It is over-written and hovers disconcertingly on the edge of banality; she shared some of Kipling's qualities, but lacked the incisiveness which saved much of his similarly rhythmic, racy, didactic verse from becoming doggerel. She could also produce a splendid 'howler', as where she refers to St. Patrick driving out of Ireland 'the crawling snake and skulking wolf',[79] and she was capable of making a stanza in an otherwise regularly-constructed poem

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[75] Daily Telegraph review; quoted in the Irish Times, 23 September 1880.

[76] 'Irish Discontent' in Edinburgh Review, vol. 155, no. 1 (January 1882), pp. 155-85.

[77] See Celtic Monthly, vol. iv, no. 6 (December 1880), p. 614.

[78] Fanny Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 4 February 1881 (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237 (4)).

[79] Verse 18 of 'The Great Archbishop'. See Appendix, p. 603.

one line shorter than all the rest.[80] The body of her poetry, however, repays examination; there are several issues which surface again and again in it, and help to illuminate the political position of the author. Was it, for instance, Fenian poetry? To decide this, it is necessary to go back to the poems Fanny wrote for the Irish People in the 1860s:

> 'Tis shame to leave thee in they direst need, unhappy land!
> Nor lift to save thee from the tyrant's gripe one helping hand.
> O Brethren, prove the mettle of your swords by noble deeds:
> Far better he who in the patriot's strike untimely bleeds
> Than he who spends a long, inglorious life in heaping gold
> With heart that unto Erin's sacred cause is false and cold . . [81]

Lines like these, whatever about their poetic quality, bear an unequivocal message. There is, moreover, a continuation of the same spirit in Fanny's Land War poetry. In April 1881 she wrote:

> The blood of martyrs is the choicest seed God sows.
> A thousandfold, at last, the wondrous harvest springs;
> From every fertile crop a Truth triumphant grows,
> And to the living from the slain Hope's mission brings.[82]

This epitomises a preoccupation of Fanny's: the heritage of dead patriots, phrased in the unfortunate metaphor which she may have borrowed from the 'Marseillaise', of a bloody fertiliser spread over Irish fields. The same idea recurs again and again in 'Hold the Harvest', with the subsequent message only thinly veiled:

> The yellow corn starts blithely up; beneath it lies a grave,
> Your father died in 'forty-eight; his life for yours he gave;
> He died that you, his son, might learn there is no helper nigh
> Except for him who, save in fight, has sworn he will not die.

Elsewhere she refers to John Mitchel 'teaching the one old way where lies the serf's salvation',[83] which seems to leave no doubt. Some of the imagery in these later poems seems consciously to use the phoenix symbol that came to be connected with Fenianism, as where she writes of those who have died for Ireland:

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[80] Verse 3 of 'Coercion - Hold the Rent'. See Appendix, pp 597-8.

[81] 'The Poor Man to his Country'; see Appendix, p. 590.

[82] 'The Clogher Massacre'; see Appendix, p. 601.

[83] 'John Dillon'; see Appendix, p. 591.

> Lo! Yonder, like white-hot beacons, they light up the path we should tread,
> Pure flames on the heavenly watch-towers; shall we weep for those happy dead? [84]

This seems to subscribe to that traditional dogma of Irish Republicanism: the personal good fortune of those vouchsafed a death in the Irish cause. In the same poem Fanny promises that England ('the Scarlet Woman that's drunken, with the blood and tears of her slaves') shall reap the whirlwind; there seems little doubt that this visitation will be a bloody one.

One of the most interesting things about Fanny's poetry, however, is how accurately it reflects her mood of the time; and in a long panegyric to John Dillon, whom she saw as an amalgam of 'Galahad the chaste' and El Cid, she shows that her particular pantheon of Irish heroes was not restricted to advocates of physical force. The eighteen verses of this poem constitute a breathless celebration of Wolfe Tone, Emmet, Mitchel, Smith O'Brien, and the rest; but O'Connell receives more than honourable mention, and so does Grattan.[85] Moreover, in several of her Land War poems there is a strong injunction to use moral rather than physical force. This is most evident in 'Coercion: Hold the Rent', which alone comes anywhere near the inspiring effect of 'Hold the Harvest';

> Hold your peace and hold your hands - not a finger on them lay, boys;
> Let the pike and rifle stand; we have found a better way, boys.[86]

With this theme, and equally inconsistent with the Fenian spirit, there is a growing preoccupation with social issues - the sort of approach which I have remarked upon in her Hovels of Ireland.[87]

> From every wayside hovel, from every pauper's cell,
> From every reeking garret, from every liquor-hell,
> From every jail and brothel, from every death-bed ditch,
> The cry is swelling - surging - '<u>Now cursed be the rich</u>!'

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[84] 'To the Land Leaguers'; Appendix, pp 595-6.

[85] See Appendix, p. 591.

[86] See Appendix, p. 597.

[87] See above, pp 517-8.

The world is changing - changing - and down the long years
I see slow revolutions wrought out with pangs and fears;
In vain to creed and custom we cling with shaking hands,
Upon the shifting quick-sands our social palace stands.

We say 'This thing is sacred - let no man, over-bold,
Touch this, whose deep foundations our social domes uphold';
But sapping waves are busy, and slowly - one by one-
Sink down the golden turrets of our fated Avalon.[88]

The same element is found in another poem:

. . . Hear again the people's first and final cry:
'No more for you, O Lords! we'll dig and grind;
No more for you the castle, and for us the stye.
No more your gyves our equal limbs shall bind . .'[89]

I have stated that Fanny's poetry tended to reflect her political preoccupation of the time; thus, when between August and November 1880 she was preoccupied with planning the Ladies' Land League she wrote:

Vain, ah vain, is a woman's prayer!
Vain is a woman's hot despair!
Naught can she do, naught can she dare -
I am a woman, I can do naught for thee, Ireland, mother![90]

By the same token, when she was worried in 1881 about rural support for the Land League and writing letters about this to the papers, she also expressed her feelings on the subject in verse. The Nation in February 1881 published a letter from her about faint-heartedness among the Irish farmers: 'Should this be true, then the Irish farmers are not worth fighting for. At all costs, the tenants much stand firm. Otherwise I shall call on America to leave them to their fate'.[91] At the same time the Boston Pilot published eleven verses of Fanny's addressed 'To the Farmers of Ireland' and bearing the same emphatic message:

What will you do? We are calling now, we who have stretched our hands to save,
We who have snatched your babes from death when the landlord and bailiff dug their grave;
We are asking now: are you true men too? Are you worthy our toil and pain?
Or the mocking world, shall it read with gibes how you fainted and failed again?[92]

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[88] 'To the Land Leaguers', Appendix, pp 595-6.

[89] 'To England; or, the Land Bill of 1881', Appendix, p. 605.

[90] 'Ireland, Mother' (published in November 1880); see Appendix, p. 597.

[91] Nation, 26 February 1881.

[92] See Appendix, p. 598.

Much of Fanny's poetry of this time contains a fierce attack on the apathy and subservience which she felt might sap the strength of the land movement. It is a recurring message in 'Hold the Harvest':

> The serpent's curse upon you lies - ye writhe within the dust,
> Ye fill your mouths with beggar's swill, ye grovel for a crust.

The same preoccupation obsessed her sister Anna,[93] and possibly their brother as well.[94] In this way, the violent phraseology of her poetry has an explanation other than that of being a literal call to arms: she was attempting to galvanise the more sluggish of the League's supporters into action.

There is undeniably a consistent strain of anti-British feeling throughout Fanny's work. Lines like the following, addressed 'To England', provide ample illustration:

> Hands off! O cruel nurse,
> Red-fanged and clawed! - alone we'll stand or fall;
> Full long enough you've coined our blood to fill your purse;
> Call off your sham Samaritans, and all
> Your juggling crew of ghouls that build our country's hearse;
> Take them away! She is no more your thrall -
> Take them away, ere yet the coming days be worse -
> Take them away, and with them take a nation's curse![95]

Nor was her dislike restricted to aspects of British rule in Ireland. In 'What shall we weep for' she attacks the hypocrisy of English imperialism abroad;[96] and this verse from 'To the Land Leaguers' shows a general disgust with the English way of life:

> From grim Britannia's bowels, where souls are slain for coal,
> Where all her iron Juggernauts o'er endless victims roll;
> From London's slums of horror, where vice with hunger meets,
> Breeding men to fill her prisons, and girls to fill her streets . .[97]

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[93] See below, p.572, and p. 556.

[94] See his celebrated letter to Mrs O'Shea from Kilmainham where he refers to the movement as 'hollow and wanting in solidity' - C.S. Parnell to K. O'Shea, 14 February 1882; K. O'Shea, i, 235.

[95] See Appendix, p. 605.

[96] See Appendix, p. 593.

[97] See Appendix, p. 595.

Davitt, who knew Fanny well, wrote:

> Intense hatred of England's sordid rule and arrogance in Ireland gave a burning fervour to her impassioned pleas for her country's freedom from so degrading a subjection. She was a rebel to her heart's core, and her songs were those of liberty only - the freedom of the peasant from the social and industrial bondage of landlordism and of her native land from foreign power.[98]

This is largely true; but it would be dangerous to draw too simple a conclusion from it as to Fanny's political stance. It will be by now becoming clear that the political feeling manifest in Fanny's poems is difficult to characterise - except that the land issue is seen as of more paramount importance than political independence, despite the violent tone and anti-British sentiment for which her lines were so celebrated.

One final characteristic is important: the intense religious feeling which runs through nearly all of her work. T.D. Sullivan wrote that Fanny 'occasionally selected sacred subjects, and was rather fond of dwelling on the mystery of life'.[99] This is an understatement. Not only was she addicted to writing hagiographical poems addressed to churchmen like Father Sheehy, Archbishop Croke, and Pope Leo XIII;[100] religious references turn up in almost every poem she wrote. Biblical allusions and Christological parallels appear in her poems to John Dillon [101] and the Land Leaguers;[102] her reaction to the Clogher Massacres was to wonder for an instant 'Is there no God?' but to find an answer in religion.[103] The poems on the Pope and Dr Croke strike a pitch of breathless adulation which the most ardent Catholic would be hard-pressed to equal. Whatever about the casual attitude to formal religion among the Parnells of which Tim Healy complained to his brother,[104] there is no question but that Fanny subscribed

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[98] Davitt, Fall of Feudalism, p. 370.

[99] Nation, 29 July 1882.

[100] See Appendix, pp. 600, 601, 603.

[101] See Appendix, p. 592.

[102] See Appendix, p. 595.

[103] See Appendix, p. 601.

[104] T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders, i, 87: 'The only religion Parnell himself has is to believe that Friday is an unlucky day . . The mother and sisters share his religious condition'.

to some sort of fervid ultramontanism. The general nature of her references shows that she reverenced all Catholic clergy, and not only those who distinguished themselves in the land agitation. She certainly saw the land cause as a holy war; she said so categorically in 'To the Land Leaguers':

> I hear the trumpets sounding - the trumpets of the Lord,
> I see the glory streaming from the seraph's lifted sword,
> I see the great white pinions from dawn to sunset lands
> Flash out Jehovah's signal for the gathering of the bands.[105]

To the imperatives of holding one's own, overcoming political apathy and driving out social injustice, her poetry added the injunction of a religious crusade; given her eloquence and manipulation of violent imagery, the powerful and heady effect of Fanny's poetry was assured. I have avoided discussing her verses in a literary context. Influences like Thomas Davis can easily be discerned - as can, less obviously, those of Lord Byron and Edgar Allan Poe. But it was not for its literary quality that her poetry was admired in Fanny's lifetime - just as, because of the lack of this, it has not been anthologised since her death. It is the immediacy of her rhetoric which captures the imagination now - most memorably in 'Hold the Harvest', less so in other poems. And this immediacy leads to the reflection in her verses of all the diverse strands which made up her own emotional, peculiar nationalism - no less forceful for its peculiarity, as her hard work in political organisation shows. Seen this way, her poetry is doubly illuminating: as a memorial to the strength of the feelings aroused by the Land War, and the inspiration behind the works as well as the words of Fanny herself.

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[105] See Appendix, p. 595.

IV

Of Parnell's strong attachment to Fanny there is little doubt. He told both Tim Healy and Mrs O'Shea that she was his favourite sister;[106] he entrusted details of the organisation of his American tour to her;[107] and several anecdotes suggest that there was a deep and warm bond between them. Standish O'Grady noted how Parnell smiled when the Attorney-General read 'Hold the Harvest' during the State Trials: 'It was a very pleasant smile, merry and natural, as if he were highly and affectionately amused at the dithyrambics of his little sister and playfellow'.[108] An anonymous writer in the Irish-American witnessed a touching scene when Parnell departed from America in 1876. The writer was present at a crowded send-off party at the New York Hotel:

> Amid the bustle Miss Parnell stood, just within the door of the ladies' reception parlour, her hand resting on the head of a splendid dog of the St Bernard breed, whom she petted while she gazed on the throng. Someone present, noticing her abstraction, jokingly remarked that she did not seem to participate in the general enthusiasm; to which she quietly replied - 'I am waiting till the crowd goes, to bid Charles goodbye, he is going back to Ireland, to do his duty and Heaven knows if we shall ever meet in life again'.[109]

Although this anecdote is wrongly dated November 1879 (the writer's object being to present this as the last meeting between the two), the substance of it is possibly true enough. And though Fanny complained in a letter to T.D.Sullivan that 'it is no use writing to my brother, for he never reads the letters of any of the members of his own family',[110] this does not mean that a warm bond did not exist between them. Parnell and his sister were close enough for him to be almost prostrated with grief when she died. He avoided the House of Commons for weeks, and appeared to those

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[106] T.M. Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, 85; K. O'Shea, ii, 44.

[107] See above, pp 510-12.

[108] Standish O'Grady, The story of Ireland, p. 207.

[109] Nation, 12 August, 1882.

[110] Fanny Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 4 February 1881 (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237(4)).

who saw him to be greatly stricken.[111] Mrs O'Shea broke the news to him, after seeing it in the morning papers at Eltham while Parnell was still asleep:

> I knew that Fanny Parnell was his favourite sister, and he had told me that she was the cleverest and most beautiful woman in his family. This I knew was high praise . . I woke him and told him of his sister's death as gently as I could; but he was terribly shocked and I could not leave him at all that day. For a time he utterly broke down . .[112]

The suddeness of Fanny's death made it an added shock. That day she had driven to the post-office, exercised the dogs, and gone for a walk with William Redmond and Michael Davitt, guests at Bordentown at the time,[113] Redmond told Barry O'Brien:

> I was at Parnell's house, Ironsides, Bordentown, when Fanny Parnell died. She died very suddenly. One day she went out for a walk. She returned in a great state of excitement with a copy of the New York Herald in her hand. It was the time of the Egyptian War, and there was a rumour of an English defeat. I remember well seeing Fanny burst into the drawing-room, waving the paper over her head, and saying 'Oh, mother, there is an Egyptian victory. Arabi has whipped the Britishers. It is grand'. That was the last time I saw Fanny Parnell alive. Next day she died quite suddenly.[114]

Contemporary accounts state that she died that evening (20 July 1881), when lying down after dinner.[115] Her mother saw her walk with Redmond and Davitt (whom Mrs Parnell disliked) as a contributory cause of her collapse, telling McWade: 'She died of exhaustion and a weak heart after walking through the hot sun to provide entertainment for Mr Michael Davitt and Mr W. Redmond, whom she had invited to Ironsides'.[116] This seems an over-simple view of the case. It has been stated that she died of tuberculosis,[117] and a weak chest would account for her recurring illnesses over

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[111] Nation, 2 September 1882: 'Mr Parnell has not been in the House since the death of his sister . . I am told by a gentleman who did have an interview with him on private business that he appeared to have suffered greatly'.

[112] K. O'Shea, ii, 44.

[113] Nation, 5 August 1882.

[114] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 373, n.1.

[115] See the Nation, 5 August 1881.

[116] R.M. McWade, Life of Stewart Parnell, p.72.

[117] In Anna's obituary; the Irish Times, 25 September, 1911.

the preceding years and her swift decline following a change of climate. But the immediate cause of her death - discounting Healy's and O'Connor's vague assertions about suicide[118] - was some sort of sudden heart failure.

The effect on Parnell of Fanny's death was not limited simply to the loss of someone he loved; the obsequies which followed affected him where he was most sensitive. When he was still in a state of shock, Mrs O'Shea recalled,

> a cable arrived for him - sent on from London - saying that his sister's body was to be embalmed and brought to Ireland, and his horror and indignation were extreme; he immediately wrote out a message for me to cable from London on his behalf, absolutely forbidding the embalment of his sister's body and saying that she was to be buried in America.[119]

'The idea of death', she adds, 'was at all times very painful to him, but that anyone should be embalmed and taken from one place to another after death was to him unspeakably awful'. This decision of Parnell's, however, was not generally popular. Irish America had decided that Fanny, rapidly becoming the object of a death-cult, should have the funeral of a martyred heroine. John Boyle O'Reilly had rather prematurely written an obituary poem called 'The Dead Singer' which depicted Fanny lying 'in the sacred clay of her country' after sailing the Atlantic 'in state on the mourning-ship, like the lily-maid Elaine'; possibly feeling he had a vested interest, he headed what can only be called a campaign to have Fanny's body brought to Ireland. On 25 July there was an immense funeral, with the remains viewed at Bordentown, and John Parnell and his mother (the latter prostrated until just before the service) as chief mourners. The coffin was then removed to Riverview Cemetery, Trenton, to await the expected shipment to Ireland, an Irish shipping firm having offered to take the casket over free of charge. Despite Parnell's feelings, Fanny had been fully and grotesquely embalmed, and one can understand his repugnance; the papers of the time show her body lying bedecked and flower-strewn on an embroidered pillow,

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[118] See above, p. 507.

[119] K. O'Shea, ii, 45.

wreathed with shamrocks. A death-mask was taken by a prominent Philadelphia sculptor, and the body lay in state at Trenton until a decision was come to about its eventual fate.

On 8 August 1882 a meeting was held in New York of prominent Land Leaguers to discuss the question. Boyle O'Reilly, unable to attend, sent a telegram reading: 'Let her be buried in Ireland, Her dead lips will speak more powerfully than ours living'. It was claimed that 'Mrs Parnell and all her friends in this country desire that the body be taken to Ireland'; Dillon had been asked if the body would be received there, twenty-five delegates had already been chosen to accompany it, and reception preparations were in progress.

There was, however, the large though unarticulated obstacle of Parnell's wishes. Plans were kept at a standstill; Fanny's remains continued to lie at Trenton. Eventually a telegram from New York on 19 October 1882 announced that the body was brought to the Tudor vault at Boston that day. A poem to Fanny's memory in the Nation remarked pointedly that the Irish people would be

> . . happier still could our fond wish restore thee
> To rest in thy own native isle of the sea'. [120]

Several similar comments were made; but in this respect at least, Parnell had had his way.

The transference of the coffin to Boston was nonetheless an occasion for demonstration. John Parnell came over from Ireland, where he had been in the meantime; Mrs Parnell was once again 'prostrated' and unable to accompany the funeral train, though she was seen waving from Ironsides as it went past the house on its way from Philadelphia. When the train stopped at Camden, New Jersey, en route, the remains were viewed once again, by seven thousand spectators. 'The face looked perfectly natural and lifelike',

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[120] Nation, 21 October 1882.

remarked an observer, 'and it seemed difficult to realise that Miss Parnell had been dead for nearly three months'.[121] There were further demonstrations in New York, and an immense procession in Boston, where the body was at last interred in the cemetery at Mount Auburn, Cambridge.

John Boyle O'Reilly remained intransigent. An editorial in the Boston Pilot remarked:

> We shall not say that the funeral of Miss Fanny Parnell took place last week in Boston; that word we reserve for the last transfer of her remains, when the Irish people of Boston shall bear her body down to the sea and send it to its natural home in the bosom of the land she lived and died for . . We persist in the belief that the spirit of the poetess will not rest till her body be buried in Ireland; it was her living dream; she never thought of lying in a vault in a Boston churchyard.[122]

All round, Fanny's death aroused strong emotions. An article in the Celtic Magazine remarked on the extraordinarily profound effect of her demise upon the Irish-American consciousness: far deeper than that of John Martin, John O'Mahony, or even John Mitchel. Moreover, the same writer added, hers was not reflected glory:

> Her place in our history will stand alone - she will stand on the pedestal of her own bright record, entirely independent of the halo shed upon it by the wondrous works of her glorious brother.[123]

The poems written in her memory at the time[124] proclaim a cult that was almost religious. Beautiful, poetic, young, generous, prophetic and noble, Fanny was all but canonised by Irish-American opinion; more than one poem about her said that she was not dead, but would arise again to sing Ireland's final liberty - as she had herself poetically prophesied.[125] It became a habit in Boston to make a pilgrimage to Fanny's grave on Memorial Day (30 May), with speeches, floral tributes, and a general demonstration of grief;[126] such visits were still being paid eight years after her death. Her influence and inspiration were of a unique type during her lifetime; she remained a cult figure after her death.

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[121] Nation, 11 October, 1882.

[122] Ibid.

[123] 'Fanny Parnell', p. 280.

[124] See Ibid.

[125] See Appendix, p.606.

[126] See Nation, 23 June 1883, 18 June 1887, 14 June 1890.

Chapter 4

'The pain and strain of years': The political activity and disillusionment of Anna Parnell

When I first began my journey
My step was firm and light
And I hoped to reach a shelter
Before the fall of night.

But a band of thieves beset me
Quite early in the day;
They robbed me and then they cast me
All bleeding by the way.

And since that hour I have crawled,
A cripple blind with tears,
While each step I've made has cost me
The pain and strain of years.

- Anna Parnell, 'The Journey' in Old tales and new (Dublin, late 1890s).

One thinks of her fading further and further away from the actual world. She glided through life as one who had very little to do with the hard facts of it; and yet she was exquisitely human. Her life ought to have been written, for she was a great woman, and yet I think that she herself would have preferred that her name be writ in water.

- Katharine Tynan (of Anna Parnell), 25 years (London, 1913), p. 98.

I

Anna Parnell's reputation is linked indissolubly with Fanny's; they are generally remembered together, and the Ladies' Land League as their joint creation. They were, however, very different types of women. They both believed in the Irish land struggle and worked passionately for it; they both wrote poetry; they were both - though in very different ways - heroines of their time. But there were not many more resemblances between them; and while Fanny's permanent ill-health and sudden death earned her a martyr's reputation, it is arguable that Anna, who lived on for nearly thirty years after Fanny's death and the end of the land agitation, is the more truly tragic figure.

She struck most people who met her as an extraordinary person; there

is no doubt that she was, as Katharine Tynan said, 'a great woman'.[1] There is however, a curious nebulousness about the personal impression she made -again remarked upon by Katharine Tynan in the second epigraph to this chapter. Anna's sister Emily described her as 'generous to a fault', of angelic qualities and great sympathy;[2] but she says next to nothing else about her, and there was evidently little contact between them. T.P. O'Connor, who claimed to 'know her very well', did not find Anna a particularly pleasing personality:

> She was not in the least pretty, either in face or figure, though she bore a somewhat startling resemblance to her illustrious brother; she had great angularity of figure. Her manner and voice were even colder than his, though behind the frigidity of the language there was intense and passionate feeling and opinion. She was far more extreme both in thought and method than her brother.[3]

But by far the most complete picture has been left by Katharine Tynan, who worked with her and loved her. She recorded that, as well as sharing Parnell's mystery and aloofness, Anna had 'his extraordinary charm in great measure'[4] and an amazing 'presence', always felt as soon as she arrived at the Ladies' Land League office in Sackville Street:

> You might not lift your eyes from your letter-writing for members of Parliament, country priests, released suspects, American journalists, revolutionary leaders; but you would certainly lift them and turn about when the little lady, whose very atmosphere was gentleness, glided gently into place.[5]

She was of the stuff of heroines; 'and what soft, gentle stuff it was!' Katharine Tynan remembered Anna's constant small gifts to the girls who worked with her, her shyness, kindness, charm and sensitivity; unlike O'Connor, she found Anna's 'small, pale face strangely attractive'.[6] Despite a strong sense of humour and a lovely laugh, she objected to any form of coarseness.

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[1] See the second epigraph of this chapter.

[2] E. Dickinson, pp. 206-7.

[3] T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, i, 219.

[4] K. Tynan, 25 years, p. 73.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p. 82.

'I cannot say', wrote Katharine Tynan, 'if religion influenced her at all, or if she was anything but a gentle stoic'. She visited Katharine at her father's farmhouse at Clondalkin and talked about writing poetry. Her friend's characterisation of Anna is as the most gentle, sensitive and other-worldly of sprites.

And yet this was the woman who crossed a river on a supporter's back so that she could be present to hector police constables at an eviction,[7] who burst through a bodyguard and stopped Lord Spencer's horse in Westmoreland Street,[8] who answered the enquiry 'You surely don't think they would shoot /an agent/?' with the terribly reply 'I'm afraid not; in these parts anger evaporates in threats'.[9] She worked all day and night in the Land League offices,made speeches of remarkable pungency, and wrote a memoir of the Land War which is sharp, forceful, cogent and brutally honest. Even Katharine Tynan, while describing Anna 'with her curiously gentle, gliding pace, in her neat dress, the very embodiment . . . of a delicate, austere lady, just verging on spinsterhood',[10] still noted that Anna alone of Dublin ladies could walk down Grafton Street by herself after the shops shut - which would have ruined any other woman's reputation. Michael Davitt gives some inkling of the contradiction between her appearance and her character:

> Fragile in form, of medium height, dark-brown hair and kindly eyes, the handsome Parnell face, with all her great brother's intense application to any one thing at a time, and with much more than even his resoluteness of purpose in any enterprise that might enlist her interest and advocacy, together with a thorough revolutionary spirit.[11]

She had a special quality of steely strength, allied to the Parnell nervousness of temperament; in many ways, she was the most formidable character of the family.

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[7] 'Miss Anna Parnell' by R.M. McWade in the Celtic Magazine, vol i, no 2 (September 1882), pp. 251-2.

[8] See below, pp 562-3.

[9] McWade, op. cit., p. 252.

[10] K. Tynan, op. cit., p. 83.

[11] Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p.300.

She had, moreover, a certain intellectual arrogance which helps to explain some of the ostensible contradictions in her character. This comes out again and again in her unpublished memoir of the Land League (characteristically entitled 'The tale of a great sham'); she constantly refers to the stupidity, slow-wittedness, and lack of intelligence of the English, the landlords, recalcitrant tenants, and anyone else who opposed her. She also took an almost brutal attitude about the victims of the Phoenix Park murders, feeling no compunction either to speak well of the dead or to admit that it was tragic mischance that killed Lord Frederick Cavendish; she implied instead that the murderers were unjustly accused, tried and sentenced.[12] There is no question but that she possessed an extreme independence of mind which enabled her to pursue the most unfashionable or unpopular opinions with single-minded determination. She obviously liked Katharine Tynan, who saw the kindest side to her; Miss Tynan was an intelligent woman, worth spending time with. But all the evidence shows that not only did Anna avoid suffering fools gladly: she refused to entertain them at all.

II

In the early 1870s, Anna was at the Metropolitan School of Art, where 'she was a diligent student, apparently the gentlest of the gentle, and nothing surprised her teachers and classfellows more than her /later/ appearance in the political world'.[13] But a political consciousness was never far below the surface, ever since the days when her unconventional opinions outraged the vicar's wife in Rathdrum and her feminism shocked

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[12] Anna Parnell, 'Tale of a great sham', Anna Parnell papers (N.L.I., MS 12,144, pp. 214-5); hereafter cited simply as 'Tale'. This important manuscript was first brought to light and drawn attention to by Professor T.W. Moody, in a paper read to the Conference on Irish Studies in New York on 20 March 1965. I am indebted to him for allowing me to use his paper as an important source for this chapter.

[13] Nation, 23 April 1881.

Mr Comerford's placid daughters.[14] Certainly by 1877 she was following her brother's political career assiduously; in this year she attended parliamentary sessions regularly and later wrote a three-part article for the Celtic Monthly about the Irish party's obstructionist tactics in the House of Commons.[15] This article repays examination; there is much in it that prefigures Anna's later political activity and position.

These 'Notes from the ladies' cage' begin with a recapitulation of the Irish Party's recent history at Westminster - seen from the ladies' gallery, the underprivileged position of which is described with characteristic sharpness. Anna describes the Irish Party with an ingenuousness she was later to revoke; she believed at this time that they 'enjoyed the remarkable distinction of being the only /party/ which has never had any internal dissentions or rivalries'.[16] She is, however, perceptive about the effects and implications of obstruction, pointing out that some English members were capable of using the movement for their own ends when it suited them, and declaring that this showed the way self-interest alone could make the English support the Irish cause. Liberals and Tories were all the same on this issue, and Radicals indistinguishable from Whigs. Unexpectedly, after describing Butt's opposition to the new policy, she praises him for courageously standing out against it instead of tacitly opposing it but claiming the credit for the successes it brought - which he could easily have done. She emphasises the lack of support for Parnell and Biggar until O'Connor Power returned from America. Dealing with the actual debates which were obstructed - on the Mutiny Acts, political prisoners, army estimates, and so on - she is straightforward,

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[14] See above, part 4, chapter 1, pp. 266-7.

[15] Anna Parnell, 'How they do in the House of Commons: Notes from the ladies' cage'; Celtic Monthly, vol.iii, no. 5 (May, 1880) pp. 469-72; no. 6 (June 1880), pp. 537-41; vol. iv, no. 1 (July 1880), pp. 17-21. Hereafter cited as 'How they do .. ', part 1, 2 or 3, with page number.

[16] 'How they do . . ', part 1, p. 470.

sharp and rather abrupt in style, but the effect is lightened by touches of asperity where members are personally mentioned: Mr Raikes 'looked as if he had been taken out of a ditch drowned', Mr Lowther's features resembled 'a horse of uncertain lineage'.[17] The effect of obstruction upon the maddened wives of English M.P.s is described with frank and satiric pleasure.

As Parnell moves to the centre of the parliamentary stage, is suspended, and joins her in the Ladies' Cage, the pace of Anna's narrative mounts. Her use of detail is vivid, and some of her insights particularly perceptive - as where she remarks how the English reaction invariably contributed to the effect of obstruction instead of nullifying it.[18] Anna's conclusion to her article was characteristically extreme, and typically élitist: she regretted the general adherence of the party to the new policy after Butt's deposition, on the grounds that the ensuing infusion of moderate opinion meant that the process was not pushed as far as it might have been.[19] She nonetheless ended her final article with a warm appreciation of the obstructionists' energy and perseverance. These articles, as well as giving a good history of the obstructionist debates, show clearly where Anna's own sympathies lie; and they portray somebody with a keen interest in political agitation, and the tendency to élitism which so often characterises a dedicated revolutionary.

By the time her articles were published, Anna was in America and was herself absorbed in the organisation of the Famine Relief Fund. A spirited letter of hers to the New York Herald in December 1879 attacked the 'murderous programme' of the English government in Ireland, and spoke of the 'enormous power of passive resistance' to be brought against it;

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[17] These men were respectively Chairman of Committees and Secretary of the Colonies.

[18] 'How they do . . ', part 3, p. 18.

[19] Ibid., p. 21.

she added that American support would be in the interests of the United States itself, as otherwise the American labour market would be flooded with Irish immigrants.[20] Nor was her support of the land movement restricted to articles and letters; I have quoted a description of her working with Fanny in the New York Hotel at this time.[21] She seems to have shared the organisational work evenly with Fanny; Tim Healy, arriving in February 1880 at New York, found Anna involved as much as her sister, and wrote unkindly to Maurice that they were 'mutually jealous of each other's efforts'.[22] He found Anna as formidable as Fanny:

> The Parnell girls are their brother's sisters! They have a central relief office here, and Anna Parnell goes down every day, though the committee employs two clerks, to work for hours over the Land League and relief business. . The demands on Parnell to visit places keep pouring in continually, but John Dillon's capacity is referred to by Miss Parnell with acerbity, and I find to my dismay that I am regarded as a 'Heaven-sent genius' to set everything right. I would not like to repeat Miss Parnell's comments on Dillon, and you need not mention this to anyone .. Miss Parnell says a lot of people are offended because they cannot get replies to their letters and invitations . . In spite of their present graciousness and compliments, I shall be the next victim if anything goes wrong.[23]

The American correspondence of the Land League in the National Library of Ireland shows that Anna was deeply involved in League business by 1880;[24] there are several businesslike and rather peremptory letters from her for this period. As with Fanny, the question of acknowledgement of American donations was a preoccupation of hers; finally in desperation she suggested a sort of 'form letter' that could be printed up, with suitably comprehensive wording, and sent off to donors.[25] The confusion of finance for 'relief' and for 'organisation' is also a frequent topic. Her hard

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[20] See Nation, 27 December 1879. The letter was written from Trenton on 3 December.

[21] See above, p. 512.

[22] T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders, i, 87; letter of 20 March 1880.

[23] T.M. Healy to Maurice Healy, 25 February 1880; ibid, i, 80.

[24] Land League papers (N.L.I., MS 8291 (1)).

[25] Letter of 15 July 1880 (unaddressed) in Land League papers (N.L.I., MS 8291 (1)).

work was eulogised by J.J.W. O'Donoghue, editor of the New York Chronicle, who wrote to Parnell in August 1880 of 'the devoted and unselfish labours of your accomplished sister, Miss Anna Parnell', adding: 'She has wrought incessantly and in such effective ways as only a true woman's warm heart could suggest, for the grand cause we all love'.[26] Davitt also mentions her diligence at this time.[27] Her work for the American relief organisation, however, was simply Anna's apprenticeship to political activity. She was about to embark upon the movement which altered the face of Irish agitation and brought her first of all great fame and then a bitter disillusionment which lasted for the rest of her long life. The movement was the Ladies' Land League.

As has been seen,[28] this organisation was started by Fanny in America in the autumn of 1880. By December of that year, Fanny was clear in her mind that the L.L.L. (as I shall henceforward refer to the movement) would have to be extended to Ireland; she suggested that Anna should see to this. But Anna was not unduly enthusiastic - her reasons being, according to Fanny, 'first, because she doubted her own executive ability, and secondly, because she thought the Irish women would be afraid to join '.[29] In the event, Anna was given little choice; 'the executive of the Irish National Land League', wrote Fanny with satisfaction, 'passed by a unanimous vote a motion requesting my sister Anna to come forward and organise a Ladies' Land League similar to the one that had already been in existence, with such excellent results, in America'.[30] This was largely due to Davitt, and Anna made no bones about the fact in a speech of April 1881:

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[26] J.J.W. O'Donoghue to C.S. Parnell, 10 August 1880, Land League Papers (N.L.I., MS 8291 (1)).

[27] Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p. 251.

[28] See above, pp 512-14.

[29] Fanny Parnell to M.F. Sullivan, quoted in 'Fanny Parnell', p. 288.

[30] Ibid.

> The resolutions passed here today describe this Ladies' Land League as being jointly my work and that of Michael Davitt. Now, it was wholly his work, I did not have anything to say to it till it was done. We did not put our heads together about it. Mr Davitt settled it all in his own mind, and he then informed the world that I was going to do it, to carry his ideas out, and he never asked my consent at all. I am glad now that he did not, because I might have hesitated; but I see now that he was right, and that this Ladies' Land League was the proper thing to form in the crisis at which we have arrived.[31]

Davitt, writing in 1904, said that this statement of Anna's was 'too modest';[32] but since Fanny corroborates the story of Anna's reluctance, it seems likely that she was being accurate. Certainly, it was Davitt's enthusiasm which made the Land League Executive adopt the idea; numerous accounts tell of the opposition that was at first offered.[33] Andrew Kettle was one member who became rapidly converted; his account is worth quoting at some length.

> About the last thing Mr Davitt did before his arrest was to start the Ladies' Land League. He and Miss Anna Parnell gathered round the ladies' centre in a short space a surprising number of really talented women. At the same time I was somewhat dubious about the wisdom of the move in such a rough and tumble business as an agrarian combination necessarily must be, when run on business revolutionary lines. I was not alone in that view, as most of the Executive were opposed to it, but Mr Davitt was the leading spirit in the movement up to this, and no-one thought of opposing him, especially as they had nothing better to propose.
> When I had an opportunity of making Miss Anna Parnell's acquaintance I became even more enthusiastic about the move than Mr Davitt. I found she had a better knowledge of the lights and shades of Irish peasant life, of the real economic conditions of the country, and of the social and political forces which had to be acted upon to work out the freedom of Ireland than any person, man or woman, I have ever met. It was a knowledge that reminded me very much of that of my own mother. It was simple, masterful and profound. Ignorance of the ethics of the real condition of Ireland has, in my opinion, been the chief cause of failure of all our movements and our leaders in their efforts to work out the redemption of the country. Anna Parnell would have worked the Land League revolution to a much better conclusion than her great brother.[34]

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[31] Speech at Kilmallock, 25 March 1881 - reported in the Nation, 26 March 1881, and quoted by Davitt in Fall of feudalism, p. 300.

[32] Davitt, op. cit., p. 300.

[33] See for instance, A. Kettle, The material for victory, p. 48; Davitt, op. cit., p. 298.

[34] A. Kettle, The material for victory, p. 48.

This was an impressive tribute from Kettle, who was not usually so eloquent. It is also significant for showing that the elements which came to the surface in 1882, when the L.L.L. was destroyed, were there from the beginning: antipathy to the idea among the Land League executive, and a very different analysis of the land situation on Anna's part from that of her brother. Parnell, Dillon and Brennan were strongly against the idea, which later earned them a scornful gibe from Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, a keen feminist: 'Theywere imbued with the old "protective" idea of man's relation to woman'.[35] But it is equally likely that Anna had made her political stance known to them, and it was not entirely to their liking.

The first rumours of a Ladies' organisation in Ireland began in November 1880;[36] Anna arrived in Dublin in December; and concrete plans for the new organisation began in early January. It was to share the premises at no. 39, Upper Sackville Street, with the Land League; existing Land League branches were to organise sister movements; the support of the evicted tenants and the encouragement of resistance to land-grabbing were to be the ladies' special provinces. They were to see to the erection of wooden huts for the evicted, and the support of prisoners' families; as coercion increased, the ladies were to decide what would 'by the expenditure of money' provide most opposition to the government.[37] Thus it was <u>from the beginning</u> an expensive programme - a point to bear in mind when considering the later disbanding of the movement on the grounds of undue extravagance.

From the beginning, there were differences of opinion about its organisation. Dillon wanted the L.L.L. to be like the St Vincent De Paul Society: a charity movement. Anna, we are told, 'strongly objected' - as can easily be imagined.[38] She claimed full organisational powers, working

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[35] F. Sheehy-Skeffington, <u>Michael Davitt</u> (2nd ed., London 1967), p. 90.

[36] M.M. O'Hara, <u>Parnell and Davitt: chief and tribune</u> (Dublin, 1919), p. 151.

[37] Davitt, <u>Fall of feudalism</u>, p. 300.

[38] See 'Anna Parnell' by Mrs Jennie Wyse-Power, in <u>Dublin Metropolitan Magazine</u>, Spring 1935, pp. 15-17, 28.

in co-operation with 'the men's organisation' - a telling phrase. (In her 'Tale' she tells of an inexplicable parcel of ragged clothing arriving at Sackville Street; the Ladies' anger at being considered simply as do-gooders evaporated in laughter when it was discovered that the clothes were intended for the Distressed Ladies' Organisation nearby, to enable them to attend Castle functions).

Many of the women who worked with Anna would have shared her attitude. The names beside hers on the early manifestoes are those of Anne Stritch, Nan Lynch and Harriet Byrne;[39] they were the secretaries of the Executive. The treasurers were Mrs Maloney and Miss O'Leary.[40] Organisers included Mrs Moore, Hannah Reynolds and Mary O'Connor (both later arrested). Dillon's cousin, Mrs Deane, was president, and Mrs A.M. Sullivan a prominent committee member.[41] The spirit that guided the most influential women, according to Katharine Tynan, was the tradition of well-educated, idealistic nationalism. Girls like the Lynch sisters had gone to convent schools abroad and travelled widely as governesses; the Walshe and Nally girls had been connected with the Land League since its inception in County Mayo. While many of the membership were there simply to write letters at dictation, Anna had still attracted a central group of remarkable women. Katharine Tynan herself was 'only one of the rank and file, and a frivolous one';[42] her fondest memories of the L.L.L. were of making tea and eating cakes, and to her 'the memory of the League rooms in those days had something of the effect of an agreeable picnic'.[43] But the central organisation of the League was more businesslike - and required greater sacrifices. Elsewhere Katharine Tynan describes a visit to the Walshe

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[39] See L.L.L. addresses of 4 February 1881, reported in Nation, 12 February 1881.

[40] 'Secret History of the Land League by Michael Davitt' in D. Cashman, Life of Michael Davitt (London 1883 or 1884), p. 230.

[41] Wm. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 376.

[42] K. Tynan, 25 years, p. 79.

[43] Ibid., p. 84.

sisters, and one girl bursting into the other's room late at night with orders from Miss Parnell to go to Paris 'now, tonight, this minute';[44] the occasion was the illicit printing of United Ireland, which was carried out by the Ladies in an atmosphere far from that of an 'agreeable picnic'.

This was an example of the sort of work which devolved upon the L.L.L. after the Land League was proclaimed in October 1881. Even before these frantic days, however, their work was of a character, and of a standard, which would then have been considered most unladylike. The organisation was elaborate; there was, besides the Executive already named, a 'reserve executive' of 21 ladies ready to take over in case of arrests.[45] The local organisations were closely linked to Sackville Street, an important part of their work being to send up data for what was called 'the book of Kells' - an immense dossier on every estate in Ireland, including details of tenants, rents, valuations, atttitudes, evictions, and the character and record of landlords and agents. Weekly reports from local branches were fed into this Domesday Book; this constituted the chief bureaucratic work[46] and shows the level to which organisation was carried - as well as the realism with which Anna combated the inefficiency of the Land League, of which she so often complained.[47] Besides this massive record, the central office also had to co-ordinate the local activities such as attending evictions and building wooden huts for the evicted - these last being intended both to provide shelter and to enable the evicted tenants to ward off land-grabbers. Though they furnished 210 cabins for evicted tenants in one year, they were often prevented by police from erecting them;[48] writing in 1907, Anna admitted that this system did not work, those huts

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[44] K. Tynan, 25 years, p. 99.

[45] 'Secret History of the Land League by Michael Davitt' in D. Cashman, Michael Davitt, p. 230.

[46] Ibid., p. 231.

[47] 'Tale', pp. 163 et seq.

[48] 'A secret history of the Land League by Michael Davitt' in D. Cashman, Michael Davitt, p. 232.

that eventually got built proving unfit to live in. Nonetheless, the psychological effect of such an effort much have been considerable - as must have been the pecuniary help offered prisoners' families. To this last, however, Anna had an objection which she states again and again in her 'Tale': there was no way of knowing whether this money would not, in fact, go towards paying the rent instead of feeding the family. And here was the crux of one of the great differences between the L.L.L. and the men: 'The Land League', Anna wrote acidly in after years, 'had by no means the same objection to rent being paid as we had'.[49]

There was, as I have said, a difference in approach from the beginning. In her memoir Anna consistently makes the point that, in spite of the fact that the Land League talked in grandiose terms, the Ladies found an almost complete dearth of organisation when they began to operate in country areas; and this was accompanied by what can only be called the lack of a consistent ideology on the part of the men. A monster meeting, Anna, believed, was not as productive as a few people monitoring an eviction proceeding,[50] and the Ladies put this belief into practice. The circular issued by the L.L.L. in 1881, detailing the procedure to be followed where evictions were concerned, shows an approach that was business-like, efficient and practical.[51] Anna came to look upon the Land League

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[49] 'Tale', p. 188.

[50] Ibid., p. 72.

[51] Quoted in Davitt's speech before the Special Commission, pp. 268-9:
'. . . There is no objection to an evicted tenant re-entering as caretaker; but grants are not made to these tenants, except under exceptional circumstances. Care should be taken to avoid collision with armed force, and to restrain useless and irritating attacks on the military, police, and other agents of the law, as these would be made a pretext by the authorities to obstruct and prevent an efficient system of relief for evicted families. Note should be taken of any damage done wilfully or negligently by the sheriff's bailiffs to the tenants furniture or stock, as the amount of such damage can be recovered by legal proceedings, and a criminal prosecution should be initiated for cruelty to animals when the stock is ill-used'. Heavy emphasis was laid upon cutting costs: 'The strictest economy consistent with efficiency should be observed, and we confidently expect that all who have it within their power will do what they can, without remuneration, to assist evicted families over their first difficulties'.

as a mixture of hypocrisy, bombast and narrow-sightedness; they let the time for a rent strike go by, and then issued the useless No Rent Manifesto, and this to her summed up the 'sham' which was at the heart of the movement. The two organisations seem to have had at best an uneasy alliance; Anna wrote of the early days of the L.L.L.:

> It did not surprise me to hear complaints from the travelling members of the Ladies' Land League that it was very difficult to do anything where 'A MAN' had been shortly before, because they were so extravagantly liberal with promises.[52]

I should state here that this view of Anna's from the vantage point of 1907 was not hindsight; it is borne out by her speeches and policies of 1881-2.[53] How far her opinions were shared by her colleagues is another matter; but of her primacy in the L.L.L. there is no doubt whatsoever, so the importance of this point is negligible.

When the time came for the Ladies to take over from the proclaimed Land League in October 1881 they were not, according to Anna, prepared enough - despite the fact that their address of February had outlined this as one of their tasks. The housing scheme was the only area of administration in which they had had any considerable experience. There was also, she bitterly remarked later, the certainty of strong animosity against them at the time:

> Besides our experience in housing, we were in possession of another distinct advantage in the knowledge we had that whatever we might do, we were equally certain to be blamed for it - an assurance which is a great help to clear and impartial judgement.[54]

Knowing that they would be criticised in any case, and annoyed at the small budget vouchsafed them, the Ladies deliberately embarked upon an active and money-spending programme from October 1881 until the following spring. 'The men' - as other witnesses besides Anna have recounted - were not at all behind them in the implications of this; and neither, admitted Anna, were

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[52] 'Tale', p. 160.

[53] See below, p. 553.

[54] 'Tale', p. 171.

the tenants. Her memoir contains many references to their tendency to backslide, and their plaguing the Ladies with demands to honour the Land League's promise of paying legal costs - which Anna saw merely as granting them the money which would enable them to pay their rents. Again, one notices her élitist attitude towards the people in whose name she was working. 'I only wished', she added ruefully, 'the tenants would be as determined with the landlords as they were with us'.[55]

What the Ladies' activity provoked is well known. Organisers like Hannah Reynolds and Mary O'Connor were arrested; thousands of angry women joined in their place. The whole organisation was to be arrested, it was rumoured, until measles broke out in the women's prison and, as Anna remarked with her sardonic humour, 'the government probably thought it would be rough on the Governor to have both the measles and the Ladies' Land League on his hands at once'. Even before they had taken over from the men, Archbishop McHale had denounced the L.L.L. as 'forgetting the modesty of their sex and the high dignity of their womanhood' and 'so far disavowing their birthright of modesty as to parade in the public gaze in a character unworthy a child of Mary';[56] This had only served to call forth angry attacks on McHale himself and fervent eulogies of the Ladies.[57] When Forster attempted to have them arrested under antique statutes intended to curb prostitution, the members of the L.L.L.were elevated yet further to martyrdom. They lived in constant anticipation of arrest; their papers had to be duplicated and hidden in unsuspecting repositories ranging from a city wine-mercant's premises to the house of 'a respectable Protestant landlady in Rathmines'.[58] When the L.L.L. was itself proclaimed, Anna arranged for simultaneous convocations all over Ireland, and the

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[55] 'Tale', p. 179.

[56] See the Nation, 19 March 1881, for the full text of this pastoral.

[57] From Archbishop Croke among others. See Davitt, Fall of feudalism, pp. 314-5.

[58] Jennie Wyse-Power, 'Anna Parnell', in Dublin Metropolitan Magazine, (Spring 1935).

government did not follow the idea through. The Ladies saw to the continued printing of United Ireland from as far afield as Liverpool and Paris, and distributed it in Ireland - 'the pleasantest part of all the work of the Ladies' Land League', Anna recalled, '/as/ it was something that could, at any rate, be done, and did not seem to be so painfully like trying to make ropes of sea-sand as so much of our other tasks did'.[59] When Forster resigned and the Kilmainham leaders were released, the L.L.L. was given much of the credit - an attitude which infuriated Anna, who believed there should be no assumption of an 'end' to the Land War. She had never had any patience with the Land Bill of 1881, and even when confronted with the fact that the mass of tenants chose to abide by it, she wanted to continue the fight on their behalf: showing yet again a marked disdain for what was - however regrettably - the popular opinion. This, however, belongs to a later section of this chapter.[60]

During their struggle, moreover, the actions of the Ladies had laid them open to accusations from the released moderates. One charge was extravagance; the other, condoning of agrarian violence. Davitt wrote:

> It was neither the business nor the desire of the Ladies' League to inquire too closely into the motives or methods of those who, driven from open combination and public meetings, resorted to such expedients as were available in carrying on the fighting principle of the movement . . /Miss Parnell's/ policy was to render Ireland ungovernable by coercion, and that she and her lieutenants succeeded completely in doing.[61]

Elsewhere, however, he states categorically that the L.L.L. organised 'intimidation'[62] and that 'no district in which some form of opposition had not been offered to an evicting landlord or obnoxious agent would receive grants from Dulbin until the weapon of the boycott was applied; districts were known as 'courageous' or 'timid' as they merited this distinction by their record'.[63] Certainly Anna's memoir is loud in its

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[59] 'Tale,' p. 185.

[60] See below, pp 571-2.

[61] Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p. 340.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid. p. 341.

denunciations of the weak spirit of the tenants; but she seems to restrict this concept to their approach to paying rents. However, the line between violent and passive resistance, always hard to draw, is illegibly smudged in the case of the Land War; numerous studies of the subject have failed to elucidate the exact extent to which the League condoned violence. Anna's position in this respect is as ambivalent as any other Land Leader's - and she often expressed herself in this respect with consummate political artistry. This is shown in a speech she made at Drumcolliher on 26 June 1881, where she referred to a tenant's threat to shoot a landlord and a voice from the crowd remarked 'Right he was'. Anna answered:

> 'Well, I will not go into the question of whether he was right or not - I certainly don't think he was, because he had not anything to shoot him with /laughter/ and you ought never to threaten that which you know you have not power to carry out'.[64]

The question was thus skilfully left open. Anna had, by then, found her element. The reluctant organiser of December 1880 was well on her way to becoming the heroine of Captain Moonlight's reign in the following winter. To further elucidate both her own career in the L.L.L. and the political rationale behind the organisation itself, a consideration of Anna's own activity throughout the period is necessary.

III

By the beginning of February 1881, the L.L.L. was organised; they issued their first manifesto on 4 February[65] and on 13 February Anna made her début as a public speaker.[66] Characteristically, she requested that there be no 'demonstration' upon her arrival at the platform, and she refused to ride in a carriage pulled by her admirers; her distaste for the sort of emotionalism called for by 'the men' is clearly evident. Even more significant were the words of her speech - the first of countless talks

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[64] Nation, 2 July 1881.

[65] See Nation, 12 February 1881.

[66] Ibid. 19 February 1881.

she was to give up and down the country.

> We are not a political movement, but we are not a charitable movement either, because charity is understood to mean alms-giving . . . It is a relief movement. The money which we shall have to administer will be the money which has been subscribed by the people themselves . . Now, the women of Ireland have never been organised before, The women of a superior sphere very much above our heads have played at organisation - they have pretended to organise relief committees, but they were never deprived of the guidance of their male friends and relations; but you will very likely for a time be deprived of the guidance of those whom you have been accustomed to trust and to look to for help. So you must learn to depend upon yourselves, and to do things for yourselves, and to organise yourselves.[67]

The objects of relief outlined by Anna were the evicted tenants, the families of prisoners, and the prisoners themselves; but a more active policy than simple relief was indicated in her concluding injunction to boycott the R.I.C. men in their town, to refuse to entertain them in their houses, and to refuse to talk to them in the street; this echoed the call to female solidarity and independence articulated elsewhere in her speech.

She found receptive audiences all over Ireland; by the end of February branches had proliferated in the country and a London organisation under Mrs A.M. Sullivan had its headquarters at the Westminister Palace Hotel.[68] During the month Anna appeared to rural gatherings in Naas, Cliffoney and Ballyhaunis, where she attracted bands on station platforms and laudatory addresses - not only as 'a lady of highly cultured intelligence, independent mind, and undoubted courage', but also as 'the sister of the heroic leader of the Irish people' - the repetition of which connection must have made Anna doubly impatient with all the paraphenalia attendant upon being a celebrity. The limelight could not, however, be avoided - especially when her opinions were as extreme as they were. On 28 February, at Naas, she tentatively suggested a rent strike in coerced areas;[69] on 6 March she became involved in a controversy about a speech of hers in

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[67] See Nation, 19 February 1881.

[68] Ibid., 26 February 1881.

[69] Ibid., 5 March 1881.

which she was supposed to have doubted the existence of the next world,[70] which may have influenced Archbishop McHale in his ill-considered attack upon her organisation at this time.[71] Later in March Anna travelled to England to visit the many branches of the L.L.L. springing up there. She made a powerful speech at Liverpool in reply to an attack on the L.L.L. in the Standard, and was widely reported for it.[72] On 20 March she was back in Ireland and into the middle of the controversy aroused by McHale's denunciation; she only referred to him indirectly, as such able vindicators as A.M. Sullivan and Archbishop Croke had already taken up the cudgels in defence of the Ladies' reputations.[73]

All this time Anna's speeches show a conception of the L.L.L. which she was later to articulate in her 'Tale of a great sham'. Organisation and research were emphasised; it was the business of the Ladies to study landlordism and 'be able to pass a competitive examination in it.'[74] The business of the tenants was to stand fast; the fact that Tipperary, for instance, was not proclaimed 'appeared to her /Anna/ the greatest slur that had been cast on Tipperary for a long time' and she called upon the tenants to refute it.[75] At Charleville a few days later she castigated 'the men' for having paid rent on the Saunders estate; she would 'do a

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[70] See Nation, 12 March 1881.

[71] A forceful letter from Anna to the Freeman's Journal of 8 March said: 'I don't wish to be charged with attempting to introduce doubts on religious matters into the minds of the women of Ireland . . /I said:/ "I think if there is another world - and you would not suppose by the way some people act here that there was one - that anyone who helps to turn out starving people onto the roadside will require a great deal of saving". The feeling which stimulated me to say this was a very strong opinion, which I have for a long time held, that it would be perfectly impossible for anyone who really believed in a judgement to come in another world to sanction or tolerate, directly or indirectly, the atrocities which are practised in Ireland under the cover of the law'.

[72] Nation, 19 March 1881.

[73] And were duly thanked for it. See reports of L.L.L. meetings in ibid., 26 March, 1881.

[74] Speech at Thurles by Anna Parnell on 20 March 1881; reported in Nation, 26 March 1881.

[75] Ibid.

thing she had never done before' and 'go outside the sphere of relief business' by advising the wives to pay for groceries and the like in hard cash only - and thus prevent their husbands from saving up money to pay rent while they ran into debt. The fact that none of the ladies' husbands were imprisoned was 'no credit to them'; and those who accused her of unfeminine extremism were 'old men and old women'.[76]

As Anna's political counsels grew more extreme, the pace of her activity quickened. 'The energy of Miss Anna Parnell is something extraordinary', remarked the Nation admiringly in April 1881; 'her desire to serve the cause of the Irish tenant is so great that she hardly gives herself a moment's rest'.[77] On 17 March she was in Navan, on 24 March at Charleville, the following day in Kilmallock, and on 27 March at Kanturk; she made speeches at each place, and at the same time was supervising the rapidly increasing and diversifying office-work in Sackville Street. At most of the meetings which she attended, Anna made remarks about 'the men' of a more or less acid nature; the only member of the Land League Executive whom she refers to in a complimentary way is Davitt who was now in prison once again.[78] Addresseswhich referred to her femininity were sure to draw a sharp riposte; when a complimentary resolution mentioned that she was 'prepared to work as well as weep', she answered that she would leave the weeping to the men.[79] In several speeches she attacked the idea of emigration;[80] she also called for an increase in American subscriptions;[81] and she did not shirk criticising the country branches

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[76] See Nation, 2 April 1881.

[77] Ibid.

[78] See Nation, 26 March 1881, for a report of her speech at Kilmallock, where she complimented him.

[79] Ibid.

[80] See her speech at Castletown-Kenneigh, Co. Cork,on 1 May 1881 - reported in Nation, 7 May 1881.

[81] Nation, 28 May 1881.

of the L.L.L. for failing to report the atrocities of local landlords and police.[82] And she skirted the issue of violence by an increasingly narrow margin. The only reason to practise restraint, she told one of the largest L.L.L. meetings to date, on 5 June 1881 at Tulla, was to keep out of jail; but 'she did not mean to preach the immoral and cowardly doctrine that it was wrong ever to resist the law; all she wanted to say was that she never allowed the other side to choose the time and the place for the people to resist the law'.[83]

She herself set an example by appearing in the field at evictions - bidding against Emergencymen at a stock auction on the Gormanston estate in May,[84] and playing a conspicuous part in the evictions at Mitchelstown in August.[85] Here she instructed tenants not to pay rents, hectored the superintending R.M. until she was allowed to accompany the sheriff on his rounds, and then headed off his party at cottages while she exhorted the tenants to hold firm:

> She did wonders during the day, journeying across fields and ditches, running and walking alternately for hours in a manner that excited the wonder of all and the admiration of some . . she skipped over long grass, ditches, and even forded small streams.[86]

Many of the rents were paid, which must have infuriated her; but it was literally 'at the point of a bayonet' and, as the Cork Herald remarked, 'her presence was anything but welcome to those whose business it was to get the rents paid'. The activity went on for four days, and the brutality of the police's treatment of bystanders and tenants drew angry letters from Anna to the national press. On the fifth day she was welcomed into Fermoy like a heroine, but she made an angry speech about the tenants in Mitchelstown who were in debt for their food, yet paid their rents. If they

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[82] As in her speech at Drumcolliher on 26 June 1881 - see Nation, 2 July 1881 - and her letter to the Freeman's Journal of 28 June.

[83] Nation, 11 June 1881.

[84] See ibid., 14 May 1881.

[85] Ibid., 13 August 1881.

[86] Ibid., 20 August 1881.

had held firm, 'Lady Kingston would have to pay £400 out of her own pocket; and do you think that Lady Kingston would go on evicting if she had to pay £800 a week for it and get no rents?'[87] Though the eviction campaign, according to the Nation, 'had kept the entire district for nearly a fortnight on the edge of civil war',[85] Anna saw it as a failure.

A month earlier she had disagreed violently with someone who mentioned the Irish people were poor and helpless, retorting:

> The Irish people are poor because they choose to be poor; the country is rich, and its wealth is in the hands of the tenant farmers if they choose, they can keep up the Land League.[89]

Whether they chose or not was the crux of the matter; and the new Land Bill gave the tenants an incentive to decide upon the alternative. Anna never believed, as her brother did, that 'the starving man is not a good Nationalist';[90] she viewed the Land Act of 1881 as a miserable half-measure, designed to deflect the Land War from its rightful conclusion, and her speeches of the summer of 1881 all carry this implication. The Bill received the Royal Assent on 22 August; Anna's speeches from this date show an increase in radicalism and more and more passionate appeals to the Irish tenants to choose open war instead of appeasement. At this stage, of course, her brother's public utterances took a similar path - but with a weight of sophisticated political calculation behind the decision which does not apply to Anna's case. In a month's time he was to write privately that the 'movement was breaking fast' and it was politically fortunate that he should be arrested;[91] this attitude, together with the expedient of 'testing the Bill', was the sort of approach which was anathema to his sister, and which did nothing to elevate her opinion of 'the men'. In the mounting anger of her public utterances from September 1881 on can be traced the beginnings of her open break with Parnell the

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[87] Nation, 20 August, 1881.

[88] Ibid., 27 August 1881.

[89] Ibid., 23 July 1881.

[90] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 292.

[91] C.S. Parnell to K. O'Shea, 13 October 1881; K. O'Shea, i, 207.

following summer.

It was at this juncture that she chose to carry the war into the enemy's country. She had made a tour of the L.L.L. branches in Britain the previous March; but her visit to Scotland and the North of England in the autumn was attended by a completely new kind of publicity. In late August she and John Redmond spoke at the meeting of the Glasgow Irish; much money was raised for the Land League, and Anna's speech referred to Gladstone in terms which make her brother's celebrated utterances at Wexford seem the essence of moderation. The Prime Minister, she told the Glasgow audience, 'is a wretched, hypocritical, bloodthirsty miscreant . . who is having your own countrymen and countrywomen slaughtered now at home to suit his own vanity'; she enjoined the Irish in Glasgow never again to vote for him.[92] Nor was this a statement made in the flush of rhetoric, as the newspapers pointed out:

> Miss Parnell is not a hasty or impetuous speaker; she delivers her sentences in an exceedingly slow and measured style, frequently pausing a second or two after each word . . Her terrible judgement on Mr Gladstone may therefore be taken as a deliberate performance, and with all the more certainty that she repeated the exact words on Monday night and made them the text of a speech which occupied nearly an hour and a half.[93]

Anna went on the speak at Edinburgh, Greenock and Dundee, and her approach did not become any more moderate. At Edinburgh she told her audience that 'she could see no advantage in shooting Mr Forster or Mr Gladstone, as these gentlemen living were doing a service to Ireland which if they were dead they could not do; they were teaching the Irish people the utter folly and weakness of trusting any English statesman, or any Englishman, to work reform for Ireland'.[94] Scottish opinion was outraged by her; the fact that a Land League in the Orkneys was mooted and founded during her northern tour cannot have set many minds at rest. At Greenock

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[92] Nation, 3 September 1881.

[93] Ibid.

[94] A speech on 31 August 1881. See Nation, 10 September 1881.

the Provost refused to chair a meeting to which she was invited because of her 'indulgence in very violent and unbecoming language'; Anna lambasted him at a subsequent meeting in Dundee, to 'a perfect hurricane of applause'.[95]

On 6 September she returned to Glasgow for the inaugural meeting on of a L.L.L. branch. She then returned to Ireland; but a month later she visited the North of England, speaking scornfully of Gladstone's threat to employ the resources of civilisation.[96] The following month she visited England again, speaking at Blackburn, Liverpool and Bradford[97] and publicising the Political Prisoners' Aid Society recently founded by the L.L.L. She also attacked the Irish police, judges, juries and any tenants who were disposed to accept the Land Act - though these, she claimed, were a tiny minority. Whether or not she believed this, it is impossible to say; but it is certain that, unlike her brother, she wanted it to be true.

By now, of course, 'the men' were in jail and the Land League proclaimed; the fact that Anna was in Liverpool and attacking the judicial system in her speeches must have been connected with her action at this time in producing a pamphlet exposing jury-packing which named jury panels all over Ireland; she had 20,000 of these printed at her own expense in Liverpool and delivered them illicitly from her Dublin home at number 7, Hume Street, aided in the venture by Mrs Jennie Wyse-Power and Patrick O'Brien.[98] The attempts of Dublin Castle to suppress this pamphlet led to O'Brien's arrest, and to the hiding of caches of copies all over Dublin. Perhaps it was some of these pamphlets which Anna entrusted under false

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[95] On 5 September 1881. See ibid.

[96] At Leeds, 10 October 1881. See ibid., 15 October 1881.

[97] 11 November, 13 November and 14 November respectively; see ibid., 19 November 1881.

[98] Mrs Wyse-Power, 'Anna Parnell', in Dublin Metropolitan Magazine (Spring 1935).

pretences to the cautious and prudent Alfred Webb, who had helped her in some underground printing ventures for the L.L.L. Webb recalled in his unpublished autobiography:

> Anna Parnell was once nearly getting me into prison for the possession and care of documents /of which/ I could not approve. She had me take charge of them on the representation that they were simply 'books'. Her brother, Mr Parnell, afterwards expressed to me his regret and disapproval of her action.[99]

After October 1881 the L.L.L. had little time to afford scruples about such matters; as Anna told a meeting at Liverpool, they 'now had to work very much underground and in the dark'.[100] In parts of Mayo, she added, 'the tenant farmers were actually afraid to be seen speaking to a strange lady for fear she might be a representative of the Land League. They were not all Furies, at Katharine Tynan was careful to point out;[101] this is borne out by Alfred Webb's delightful account of how he visited Sackville Street at the time 'when the leading Lady Land Leaguers were looked upon as Joans of Arc', and found the ladies sitting in silence, one behind the other in the large central office, each combing the hair of the girl in front of her.[102] But, as he pointed out, the principals of the movement were not present at the time. Anna, for one, was rapidly becoming completely involved in organisation; after her English tour in November she appeared at fewer and fewer public meetings, and it was at this time that Katharine Tynan remembers her working until after midnight every night and then walking alone across the city to Hume Street. The accounts of weekly L.L.L. meetings given in the Nation during the winter of 1881-2 show the vast increase in business handled.[103] Organisation involved the delineation of policy and the elucidation of what the Land League meant; in November 1881, when confusion was caused by an open letter from

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[99] A. Webb, 'Autobiography', ii, p.433 (MS in Society of Friends' Library, Eustace Street, Dublin).

[100] Nation, 19 November 1881.

[101] K. Tynan, 25 years, p. 82.

[102] A. Webb, 'Autobiography', ii, 434.

[103] See Nation, 26 November 1881, for especially detailed minutes.

Kilmainham about what tenants' cases deserved assistance, Anna wrote to the Freeman:

> We will support all deserving cases to the utmost of our resources, no matter what the other tenants on the same estate may have done or left undone . . we do not intend to withdraw support from any tenant who has been receiving it up to the present, except for one of the reasons which would have at any time obliged us to withdraw it from him.[104]

The only tenants the Ladies would abandon, she continued, were those who had been evicted and now intended to redeem their property by paying rent; for this would mean they had lived off the L.L.L. while saving up money to pay the landlord.

It was about this time that Anna became a sort of folk heroine; when a meeting of the Children's Land League (an offshoot of the L.L.L.) was broken up in Kerry the same month, there was a procession of children through the village 'cheering for Miss Parnell and the Land League',[105] which implies that she held a position in the popular imagination at least equal to her brother's. Fame in Ireland was accompanied by notoriety in England; Mrs Parnell tells of Anna being burnt in effigy with the Pope outside her gate one Guy Fawkes Day in Eltham.[106] Her status was enhanced by the official proclamation of the L.L.L. by the R.I.C. on 16 December, when it was announced that the suppression of the Land League on 20 October had also included that of the Ladies.[107] Anna had to organise an alternative headquarters in London, in the care of Helen Taylor at Kensington; speaking in the North of England at the end of the year, she

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[104] See Nation, 26 November 1881.

[105] Ibid. My italics.

[106] K. O'Shea, i, 156. She dates this as 5 November 1880; but Anna was unknown at that time, so it must have been November 1881. Either way, some doubt is cast on Parnell's supposed comment that Anna's 'pride in being burnt as a menance to England would be so drowned in horror at her company that it would put the fire out'; on Guy Fawkes Day 1880 he was in Ireland, and the same day in 1881 he was in Kilmainham.

[107] Nation, 24 December 1881.

mentioned that she had heard of the imminence of her own arrest and had been making preparations.[108] At a meeting in Liverpool she referred to Herbert Gladstone as a 'sneaking spalpeen' and ridiculed Forster for his measures against the Ladies, to consummate effect.[109] In the New Year she was back in Dublin, chairing the fourth meeting of the L.L.L. since its official suppression, and attacking the Freeman's Journal for supposing that the Political Prisoners' Fund would close at £10,000; this, she said, was not nearly enough, considering that even before the recent wave of arrests they had been spending £400 a week upon the prisoners. By the end of January, several of the Ladies were themselves in jail;[110] but there was no retrenchment in activity as far as Anna was concerned. In one area there was a new departure; the support of English tenants. The colliery owners at Ushaw Moor in Durham had evicted some miners from their cottages; the L.L.L. sent them a donation of £50 and a resolution of sympathy which was, according to local opinion, more than the Trades Union offered. An address of thanks from the miners 'expressed a strong hope that the English working classes would see their way towards reciprocating the kindness of the Irish people'.[111] This would have been exactly to Anna's way of thinking; but it is a fair supposition that 'the men' would have seen it as a dangerous precedent and rank extravagance.

The Ladies were, in fact, getting through a great deal of money; it was to be one of the accusations levelled against them after the release of the Kilmainham prisoners, that they spent £70,000 sent from Paris without accounting for it. It should be pointed out, however, that two separate sources - Davitt's 'Secret History of the Land League' in Cashman's biography and Mrs M.F. Sullivan's account of the movement for Redpath's Weekly in 1882 - give a list of accounts submitted by Anna which add up

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[108] Nation, 31 December 1881.

[109] Ibid., 7 January 1882.

[110] See ibid., 28 January, for details of their treatment in Mullingar jail.

[111] Nation, 28 January 1882.

to very nearly this amount. The period covered was from the inception of the movement up to June 1882, except where stated otherwise. The left-hand column gives a good indication of the areas in which the Ladies were active:

Account	£	s	d
Evicted tenants	20,849	19	4
Families of coercion law prisoners	5,123	2	0
Families of ordinary law prisoners	1,449	11	11
Building	9,469	3	5
Providing for coercion law prisoners and ordinary law prisoners from 26 December 1881	21,637	16	5
Ordinary law prisoners' catering from 26 December 1881	1,603	12	1
Legal costs by L.L.L.	1,508	17	7
Miscellaneous grants	187	7	0
Grants by L.L. since its suppression	7,542	16	2
Total:	£69,372	15	10

By June 1882, as much as £865 a week was being spent upon evicted tenants by the L.L.L.;[112] the Ladies' special work, that of building houses for the evicted tenants, was still an important preoccupation. Throughout the spring of 1882 Anna had been less in the public eye than usual, due to the dearth of public meetings. But on 14 June 1882, walking down Westmoreland Street, she jumped out before Lord Spencer's horse, caught it by the bridle, and hectored the Lord Lieutenant about the forced stopping of building huts for tenants evicted near Limerick.

> His Excellency seemed puzzled for a moment at the strange position in which he was placed, and spoke a few words in an undertone to the aide-de-damp, who dismounted from his horse and politely led the lady to the footpath . . Neither the Lord Lieutenant nor the aide-de-camp knew that the lady was Miss Anna Parnell. Seemingly at the direction of Earl Spencer, the aide-de-camp told her that if she presented her card at the castle the Lord Lieutenant would hear anything she had to say.[113]

In a letter complaining about the treatment of the tenants which she sent to the press, Anna gave a characteristically different account:

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[112] See Nation, 10 June 1882.

[113] Evening Telegraph, 16 June 1882.

> I met Lord Spencer on his way to the Castle subsequently, and asked him, whether the statement /that the building of the huts had been suppressed/ was true? He answered that he could not hear what I was saying; but he could hear perfectly well, and I told him so, to which he replied steadfastly, "I cannot", and refused to say anything else; from this I came to the conclusion that Lord Spencer is really ashamed of himself, and would be glad to escape from the odious position he has put himself in . . [114]

But already the money for aiding evicted tenants was being choked off by 'the men', released a month before. In July Anna was to be prostrated by the news of Fanny's death; in August the L.L.L. would breathe its last, and Anna would enter a political wilderness of bitterness and disillusionment.

IV

The outline of how the L.L.L. came to be disbanded is well known, attested to by many authorities: Parnell, infuriated by the Ladies' extremism and financial extravagance, cut off their funds and the movement collapsed, leaving an implacable estrangement between him and his sister.[115] The sequence of events was, however, rather more complex than that, and Anna's own account is enlightening about this. After Forster's resignation and the release of 'the men', there was a reaction which infuriated her: it was assumed that the Ladies had 'beaten Forster' and that the fight was over. 'This fictitious triumph', she wrote, ' was even worse than the cold atmosphere of censure that we had so long been used to';[116] Anna saw the rapprochement with Gladstone as a terrible betrayal. There was, for the exhausted Ladies, only one advantage: 'our long nightmare was over . . they could have no excuse for leaving the work they had made on our shoulders for much longer'.[117] But at a meeting with the released M.P.s, the L.L.L. was amazed to be met with polite surprise

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[114] Letter dated 15 June, Evening Telegraph, 16 June 1882.

[115] See for instance Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p. 356; O'Brien, Parnell, i, 364-5; Wm. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 463; K. O'Shea, i, 260-1.

[116] 'Tale', pp 191-2.

[117] Ibid., p. 197.

from the men when it announced that it wanted to quit. The reasons it gave were first, simple exhaustion (Anna wrote time and time again of how she would have welcomed prison 'for a rest'), and, second, that 'it was morally impossible for us to go on working with the men' - which to her 'hardly sounded emphatic enough'.[118] She admits in her memoir, however, that such antipathy may not have been universal. The executive of the L.L.L. numbered 25, not all of them closely connected with its organisation; the animosity between the two Leagues may not have been realised by all the ladies involved.

In any case, the Ladies consented to continue for the present. The Kilmainham Treaty had left everyone exhausted by the Land League, Anna remarked, except the Government; 'for the Land Leaguers worked just as hard for a sham as anybody could have done for a reality'.[119] Demands for legal costs continued to flood in from evicted tenants, for there was no pause in the landlords' machinery. Anna, as usual, far preferred to concentrate upon housing the evicted tenants; her distrust of money payments was unabated. But the Land League refused to allocate money for housing, and remained evasive about what their position was as regarded a full-scale resistance to paying rents, which the Ladies still advocated. Relations between the Leagues deteriorated; the Ladies 'cherished hopes of an early release from a long and uncongenial bondage'. May, June and July of 1882 passed without any explanation while the ladies were 'kept to the grindstone' - and the Land League, to Anna's extreme annoyance, used the L.L.L.'s account to make grants for legal costs and then refused to reimburse the Ladies from Paris. The L.L.L.'s bank began to worry; Anna told them to stop the cheques if they liked, hoping that this would force the men to resolve the situation. The Ladies did not wish to dissolve, and precipitate a public quarrel; and they were not emphatic enough with

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[118] 'Tale', p. 197.

[119] Ibid., p. 227.

the men in private. They were still, moreover, expected to do all the hard work.

The men's policy came out into the open when the L.L.L. overdraft reached £5000. They refused to discharge it unless the Ladies dissolved - while still undertaking to take over the job of considering all applications for legal aid and making recommendations upon them to the men. In other words, they were to lose autonomy and continue as workhorses- working on a scheme with which Anna, at any rate, fundamentally disagreed. When the men presented this ultimatum, in the form of a document to be signed by the Ladies, the remaining scales dropped from their eyes.[120] They did not fear legal distraint since the leading Ladies had followed Anna's example and located their personal savings far away from Ireland. So they told the men that they would hand over their records and do any outstanding secretarial work, but would co-operate no further.

There seemed only two ways out of the deadlock: dissolution and failure to honour their debts, or compliance with the men's request. Finally, the Ladies overcame the difficulty by sleight of hand. They copied out the Land League ultimatum, but instead of the clause about promising to examine cases of applicants 'towards whom the Land League had incurred responsibility' they inserted an undertaking to deal with those 'towards whom the Ladies' Land League had incurred responsibility'. This meant in effect no work at all, since the Ladies had regularly avoided making any such recommendations - except in the cases of one or two evicted tenants, whom they would have helped out in any case. They signed the altered document 'lavishly' and returned it. The men welcomed it. Either they never noticed the alteration until the Ladies' debts had been paid, or they just decided to take the easy way out. 'Perhaps', noted Anna with acerbity, 'they thought there was no end to our folly; if they did, perhaps the thought was not unnatural'.[121]

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[120] 'Tale', p. 235.

[121] Ibid., p. 238.

In August 1882 the L.L.L. was dissolved. There had been one last scare that the small emergency fund would be inadequate to cover some final obligations to evicted tenants; but it proved sufficient. 'So at length the ghost of the Ladies' Land League rested in peace'.[122]

This was the substance of Anna's account, written twenty-two years afterwards; but it seems definite that hindsight was no part of her attitude, and that her reaction in 1882 was much as she recalled it in 1907. On 19 July 1882 she wrote a long letter to a priest named Father Cantwell which was printed in the Nation; her point was that at this stage evictions and landlord oppression must be expected to increase. Landlordism had not been given the death-blow; instead the beast had been enraged by superficial wounding. Moreover, the Land Courts would work to the advantage of the landlord in facilitating the raising of rents 'if once they can break down the pressure on the Land Court from the other side'. Therefore, she continued, the supreme effort was needed now; it was no longer sufficient to rely upon Irish America; the tenants must plan ahead and organise by subscribing a shilling in the pound on the valuation of the estates where they lived; and this must be collected before the landlord could claim it for rent.[123]

Given the condition of rural Ireland in the late summer of 1882, this was not a realistic assessment. Landlordism may not have been killed outright, but the principle of the 1881 act was far nearer to a death-blow than to the glancing injury which was Anna's estimate of it. However, accurate or not, the point is that Anna's analysis of the situation was the same in 1882 as she outlined it to be in 1907;her approach to the Land Act, to the question of advancing money for legal costs, and her whole attitude to the course the Land War should take was as different from that of her brother as it could possibly be. Given this, it was impossible

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[122] 'Tale', p. 239.

[123] Published in the Nation, 29 July 1882.

that there should not be friction between the two organisations as soon as the Land League leaders were released.

Nonetheless, the extent of this difference is never mentioned by the memoirs of those prominent during the era; the L.L.L. is generally treated in an indulgent and slightly dismissive way, with its members portrayed as eccentric hoydens. Anna wrote furiously to Dr Sigerson in 1907 that all the memoirs of the 'eighties 'have libelled and ridiculed us in the most outrageous way'.[124] Andrew Kettle gives the most sympathetic view of them; his ideas about land were closer to Anna's than to her brother's. But his memoir was not published until long after Anna's death. Davitt alone implies that the Ladies were implacably opposed to Parnell's approach, when he described Parnell grimly telling him that 'they told me in Dublin, after my release, that I ought to have remained in Kilmainham';[125] Davitt defended the organisation to Parnell (though this did not prevent Anna from dismissing his Fall of feudalism as 'a mass of lies').[126] Most accounts, however, accept the view that the L.L.L. was disapproved of simply because of its 'extremism' and overspending; the antipathies that had existed since its foundation are never mentioned.

Here again, however, the invaluable Katharine Tynan adds some vivid detail from the Ladies' side:

> I believe Mr Parnell disliked the women's organistion from the beginning, as he certainly detested it in the end. .
> I remember once that an energetic lady who was our honorary treasurer rebuked him because he came in like a conspirator, wrapped in an old coat with capes and a cap drawn over his eyes. She told him it was no proper attire for the uncrowned king of Ireland to wear. I think he only smiled with a grim amusement . .
> It must have been after Mr Parnell's release from Kilmainham that the situation became difficult between him and Miss Parnell, as President of the Ladies Land League. It may be conceded now frankly that he detested the organisation, that in the hands of the sister as like him as a woman can be like a man it had taken a course of its own, and one in many ways opposed to his wishes and policy. I think he froze the organisation out of existence by refusing further supplies. He simply would not answer letters, sign cheques, or do anything else demanded of him . .[127]

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[124] Anna Parnell to Dr Sigerson, 12 December 1907 (N.L.I., Sigerson papers, MS 8100(8)).

[125] Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p. 357.

[126] Letter to Sigerson (see n. 124 above).

[127] K. Tynan, 25 years, pp. 73, 88.

There was also, according to Katharine Tynan, gossip about the O'Shea affair in the Ladies' office; someone jestingly referred to it in front of Anna and was silenced by 'Miss Parnell's pale, sibylline smile'.[128] She stated that Parnell knew of this gossip, but she admitted that she was unable to remember whether it was during the heyday of the L.L.L. or later that a lady who had spoken of the affair received from Parnell a letter that was 'a masterpiece of dignified and terrible rebuke'.[129] These sidelights confirm the likelihood that Parnell never felt warmly towards the organisation from the beginning.

There was certainly open war from the moment Parnell stepped outside Kilmainham; William O'Brien remarked that 'the ladies . . . themselves displayed so intrepid a spirit in the No Rent struggle that they were naturally among the severest critics of the Kilmainham Treaty';[130] they were,he added, 'to a great extent unthanked' and they heralded Parnell's first visit to Sackville Street after his release with an ironic piano chorus. O'Brien added contradictorily: 'Nobody appreciated more than Parnell their daring and unselfishness; it was his financial soul alone that saw any defect in their operations'.[131] This is unnecessarily ingenuous. Davitt described to Barry O'Brien Parnell's fury on meeting him after his release from Dartmoor, when they journeyed down to London together:

> 'All the way', said Davitt, 'he talked of the state of the country, said it was dreadful, denounced the Ladies' Land League, swore at everybody, and spoke of anarchy as if he were a British minister bringing in a coercion bill. I never saw him so wild and angry; the Ladies' Land League had, he declared, taken the country out of his hands and should be suppressed. I defended the Ladies, saying that after all they had kept the ball rolling while he was in jail. 'I am out of jail now', said he, 'and I don't want them to keep the ball rolling any more. The League must be suppressed or I will leave public life'. In August we met at Dublin. The Ladies' League wanted £500. I called on Parnell at Morrison's Hotel and asked him for a cheque for that amount. 'No', he said, 'not a shilling; they have squandered the money given to them, and I shall take care

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[128] K. Tynan, Memories, p. 5.

[129] K. Tynan, 25 years, p. 88.

[130] W. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 462.

[131] Ibid., p. 464.

> that they get no more'. I said:'But, Mr Parnell, their debts must be paid whatever happens.' But he would not discuss the matter. I left him in a bit of a temper and would not come back when he sent Dillon for me later in the day. Next day, however, I saw him again. He gave me the cheque. 'There', said he, 'let those ladies make the most of it. They will get no more money from me, and let the League be dissolved at once'. I believe the Ladies' Land League was never formally dissolved, but died of inanition, for Parnell stopped the supplies. The Land League had been suppressed by the Government. The Ladies' Land League was practically suppressed by Parnell.[132]

Davitt told the same story in his own memoir six years later.[133]

Parnell's own view of his disagreement with Davitt over the matter is given in a letter he wrote on 20 August to Mrs O'Shea:

> The two D's /Dillon and Davitt/ have quarrelled with me because I won't allow any further expenditure by the Ladies and because I have made arrangements to make the payments myself for the future. They were in hopes of creating a party against me in the country by distributing the funds amongst their own creatures, and are proportionately disappointed.[134]

At several points throughout her memoir, Parnell's wife makes references to the folly of the L.L.L., with their 'incitements to crime and wild expenditure';[135] she tells how Gladstone was amused by their extravagance, remarking that this was 'very satisfactory, as the Ladies have evidently put these large sums beyond the power of the Land League's expenditure'.[136] Mrs O'Shea believed that 'Parnell wrote to her /Anna/ again and again from prison, pointing out the crass folly of the criminality for which the Ladies' Land League now solely existed';[137] this is unlikely, for Parnell wrote to Sir Charles Russell in 1889: 'I know nothing about the distribution of the Irish World by the Ladies' Land League; I was then in Kilmainham and was not allowed to communicate with them'.[138] and he had by then little reason to prevaricate about the subject. But while contradicting the

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[132] O'Brien, Parnell, i, 364-5.

[133] Davitt, Fall of feudalism, p. 356.

[134] See K. O'Shea, ii, 51.

[135] Ibid., i, 260.

[136] Ibid., i, 273.

[137] Ibid., i, 271.

[138] C.S. Parnell to Sir Charles Russell, 6 March 1889 (N.L.I., Parnell letters, MS 5934).

assertion that he often wrote to Anna in disapproving terms, this reference shows that the Ladies were more openly involved with radical nationalism than was the Land League- a contention which is borne out by references in W.M. Lomasney's correspondence with John Devoy in February 1881, which mentions telegraphing to Anna 'in such a way that she alone could understand it'.[139] Given Parnell's initial dislike of the movement, his disapproval of the tendencies of their policy while he was in prison, and his own change of approach when he came out of Kilmainham, it was inevitable that he should have suppressed the L.L.L. as soon as he could. The factor of expense provided him with both an excuse and a strategy for this, but was not in itself a primary cause.

The account of the suppression given by Anna in her 'Tale', therefore, is a valid one; but it has one serious discrepancy. Why, one asks, did Anna herself - by now a national celebrity and a woman of influence as well as inspiration - simply accept the inevitability of dissolution without even an attempt at public justification, much less an effort to keep the Ladies' Land League afloat? She had stormed into Tim Healy's lodgings and attacked him because of articles he wrote (at Parnell's instigation) criticising the L.L.L.;[140] and her defiant letter to Father Cantwell on 19 May shows that she was prepared to continue organising the tenants. Yet after this opening volley she fired no more shots, and the L.L.L. was dissolved in August. There is an important omission here; and it arises, not from any desire on Anna's part to mislead, but from her peculiar approach to writing history. She believe that persons were unimportant as their actions, unlike those of groups or classes, 'are not met with again' in history.[141] This led to her ignoring the very special

[139] W.M. Lomasney to Devoy, 11 February 1881, Devoy's post bag, ii, 36; also a reference in same to same, 18 February 1881, ibid., ii, 40.

[140] T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders, i, 157.

[141] Anna Parnell to Helena Molony, 7 July 1910; quoted in T.W. Moody, 'Anna Parnell and the Land League', a lecture given to the Conference on Irish Studies in New York on 20 March 1965.

positions both of Davitt and of Parnell himself; Davitt was, in fact, one of 'the men' whose own ideas were far closer to those of the Ladies than his male colleagues', but Anna makes no exception for him in her 'Tale' at all. And her 'de-personalising' approach also meant that she left out what must be considered a vital factor in the suppression of the L.L.L. - the fact that on 20 July 1882, the very day after Anna wrote to Father Cantwell stressing that the fight must go on, Fanny Parnell died in her bed at Bordentown; and Anna was instantly precipitated into a nervous and physical breakdown from which she did not emerge until the end of the summer.

A fortnight after Fanny's death she was still dangerously ill and unable to work;[142] meetings of the L.L.L. were at first cancelled, and then began to convene without her.[143] She did not attend any of the meetings which organised the dissolution of the L.L.L. and appointed a working committee to wind up business. Early in August her condition had been critical, and Parnell and other members of the family had been summoned to Dublin; even after a partial recovery, her doctors said she could not work again 'for a long time'.[144] Contemporary opinion attributed her breakdown as much to overwork as to grief, stating that 'strong men have broken down under labours less severe', much less someone of her frail constitution and self-denying habits.[145] Katharine Tynan remembered Anna's extremely distressed state long after Fanny's death; she could not be left alone in Hume Street, where she paced up and down her room all night. All the evidence shows that she was completely shattered, mentally and physically, at the very juncture when she needed reserves of strength most; and the comparative ease with which the Ladies' organisation gave way is explained.

There is, moreover, some indication that when she recovered, Anna

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[142] Nation, 5 August 1882.

[143] See ibid., 5 August, 12 August, and 19 August 1882.

[144] Ibid., 5 August.

[145] Leader in ibid.

refused to consider herself as party to the submission. When the National Executive of the L.L.L. announced its dissolution in August, it stated that local branches could decide for themselves whether or not to continue;[146] and as late as December English branches were still meeting, one of which sent a small sum 'to Miss Anna Parnell in aid of the evicted tenants'. Anna replied with a letter which acknowledged receipt of the donation and asked the ladies to continue in their efforts to secure money in aid of the evicted tenants.[147] When her illness was over, she may have attempted to struggle on.

She was, however, by now out of the political picture; and so she was to remain. Her attitude continued unbending. Early in the following year a branch of the L.L.L. still active in St Louis sent her $200 'for the poor of Ireland', and she wrote back refusing to 'act as almoner'. The attitude she showed in her letter prefigures her later 'Tale';

> The lack of food and impending famine all over Ireland have been brought most deliberately on the country by the people themselves, by the way they have gone on paying rent, in spite of everything that has been done to induce them to refrain from so suicidal a course.[148]

'Alms' like those offered by the St Louis ladies only go to landlords and so perpetuate the system; it was relief funds which saved the landlords in 1880 and helped 'the triumph of the Government over the Land League'. The Irish people, she added, 'having had to choose between the Land League and Gladstone, chose the latter, and the result is famine'. She concluded in a kindlier tone, telling the ladies of St Louis that even if things were not better in Ireland, they had still done all they could.

This letter was written from 7, Hume Street, as was a note she sent Katharine Tynan in August 1885, acknowledging her gift of a book of poetry;[149] but in 1886 William O'Brien heard that she had taken up

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[146] See Nation, 12 August and 19 August 1882.

[147] Ibid., 30 December 1882.

[148] Ibid., 24 March 1883; quoted from American Celt.

[149] K. Tynan, 25 years, pp. 150-1.

residence in a painters' colony on the Cornish coast.[150] Up to her departure she still followed Irish politics; in February 1886 she wrote to the Freeman defending T.D. Sullivan, who had been criticised for his opposition to O'Shea's candidature in Galway. Anna praised the Nation for having sided with the obstructionists in the 1870s instead of 'doing as others did, holding back and waiting for events before taking sides' - probably a blow aimed at the Freeman itself. She continued:

> . . . When we consider that Mr Sullivan is not apparently a very aggressive or venturesome politician in himself, his action becomes the more remarkable as an example of courageous fidelity to principle . . Whatever it is possible for a political party to owe to journalistic support, the present dominant party in Irish politics owes to the Nation under Mr T.D. Sullivan; and yet supporters of that party are now denouncing him and calling on the workingmen of Dublin to boycott him, because he did not open his arms to a Gladstone Whig as representative of an Irish national constituency.[151]

She went on to give her own views on O'Shea's return, eventually taking a surprisingly conciliatory position:

> I am aware that the question is generally stated as being what the effect of returning or rejecting Captain O'Shea would be on the Government, not what he is himself, but even from this point of view there are two ways of looking at it, and Mr Sullivan may have thought the return of Captain O'Shea might have an effect on English members of the House of Commons not generally predicted here. But however that may be, I certainly agree with you that there is no good end to be served in discussing the matter now, and I am sure that if the O'Shea party will let it drop the other side will do the same, for after all, when seventy members of the Irish party formally declared that they wanted Captain O'Shea it would have been a pity if they had not got him, and the only patriotic course for anyone now to take is to hope that they may be pleased with him.[152]

The Freeman did not print Anna's letter; she sent a draft of it to Sullivan himself, who incorporated it in his memoirs.[153]

She was still living in Cornwall in 1889. Katharine Tynan, entering the New Gallery in Regent Street with her old friend W.B. Yeats in the

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[150] Wm. O'Brien, Evening Memories, p. 188.

[151] See Sullivan Papers in N.L.I. (MS 8237(7)). The letter is a rough draft, undated and unaddressed.

[152] Ibid.

[153] See T.D. Sullivan, Recollections of troubled times in Irish politics (Dublin, 1905, 2 vols.), pp. 195-6.

summer of that year, was startled to find Anna there, 'in rapt contemplation of a picture'.[154] Anna had been painting in Cornwall, and had come up to London for the day. To Katharine Tynan's surprise, her companion was mistaken by Miss Parnell for John Dillon - 'a most unlikely thing'. On finding out who it was, 'she was very much interested'. What the poet thought of being taken for Dillon is not recorded. It must have been an encounter worth witnessing.

It is not surprising to find her living in Cornwall. She certainly disliked England; but she felt for Ireland a lasting bitterness. Her experiences in land agitation and politics had left her in 1882 with an attitude which she gives vent to in one of the few passages of her 'Tale' to reflect her own feelings:

> However long I might live, I knew it would never again be possible for me to believe that any body of Irishmen meant a word of anything they said. It is true that I had been inside the Land League. Allowing, however, for the utmost difference between the views of insiders and outsiders, a feeling must have been created amongst the latter that something had been very wrong in the Land League, for so much cry to have ended in so little wool.[155]

She therefore decided that the Irish Party lost credibility generally, and the right sort of person stopped identifying with it after 1882; self-seekers and humbugs came to the fore. She felt this analysis borne out by the Home Rule Bill, which she saw as a hypocritical 'absurdity';[156] even the Plan of Campaign came too late and was not based on a sound principle;[157] and the later Land Acts she considered pro-landlord, if anything. The collapse of the disciplined Irish Party in 1891-2 seemed to bear out her gloomiest prognostications. When she wrote bitterly about the decline of Irish politics, the élitism of her own approach is finally and categorically stated:

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[154] K. Tynan, 25 years, p. 98.

[155] 'Tale', p. 46.

[156] Ibid., p. 5.

[157] Ibid., p. 241.

> The only difference between the Irish ship of state as she has now become and what she had been before is that the colours under which she had previously sailed in secret are now nailed to the mast. Anybody who does not like the flag need no longer have anything to do with it. Those to whom it was invisible once can see it now, and no victims need waste their strength, money and time under a misapprehension as to its real nature. This gain is surely a set-off to the infinitesimally small chance, which is all that has been lost, of a minority being able to seize some unexpectedly magnificent opportunity and by its aid turn the national rudder against the dead weight of the majority . . [158]

The Irish tendency to neutralise action by too much talk beforehand is something she attacks mercilessly in the closing pages of her account; and she perceptively expected 'armed rebellion to be the next thing either tried or played at here', for if the Fenian tradition had once been ridiculed, the Land League and the Irish Party had by 1907 made themselves every bit as open to ridicule. Anna did not live to see Easter Week 1916; but it would not have surprised her, and there were many elements in its making which would have appealed to her greatly.

Anna never spoke to her brother again after 1882. His wife wrote that he regretted this, and several times made overtures to his sister, 'of whom he was really fond, and for whose strength of mind and will he had much respect'; but she never acknowledged his letters, and when they met by accident once or twice she resolutely cut him dead.[159] Parnell told William O'Brien the same story; he asked O'Brien for news of her in 1886, and added: 'She has never spoken a word to me since I stopped that account of the Ladies' Land League'.[160] Anna, he told O'Brien, 'might have been great in anything'. He had spoken of her to Andrew Kettle in similarly glowing terms some years before:

> My sister knows all about Irish politics. She is never at a loss, and is never mistaken in her judgement. It was she who hung on to Power and myself and the other people and gave us no peace until we had to move to get Davitt liberated. She saw some of Davitt's work, his plans and projects for the future of the Irish national

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[158] 'Tale', p. 256; my italics.

[159] K. O'Shea, i, 266.

[160] Wm. O'Brien, Evening Memories, p. 188.

> movement, and she determined if possible to get a man who could think and plan under such circumstances restored to the sphere of action . . [161]

This was long before the rift between brother and sister. But some sort of admiration for Anna's great qualities must have remained in Parnell's mind, as well as a residual affection. The same was probably true from Anna's side; Katharine Tynan wrote that 'they were devoted to each other'.[162] Probably Anna's arrogance and pride had a good deal to do with the maintenance of the break between them; judging from her writing, it was her chief fault. But she had more to be arrogant about than most people. Her loyalties were shown in 1891 to be with her brother; perhaps her attitude was reinforced by her contempt for 'the dead weight of the majority'. A typical flash of Anna's spirit comes out in a letter she wrote to the Irish Times after Parnell's death, objecting to the choice of Glasnevin as a burial place:

> Mr Harrington is reported as saying that my brother's body belonged to the Irish people. That is true if the fact of their having killed him gave them a title to it, for I may as well take this opportunity of saying that I consider it very unjust to lay his death at the door of individuals like Healy, Dillon or O'Brien. Whatever they did was endorsed by the Irish nation as represented by its majority, and on it the responsibility both for his death and its own degradation lies.[163]

A few years before, she had written a poem in which she stated that she would welcome death as a release from 'this world's Hell'; the alienation and bitterness testified to on every page of her 'Tale of a great sham' had entered her soul after the collapse of the Ladies' Land League, and settled there thenceforth. Alfred Webb wrote of her brother that 'he broke his life; it was not rounded off and perfected';[164] the same was true of Anna, though instead of dying dramatically amid the wreckage of her career, she lived on in disillusionment - the most likeable, and possibly the most

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[161] A. Kettle, The Material for victory, p. 48.

[162] K. Tynan, 25 years, p. 90.

[163] Quoted in Wicklow Newsletter, 31 October 1891.

[164] In an addendum about the Parnell Split attached to his unpublished autobiography; see above, p. 559, note 99.

admirable, of the Parnells. The publication of memoirs about the period of her political activity which ridiculed the L.L.L. or dismissed it indulgently was galling to her; she felt cheated by her contemporaries and undervalued by posterity. As well as painting, she found refuge in writing poetry, most of it satirical parody in an anti-British vein. Some of her more personal verses, however, have a sparseness and a memorable simplicity reminiscent of her sister's American namesake, Emily Dickinson. The title of my study of Anna comes from one such poem, 'The Journey', an allegorical view of her career and life; its bleak stanzas provide a fitting conclusion.

When I first began my journey
My step was firm and light,
And I hoped to reach a shelter
Before the fall of night.

But a band of thieves beset me
Quite early in the day;
They robbed me and then they cast me
All bleeding by the way.

And since that hour I have crawled,
A cripple, blind with tears;
While each step I've made has cost me
The pain and strain of years.

I've had no shelter from the storm,
No screen against the heat;
The sun has beat against my head,
The shards have cut my feet.

My fellow-travellers on the road
Bound for the selfsame goal
With purse and staff and scrip equipped
And limbs and raiment whole,

All point at me with scorn, and say:
'Why does he choose to roam?
For travelling he is not fit;
Cripples should stay at home'.

Alas! they do not know that I
Was once as fit as they
And that there is no turning back
For those who go this way.

The long dark shadows of the night
Are closing on me now,
And its clammy dews are lying
Heavily on my brow.

I see the light of the City
Where I may never win
And I know there's warmth and comfort
For those who are within;

And alone in the cold and darkness
I know that I must die,
And unburied in the desert
My bones will always lie.

Chapter 5

Charles Stewart and John Howard

From 1875 until his brother's death in 1891, John Howard had little to do with Ireland; the most valuable passages in his memoir have to do with the period before Parnell entered politics. Nonetheless, the brothers remained closely connected; there was a bond between them which absence did not erode. However, because John lived largely in America from the early 1870s, and also because the relationship between the two brothers is something which I have referred to regularly throughout this study,[1] my treatment of John Howard at this point will be brief. His life after Parnell's death is better chronicled than that of any other member of the family; but during his brother's political ascendancy, John Howard remains a figure in the wings.

In view of the fact that he wrote a memoir, this seems an unexpected contention; but the most remarkable thing about John Parnell's book is the extent to which he rigorously excludes himself from it except where his life intersects with that of his brother. Possibly he was too conscious of the travesty published by his sister Emily some years before, in every chapter of which the author plays a starring and obtrusive role. In John's case, the omission of his own experiences is to be regretted. He tells us that he continued his experimental farming in the South, and travelled widely through the United States.[2] He had left for America just after his failure in the 1874 Wicklow election,[3] but returned in time for his brother's unsuccessful candidacy for Co. Dublin in the same year.[4]

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[1] See especially above, part 4, chapter 1, pp257-8 and chapter 3, pp.305-8.

[2] See J.H. Parnell, pp. 270-6 for a vividly described expedition to the remotest part of the Georgia mountains.

[3] See above, part 4, chapter 3, pp 320-2.

[4] J.H. Parnell, p. 146.

He then went back to Georgia, and next met his brother in New York during October 1876, when they visited the Independence Centenary exhibition at Philadelphia together.[5] They met again during Parnell's frantic American tour in 1880;[6] but they did not see each other again until John visited Avondale with his mother. He dates this as autumn 1885,[7] but she does not seem to have left America in that year, and John did not accompany her on her return to Avondale in 1886,[8] so this joint visit was probably in 1884, when Mrs Parnell came to Ireland after Arthur Dickinson's death.[9] John returned to America, but was back in Wicklow in time to go shooting at Aughavannagh in 1886, and again in 1887; he was in England during the Special Commission hearings of 1889.[10] This seems to have been his last contact with Parnell; he heard of his brother's unexpected death in Atlanta,[11] and did not arrive back in Ireland until December 1891.[12]

John admits himself that he saw little of his brother in the 'eighties, but states that he was 'in constant communication with /him/ and followed his career in the newspapers'.[13] Communicating with Parnell was never easy; elsewhere John admits: ' . . even I, when I wished to arrange to meet him, had to do so by telegram, as if I sent on a letter in advance he rarely took much notice and I had to go and rout him out wherever he was stopping',[14] When they did spend time together it was usually in Ireland, where the old associations of Avondale and their common interests in farming and mechanics kept up the strong bond between them. And John

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[5] J.H. Parnell, p. 146

[6] Ibid., p. 156.

[7] Ibid., p. 277.

[8] See contemporary newspaper accounts - above, pp 484-5.

[9] See above, p. 481.

[10] J.H. Parnell, pp 222, 226.

[11] Ibid., p. 255.

[12] See Wicklow Newsletter, 26 December 1891.

[13] J.H. Parnell, p. 270.

[14] Ibid., p. 181.

had an added interest in keeping in touch with his brother; for, as his candidature in the Wicklow election implied, he was politically sympathetic to Parnell's career.

This is not to say he can fairly be classed as a 'political Parnell'; I have said before that he alone partook of the elements of the two divisions of John Henry Parnell's children.[15] He was primarily interested in experimental agriculture, and politics came only second to this - an attitude which he was capable of attributing rather ingenuously to others as well:

> I attributed a good deal of the antagonism shown towards me /in the Wicklow election/ to the fact that I was the first to import frozen fruit from America to Ireland, which was followed by the importation of frozen meat, which local farmers thought would greatly injure their trade . .[16]

In fact, John's transportation of frozen goods never became anything like a regular trade; and there were plenty of other reasons for his lack of support in the Wicklow election. He had stood unexpectedly, at the last moment, with no political record, and without wanting to in the first place; his brother, in fact, made his speeches for him. And as one of the local gentry suddenly running on a Home Rule ticket, he not unnaturally would have appeared in the guise of an opportunist. There was also the matter of there being initially two Home Rulers in the field already, and of John's indecisive temporary withdrawal.[17] Yet it was typical of the man that he found a simple and rather naïve answer to his failure in his agricultural pursuits; and even more typical that he returned to his farming with no regret whatsoever.

His interest, however, remained. He knew Patrick Ford in New York, and was in the habit of visiting him;[18] he met Davitt in America in 1878 and talked to him about the land question. In 1880 he helped Patrick

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[15] See above, part 3, chapter 3, p.211; also above, p.463.

[16] J.H. Parnell, p. 137.

[17] See above, part 4, chapter 3, p.321.

[18] J.H. Parnell, p. 152.

Moran, the editor of the Atlanta Constitution, to found a Land League branch in that city; he also worked on the organisation of one in Savannah,[19] and he mentions in his memoir that he 'attended many meetings in New York'. John was a prominent enough figure in Irish-American politics at this time to be invited to the elaborate farewell dinner given by the Land League of New York to James Redpath in June 1881;[20] in the spring of that year he addressed a meeting of the New York Land League where he spoke of the universality of interest among the Irish in the land question and called for money:

> The agitation is not yet over; I am afraid it is only the beginning, because I do not think Gladstone will bring in a bill which will suit. I think Gladstone is willing, but those old fogey Englishmen will not let him do any good.[21]

Again, this analysis is what one would expect: a direct, rather over-simplified view, expressed with a moderation foreign to his sisters and - at this stage - to his brother. The same approach is to be seen in an interview which the Chicago Citizen conducted with him in February 1882; John volunteered the opinion that Parnell would continue his present tactics, the current ministry would be overthrown, and Home Rule quickly attained.[22] If Anna was infuriated by Charles in 1882, she must long since have become disillusioned with John's diffidently optimistic moderation.

Nonetheless, he was 'political' enough for his private life to have a certain publicity-value - reinforced, as time went by and the myth grew, by the fact that he was Parnell's brother. And, like the great man, he was vulnerable to publicity through his position as a landlord. There was evidently talk about this from an early stage; in her letter to T.D. Sullivan in 1880 Mrs Parnell said, ungrammatically but emphatically:

> He /John/ has not evicted any tenants, though his are well able to pay their rents to him, at least in many cases having money

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[19] J.H. Parnell, p. 268.

[20] See Bradstreet Press pamphlet, quoted above, chapter 3, p.508, note 13.

[21] Speech of 5 April 1881, quoted in Nation, 7 May 1881.

[22] Ibid., 11 March 1882, quoted from Chicago Citizen, 18 February 1882.

> in bank /sic/ and have so far, I believe, paid him nothing, though offered a good reduction, while he, not being the head landlord, is obliged to use a legacy to pay Trinity College, the head landlord, the old rent demanded by them, and for fear of eviction himself . . [23]

He may not always have been so indulgent. The Irish Times of 25 August 1882 carried a paragraph announcing that the previous Saturday 'a number of bailiffs proceeded to Mr John H. Parnell's estate in this county /of Armagh/ and seized four farms for non-payment of rent - one in the townland of Lisoosley, and three in the townland of Keenaghan'. These farms were to be put up for sale; the tenants evicted put up no opposition. This contention went uncontradicted; Lisoosley and Keenaghan were indeed part of the Collure estate, and John was in financial trouble in 1882.[24] Nor was this the only opportunity given the Tory press to point up what was, they claimed, a serious anomaly. In November 1885 the Irish Times reported that some of John's tenants at Moy, Co. Armagh, were served writs for rents 'not a month overdue; in every one of these cases the tenants, for sums of a few pounds, will be put to 30/= costs'.[25] The paper went on to claim, incorrectly, that Charles Stewart had an interest in the estate and fixed these rents, 'known as the greatest rackrents in the county . . but that was before Mr Parnell was known as a politician'. The Collure rents had been reduced in the Land Courts over the past few years - one from £63 -15-0 to £42. Such jibes may have seemed insignificant at the time; but they had an undoubted political importance, and memories about such things were long. In 1891 a rumour was abroad that John Parnell intended to contest a seat at the next election for his brother's party, and the Nation snidely remarked:

> We suppose that the choice has fallen upon him because of his services to and sufferings for his country; the tenants of Mr Parnell in county Armagh will more than ever appreciate the meaning of Mr Parnell's pretensions.[26]

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[23] D.T.S. Parnell to T.D. Sullivan, 21 January 1880 (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237), p. 31.

[24] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1882, 13.284; also below, p. 584.

[25] Irish Times, 12 November, 1885.

[26] Nation, 25 April 1891.

At the time of the evictions, however, there were slightly extenuating circumstances - which the Nation in those days would have been only too ready to point out. An eviction for non-payment of rent in late 1882 was different from evicting in 1880 or 1881 - or so a moderate like John Parnell would certainly have felt. Moreover, Collure was held from Trinity College under their Perpetuity Leasing Act - and such estates were notoriously badly managed by their head landlord. In 1882 Trinity sent a deputation to Forster to lodge an objection to accusations that they 'crushed' leasees, who were 'poor cultivators of the soil'; their case was that the college estates were let to wealthy middlemen, and if anyone was responsible for ill-treatment of tenants, it was the latter.[27] This drew a long, angry and carefully substantiated letter from Lord Leitrim about the college estates; he pointed out that Trinity raised head-rents to the middlemen arbitrarily and unreasonably, and without considering any improvements. In many cases (as with Collure[28]) there was already very little profit margin between rents received and rent due. Others wrote in similar terms. The last rent rise had been in 1882; John Parnell's pressure on his tenants may have been forced upon him.

He was, as I have mentioned, in financial difficulties in 1882.[29] He was still liable for a quarter of the £10,000 owed by Charles on Avondale for the Wigram mortgage - an arrangement which pursues the Parnells' muddled financial lives throughout the period like a family spectre. John also owed his brother £1515 outstanding on a private loan. The interest alone on what he owed of Wigram's money came to £1050 in 1882.[30] For the £5065 thus owed by him to Charles in this year, the latter got a mortgage on Collure. I have already referred to John's silence on this subject when he recalled that Charles asked him to back bills for £3000 in 1881 to help their

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[27] See Irish Times, 15 March 1882 - report and editorial.

[28] See above, part 4, chapter 1, p.257.

[29] See above, part 5, chapter 3, pp426-7.

[30] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1882, 12.284.

mother.[31] On these debts falling due, according to John, 'I had to sell what little capital I had, while my promising fruit business was crippled for want of money'. It is unlikely, however, that he was ever in the position of making much wealth out of his American business. He had to work extremely hard at it, and was mentioned in agricultural journals for his experimental ventures;[32] he was celebrated for growing peaches of unrivalled size, as well as for his innovations in frozen shipment. But time and time again in reading his memoir one is struck by the number of might-have-beens which marked his attitude and his life - his missed chance to inherit Avondale, his fling at politics, the alteration of his great-uncle's will,[33] the near misses where financial success was concerned; such as his advice to Charles to buy up pine-lands in the American south when he had a chance to do so for a dollar an acre.[34] The same holds good for the many agricultural and industrial ventures which he planned at Avondale in the 1890s.[35] T.P. O'Connor said of him that 'he had the Parnell inclination to go in for enterprises that promised fortune and left only debt, and poor Parnell had to make up the losses'.[36] Whatever about his brother making up his losses, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that John was not cut out for success.

Perhaps partly because of this, he worshipped his brilliant brother; this comes clearly through every page of his memoir. His personal diffidence and his devotion to Charles have led to some unnecessarily dismissive judgements of him. T.P. O'Connor wrote:

> /John/ had some likeness to his brother, but it was a likeness that was rather like a caricature; he was a very aimable, very harmless, and rather a stupid man . . [37]

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[31] J.H. Parnell, pp. 209, 286-8. See above, part 5, chapter 3, pp421-2.

[32] See W.P. Coyne, Ireland industrial and agricultural (Dublin 1902), p. 271; also Mrs Parnell's letter to T.D. Sullivan of 21 January 1880 (N.L.I., Sullivan Papers, MS 8237(6), p. 31.

[33] See above, part 4, chapter 1, pp255-7.

[34] J.H. Parnell, p. 103; see above, part 4, chapter 2, pp309-10.

[35] See below, pp608-12.

[36] T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, ii, 328.

[37] Ibid.

Joyce's Simon Dedalus said that when they put John in Parliament, Parnell would come back from the grave and lead him out of the House of Commons by the arm.[38] This was not altogether likely, since Parnell had wanted his brother to run for parliament in 1884;[39] but such an interpretation of Charles's attitude towards his kindly, stammering elder brother is not inaccurate. John himself testifies to something like it in several revealing incidents:

> He and I were travelling together by train, when a number of enthusiasts followed us into the carriage. He straightened himself from his usual half-reclining position in the corner of the carriage, which he adopted when travelling, and said to me pettishly: 'Can't you get those people out of the carriage, John? They're annoying me'. I had to set about the very uncomfortable task of going up to each person and asking him whether he would mind leaving the carriage, as my brother wished to be alone.[40]

Nor was this peremptory tone an unusual one; at Avondale, John recalled, 'he used often to say: "Now, John, you might take a basket and go and pick some barberries for me".[41] There was also the incident of the two brothers meeting in Kildare Street and Charles - then at the height of his fame - not saluting John except by the most inconspicuous of winks: an action which John quite properly puts down to 'affectation'.[42] The untouched aura which Parnell cultivated did not allow a casual encounter on a Dublin street. When the acquaintance thus cavalierly treated was the celebrity's own brother, there was good excuse for resentment. The fact that John was not blind to the 'trace of affectation . . in this sphinx-like attitude towards the world in general' shows that he retained a degree of detachment; he had, after all, known his brother when there was nothing to single him out for greatness. But there was no element of bitterness in his attitude - though it might have been forgiven in one who was so often

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[38] J. Joyce, Ulysses (Random House reprint edition, N.Y. 1966), p.165.

[39] J.H. Parnell, p. 277.

[40] Ibid., p. 177.

[41] Ibid,, p. 179.

[42] Ibid., p. 277.

the loser by his brother's good fortune. From his side, Parnell does not seem to have made a habit of subjecting John to his 'sphinx-like attitude'. 'He was always specially fond', recalled John, 'of quizzing me with a kind of dry but always good-natured humour';[43] and at Avondale in 1884 he enthusiastically brought John over his sawmills and mining works, and listened to what he had to say.[44] The fact that Parnell inherited Avondale over his brother's head never seems to have come between them. John says that his brother often 'expressed regret' at this fact to him,[45] but this can have been scant comfort as he watched his brother pouring money into mines and quarries as mortgages accrued on the family estate - although, it is only fair to add, he himself would probably have done no differently.

Throughout Parnell's career, then, though seeing comparatively little of each other, the brothers' relationship was a close one. As was the Parnells' habit, their arrangements to meet were haphazard; a typical instance was when John and his mother came to Ireland in 1884 and 'found to our surprise that all our family had left Dublin';[46] they had to go to the reliable Alfred MacDermott to discover that Charles happened to be at Morrison's Hotel, and Emily was still down at Avondale. 'We are a peculiar family', Parnell once told William O'Brien, 'we are all very fond of each other, but somehow we do not seem to get on so well when we are too much together'.[47] This was, in general terms, no more than the truth. But, as in their childhood, between the two brothers there was a close bond which was only emphasised by their great dissimilarity of character, and by the habit of the younger to expect the elder to do things for him as a matter of course. John accepted his role no less naturally; he was not made of the stuff of greatness, and he recognised it as equably as he realised his brother's genius. But there was a good deal more to him than

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[43] J.H. Parnell, p. 172.

[44] Ibid., p. 277 et seq.

[45] Ibid., p. 303.

[46] Ibid., p. 277.

[47] Wm O'Brien, Evening memories, p. 188.

O'Connor's description[48] allows. He is a vital figure against which to define his brother; and his memoir is, I believe (despite several terminological inaccuracies) an under-rated source of material about Parnell. The balance of the brothers' relationship was set up before Charles became famous, and altered little during his career; this is why a chapter about their interaction upon each other between 1875 and 1891 need be no longer than this one. The life of John Howard Parnell took a more active turn after his brother's death, and his fortunes during this period will form the framework for a conclusion to this study. For, in a sense, John's life was as moulded and defined by that of his brother after the latter's death as much as it ever was while he was alive. It is typical of John that he ends his book with Charles' death; and although he was to experience bitter disillusionment both over Irish politics and the fortunes of Avondale in the 1890s, he rarely if ever allows a mention of this to enter his book. Their relationship tells as much about Parnell as it does about his brother. They were at the same time as unalike and as closely united as two brothers could be: yet another facet of the Parnell paradox. Parnell was fond of Theodosia and Emily, suffered his mother's excesses with equinamity, admired Fanny, and fought with Anna; but the retiring, diffident John Howard - politically sympathetic but rarely with him during his career, and whom Charles treated with a certain thoughtlessness and authority which both brothers accepted as completely natural - seems to have known him better than any of them.

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[48] See above, p.585.

Appendix : Selected poems of Fanny Parnell

The order I give these in is that in which they appeared in print. They may, of course, have been written earlier than their publication date. This does not pretend to be a full, or even a comprehensive, selection of Fanny's work; it merely comprises those of her poems that I came across, and used for illustration when discussing her poetry. The first poems I give were written when she was fifteen; the last one was written a year before her death. For the last year of her life, none of her poems appeared in the periodical literature of the time.

Eily

(Irish People, 18 June 1864; signed 'Aleria')

O, blue are the eyes of Eily, my love,
As blue as her native skies,
And mirrored far down in their dew-swimming depths
A Heaven of sweetness lies.
But their chief charm it is, whene'er I look in,
No image but mine I see;
I know, by that token, my own Irish maid
Is true unto love and me.

O, red are the lips of my Eily, my love-
O, red as the wild wood rose,
And in them all fragrance and purity dwell,
All virginal beauty blows;
But their chief charm it is, that e'en as the flower
They've thorns for the touch profane,
For all but of him who is lord of her heart
Would surely their brightness stain.

O, sweet is the smile of my Eily, my love-
O, sweet as the glance of May,
When the hawthorn blossoms peep forth from the glade
To meet the first kiss of day;
But its chief charm is this, it never hath beam'd,
Except on the bold and free,
And therefore I know that my own Irish girl
Is true to her land and me.

A Sonnet

(Irish People, 20 August 1864; signed 'Aleria')

Oh, why those tears? 'tis not the time for thee
To weep o'er any but another's woes;
Thy heart, as yet, with spring's sweet blisses glows,
Leave tears to Age - all now is jubilee.
Go forth, then, sad one, from thy gloomy cell,
Sit not with sorrow's phantoms in thy brain.
Not here - Canst wrestle with thy secret pain,
Not here - release thee from thy evil spell.
Go forth, beneath the calm, free smile of Heaven,

I' th' dewy air thy throbbing bosom lave,
Thy wearied brow to God's pure sunshine bare,
For unto Nature only is it given
Her child from his own darkened heart to save,
With loving might of all that's glad and fair.

The Poor man to his country

(Irish People, 1 October 1864; signed 'Aleria')

Dark, dark and strange hath been my lot in thee, O Mother Isle;
Long used to tears, methinks I've almost now forgot to smile.
The grim wolf, Poverty, with sharpest fang hath drained my life,
Hath reft me of my loved ones all - of friend, and child, and wife,
And left me lone by each untimely grave to pine for death;
Yet will I love thee, Mother Erin, till my latest breath.
Faint hearts that cannot meet distress may shrink and be estranged,
But I will cling to thee through every change with love unchanged.
Stern suffering doth but knit me closer still unto thy breast;
And shame it is thy sons on foreign shores should seek for rest,
'Tis shame to leave thee in thy direst need, unhappy land!
Nor lift to save thee from the tyrant's gripe one helping hand.
Brethren, prove the mettle of your swords by noble deeds;
Far better he, who in the patriot's strife untimely bleeds
Than he who spends a long, inglorious life in heaping gold,
With heart that unto Erin's sacred cause is false and cold;
Not such are we - oh, we would scorn to fly from poverty!
All suffering would we gladly, boldly face for liberty;
Yes, and the poor man's hand on Erin's brow shall place the crown
When 'neath the poor man's sword usurping might i' th' dust lies down.

John Dillon

(Printed in the Boston Pilot, probably at the time of Parnell's and Dillon's American tour in early 1880)

Pater nobilis; filius noblior

Like Spain's young Cid of yore, me thought I saw thee rise -
The mystic inner glow through thy pale features shining;
Rodrigo's fiery soul was leaping from thine eyes -
Spain's Red-Cross flag with blazoned shamrocks round thee twining.

I heard thee speak, and dreamt of Galahad the chaste,
Of Launcelot the brave, and Arthur's kingly glory;
Mailed shadows on thy form the helm and hauberk placed,
And bade thee forth, to take up knighthood's broken story.

The voice of Art MacMurrough thundered through thy tongue,
Of John the proud, whose true heart - Bloody Bess disdaining -
By those twin snakes of craft and greed to death was stung,
Whose rank trail still the banners of the Scot is staining.

Methought the murdered Desmond raised his blood-scored throat;
Up towered the Three Great Earls, who fought and fled despairing;
Uprose our Roe O'Neill, who first the Roundheads smote,
Then died, with single arm his country's flag up-bearing.

Around thee still I saw the great souls thronging fast -
Grattan, the golden-tongued, whose breast with storms was swelling,
The Geraldine, of all his race's heroes last,
With wild Norse blood against the Saxon churl rebelling-

Wolfe Tone - ah! let the head be bared, the voice be hushed!
See you the livid veins that gape with mournful quiver?
O sainted suicide! the blood that from thy sad heart gushed
'Twixt Celt and Saxon flows a black and bridgeless river.

Tread softly yet again! we stand on holy ground -
Emmet, our nation's Bayard, 'gainst forlorn hope hoping-
In him woke up some plumed Knight of Table Round,
With baffled fingers for the dead past groping.

A giant form I saw, that loomed up dim and vast -
A great broad brow of might, yet stamped with endless yearning -
O'Connell! thou whose labours all men's have o'er past
Yet for thy guerdon only failure's anguish earning.

Fret not thy noble heart! No hero falls in vain!
Lo! Samson in his wreck the Pagan hosts o'er throwing -
Lo! Herakles, the half-god, rent with such vast pain
As only they who serve their race win right of knowing.

Behold Prometheus! - lover of the darkened world!
The grim gods cursed with death the flame he gave for blessing,
Yet, to his rock of torture by their vengeance hurled,
He gazed and smiled, his soul in triumph still possessing.

And still they came! Lo! Davis! - he whose meteor soul,
As in Elijah's fiery chariot heavenward sweeping,
Threw down the patriot's mantle, and the poet's scroll,
That Erin's mournful genius still untouched is keeping.

Yet more! the men who through the white-hot furnace walked,
Like Rome's live torches, quenched in pain's last radiation;
Mitchel, whose tongue the thunders of the war-gods talked,
Teaching the one old way where lies the serf's salvation.

O'Brien, he who smote his fellows on the face -
The clan of lordlings, born from rapine and oppression -
And, turning, stung with grand disdain of pride and race,
Went out and joined the patriots' Pariah procession.

And still they came, till space shall fail to tell their names,
Thousands of hero shades around thy young head sweeping;
The air was filled with splendours, as when heavenly flames
O'er apostolic brows the Spirit's watch was keeping.

Thy sponsors these, young chief - thy comrades to the fray -
In all their pangs and joys thou shalt be made partaker -
They shall be there to choke the landlord from his prey -
They shall be there to give the lie to peer and Quaker.

The path before thy feet climbs brightening to the stars -
These champion souls that fell shall never bid thee falter;
Better to strive and fall, marked but by Freedom's scars,
And immolate e'en Fame on Freedom's holy altar.

And when that ancient Pharisee of whom we wot,
Whom kindly hands for England's using resurrected,
With lips smile-wreathed, and palms that bear a wet, red blot,
Whose tender heart oft bleeds for fat steers unprotected,

Me-thinks that when great Gabriel brings the wakening light
Our Dillon's name as one that loved his fellow-men shall shine,
While on the sacred roll the angel's hand shall write
Our Forster's gentle name as one that loved his fellow-kine.

Ireland

(Nation, 5 June 1880; also published in the Celtic Monthly and the Irish American)

She turns and tosses on her couch of pain,
Where cruel hands have stretched her, spent and worn;
And by her side the weary watchers strain
Sad eyes to catch a gleam of halting morn,

She mourns- and every mourn a true heart rends -
She sighs - thé fever hot in every limb -
'Ah God, whose love the humblest wretch befriends,
Bid daylight break upon my eyelids dim!'

Oh, long the night! - and many a time and oft
We've thought, with throbbing pulse, 'The dawn draws nigh!'
We've seen the clouds, illusive, break aloft,
And then with tenfold blackness mock the eye.

Oh, long the night, and fierce the fever's pain!
Once more we see faint glimmerings far-off play,
We've hoped so oft, we dare not hope again;
And yet, if this indeed, at last, were day!

What shall we weep for?

(Nation, 17 July 1880; reprinted from the Boston Pilot)

'Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers'.

Shall we weep for thee, O my mother - shall we weep for the martyred land -
For the Queen that is prone in ashes, struck down by a robber's hand?

Shall we weep for the fair green banner, drowned deep in a vale of tears?
For the golden harp that is broken, and dumb with the rust of years?

Shall we weep for the children banished, or for those crushed down to the brute,
Crushed out of the semblance of human, while justice sits blind and mute?

For the peasant that died in torments - for the hero that battling fell,
For the martyr that slowly rotted in the voiceless dungeon cell?

For the famine, the filth and the fever, the lash, and the pitchcap and sword,
For the homeless, coffinless corpses, laid out on their native sward?

For the strong man that crept from prison, old, helpless and blind,to die -
For the soldier that bled from England, 'neath many a hostile sky?

Whom England, delighting to honour, gifts of chains and a dungeon gave
Till his brave heart broke with its anguish, and he staggered from cell to grave?

Shall we weep for these, O my brothers? - my brothers in pain and in love -
For these who have suffered and perished, and shine as the stars above?

Lo! yonder like white-hot beacons, they light up the path we should tread,
Pure flames on the heavenly watch-towers - shall we weep for those happy dead?

Nay, not for mother or children,nor for centuries' woes we'll weep,
But we'll weep for the vengeance coming - that waits, but shall never sleep.

Let us weep for the hand that's bloody, with many an innocent life;
Let us weep for those that have trampled the defenceless down in the strife -

For the heart the Lord hath hardened, with triumph, and spoil and crown -
For the robber whose plundered kingdoms never see the sun go down -

For the Scarlet Woman that's drunken, with the blood and tears of her slaves,
Who goes forth to slay with a psalm-tune, and builds her churches on graves -

For her sons who rush out to murder, and return with plunder and prayer,
Lifting up to the gentle saviour the red hands that never spare.

For these and the doom that is on them, the spectre ghastly and grey,
Looming far in the haunted future, where Nemesis waits her prey,

Let us weep, let us weep, my brothers! We have heard but a whisper fall,
But we know the voice of the tempest, be it ever so still and small.

To their God of cant and slaughter they shall cry in their hour of need,
But the true God shall rise and break them, as one that breaketh a reed.

Weep not for the wronged, but the wronger - the despot whom God hath cursed -
Holding off a while till the floodgates of his gath'ring wrath have burst.

For the wronged a moment's anguish - for the wronger damnation deep -
He that soweth the wind shall surely for harvest the whirlwind reap.

Hold the harvest

(This was first published in the early autumn of 1880; the fullest version I could find was in R.M.McWade's Life of Stewart Parnell, pp 57-8).

Now, are you men are you kine, ye tillers of the soil?
Would you be free, or evermore the rich man's cattle toil?
The shadow on the dial hangs that points the fatal hour -
Now hold your own! Or, branded slaves, forever cringe and cower.

The serpent's curse upon you lies - ye writhe within the dust,
Ye fill your mouths with beggar's swill, ye grovel for a crust,
Your lords have set their bloodstained heels upon your shameful heads,
Yet they are kind - they leave you still their ditches for your beds!

Oh, by the God who made us all - the seigneur and the serf -
Rise up! and swear to hold this day your own green Irish turf;
Rise up! and plant your feet like men where now you crawl as slaves,
And make your harvest-fields your camps, or make of them your graves.

The birds of prey are hovering round, the vultures wheel and swoop-
They come, the coronetted ghouls! with drumbeat and with troop-
They come to fatten on your flesh, your children's and your wives' -
Ye die but once- hold fast your lands and, if you can, your lives.

Let go the trembling emigrant - not such as he you need,
Let go the lucre-loving wretch that flies his land for need,
Let not one coward stay to clog your manhood's waking power,
Let not one sordid churl pollute the Nation's natal hour.

Yes, let them go! The catiff rout that shirk the struggle now,
The light that crowns your victory shall scorch each recreant brow .
And in the annals of your race black parallels in shame
Shall stand by traitor's and by spy's the base deserter's name.

Three hundred years your crops have sprung, by murdered corpses fed;
Your butchered sires, your famished sires, for ghstly compost spread;
Their bones have fertilised your fields, their blood has fall'n like rain,
They died that you might eat and live - God! have they died in vain?

The yellow corn starts blithely up - beneath it lies a grave,
Your father died in 'forty-eight; his life for yours he gave;
He died that you, his son, might learn there is no helper nigh
Except for him who, save in fight, has sworn he will not die.

The hour has struck, Fate holds the dice, we stand with bated breath;
Now who shall have our harvests fair - 'tis Life that plays with Death;
Now who shall have our Motherland? 'Tis Right that plays with Might;
The peasants' arms were weak indeed in that unequal fight!

But God is on the peasants' side, the God that loves the poor;
His angels stand with flaming sword on every mount and moor.
They guard the poor man's flocks and herds, they guard his ripening grain;
The robber sinks beneath their curse beside his ill-got gain.

O pallid serfs! whose groans and prayers have wearied Heav'n full long,
Look up! there is a law above, beyond all legal wrong;
Rise up! the answer to your prayers shall come, tornado-borne,
And ye shall hold your homesteads dear, and ye shall reap the corn!

But your own hands upraised to guard shall draw the answer down,
And bold and stern the deeds must be that oath and prayer shall crown;
God only fights for those who fight - now hush the useless moan,
And set your faces as a flint, and swear to Hold Your Own.

To the Land Leaguers

(Celtic Monthly, vol. iv,no. 3 (September 1880), p. 241)

I hear the trumpets sounding - the trumpets of the Lord;
I see the glory streaming from the seraph's lifted sword;
I see the great white pinions from dawn to sunset lands,
Flash out Jehovah's signal for the gathering of the bands.

And from Columbia's prairires, all rich with harvest gold,
And from her teeming cities, with wealth of souls untold;
And from each bog and mountain on Erin's tear-steeped soil,
Where sweat and blood and famine are the bitter fruits of toil,

And from the ancient Russias where royal fingers drip
With heart's-blood of a people wrung through their strangling grip;
From every living charnel-house, in rank quick-silver caves,
Where sage and hero, world-forgot, drop piecemeal to their graves,

From grim Britannia's bowels, where souls are slain for coal,
Where all her iron Juggernauts o'er endless victims roll;
From London's slums of horror, where vice with hunger meets
Breeding men to fill her prisons, and girls to fill her streets,

From Scotia's bold brown heather, where once the mountaineer
Trod free as morning breezes, light-footed as the deer;
From Gallia's smiling vineyards, with noble blood made green,
And from that great, strange city - 'mid all the cities queen -

From thee, mysterious Paris! to Freedom consecrate -
Though long and sadly waiting, she stands outside the gate;
No Athiest bigot shocks her - no rabble passions fright,
For through the ghastliest shadows thy face e'er seeks the light.

From each far land where echoes the heart-beat of our race,
Each home where labour's bondage has left its branding trace;
Each breast that feels the trampling of iron hooves of caste,
And knows its cry is helpless to laws the rich have passed;

From every wayside hovel, from every pauper's cell,
From every reeking garret, from every liquor-hell,
From every jail and brothel, from every deathbed ditch,
The cry is swelling - surging - '<u>Now cursed be the rich</u>!'

'Oh, these are but earth's vermin!' Yet God He made them men.
The great, glad earth he gave them, and not a noisome den;
Now woe to you who heed not the wail from lips unclean,
There's naught unclean or common before God's eyes, I ween.

Now, woe to you who gird not your limbs to fight for these,
When God calls forth to battle, let no man take his ease;
Well spake the olden legend - in every pariah kind
In foulest thing that's human, a door to God we find.

Go forth! oh, knightly Leaguers! Like Arthur's chiefs of old,
Give back your outcast brother the birthright he has sold;
First, bind his broken body -first, stay the hunger-pang;
Preach not to him your sermons, but to the spoiler's gang.

Talk not to him of duty, from transcendental heights;
Shall slaves have human duties, that have no human rights?
To him whose earth is hell, your heaven is but a name;
Christ <u>fed</u> the starving sinner - go you and do the same.

The world is changing - changing-and down the long years
I see slow revolutions, wrought out with pangs and fears;
In vain to creed and custom we cling with shaking hands,
Upon the shifting quick-sands our social palace stands.

We say: '<u>This</u> thing is sacred - let no man, over-bold,
Touch this, whose deep foundations our social domes uphold;'
But sapping waves are busy, and slowly - one by one-
Sink down the golden turrets of our fated <u>Avalon</u>.

On roll the mighty aeons - and whither? - who shall tell?
'Mid shoreless oceans stranded, we trust all things are well;
Fierce tides uprushing swallow the dreamer and the drone -
Lay by your trusting, brothers! your deeds shall save alone.

God shapeth all things rightly, but makes of men his tools;
God teacheth holiest wisdom, but holds on earth His schools;
With hands of flesh he labours - He plans with human brains,
And to our staggering weakness His Car of Triumph chains.

Ireland, Mother!

(Nation, 27 November 1880)

Vein of my heart, light of mine eyes,
Pulse of my life, star of my skies,
Dimmed is thy beauty, sad are thy sighs -
Fairest and saddest, what shall I do for thee,
Ireland, mother!

Hast thou not sons, like the ocean sands?
Hast thou not sons, with brave hearts and hands?
Hast thou not heirs for thy broad, bright lands?
What have they done - or what will they do for thee,
Ireland, mother?

Were I a man from thy glorious womb
I'd hurl the stone from thy living tomb;
Thy grief should be joy, and light thy gloom;
The rose should gleam'mid thy golden broom,
Thy marish wastes should blossom and bloom;
I'd smite thy foes with thy own long doom,
While God's heaped judgement should round them loom -
Were I a man, lo! this I should do for thee,
Ireland, mother!

Coercion - Hold the rent!

(Written in autumn 1880, according to Davitt, who quotes it in Fall of Feudalism, pp 266-7)

Keep the law, oh keep it well - keep it as your rulers do;
Be not righteous overmuch - when they break it, so can you!
As they rend the pledge and bond, rend you, too, their legal thongs;
When they crush your chartered rights, tread you down your chartered wrongs.
Help them on and help them aye, help them as true brethren should, boys;
All that's right and good for them, sure for you it's right and good, boys.

Chorus : Hold the rents and hold the crops, boys;
Pass the word from town to town;
Pull away the props, boys,
So you'll pull coercion down!

Ah, for you they'll tear and toss Magna Carta to the wind;
Law of men, nor law of God, e'er their throttling fingers bind;
Hear their ragings! as of old, when the just Judge found no law,
'Whom the law condemneth not, he shall perish without law!'
Hold your peace and hold your hands - not a finger on them lay, boys!
Let the pike and rifle stand - we have found a better way, boys.

Chorus.

Let them try once more the plan, erst so potent in its spells-
Let them fill their prison pens, let them fill their torture cells,

'Squelch you, ay, by heav'n, like rats, crawling in th' mammoth's way!'
Might is Right and force is God - well the lesson they have taught, boys!
Wait! you'll pay them back anon, in the lesson they have wrought, boys.

Chorus.

While one brave heart gasps unheard, stiffled 'neath their panther grip,
While one woman's scalding tears vainly for the lost one drip,
While one jail a victim holds, while one hearthstone mourns a gap,
Up and shout the shibboleth that can make the fetters snap!
Never heed the perjured Whig, never heed for cant or curse, boys;
No coercion e'er coerced better than an empty purse, boys!

Chorus.

To the farmers of Ireland

(Nation, 5 March 1881, reprinted from the Boston Pilot)

What will you do, farmers of Ireland - what will you do in the tempest-throes,
What will you do when the grisly ranks of trappers and jailors round you close ?
What will you do when the sleuth-hounds bay, and the hunters of men are pressing sore,
And the wreck and ruin seem very near, and the helper is seen no more?

What will you do when the despot shakes his bloody manacles in your face?
What will you do when his strangling grip is hard on the throat of your swooning race?
What will you do when your lords come back for the vengeance they hoard today,
And the face of manis black with wrath, and the face of God seems far away?

What will you do? We are calling now, we who have stretched our hands to save -
We who have snatched your babes from death when the landlord and bailiff dug their grave;
We are asking now: are you true men too? Are you worthy our toil and pain.
Or the mocking world, shall it read with gibes how you fainted and failed again?

We have sent you gold, we have sent you cheer, we will send you more than all;
We are waiting here, while we hold our breaths, to catch but your feeblest call
We are waiting here, O brothers dear! we are listening across the seas,
And 'tis 'Hold- ah! hold- the sweet old land!' we pray you on bended knees.

For you cannot fail - you must not fail - though you battle with earth and hell,
Or never again may an Irish breast with hope of with triumph swell;

May the brand of shame on each Irish brow for ever and ever burn
And the banded nations from their midst a people of outcasts spurn!

Can you hold your own? Will you hold your own? Now answer us back once more,
If the helmsman fall, will you guide yourselves the ship to the splendid shore?
When we held you up in your famine pangs, when we filled your empty veins,
Then you swore that the hunger's blight no more should wither your teeming plains.

Yes, you swore by the cross where bound and nailed you have writhed and bled so long,
By the God who counts the groans of the weak and the crimes of the great and strong,
By the mother of Christ, who once has wept, as your peasant mothers weep,
When their sons in the pauper's or rebel's grave are thrust away to sleep.

By the Christ who blessed the beggar and slave, and cursed the rulers of earth,
By the bloody travail of those who died to give to your freedom birth,
By the Faith you have clasped 'mid stress and storm, till each sod of your martyred land
Is a holy spot where with reverent head and with feet unshod we stand -

By these, and by all that you hold most dear, by all that you hold most high,
You have sworn that no son of an Irish womb in a coward's ditch shall die;
You have sworn you would dare whatever a man, whatever a hero durst,
If you falter now, if you truckle now, then perish a race accursed!

But you will not yield, for we know you well, you have shared our bosom-fires,
And the blood that seethes in your labouring hearts is the blood of glorious sires;
We are brothers all, we are comrades all, we will stand with you or fall-
But we will not stand by a dastard's side, nor die for a willing thrall.

Let a shout come back from your trampled homes, in the Saxon trooper's teeth:
'There is never a power, 'mid Thugs on earth, or 'mid the devils beneath,
That shall turn us now, that shall fright us now, from the road where our feet are set -
Stand fast to us now, we are true men too, and we will be <u>free men</u> yet!'

Leo the Thirteenth

(Nation, 19 March 1881, reprinted from the N.Y. National Advocate)

Not for the halo that wreathes thy head,
Not for the fame of thy hallowed life,
Not for the incense thy hands have shed,
O'er a fetid age of sin and strife,

Not for thy glory of high estate -
Ruler of millions of pilgrim feet-
Lord of the keys of the heavenly gate,
Throned in the slain Christ's victory-seat!

Not for the crimes of unholy hands,
Not for the wrongs that thy church has borne,
Plundered and stripped 'mid the godless lands,
Bared to the bigot's and recreant's scorn-

Nay, not for these do thine eyes behold
A nation wrung with the throes of years
Lie down in a passion of love untold
And bathe thy feet with their grateful tears.

O beautiful feet with glory shod!
O beautiful eyes now dim with pain!
Thrice holy the dust those feet have trod-
The spot where a glance from those eyes has lain!

Full vainly they tried, the lying knaves,
To draw a curse on our Erin's head;
He thought of her bonds and her famine graves,
And he gave her a blessing instead.

They tried with the slanderer's asp-like tongue,
They tried with the flatterer's supple knee;
On each snowy name their filth they flung,
And the pulse of their black hearts leaped with glee.

But he thought of the men who held on high
The flag of their faith 'mid blood and flame -
He thought of the men who joyed to die
To save the altar they loved from shame.

He looked at the mummers false and sly,
And he thought of the olden Pharisee;
He heard the naked and hungry cry,
And he thought of Jesus of Galilee.

Then he turned from the foe, now masked as friend,
Now crouched and fawning - but all too late -
And he said, 'No message of wrath I'll send
To the land that is scored with Cromwell's hate.'

And he poured out the myrrh and wine,
And he poured out the balm for the wounds that bleed,
And we know him now, 'mid raptures divine,
For a vicar of Christ the Lord, indeed.

The Clogher massacre

(Celtic Monthly, vol. v no. 4 (April 1881), p. 367)

Once more the tale of murder, hissed across the seas,
Stops all the pulses of our weighted hearts,
Back from the frozen lips the cry of horror flees,
And, stone-bound, dies in groans the curse before it starts.

Is there no God! - sweeps, cold with chill of death, the thought
Athwart the faith that buds and reaches to the light!
For what, then, hath the worker toiled? The champion fought?-
Why stem the wrong? - and why uphold the painful right?

Is there no God! - oh, dim the eyes that peep and peer
Through Life's black fogs, that shroud the mysteries of love!
Like monstrous shapes loom forth, amid the shadows here,
The messengers that bear the glory from above.

The blood of martyrs is the choicest seed God sows. -
A thousandfold, at last, the wondrous harvest springs; -
From every fertile drop a Truth triumphant grows,
And, to the living from the slain, Hop's mission brings.

Yea, 'it must needs be that offences come.' - Yet woe
To him through whom they come! And thrice anathema is he
Who with the sword of justice strikes th'assassin's blow,
Who treads with Nero's heel, and crooks a Cromwell's knee!

Wherefore we will not curse you, O ye men of blood;
For on your brows an awful seal is set this day -
Swift woe - the sudden doom that cometh like a flood,
When all your work is done, and the just God shall pay!

The great Archbishop

(Nation, 16 July 1881, reprinted from the Boston Pilot)

We said, each man within his sad and bitter heart, 'Behold, we stand alone;
And they who flout us now shall gather where we strewed, and reap where we have strewn;
The priest and scribe, the learned and great, they pass us by with coldly fuming eyes,
While inch by inch and step by step we push the fight that yields for us no prize.

Ay! they who prated loudest once of love for justice, liberty and man
Wag snake-like tongues and spit against us now the venom of their pious ban.
All men', we groaned, 'are beasts of burden or of prey, and only we are left
To catch the dropped threads that our sires let fall from Freedom's torn and bloody weft.'

Ah! sorely erred we then, for even as we flung our fretful moans and cries
Right up in bitter unbelief against the dumb face of the patient skies,

Out from the bosom of the heaving South a lustre blossomed o'er the land
That broadening, whitening, brightening grew - a great white rose, held fast in God's own hand

Grew over all the stormy heaven, and opened wide for all its glorious breast
Till, as the exiled Jew his Zion's fanes, so Cashel's sacred ground we blessed!

Ah, high-priest of our noblest dreams! before that dreadful altar shines thy face,
Beneath which sob and call the souls of them who died - in vain - to save their race.

'How long, O God! How long ere thou avenge our sacrifice of blood and pain?'
And still the awful answer murmurs back: 'Not yet, till all God wills be slain!'

Thy feet are drenched in scarlet wine, the sacramental blood that pours
From England's wine-press when she treads the yearly vintage of our mangled shores,

And England's thunders threat thy consecrated head, and Christian bosoms pine
To hunt once more the unresisting priest, and break the sanctuaried shrine.

Yet brighter still for storm and might thy face shall glow, and tell the herd around,
That on Sinai's tempest-blackened peak thy soul the light of God has found;

With Him whose holiest name is Love thy soul has talked, and back to earth has brought
The radiance of th'immortals sealed upon the brow that wears a god-given thought.

Like Moses to thy people, where, fear-stricken, 'mid the wilds they doubt and quail,
Thy prophet-voice peals forth again: 'Thus saith the Lord, this time ye shall not fail.'

And on the heights, like Moses too, of yore, thy hands are raised for us in might,
While through the shadowed valleys at thy feet a hundred Joshuas lead the fight.

Lift still thy hands, and weary not, for shining armies fill the lurid air;
Lift still thy hands, and leave us not, for vicotry waits at last upon thy prayer.

And 'mid the clamour and the heat, thy warning voice breathes calm and low-
'Be true, O children! and be pure; be bold, yet strike no fool's or fuffian's blow.'

Thine will be the loftier task than sacred Patrick's wrought in splendid years long past,
When from our shores - as legends tell - the crawling snake and skulking wolf he cast.

Be thine the mission to uproot from human breasts the bestial, false and vile,
And give to us once more, purged clean with tears and fire, our long-lost Holy Isle.

The Immortal three

(Nation, 20 August 1881, reprinted from the Boston Pilot)

Sing out the names of our leaders anointed,
Echo the chorus from Liffey to Shannon,
Drown with your paeans the roar of the foemen,
Clamour of curses, and thunder of cannon;
Shout from the stream where you bled for a dastard,
Crushed with unhonoured and profitless slaughter,
Shout from the shambles of Wexford and Dredagh,
Shout from the banks of the splendid Blackwater,
Shout from the blood-reeking bath of the Curragh,
Shout from Dungannon the faithful and fearless,
Shout from the low-moaning wave of Lough Swilly,
Shout from old Tara, the holy and peerless,
Cashel of kings, and Meath, and Kilmallock,
Deathless for ever in song and in story;
Ring out their names from the Bann to the Barrow,
Shout for your captains in gloom and in glory!
Tribunes and prophets and priests of the nation,
Pillars of flames on our path they have risen,
Crowning with haloes the brow of the felon,
Flushing with radiance the shrine in the prison!
Cashel of kings! Behold thy Melchisidech!
High priest and ruler, our weary hearts hail him,
Bringer of gifts of rich cheer to the fighter,
Sceptreless monarch of Innisfail's Salem!
Meath! from the dream-haunted slopes of thy Tara,
Yet in these last days the curse shall be taken.
Shadowy eyes of old heroes and sages
Watching, shall see the dead glories awaken.
Bitter and stern fell the ban of the seer,
Temple and palace long ages have mouldered,
Yet 'mid their ruins the Bel-fires of freedom,
Quenchless, eternal, have quivered and smouldered;
Ghostly Feis-Teamrachs, their grim vigil keeping,
Yet shall behold them resurgent in power,
Kindled anew from the flames of the altar,
Fed with the chrism of heavenly dower.

Noble Kilmallock! the last but not lesser-
Flushed be the shout of our loud jubilation;
Stormy and hot on the cold prison threshold
Fall the fierce tears of a wrath-heaving nation;
Yet through the din of our passion and weakness
Steal the clear whispers of Faith's high evangel;
Now, as of old on the martyred apostle,
Shines in the dungeon the light of God's angel.
'Only a priest' he was - so they dared seize him,
Only a worker for God and his neighbour -
Only a private in Heaven's bright army,
Happy unheeded to wrestle and labour;
'Only a priest' he was - only a hero!
Only a sovereign of hearts that were breaking -
Only a voice in the wilderness crying,
Paralysed men from their death-slumber waking;
Only a patriot! word of all others
Saddest, most beautiful, sacred to sorrow -
Written today in the tears of the outcast,
Graven in blood on the scaffold tomorrow;
Only a priest and only a patriot!
Star of Kilmallock, undimmed and fading,
Thou shalt gleam on when the mummers of justice
Long shall be snatched from their vain masquerading.
Glorious for ever, both pastor and prelate
Lions of God going forth as to battle -
Gone are the days of our shame when we followed
Trimmers and traitors, like blind, blatant cattle;
Cashel of Kings, and Meath, and Kilmallock -
These be our beacons to Liberty's haven.
Lead they to sacrifice, anguish, defeating,
Never a one shall be recreant or craven;
Up the steep bluffs of the highlands of duty,
Out from the sloughs where we whimper and wallow,
Lead us, O chosen of God and the people!
Be it to life or to death, we will follow!

To England; or, the Land Bill of 1881

(Nation, 1 October 1881; reprinted from the Boston Pilot)

Tear up the parchment lie!
Scatter its fragments to the hissing wind,
And hear again the people's first and final cry-
'No more for you, O Lords! we'll dig and grind;
No more for you the castle, and for us the stye;
No more your gyves our equal limbs shall bind;
A power has breathed on torpid tongue and darkened eye;
We will not drudge to glut your tills- but we can die.
Tear up your parchment lie!
We cannot crouch- but we can die.'

Call off your quacks of state-
Your mountebanks of Brummagem reform!
Fought we, a landlord's greed by newer plans to sate-
To gorge the suckers of a lawyer swarm?
Was it for this we chose to suffer, starve and wait-
For this we faced the nakedness and storm-
For this the dogs have licked our sores outside your gate-
For this you claim our love, and marvel at our hate?
Call off your imps of state-
We cannot love, but we can hate!

Choke back your mouthing guile!
We know our friends, and well we know our foes.
You weep for us, kind heart! -so weeps the crocodile;
One hand you reach to help- the other stuns with blows.
Damn not your soul too deeply! 'Twere not worth your while;
Since we have looked behind your raree-shows
Some things we've seen too mean for speech, and some too vile;
We dread not now your frown, we trust not now your smile.
Choke back the voice of guile!
We scorn your frown- we loathe your smile!

Hands off! O cruel nurse,
Red-fanged and clawed! alone we'll stand or fall;
Full long enough you've coined our blood to fill your purse.
Call off your sham Samaritans, and all
Your juggling crew of ghouls that build our country's hearse;
Take them away! She is no more your thrall-
Take them away, ere yet the coming days be worse-
Take them away, and with them take a nation's curse!
Hands off! O bloody nurse!
We cannot bless, but we can curse.

Tear up the parchment lie!
You, Gladstone, sunk supine to quivering slush-
You, Forster, with the seal of Cain in breast and eye-
You, Bright, whose slopping tougue can gloss and gush-
You, puppet-brood, the lesser legislative fry-
A people's might your bungled works shall crush,
A people's wrath your grinning cozenage defy.
We will not yield, we will not starve, we will not fly-
Tear up your parchment lie!
This time we'll neither crouch nor die!

After death

(Nation, 12 August 1882; described as having been written about a year before.)

Shall my eyes behold thy glory, o my country? Shall mine eyes behold
thy glory?
Or shall the darkness close around them ere the sunblaze break at last upon
thy story?

When the nations ope for thee their queenly circle, as a sweet new sister
hail thee,
Shall these lips be sealed in callous death and silence, that have known
but to bewail thee?

Shall the ear be deaf that only loved thy praises, when all men their
tribute bring thee?
Shall the mouth be clay that sang thee in thy squalor, when all poets'
mouths shall sing thee?

Ah! the tramp of feet victorious, I should hear them 'mid the shamrocks
and the mosses,
And my heart should toss within the shroud and quiver as a captive dreamer
tosses.

I should turn and rend the cere-clothes round me, giant sinews I should
borrow-
Crying, 'O my brothers, I have also loved her in her loneliness and sorrow!'

'Let me join with you the jubilant procession; let me chant with you her
story;
Then contented I shall go back to the shamrocks, now mine eyes have seen
her glory!'

Epilogue

The Parnells

and

Avondale

after

1891

Epilogue

The Parnells and Avondale after 1891

> No story of Greek history by a Greek dramatist tells of a family tragedy more striking and more complete.
>
> T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, ii, 331.

I

John Howard Parnell arrived back at Avondale in December 1891.[1] Though he returned to America in the spring, he came home in September 1892.[2] Almost at once, he began his efforts both to retain Avondale and take his brother's place: both destined to fail, through a combination of unpropitious circumstances, lack of sympathy, and his own failings of indecision and failure to appreciate and cope with the realities of his position. Though March 1893 found him back in Alabama, he wrote from there requesting that he be entered as an elector for the Rathdrum Board of Guardians in his brother's place;[3] and he had already started to become involved in Nationalist politics.[4] On 28 May he arrived at Queenstown,[5] and announced plans to ship over four thousand plum-trees to refurbish Avondale's orchards; to establish a cottage-industry making fruit-baskets on the estate; and to keep the quarries going. He expanded upon these plans in an address to the Irish Industrial League on 7 June: the surplus of the sawmills was to produce oak walking-sticks, wood-wool,

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[1] See Wicklow Newsletter, 19 December 1891 and 26 December 1891.

[2] See ibid, 27 February 1892, 30 July 1892, 3 September 1892.

[3] Ibid., 4 March 1893.

[4] See below, pp614-9.

[5] Wicklow Newsletter, 3 June 1893; Irish Weekly Independent, 3 June 1893.

and rough furniture.[6] Later in the summer he demonstrated how another of his preoccupations could make money, by importing a crate of peaches from America 'in perfect condition'.[7] At the beginning of the following year he went once more to America, returning after the summer. His plans were still expanding: the manufacture of walking-sticks from furze-wood was to be started, and in November he bought the Arklow quarries, which his brother's administrators had put up for auction.[8] By the following summer, orders from America and London had been received for walking-sticks, and wood-wool mattresses been supplied to local Unions and the Holles Street hospital.[9] Chairing a meeting of the Irish Industrial League in January 1896, John described the Avondale industries as 'getting nearly beyond his power'.[10]

But such optimism cannot have been carried unduly far. He had to sell the quarries again a year later;[11] and John's little industries, however brave or imaginative, were not enough by themselves to make Avondale viable. It was, after all, primarily a landed estate; and John made no more money out of it on this level than his brother had done. The difference was that John attempted to - but without success. Case after case was brought before the Land Commission Court at Rathdrum when tenants on the Avondale estate claimed a reduction: and they generally got it.[12] More than once the presiding judge - as well as the Wicklow Newsletter, which lost all patience with John when he too entered Nationalist politics -

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[6] Wicklow Newsletter, 10 June 1893.

[7] Ibid., 5 August 1893.

[8] Ibid., 10 November 1894; also below, pp.

[9] Ibid., 4 May 1895. 100,000 sticks had been ordered from America, and 20,000 from London. 50 mattresses had been sent to Holles Street.

[10] Ibid., 25 January 1896.

[11] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1895, 5.204.

[12] See Wicklow Newsletter, 27 April 1895; Michael Devereux got his rent lowered from £54 to £34, and Patrick Moore from £28 to £16 ; another farm at the Meetings was lowered to £13-15s from £20. See ibid., 17 July 1897, where Daniel Condell is described as claiming for improvements and revaluation: and ibid., 14 May 1898, where two more tenants received judgement in their favour.

attacked the Avondale rents as being too high; but it seems likely that this was prompted by political animosity. In most cases, what the court's decision amounted to was that the valuation was at fault: the tenants were, after all, asked no more than this.

The reason for their objections at this stage is a simple one: they were, for the first time in a long while, being pursued for their rents. John was a different kind of landlord from his brother, and by 1896 he was bringing ejectment suits against tenants for non-payment, including one against the ubiquitous Shiel of Carrignameel.[13] It should not be inferred from this that John was a particularly harsh landlord: he took a strong line over an eviction on the Whaley Abbey estate nearby when an evicted farmer's land was taken over by a neighbouring tenant. John declared that 'no man should take or touch an evicted farm', and attempted to mediate between the landlord and the evicted tenant.[14] But he was not prepared to take the attitude of his brother. No Avondale tenant started proceedings to purchase, except Peter Brennan, who had bought 131 acres at Ballyknockan:[15] it is likely that John therefore saw no reason why they should not pay rent. But, as with his brother, his own peculiar position ensured that such proceedings received maximum publicity.

As regards making money from the demesne itself, traditional farming never seems to have appealed to him. The projected plum-trees were weakened by early frost;[16] John planned gooseberries instead, but nothing came of them.[17] The sawmills seemed to be the only chance of making money, from the first attempt at selling off elm timber for coffins[18] to his celebrated

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[13] See Wicklow Newsletter, 31 October 1896, for the case against Shiel; also ibid., 19 June 1897, for a case against James Byrne for rent and arrears. Previous difficulties with Shiel are described above, part 5, chapter 2, p.392.

[14] See Wicklow Newsletter, 25 September 1897 and 22 October 1898.

[15] See above, part 5.

[16] Wicklow Newsletter, 3 June 1893.

[17] Ibid., 3 September 1892.

[18] J.H. Parnell, p. 256.

umbrella-handles and walking-sticks; but nothing worked out as he had hoped. The furze articles were discriminated against on the English market and had to be sold through middlemen as 'English' ware; though American orders were healthy, John's lack of capital forced him to sell out the industry to an English company.[19] The wood-fibre bedding business was similarly 'grabbed'.[20] 'We allow foreigners to grab everything', he lamented, 'to the destruction of our race'.

His own experience certainly bore this out. It was as true for the quarries as the wood industries. John bought them for £1200 to prevent a Welsh company getting them: but he was forced to sell out to a Scot a year later.[21] In the years immediately after his brother's death, the relations between the Parnell quarries and Arklow Harbour had continued stormy;[22] Kerr now represented the quarry, and though he and the Parnell family wished to continue sending free material to the harbour works, the old animosities were still there. In any case, the quarries themselves soon ground to a halt. Work was suspended at Big Rock in 1891, and the number/had employed dropped to 60.[23] The tramway to the harbour had been completed, but the idea of a steamboat was postponed. Kerr's sudden death in November 1891 prolonged the hiatus;[24] the affairs of the quarry were still held up with the solicitors for Parnell's estate, who wrote in May 1892 promising the free stone offered to the harbour works.[25] In the following

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[19] See a long letter from him to the All Ireland Review, 11 May 1901, the original of which is in the Redmond Papers (N.L.I., MS 15,220). Also his letter of 19 February 1899 to E. O'Flaherty, ibid.

[20] Ibid. The Wicklow Newsletter of 9 September 1893 described how the Brunswick sawmills in Dublin had taken up the idea and were now manufacturing wood-wool.

[21] See letter to All Ireland Review, loc. cit. (note 19 above). The buyer was T.M. Falkiner (Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1895, 5,204).

[22] See Wicklow Newsletter, 17 October 1891. At one stage affairs reached the stage where it was decided to limit the membership on the Harbour Board to an equally-divided representation of Parnellites, anti-Parnellites, and conservatives, but the arrangement broke down. See Irish Weekly Independent, 4 February 1899.

[23] Ibid., 24 October 1891.

[24] Ibid., 14 November 1891.

[25] Ibid., 21 May 1892.

September John announced his intention to put the quarries back on their feet:[26] he made good his word by buying them at auction on 6 November 1894, for £1200.[27] In January 1895 it was announced that the quarries were to be formed into a limited company and floated with a capital of £30,000: orders for setts and macadam had already been received from Dublin corporation.[28] But this was only possible by coming to an arrangement with a civil engineering company.[29] The quarries only employed about ten men when John bought them; and though when he 'inspected' them in 1895 he found 100 men at work, new machinery, a widened tramway, and a new railway track in the making,[30] this was not possible with John's resources alone. In 1900 the industry at Big Rock was still referred to locally as 'the Parnell quarries',[31] but by 1898 John was writing 'I have sold my share in the quarries, and that is all gone now'.[32]

He never attempted to rescusitate the mines, which remained unworked after Parnell's death:[33] but this was probably due more to his own restricted finances than to any lack of optimism on John's part.

Ever since 1891, the destitution of the Parnell family had been more or less openly discussed. There were rumours of mortgages and relief funds.[34] Kerr's death in November had increased the difficulty: Henry Campbell visited the estate with some accountants in November 1891, and it was understood afterwards that 'no matter into whose hands it may pass, it will be sold'.[35] In his early years there, John attempted to find money

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[26] Wicklow Newsletter, 3 September 1892.

[27] Letter to All Ireland Review, loc. cit. (above, note 19); also Wicklow Newsletter, 10 November 1894, for an account of the auction.

[28] Ibid., 19 January 1895.

[29] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1895, 5.204.

[30] Wicklow Newsletter, 23 March 1895.

[31] Ibid., 31 March 1900, and article on Arklow in Irish Weekly Independent, 5 March 1898.

[32] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 2 December 1898 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

[33] See Wicklow Newsletter, 26 December 1891 and 14 January 1899.

[34] See ibid., 24 October 1891, where reports of the estate's debts were denied (inaccurately) in an anonymous letter; and 13 March 1897, when a relief fund for the family was mentioned.

[35] Ibid., 21 November 1891.

by raising small mortgages on the estate;[36] but he seems to have pinned all hopes upon his 'industries'. In May 1895 he wrote sadly to John Redmond: 'We will have to vacate Avondale any moment . . there is nothing to keep things going here. I have done all I could . . every day I look to be the last here'.[37] The last day at Avondale was not to be for a few years: but in the meantime, he was plagued by money troubles. A long letter to Edward O'Flaherty of New York in February 1899 apologised for an overdue loan: 'I have worried myself to death over the business and have tried to make good the loss in every possible way . . If I had had money to have gone on with the furze handle business I would, I believe, have paid off the bill this year . . '.[38] In the end he asked O'Flaherty to accept a mortgage on Avondale: and then characteristically asked:

> Could you possibly ask Mr. Brennan if he could find out if the English primroses, wild ones, would bring a good price if they could be brought over . . by refrigerator?

This incorrigible lack of realism strikes a note reminiscent of his great brother. O'Flaherty accepted this arrangement, and John wrote gratefully to him later in the year, enclosing the advertisement for sale of Avondale, presumably to show him that his loan was safe.[39] But O'Flaherty was not John's only creditor; in April 1898 he had written to Redmond asking if the Independent Party would back a bill for him for £100: 'the first money coming in would go to pay it off'. Redmond's confidence cannot have been increased by John's subsequent confidence that he did not know 'what is to be done about the Bills at Avondale for the last three months'.[40] A year later he wrote to Redmond again, asking him to intercede with another

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[36] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1893, 81.106; 1894, 34.8; 1899, 94.220; 1899, 94.22.

[37] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 30 May 1895 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

[38] J.H. Parnell to E. O'Flaherty, 19 February 1899 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

[39] Same to same, 9 July 1899 (ibid).

[40] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 10 April 1898 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220). See also a similar letter of 2 December 1898.

creditor, who would not renew a debt for £25.[41] By then, however, Avondale was coming on to the market: and John had become City Marhsal of Dublin.

This was a post which, according to T.P. O'Connor, the Parnellite Dublin Corporation arranged for him:[42] he was unanimously elected to it on 7 March 1898, the three other candidates having withdrawn.[43] Most of the duties were ceremonial: but it involved him in acrimonious disputes with the Pawnbrokers' Association, who controlled his income,[44] and with the Irish Party over his taking part in the ceremonies for Queen Victoria's visit to Dublin.[45] Nor was the situation to his taste. 'It is my daily bread', he wrote gloomily in 1899, 'but it is a position not suited to my tastes at all, as I have been engaged all my life in natural enterprises .'.[46] It only brought him £150 a year; but by 1901, when Avondale had been sold, he was able to write to Redmond: 'I am practically out of debt. I released my personal security on the Armagh and Avondale mortgage. I also cleared the National Bank, Mr. Carew, and all my other debts . . I came out on top'.[47] But by then, if his finances had been straightened out, he had received several personal set-backs in other spaces.

One of the areas which brought him most disappointment was politics. In January 1892 he wrote to Redmond asking for advice about an invitation to speak at a political meeting that month; he stated that he was 'not a public speaker' but wanted to show that he upheld 'my brother's principles'.[48] Later that year he was rumoured as a candidate for Limerick City and East

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41 J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 18 July 1899. (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

42 T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, ii, 328.

43 Irish Weekly Independent, 12 March 1898.

44 See J.H. Parnell to E. O'Flaherty, 9 July 1899 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

45 See J.H. Parnell to P.F. Moran, 4 October 1902 (ibid); also below, p. 617.

46 J.H. Parnell to E. O'Flaherty, 9 July 1899 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

47 J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 9 July 1901 (ibid).

48 Same to same, 12 January 1892 (ibid).

Wicklow:[49] his name did in fact go forward for the Wicklow seat, but he did not campaign for it and only polled 546 votes; it was claimed that he simply entered the lists as a gesture of protest against the way that clerical pressure had sewn up the result beforehand.[50] His connection with the Independent party, however, was strong enough for him to earn a severe rebuke from the Wicklow Newsletter about being 'duped' by Parnellites and utilised for the kudos of his name.[51] He again involved himself in the Wicklow campaign of April 1895;[52] a month later he was invited to stand for Meath, and again asked Redmond for advice.[53] He had already been mentioned as a candidate in 1894, when the previous Independent candidate decided to emigrate.[54] In his campaign during July 1895, the old issues of Sir John Parnell's career were given an airing, as well as mention of John as an industrial benefactor; but the constant references to his brother show the real nature of his appeal.[55] He was elected on 24 July, by the narrow margin of 43 votes.[56] But it was the first Independent victory in Meath, his brother's old constituency, for three elections. The Independent crowed:

> He has a rare combination of prestige, birth, fortune, genius and industry: a man who will be a tower of strength to his party, a bulwark against the rude assaults of their opponents, in their hour of security an ornament, and in the day of danger a protection.[57]

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[49] See Wicklow Newsletter, 28 May 1892.

[50] Ibid., 16 July 1892.

[51] Ibid., 19 November 1892.

[52] Ibid., 20 April 1895.

[53] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 30 May 1895 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

[54] See Irish Weekly Independent, 14 July 1894 and 15 June 1895.

[55] See his speeches at Trim on 7 July (Irish Weekly Independent, 13 July 1895), and at Duleek on 15 July (ibid., 20 July 1895).

[56] He polled 2380; his opponent was James Jordan. See Irish Weekly Independent, 27 July 1895.

[57] Ibid.

But this was rating poor John too highly. He rarely spoke at Westminster, where his stammer must have been a terrible handicap. He presided over political conventions,[58] and supported movements like Horace Plunkett's co-operative; and he was dutiful about giving newspaper interviews.[59] In 1896 he described the recent Land Bill both as 'a landlord's bill' and as 'tolerably fair';[60] such equivocation cannot have helped his political persona. Though he dutifully raised a question in 1897 about the mails delivery in county Meath,[61] his only real political embroilment of that year was with John Dillon over the endlessly-disputed Paris Funds, of which John claimed £5000 to pay his brother's 'political debt' to the Hibernian Bank.[62] No-one could say he distinguished himself politically; the Wicklow Newsletter described him as 'a milk-and-water' speaker, and unkindly remarked that 'he has persuaded himself - or perhaps allowed somebody else to persuade him - that the mantle of the late Mr C.S. Parnell has fallen upon his shoulders'.[63]

John was painfully conscious that he was generally considered of not much account. He told a Westminster Gazette reporter, with an odd defensiveness: 'I see the situation plainly enough, though perhaps people think that I don't. I sit in the House of Commons. I do not make speeches. I do not even ask questions, but I see everything'.[64] Some years afterwards he wrote to Redmond of the 'contempt and dislike' with which he had always been treated by other members of the Independent party.[65] He may not have

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[58] As at Limerick, 8 December 1895 (Irish Weekly Independent, 14 December 1895), and Carnew, 5 July 1896 (ibid., 11 July 1896).

[59] See ibid., 23 May 1896, and Wicklow Newsletter, 26 September 1896.

[60] At Carnew; see note 58 above.

[61] On 15 August. See Irish Weekly Independent, 4 September 1897.

[62] See ibid., 18 September 1897.

[63] Wicklow Newsletter, 11 July 1896.

[64] Westminster Gazette interview reprinted in Irish Weekly Independent, 26 September and 10 October 1896.

[65] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 25 November 1903 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

contributed much beyond his careful pronoucements about the desirability of unity, and his praise of industrial and agricultural co-operative development; but it must have been generally realised - not least by himself - that he was in the Party for his name and the prestige it conferred. He felt he had reason to be embittered about the way in which he was eventually disposed of by his colleagues. In May 1900 he complained to Redmond of 'the conduct of certain Irish members' to him, especially Pat O'Brien, who had attacked him about his attitude towards the Queen's visit.[66] He added that he would prefer to leave the party than to put up with such sneers and jibes: 'a man must have a very mean mind to quarrel with me', he added, 'and I have always had the knack of standing aloof from it'. Even his inoffensiveness could well have made him a marked man at this most squalid and back-biting era of Irish politics; but references in this letter suggest that John himself contributed to his unpopularity with other party members. 'You must recollect', he admonished Redmond 'that I stand in a social position different from all the other nationalists'; he was not going to jeopardise his position 'among everyone' for the party. 'We have no quarrel with the Queen's doings; it is with the ministers, and I think my brother would have taken the same view'. He may have been safe enough in writing like this to Redmond, who had himself welcomed the projected royal visit in March.[67] But Redmond's statement had been traduced in a private letter of John Dillon's as 'a crawling, sneaking . . . outbreak of superabounding snobbery';[68] John Parnell's decision to present the keys of the city to Her Majesty must have been the object of similar anger. At all events, whether or not this was the most important reason for John's separation from the Irish party, it was the immediate cause. He

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[66] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 27 May 1900 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

[67] T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders of my day, ii, 448.

[68] J. Dillon to Wm. O'Brien, 14 March 1900. See F.S.L. Lyons, John Dillon (London, 1968), p. 208.

was, however, put out by what he, quite fairly, referred to as 'a trick'. In the 1900 election, he was the only candidate whose name went forward for South Meath: he did not, therefore, need to place the deposit necessary for an opposed candidate. Ten minutes before nominations closed, J.L. Carew, an Irish party member who had lost an election in Dublin, entered his name,with the necessary papers and deposit for an opposed candidate. John and his supporters did not have time to reorganise their position; John was disqualified, and Carew returned unopposed.[69] It was little wonder after this shabbiness that John did not run as an Irish Party member in the by-election following Carew's death in 1902; he entered the contest as an independent, and was beaten by David Sheehy. In letters at the time and afterwards, John claimed that the Meath electors had asked him to stand, and would have returned him had it not been for both the superior organisation and the scurrilous nature of the other side's campaign;[70] he had, he added rather pathetically, sacrificed his fruit-growing to enter Redmond's party, and had never given offence to anybody. Redmond's reply on the subject was curt and decisive:

> I do not care to discuss the election business. I most deeply regretted your action. Refusing to become one of the Irish Party destroys the possibility of election for any nationalist constituency. I believe you are entirely mistaken about Pat O'Brien, Clancy, and others of whom you write.[71]

Even before he was expelled from politics, a deep disillusionment had set in. The following extract from a long letter to John's to Edward O'Flaherty pre-dates his political quarrel, but it shows the cast of mind which contributed to it.

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[69] See Irish Times, 4 May 1923, and Irish Independent, 4 May 1923, for accounts of this manoevre; also see J.H. Parnell to P.F. Moran, New York, 4 October 1902 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220), where he refers to 'the trick' which lost him his seat.

[70] Ibid.; also see J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 25 November 1903 (ibid).

[71] J. Redmond to J.H. Parnell, 27 November 1903 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,222).

> I am sorry to tell you that since I have been living over here my mind and opinion has /sic/ completely changed in reference to the Irish people. My opinion is, the people and the government are more of a stumbling-block to the prosperity of Ireland than Ireland is itself. They put every obstacle in your way to make a success of anything, unless you use a whip over them. If you get up any enterprise they think it is your duty to give them all and make nothing for yourself. I cannot blame the people: this grabbing and beggary has been instilled into them by their being slaves. They do not seem to appreciate anything done for them. You are never helped by anyone in your undertakings the way you are in America. The only people doing anything for this unfortunate country are a few wealthy individuals and those are the Tories, titled ladies like Lady Aberdeen or Lady Arran. One is only laughed at if he gets up anything out of the way, even amongst my own Independent Party. For my part I do not see any use of any of the Irish parties, they are not doing anything for the material good of the country. For my part I am so discouraged about everything Irish that I would be glad to be back in Alabama again and amongst enterprising people. The great trouble in Ireland is, everybody tries to lead a lazy life, and, as they call it, an 'asy' one. Everyone is gifted in the art of beggary, and the sooner people are stopped begging the better for Ireland. All this /about/ farmers and beggary is all nonsense. Ireland is one of the richest countries in the world but the people, rich and poor, think there is nothing here but beggary.[72]

Ironically, his sister Anna had made the same point about Ireland's wealth, after a very different process which led to a similarly bitter disillusionment.[73] John stayed in Ireland, but continued to dislike it. 'Ever since my brother's death', he wrote in 1905, 'I have been doing my best to keep up his memory, and have injured myself every way, and as other people do not seem to have any sentiment for his memory now, I do not see why I should sacrifice myself, which I have done, to keep his things intact'.[74] This last reference was to the episode which set the seal upon his long canon of disappointments in the 1890s: the way that Avondale was finally disposed of.

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[72] J.H. Parnell to E. O'Flaherty, 19 February 1899 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,222).

[73] See above, part 5, chapter 3, p. 572; also p. 556.

[74] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 12 October 1905 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,222).

II

Ever since 1891, it was commonly assumed (except, in his moments of optimism, by John himself) that Avondale would have to be sold. The fact was made all the more inevitable by William Kerr's death in early November.[75] Rents were overdue;[76] most of the workmen were paid off;[77] in April 1892 there was a large auction of stock and farming implements.[78] The Irish estate, though Parnell's widow was administrator, was handled by the Court of Chancery to recover enough arrears to pay creditors[79] - one of whom brought a case against the Parnell estate for non-payment of rent in August 1892.[80]

As early as March 1893, Alfred MacDermott filed a petition for the sale of Avondale;[81] the one thing, as Emily Dickinson observed, upon which all the solicitors could agree.[82] No negotiations, however, took place until 1898. John Parnell was anxious that as many tenants as possible should purchase - or so he claimed later; and he himself planned to buy back some of the desmesne under the Land Act.[83] When Avondale was finally advertised for sale on 3 October 1899 the tenants asked that the sale should be postponed and sold under Section 40 of the Land Act, as several of the holdings would come under this provision;[84] but nothing came of this. In any case, by this stage a plan was under way to 'save Avondale'.

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[75] Reported in Wicklow Newsletter, 7 November 1891.

[76] Ibid., also numerous references above.

[77] Ibid., 21 November 1891.

[78] Ibid., 9 April 1892. 81 cattle, 189 sheep, 10 horses, a jennet and a donkey were sold, as well as a comprehensive list of farm machinery and implements, and a good deal of timber.

[79] Ibid., 30 April 1892.

[80] See ibid., 13 August 1892. The land in question was a farm at Garrymore, rented by Parnell from Reverend Frederick Carroll.

[81] Ibid., 18 March 1893 and 25 March 1893.

[82] E. Dickinson, p. 195.

[83] In a long letter to the Independent, 25 September, 1902.

[84] Wicklow Newsletter, 4 November 1899.

This comprised a scheme by which a collection would be taken up for a 'Parnell monument', with part of the money to go to redeeming Avondale. This was from the beginning a concept which led to dissension. The Parnell family felt that the only reason why the estate had to be sold was because of 'political debts', notably the £5000 guaranteed by Parnell and now imprisoned in the Paris funds.[85] They therefore assumed that the arrangement was to buy back the estate for the Parnell family. The Irish Party, however, had the idea of buying Avondale 'for the nation'. Nor was the ultimate object defined in the numerous outlines of the plan which were published:[86] 'saving Avondale' was what was chiefly appealed to. In October 1899 Redmond and Tallon, Lord Mayor of Dublin, set off on a fund-raising tour of America. By 28 October, 15,000 dollars had been collected;[87] in November Tammany Hall contributed 10,000 dollars specifically 'for the purchase of Avondale';[88] Redmond and Tallon returned with 50,000 dollars. Redmond announced that the Tammany donation was 'to purchase Avondale, and thus secure the retention of the Parnell homestead in the family';[89] in January 1900, back in Dublin, he announced that £3000 more was to be earmarked for Avondale, and a remaining £3000 for the 'monument' itself.[90] Avondale, however, was to be the Parnells' 'as long as they existed', their home 'as long as they chose to occupy it'.

This must have seemed unequivocal enough to John. He had felt as early as July 1899 that if any monument was to be raised, keeping Avondale was the best way of doing it.[91] But a disagreement now began with Redmond,

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[85] See a letter from Henry Parnell to Irish Weekly Independent, 7 October 1899.

[86] See, for instance, Irish Weekly Independent, 1 July 1899, 7 October 1899, and countless references throughout Redmond's American tour in the autumn of that year.

[87] Ibid., 28 October 1899.

[88] Ibid., 2 December 1899.

[89] Ibid., 18 December 1899.

[90] Ibid., 6 January 1900. This was at a Mansion House meeting, attended by John Howard Parnell.

[91] See J.H. Parnell to E. O'Flaherty, 9 July 1899 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,222). 'Keeping his home would be the monument I should go for first'.

who started to refer to the estate being bought 'for the Nation': by this, John felt, the Parnells would be 'simply evicted', or else 'made gate-keepers'.[92] John wanted the house to be kept in the Parnells' possession, with if possible an industry started there for local employment; Redmond wanted the house as a 'public monument' and only the lawn retained, which John felt would cause too much local unemployment.[93] (He also felt, bitterly but inaccurately, that Avondale even in his brother's lifetime had been 'too much of a public place'.) In October 1900 he suggested to Redmond some of the lands which could be sold off;[94] but they could not come to an agreement.

At this stage, John went ahead with a scheme of his own. He sold Avondale to a Dublin butcher named Boylan for £8000, refusing to close the sale unless he was given a two-year option for repurchase.[95] This was £1,400 more than the separate offers for different farms would have raised, and since the money was promised to clear encumbrances, the highest offer had to be accepted.[96]

During the next two years John raised scheme after scheme for buying back the property, in some form or other. He wondered if the Department of Lands would buy the 100 acres round the house for an agricultural school - a scheme which Wicklow opinion favoured, 'especially the Conservatives like Lord Fitzwilliam'.[97] He attempted to persuade Boylan to take over the quarry, and to back him in 'working the place'.[98] But the basic necessity

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[92] J.H. Parnell to P.F. Moran, New York, 4 October 1902 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,222), recapitulating upon the events of 1900.

[93] J.H. Parnell to Irish Weekly Independent, 25 September 1902.

[94] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 12 October 1900 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

[95] See letter from Samuel Abbott, solicitor, about Boylan's purchase in Irish Times, 10 November 1900; also J.H. Parnell to Irish Weekly Independent, 25 September 1902.

[96] Letter from Samuel Abbott (see note 95 above).

[97] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 27 Febuary 1901 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,222).

[98] Ibid.

was the money to buy back the estate, and for this he had to depend upon the Irish Party. If they bought the house, he might take Casino and some land;[99] £3,500 would be enough to purchase Avondale and the demesne for an agricultural farm. This implies that the 'gate-keeper' status now seemed less unattractive to him; but time was running out. And, though he had proudly told Redmond that 'very few get the best of Mr Boylan; so no-one can abuse me now for /not/ taking care of myself',[100] Boylan was now asking £10,000 for the repurchase instead of the 'cost-price' originally envisaged.

In August 1901 the house effects were auctioned, and John wrote anxiously to Redmond asking for money to buy the library 'for the sake of history';[101] but no help was forthcoming. John bought what he could of the furniture, but an English buyer carried off the library.[102] He felt bitter about this ('If I had had any help at all, or even the promise, I would not have let the English grab a single book here');[103] but he continued to importune Redmond and the monument fund for the repurchase money. Boylan would now take £5000 cash and the remainder on 5% mortgage; he was trying to buy out the tenants who would not purchase, and intended to sell the whole property in 1902 in any case.[104] John's option ran out in June 1902, but he seems to have obtained an extension; in April 1903 he was still trying to get the estate back, his latest plan being to do so by selling off the mountain lands.[105] But nothing came of this, or of

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[99] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 9 July 1901 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,222).

[100] Ibid.

[101] Same to same, 2 Aug. 1901 (ibid).

[102] Same to same, 17 August 1901 (ibid).

[103] Ibid.

[104] Same to same, 8 September 1901 (ibid).

[105] Carrignaweel, Carrignamuck and Glenmalure. J.H. Parnell to 'O'Mahony', 24 April 1903 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers MS 15,222).

anything else. In 1904 Boylan died, and Horace Plunkett persuaded the Board of Agriculture to buy the estate for £10,000 and start a forestry school there.[106] By then, Avondale had long been lost to the Parnells, and John never got over it. He hated 'the English government' being in possession of it;[107] he objected to trees being cut down and employees laid off;[108] and in one of the few embittered passages of his published memoir he wrote:

> Not only was he /Parnell/ flung to the wolves, but his beautiful home of Avondale as well. Little did Charley think . . to see his home in the hands of the English government under the Board of Agriculture, and the estate worked by English and Scotch labourers.[109]

It is surprising that Avondale's future as a forestry school did not please him; it was a more worthwhile fate than many of the alternatives mooted. But John was not easy to please where the estate was concerned; and the Irish Party were, from his point of view, unnecessarily flinty about the monument fund. He must have been an irritating man to do business with, with his sudden bursts of optimism and his flashes of stiff-necked pride. But it is hard not to think that he was treated with unnecessary meanness.

The same is true for the epilogue to the disposition of the estate: Redmond's takeover of Aughavannagh. In 1892 Redmond rented the shooting there from John, 'annually according to circumstances'; John suggested that he, Redmond and others who had visited there in the old days should take on the lease for the barracks when it came up for renewal and renovate it.[110] This arrangement continued through the 1890s; while John held the lease, Redmond (who used it more often), was responsible for upkeep. The

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[106] St John Ervine, Parnell, p. 322.

[107] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 4 February 1905 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

[108] Same to same, 1 April 1906 (ibid).

[109] J.H. Parnell, p. 5.

[110] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 9 February 1892 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

arrangement eventually worked out as unsatisfactorily as in most such situations. In1905, embittered by all that had happened in politics and over Avondale, John told Redmond he would like to sell him the lease (which had been renewed until 1923), though he had previously been reluctant to see it go out of the Parnell name.[111] Redmond replied, pointing out that he had spent a good deal on improving the place; John was asking £100, which he thought was too much.[112] In October 1905 Redmond offered to spend £200 on renovating the barracks further, to leave John all privilege of shooting and fishing, and to pay him £25 for the lease. If John refused, Redmond threatened to stop paying his share of the rent; he also pointed out that John had never paid 'one shilling' for repairs.[113] John countered with a price of £50; they eventually compromised on £40,[114] but not without some animosity. Redmond refused John's requests for a meeting; eventually he negotiated with John through Joseph McCarroll, an old Parnellite from Wicklow, who complained to Redmond of 'John Parnell's stupidity' and 'those unaccountable fits he takes'.[115] However by the end of the year, the deed of transfer was registered. John retained shooting rights and the use of a room when he visited; the place was not to be sold, but kept in memory of Parnell. Perhaps John saw it as a sort of monument.

In any case, it is unlikely that he went there much. He used a cottage at Avondale for fishing on his Wicklow trips from his new residence at Upper Mount Street in Dublin;[116] later, he rented fishing at Laragh

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[111] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 12 October 1905 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220). Several other letters in this collection show the arrangement obtaining from 1892 up to this date.

[112] Same to same, 22 October 1905 (ibid).

[113] J. Redmond to J.H. Parnell, 25 October 1905 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,222).

[114] J.H. Parnell to J. Redmond, 26 October 1905 (ibid) - also same to same, 1 April 1906.

[115] Joseph McCarroll to J. Redmond, 31 October and 27 November 1905 (ibid).

[116] Which he could only just keep going. See J.H. Parnell to J.Redmond, 24 October 1905 (N.L.I., Redmond Papers, MS 15,220).

Castle,[117] and a resident of Annamoe remembers seeing him, a lonely figure walking the roads in the area.[118] He remained City Marshal, though Joyce's Leopold Bloom heard he never wore his uniform;[119] Haines and Buck Mulligan watched him, a grey ghost of a man, playing chess in the D.B.C. cafe.[120] His last years were not lonely; in 1907 he married Olivia Mateir, the widow of Archibald Mateir of Carlingford, Co. Louth. They lived first at Clarinda Park, Dun Laoghaire, near where John and the rest of the family had rented the O'Conor Don's house fifty years before;[121] later they moved to Sion House, Glenageary, which cannot have been far from the first house, Khyber Pass, in which Delia Parnell installed her family after her husband's death.[122] His stepson, Captain Mateir, remembers visits to Wicklow, but the connection with Avondale was gone. John published C.S. Parnell: a memoir, in 1916, and lived on until 1923, the last of the Parnell children to die. The obituaries were kind but dismissive;[123] one mentioned that he had become a subscriber to the Unionist Party, and a photograph showed him proudly displaying one of his prize peaches from Georgia.[124] This recalled what was probably the happiest period of his life; what followed his brother's death was a protracted, saddening anti-climax. He could have said, as his sister Emily did, that 'this was the only reward that patriotism had brought us';[125] but he did not, for that was never his style.

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[117] Given as his Wicklow address in Who's Who, 1913.

[118] Reminiscence of Mr R.C. Barton, Glendalough House.

[119] J. Joyce, Ulysses (Random House ed., N.Y., 1966) p. 165.

[120] Ibid., p. 248.

[121] See above, part 4.

[122] Above, part 4.

[123] See Irish Times, 4 May 1923, F.J., 4 May 1923; Irish Independent, 4 May, 5 May, 7 May 1923; The Times, 4 May 1923; Daily Express (Dublin) 3 May 1923; Evening Herald (Dublin), 3 May and 5 May 1923.

[124] Irish Independent, 5 May 1923, p. 3; Irish Times, 4 May 1923.

[125] E. Dickinson, p. 203.

III

After 1891, the remainder of Parnell's family lived as they always had done. Mrs Parnell continued to reside in America, after a brief visit to Ireland in December 1891.[126] She issued some political dicta upon the Presidential election of 1892,[127] and she was in Ireland again in 1894.[128] However, in April 1895 most newspapers carried reports describing how she had been attacked and robbed near Bordentown;[129] she received severe head injuries. A delegation from the Independent Party which visited her a month later found her 'at the point of death':[130] by March 1896 she had rented out Ironsides and was living at Trenton. She was described as possessing all her faculties, but not yet fully recovered; she intended going abroad to join Anna.[131]

She was still, as ever, capable of giving interviews. American papers in the summer of 1896 carried reports of her opinions regarding Parnell's death:

> Mrs Parnell believes her son was either assassinated by English agents or is still alive. She leans to the latter conviction. She says the night he died he retired to bed complaining of rheumatism in his left arm, and his death was pronounced by physicians to have been cause by rheumatism of the heart. 'Whoever heard', she asked, 'of rheumatism passing from a man's left arm to his heart and killing him in a single night?' Mrs Parnell has a number of theories to account for her sons alleged disappearance.[132]

In the same interview, she declared her intention of selling up Ironsides and returning to Avondale, and she arrived there for the last time in

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[126] See Wicklow Newsletter, 26 December 1891.

[127] Ibid., 19 November 1892; she instructed the American Irish to vote for the Democrats and Cleveland.

[128] See ibid., 3 February 1894, for her departure from the North Wall.

[129] See ibid., 27 April 1895, and Irish Weekly Independent, 27 April 1895; also E. Dickinson, ch. XV.

[130] Irish Weekly Independent, 18 May 1895.

[131] Ibid., 14 March 1896.

[132] An interview in New York on 28 July 1896, printed in Kansas Current Remark and quoted in Wicklow Newsletter, 22 August 1896.

September 1896.[133] Having fallen badly on her voyage over, she was 'very infirm';[134] Emily Dickinson, meeting her at Kingsbridge, found her 'a changed and broken figure'.[135] While at Avondale, financial worries surrounded her. Emily Dickinson describes her 'going without certain luxuries to which her age and her position entitled her',[136] and in March 1897 some movement was made among nationalist groups to begin a 'Parnell family fund';[137] it was reported that 'Mrs Delia Stewart Parnell and some members of her family are in deep distress'.[138] There were many subscriptions, but this fund rapidly became absorbed into the Parnell monument collection.[139]

Delia Parnell lived on at Avondale until her death in March 1898. Emily describes her as passing a sedentary life, as 'she did not like driving';[140] well into her eighties, she liked country life as little as ever. Her death followed a bizarre and terrible incident. A dinner-party was organised by Emily (and later described by her to great dramatic effect)[141] where her mother shone conversationally as in the days of her youth; Mrs Parnell retired late, and arose early to breakfast in her room. Sitting by the fire, she either fell into the flames or her clothes caught a spark from it; she was found ablaze, with the room 'afire at several points'. After her rescue, she rallied a little, but died the following day, 27 March 1898.

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[133] See Wicklow Newsletter, 29 August 1896. She arrived at Queenstown on 26 August, and then proceeded to Bray with Emily Dickinson.

[134] Ibid.

[135] E. Dickinson, p. 208.

[136] Ibid., p. 209,

[137] Irish Weekly Independent, 13 March 1897.

[138] Ibid, 15 May 1897.

[139] The money was described in May 1897 as being intended to secure Avondale for the Parnells - Irish Weekly Independent, 15 May 1897.

[140] E. Dickinson, p. 210.

[141] See E. Dickinson, pp. 212-16, and also almost every contemporary newspaper; the most detailed account being in the Irish Independent, 2 April 1898.

There was an enormous funeral at Glasnevin on 1 April 1898; the intention had been for a private ceremony at Rathdrum[142] but the Independent party made it a great occasion. Delegates came from all over Ireland, and there was a procession through Dublin, which numbered celebrities like Maud Gonne.[143] But in the many long lists of notables at Mrs Parnell's funeral, there is no mention of any of her neighbours among the Wicklow gentry. In her death as in life, what defined her was her son's reputation: not the Irish county circle she had married into over fifty years before and to which she had never been able to adapt.

The end of the remaining Parnells can be told briefly. Anna died in 1911. She remained reclusive after 1891. T.P. O'Connor and others heard she was penniless and attempting to get a book of poems published: 'We got the poems published and sent her a sum which was supposed to be the profits - entirely imaginary - of the sale of the book'.[144] She contributed an introduction to Jennie Wyse-Power's Words of the dead chief in 1894, which repeated the judgements of her political days, and foreshadowed what she was to say in her 'Tale of a great sham': 'the smallest minority owes no allegiance to the proudest majority on the smallest matter of principle'.[145] She was not, however, forgotten: in 1899 the Independent held a competition for an essay on 'the most remarkable woman in Irish history' and Anna was high on the list of the most popular subjects (in the catholic company of St Brigid, Devoragilla, Ann Devlin,

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[142] Daily Nation, 1 April 1898.

[143] Freeman's Journal, 2 April 1898. She wrote a eulogistic article about Parnell in the Irish Weekly Independent, 6 October 1894.

[144] T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, ii, 220. He does not give a date, and the book Old tales and new, printed by Sealy, Bryars and Walker, Dublin, does not carry one. It seems to have been in the early 1890s.

[145] Irish Weekly Independent, 13 October 1894, excerpts from Anna Parnell's introduction to J. Wyse-Power, Words of the dead chief, published that year.

Maire, Deirdre, Sarah Curran and Speranza).[146] She appeared in Ireland in 1907-1908, when she gave a lecture on the Ladies' Land League[147] and campaigned for G.J. Dolan, who had resigned from the Irish Nationalist Party to stand as Sinn Fein candidate for Leitrim.[148] This may well have been through the influence of Mrs Wyse-Power, with whom she stayed in touch. It did not prefigure a return to politics; it was later said that she was pelted with eggs on the hustings, and refused to speak in Ireland again.[149]

She had not remained closely in touch with her family, though she sailed to America after the attack on her mother in 1895.[150] She also corresponded with her sister Theodosia, who was in touch with her at the time of her death, and who wrote to Helena Molony about the 'Tale of the great sham' and Anna's anxiety to have it published.[151] But when a middle-aged woman calling herself Cerisa Palmer was drowned in the sea-baths at Ilfracombe on 20 September 1911, it was some days before it could be ascertained that this was Anna. She swam out to sea, ignoring the attendant's advice, was swept under in the heavy swell, and drowned very quickly. Giving evidence at the inquest, her landlady remarked that she 'had said it was not much of a day to go bathing, and deceased said "Rubbish" . . Miss Palmer preferred to do as she pleased'.[152] The indomitable, astringent spirit of Anna comes strongly through the report of the inquest proceedings - as strongly as through the absorbing memoir which she left behind her.

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[146] Irish Weekly Independent, 9 December 1899.

[147] This is mentioned in her obituary in The Times, 25 September 1911, but I can find no contemporary account of it.

[148] See F.J., 25 September, 1911; also Senator Mrs J. Wyse-Power, 'Anna Parnell', in Dublin Metropolitan Magazine (Spring 1935), p. 17.

[149] Obituary in F.J., 25 September 1911.

[150] E. Dickinson, p. 206.

[151] see F.J., 25 September 1911; also see Theodosia Paget to Helena Molony, 23 November 1911 (N.L.I., Anna Parnell material, MS 12,144). Anna had left Theodosia some money, with the idea of publishing the 'Tale'.

[152] F.J., 25 September 1911.

Henry died four years later, in November 1915, at Lausanne.[153] He remained out of the picture in the years after his brother's death, except for writing to the newspapers contradicting Emily's assertions about Parnell's life at Cambridge.[154] He continued to raise an income from his Irish estate.[155] By 1897 he was living abroad, in Heidelburg.[156] A son of his, Harold de Mowbray, lived with John Parnell and his wife after 1915. Henry's residence on the continent, together with his self-effacing life-style, makes his movements no easier to chart at the end of his life than at its beginning.

Emily, on the contrary, died in a blaze of publicity. The last years of her life seem to have been confused and unhappy. John had found her 'almost starving' at Avondale in 1891.[157] She moved to Bray in 1892, and spent the summers there for the next few years.[158] Her daughter married a man named O'Clery, of whom Emily disapproved; he died after three years, and Delia became a nurse; she was living at Avondale when Mrs Parnell died in 1898. When Avondale was sold, Emily moved to Dublin, and Delia emigrated to Australia, meeting an Englishman named Wright on board ship and marrying him on arrival.[159] As for Emily, she re-entered Dublin life and bought two horses.

> No longer young, I yet looked younger than I was, and my seat on horseback, for which I had ever been remarkable, was as good as of yore . . sometimes I drove the pair of superb animals, conscious of their pedigree, together in a phaeton, on which occasions their high-stepping action was the admiration of Dublin.160

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[153] Debrett's Peerage. Of his three children, Captain Mateir tells me that one was mentally retarded and lived with John Howard Parnell; another son died young; and a daughter became mentally unbalanced.

[154] Mentioned in Irish Independent, 24 May 1918.

[155] See Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1893, 23.191; 1893, 59.81; 1897, 1.181.

[156] Reg. of Deeds, Mem. for 1897, 1.181.

[157] J.H. Parnell, p. 256.

[158] E. Dickinson, p. 196.

[159] Ibid., p. 235.

[160] Ibid., p. 237.

But this was not how others saw her; it was at exactly this period that Joyce's invaluable observer mentions 'his /P̄arnell's̄/ other sister, Mrs Dickinson, driving round with scarlet harness, bolt upright like Surgeon MacArdle'.[161] T.P. O'Connor described her accentricity as 'wildly and publicly developed', and was told of her 'driving about Dublin in the wierdest garments - flaring yellow or some such outrageous colour'.[162] In these days, as 'a prominent and somewhat grotesque figure in Dublin life',[163] there is a strange echo of her mother about Emily; she even gave an 'American tea', which recalled the far-off days of Lord Carlisle.[164] As she tells the story, she was impoverished at the height of her social success by the cessation of her annuity from her brother's estate, so she 'decided to leave Dublin and abandon my meteoric reappearance in social circles';[165] when she wrote these words, at the end of her haphazard memoir, she was living in a remote fishing-village, where she was sustained by visits from Irish friends and her one good friend, 'Lady ---' (another echo of Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell). A grandiloquent farewell to her readers from this unaccustomed tranquillity ends the book.

But this was not the end of the story. I am indebted to Captain Mateir, John Howard Parnell's stepson, for some details of what afterwards became of Emily. A patriot's mistake was published in 1905, and made her some money. She characteristically spent this by moving into a Dublin hotel and living lavishly for a while. At this point, she encountered a fortune-seeking Guardsman named Captain Cuthbert Ricketts, younger than Emily, who believed she had money; they were married and went to Monte Carlo. Within days, Ricketts discovered his wife's real circumstances; John Howard Parnell, who knew little of all this, was summoned out to Monte

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[161] J. Joyce, Ulysses, p. 165.

[162] T.P. O'Connor, Memories of an old parliamentarian, i, 232.

[163] Ibid., ii, 304.

[164] E. Dickinson, p. 238. See above, part 4.

[165] Ibid., p. 240.

Carlo, where he found an hysterical Emily beaten up and abandoned by Ricketts. The stability of her mind was, not surprisingly, further affected by this experience; she was more or less unaccountable from this period on.

She lived on and off with John Howard; but she was resident in Wales in May 1918. She was under a doctor's care, but left and came to Dublin. She stayed in a hotel for some days, and then on 13 May made her way to the South Dublin Union, where she demanded entry as a pauper and gave her name as 'Miss Roberts'.[166] She died there six days later, and was only then identified. In a statement to the papers, John Parnell said that she had £1000 from Captain Dickinson, £1000 from Sir Ralph Howard, and a life annuity for £100 which she had sold for £650 'a few years ago' (thus giving the lie to Emily's statement that this had lapsed after she re-entered public life).[167] She had also inherited £850 from her mother and her book had brought her £600.[168] She had therefore enough capital to live off. It is unlikely that Emily would have used her capital wisely; she had already commuted one annuity, and splashed out on her book's earnings. But she could have gone to John's house to stay; it seems unquestionable, as Mrs John Parnell surmised, that 'her mind was somewhat deranged';[169] it had been so for many years, and she died as unreasonably as she had lived.

Only John and Theodosia were left, and she died on 17 March 1920. In April 1893 her husband had been in charge of a District Coastguard Station on the Clare coast,[170] but by 1911 the Pagets were living at Weybridge again.[171] Claud Paget died in 1917; when Theodosia died three years

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166 Irish Independent, 24 May 1918.

167 Above, p.632.

168 Irish Times, 27 May 1918.

169 Irish Independent, 24 May 1918.

170 See Wicklow Newsletter, 22 April 1893.

171 See report of Anna's inquest, F.J. 25 September 1911.

later she was living at 38 Denbigh Street, Pimlico.[172] With John's death three years later, the Avondale Parnells were all gone. With them snapped the last threads leading back to the background and the family which had, far more than has been recognised, defined and influenced the life of the greatest of them all.

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[172] Debrett's Peerage.

Conclusion

Conclusion

This study of Parnell, as its subtitle implies, is an exercise in contextual history. The man has often been seen as a phenomenon, a Hero after Carlyle's mould, and Heroes, like Patrick Kavanagh's Gods, make their own importance: environmental influences are dismissed into insignificance. By seeing Parnell against his background - in the continuing Wicklow tradition, as well as surrounded by his extraordinary family - I have attempted to redress the balance. He may well remain a hero: his political career is no part of my study here. But along the way enough of the often-adduced myths surrounding his persona have been re-examined to show aspects of the man in a different light.

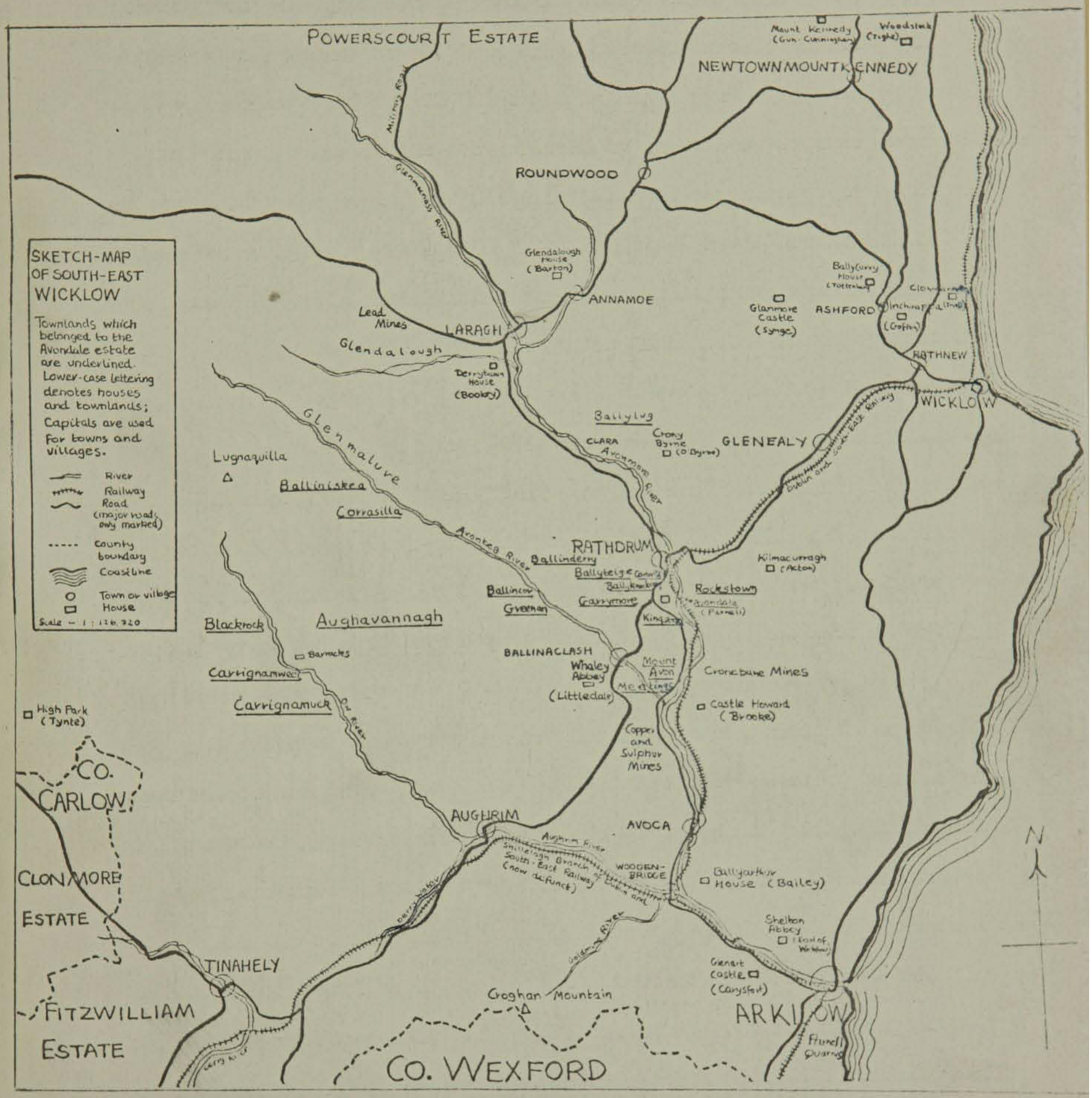
The family myth which played such an important part in launching him politically was totally distorted: Sir John Parnell was at best an ambiguous 'Patriot'. Charles Stewart Parnell was not a well-off young gentleman who aspired to do his duty for the national ideal, and lost his fortune in the process: he was an aggressive young county buck, with an estate that was heavily encumbered by debts long before he entered politics. His mother, influential as she was, can no longer be seen as a fervent nationalist who educated her children in political principles from the cradle: she seems instead to have been intellectually light-weight, socially snobbish, mentally erratic, and far out of her depth as regards her son's politics. What influence she had on him and on his sisters was more to do with a sense of alienation from county opinion than with any positive political analysis. Moreover, Parnell's sisters Fanny and Anna have never been given their due: Fanny was more formidable than she has been painted, and Anna had a far more original importance than most publications have credited her with.

There are many other misconceptions which I have attempted to elucidate. But there are also, more importantly, some important positive aspects of Parnell's background which have never been properly emphasised. Sir John Parnell's importance in dictating the family tradition may have been a latter-day myth: but in the under-estimated figure of William Parnell is a potent influence. Equally important on the larger canvas is the whole fabric of Wicklow landed society - always conservative but including both a better type of landlord than elsewhere and odd examples of an enlightened social approach in James Grattan and William Parnell himself. Parnell's position in Wicklow society and his continuining relationship with the county provide a new definition of what has previously been seen simply as his eccentricity. His industries, for instance, took up more of his time (and his money) than has been recognised, especially in the later years of his life. Wicklow was not something he left behind him. It can be suddenly enlightening to consider his career in this light: to see him as a reforming Wicklow gentleman, with the inherent conservatism and arrogance of his class, but a 'modern' outlook where industry was concerned, and a readiness to accept the ending of the old land system (which had never proved profitable in his own case). His extraordinary qualities, of course, remain; and even before his death, too much of what he represented had been elevated to myth for it to be possible, or even valid, to demythologise him now. But he was not a myth to his brothers and sisters, nor to the Gaffney family at Avondale, nor to the long-suffering William Kerr. And he was not a myth to his 'county' contemporaries like Lord Meath, who had been to school with him, or the Bartons who had played cricket with him, or Lord Carysfort, who had urged him to take up his position in the county: nor to those who sniped at him on the Arklow Harbour Board. He was part of what all these people represented: he came from this background, and he remained far more integrated into it than has generally been realised.

Each section of this study has its own conclusions: some of these are repeated and amplified throughout. My study has been, in a sense, empirical, working from the broadest definitions (the Wicklow gentry and the Parnell family history) down to the particular product of this environment. Such a process was initially dictated by the dearth of specific Parnell papers; but I think it has its own validity. It has, however, necessitated an approach lengthier, more 'literary', and of a more narrative nature, than most analyses. Along with this, the same ground has sometimes been retraced. The intention is for an overall pattern to emerge: to see, in the broadest sense, a phenomenal politician defined against the non-phenomenal aspects of his background and his life. My approach, and the sharply compartmentalised structure of this study, precludes a pat conclusion. There is no 'therefore' at the end of this process: but I hope there are several overwhelming inferences, which I have attempted to draw out throughout and to indicate here. I have limited myself to certain areas of study as regards Parnell - those which have so often been ignored before.

The facts of Parnell's public life (though not their interpretation) have become almost a cliché: I have thus been left freer to examine his background as separate from his career. But the continuing influence of what surrounded him is what matters. When Sir Lewis Namier decided to examine the meaning of eighteenth-century politics along the same lines that Aeschylus used to determine the flight of crook-taloned birds, he was accused of not seeing the wood for the trees. This thesis in no way sets itself up to be Namierist. But as regards what made Parnell, it is an attempt to get into the wood: to examine what grows at the back of it, from the immense and atrophied trunks of past generations down to side-shoots, latter-day saplings and the surrounding undergrowth; with the eventual object of retreating to a new vantage and seeing trees and wood together.

THE END


SKETCH-MAP OF SOUTH-EAST WICKLOW
Townlands which belonged to the Avondale estate are underlined. Lower-case lettering denotes houses and townlands; Capitals are used for towns and villages.
River
Railway
Road (major roads only marked)
County boundary
Coastline
Town or village
House
Scale – 1 : 126,720
POWERSCOURT ESTATE
Mount Kennedy (Gun-Cunningham)
Woodstock (Tighe)
NEWTOWNMOUNTKENNEDY
Military Road
Glenmacnass River
ROUNDWOOD
Glendalough House (Barton)
ANNAMOE
Ballycurry House (Totterdell)
Glanmore Castle (Synge)
ASHFORD
Inchinarra (Crofts)
RATHNEW
Lead Mines
LARAGH
Glendalough
Derrybawn House (Bookey)
WICKLOW
Ballylug
Crosy Byrne (O Byrne)
CLARA
Avonmore River
GLENEALY
Dublin and South East Railway
Glenmalure
Lugnaquilla
Ballinaskea
Corrasilla
Aghrogue River
RATHDRUM
Ballinderry
Ballybeige
Kilmacurragh (Acton)
Rockstown
Avondale (Parnell)
Ballincor
Greenan
Garrymore
Kingstown
Blackrock
Aughavannagh
BALLINACLASH
Whaley Abbey (Littledale)
Mount Avon
Meetings
Cronebane Mines
Barracks
Carrignamweer
Carrignamuck
Derry River
Castle Howard (Brooke)
High Park (Tynte)
Copper and Sulphur Mines
CO. CARLOW
AUGHRIM
AVOCA
Aughrim River
Shillelagh Branch of Dublin and South-East Railway (now defunct)
WOODEN-BRIDGE
Ballyarthur House (Bailey)
CLONMORE ESTATE
Derry River
Shelton Abbey (Earl of Wicklow)
Glenart Castle (Carysfort)
TINAHELY
Croghan Mountain
ARKLOW
FITZWILLIAM ESTATE
Carrig River
Avoca River
Ffrench Quarries
CO. WEXFORD
N

APPENDIX A

Bibliography

Brief Notes on Bibliography :

The plan of my bibliography is as follows :

A : PRIMARY SOURCES

I : Memorials in Registry of Deeds, Dublin

II : MSS in National Library of Ireland

III : Other MSS

IV : Printed contemporary correspondence

V : Parliamentary records

VI : Contemporary periodicals

VII : Contemporary works of reference

VIII : Memoirs by contemporaries

IX : Other contemporary writings

B : LATER WORKS

I : Biography

II : Works of reference

III : Special subjects

IV : Unpublished Works

One or two of these classifications may seem unnecessarily catholic : but the alternative was for a proliferation of sub-headings, with very few entries under each. The entries under each heading below are numbered, and in alphabetical order : where a note is needed about classification under particular headings, I have put it in the apposite place.

A disadvantage arising from following a plan as simple as the one above is that it does not allow for emphasis of particular works whose importance, in a sense, transcends their classification. J.H. Parnell's

C.S. Parnell : a memoir (A VII, no. 37) for instance, was one of the most important source-works for this thesis, and I should like to emphasise that here. A secondary work which has been under-estimated is St. John Ervine's Parnell (BI, no. 2) : though popularised and racy, it contains important insights into Parnell's Wicklow background. However, the really important sources for my work have classifications to themselves : the memorials in the Registry of Deeds, the assorted MSS in the National Library, and the contemporary newspapers (AI, AII, and AVI). The Registry of Deeds, if gone into in depth, provides an invaluable repository for family history - or at least for that vital aspect of it which deals with the transference of property through the generations. It also goes a long way towards making good the deficiency caused by the lack of estate maps for Avondale : enough details are given about the various areas of the estate to build up a comprehensive idea of it. Of the MSS in the National Library, John Henry Parnell's 'Journal' (A II, no. I) was especially illuminating, and has not, I think, been much looked at before. Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell's long letter to T.D. Sullivan (A II, no. 6) was as instructive for the manner in which it is written as for its actual contents. The body of estate memoranda for Wicklow was again useful in my empirical process : the Fitzwilliam papers (A II, no. 10) were invaluable, as were the copious diaries of Lady Alice Howard and Lady Caroline Howard in the Wicklow Papers (A II, no. 8), and James Grattan's notebooks (A II, no. 9). Among other MSS, the letters of Parnell's at Avondale House (A III, no. 1.) are especially useful for providing facts about his mining venture.

Newspapers were important for building up a picture of Parnell's relations with Wicklow throughout his career, and no journal was more useful for this than William McPhail's quirky, expansive, 'rural Tory' Wicklow Newsletter (A VI, no. 21) which I used exhaustively.

Among contemporary reference works, I used Thom's Directory (A VII, no. 19) extensively, especially for the first section of my work.

Contemporary memoirs were most important, for reflections of contemporary opinion as well as hard facts. The anonymous recollection of Fanny Parnell in the Celtic Magazine (A VIII, no. 10) provided some valuable insights: books by men like Henry Harrison (A VIII, no. 20), Sir William Butler (A VIII, no. 3), and Andrew Kettle (A VIII, no. 20), who saw Parnell outside his political context, were particularly useful. Emily Dickinson's maddening memoir (A VIII, no. 9) was a staple, but had to be handled gingerly; the same was true for the recollections by Katharine Parnell (A VIII, no. 36) and by Delia T.S. Parnell in McWade's book (A VIII, no. 26).

As is obvious from my text, the works of William Parnell (A IX, nos. 13-16) were basic source-material for an important section of my work; the many contemporary guides to Co. Wicklow, also under the heading of 'other contemporary writing' (A IX, nos. 5, 7, 18, 21, 23) were important in the first section on the county.

Of later works, I have already mentioned Ervine's biography; Barry O'Brien's book about Parnell still towers above all the rest (BI, no. 8). The special-subject classification included books which I consulted throughout as well as some writing on very specific topics. Both of the unpublished works listed (B IV, nos. 1 and 2) were most important - Dr. Martin's article covered comprehensively a whole area of Parnell's youth which would otherwise have been an important section of my study, and Professor Moody's work on Anna Parnell both provided references and suggested a line of approach.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A : PRIMARY SOURCES

I : Memorials in the Registry of Deeds, Dublin

(Up to 1831, these are catalogued by a volume number, the first in the series : the next number denotes page, and the third, the actual number of the memorial. Thus 255. 324. 165063 means volume 255, page 324, Memorial number 165063. From 1831, Deeds are catalogued differently : the year is given, then the volume number for that particular year, then the memorial number. They are listed in order of volume number. For the property of Sir John Parnell and his father :

255	.	324	.	165063
257	.	20	.	165130
261	.	558	.	198645
263	.	237	.	167471
265	.	236	.	174973
265	.	629	.	180088
268	.	493	.	171255
294	.	500	.	195546
295	.	291	.	196191
297	.	572	.	196187
297	.	573	.	196188
297	.	574	.	196189
297	.	575	.	196190
297	.	605	.	196321
298	.	558	.	198645

299	324	165063
302	104	199336
305	91	200603
306	430	204032
307	337	207370
310	478	207393
311	349	210628
320	60	210729
320	195	215257
325	411	221496
325	413	221497
326	492	216733
328	434	221573
331	234	221494
331	236	221495
337	52	225275
337	161	226446
340	363	229788
341	122	227795
342	181	229242
344	342	231887
344	343	231888
349	343	234564
352	99	236805
353	128	236804
354	245	237896
354	501	240151
354	503	240152
355	31	236879
358	559	243093

362	137	242921
363	564	246215
365	538	246476
367	137	246326
369	54	246350
374	33	247754
377	413	255133
383	252	253775
389	77	255741
389;	495	257043
395	421	262305
399	429	264379
406	411	267091
422	349	276490
428	253	280110
444	532	289565
451	310	289929
460	505	295172
464	540	297562
464	541	297563
493	446	323719
493	447	323726
503	229	323770
509	489	335814
515	518	335813
516	99	336348
527	581	252571
528	286	346613
531	334	351104
537	523	354070

542	14	355716
560	449	375622
569	557	383941
596	290	406658

For the property of Samuel Hayes :

255	222	164473
286	511	190098
303	707	204104
313	538	210289
316	293	212062
331	479	222929
332	203	224121
348	288	234231
356	293	240259
472	424	303548
478	160	308062
760	103	516038
786	555	532090

For the property of William Parnell :

544	137	361412
549	443	364504
553	340	368788
560	431	375487
573	12	383112
601	33	407707
614	560	426386

690	. 195	. 474148
749	. 53	. 509388
761	. 252	. 516787

For the property of John Henry Parnell :

774	. 283	. 524598
786	. 255	. 532090
857	. 64	. 572064

(Henceforward	1834	: 1	. 83
catalogued	1835	: 14	. 173
under year)	1836	: 2	. 145
	1842	: 15	. 181
	1844	: 17	. 127
	1845	: 13	. 299
	1847	: 12	. 212
	1848	: 5	. 122
	1852	: 26	. 282
	1853	: 26	. 110
	1854	: 24	. 128, 25, 105, 29, 288
	1855	: 23	. 9, 32, 132
	1857	: 6	. 172
	1858	: 5	. 227, 25 . 123
	1859	: 12	. 26, 19 . 138, 29 . 251

For the property of the Parnell family after 1859 :

1862	: 12	. 72, 12 . 73, 16 . 21, 16 . 22, 18 . 112, 33 . 97
1863	: 37	. 27, 39 . 1

1864	:	31 . 161
1865	:	3 . 160, 26 . 95
1866	:	21 . 202, 26 . 282
1867	:	2 . 16, 28 . 193, 32 . 68,
1868	:	14 . 134, 14 . 135, 18 . 214, 33 . 136
1869	:	7 . 96, 24 . 134, 27 . 67
1870	:	32 . 192
1871	:	9 . 61
1872	:	6 . 140, 11 . 47, 23 . 238
1874	:	19 . 249, 24 . 178, 25 . 77, 26 . 97, 26 . 101, 26 . 180, 29 . 11, 30 . 132, 30 . 177, 32 . 45, 34 . 85, 34 . 86, 42 . 8, 44 . 259, 47 . 287, 47 . 289
1875	:	2 . 246, 3 . 263, 3 . 224, 15 . 212, 30 . 262 37 . 38
1876	:	1 . 77, 4 . 28
1879	:	17 . 9
1880	:	44 . 191, 46 . 209
1882	:	12 . 284, 36 . 27
1883	:	37 . 27, 39 . 1
1884	:	5 . 234, 39 . 1
1885	:	4 . 95, 15 . 230
1889	:	28 . 182
1891	:	22 . 53, 50 . 145
1893	:	23 . 191, 51 . 106, 59 . 81
1894	:	30. 178, 34 . 8
1895	:	5 . 203, 5 . 204
1896	:	20. 141
1899	:	94 . 220, 94 . 221

II : MSS in the National Library of Ireland

1. Parnell material

   'Journal of a tour in the U.S. and Canada, 1834-5' by John Henry Parnell : MS 2036

   Letters of C.S. Parnell : MSS 5934; 15, 735; 10, 416

   Avondale rent-roll, 1899-1900 : MS 10, 696

   Anna Parnell material (including 'The tale of a great sham'): MS 12, 144

2. Land league Papers

   Including letters of Anna Parnell's among the American material MS 8291

3. Redmond Papers

   Including letters from J.H. Parnell : MSS 15, 222

4. Sigerson correspondence

   Including letters from Anna Parnell : MS 8100

5. List of Armagh townlands and landlords, C. 1860

   Helpful in defining the Collure estate : MS 2716

6. Sullivan Papers

   Including letters from Delia T.S. Parnell, Fanny Parnell and Anna Parnell : MS 8237

7. Estate Maps

   Maps of the estates of Sir John Parnell in Leix and Cheshire by Samuel Byron, 1789, with additional maps by William Delaney, 1803-5 : MSS 21 F 18 (1-17)

8. Wicklow papers

   Family commonplace-books, letters and diaries of the Howard family, c. 1820-70 : MSS 3575, 3577-8, 3594-3625, 4799-4803, 4810

9. James Grattan material

   Estate accounts : MSS 5515, 5382-3
   James Grattan's diaries and notebooks, 1820-53 : MSS 5776-9, 3847-53, and his library catalogue in 1825 : MS 4704

10. Fitzwilliam Papers

    Estate accounts and memoranda, tenants' ledgers, rentals, eviction and emigration books, agent's correspondence, 1820-70 :

MSS 3983-4, 3986-7, 3991, 3993, 3996-9, 4954-6,
4959, 4962-3, 4965-7, 4969-72, 4976, 4987-92, 4995-6,
6073, 6077-81, 6083-7, 6119-20, 8816, 12, 163, n 19-20 p 211-12

11. Powerscourt Papers

Principally estate records and accounts, 1820-70: MSS 1763, 2740, 3163-4, 3167-77, 4882-6, 4888-93

12. Some miscellaneous MSS to do with Wicklow, 1820-70

Crofton estate accounts : MSS 2065, 7233
Brabazon estate valuation, 1823; MS 8742
Loftus servant roll, 1825,: MS 4329.
Miscellaneous diaries of Loftus family : MS n. 3318 p 2936
Proby rental, 1826 : MS 1149
Massy estate accounts : MS 3928
Truell family letters : MS m 4581 p 4547
'Tour of Wicklow' by Dorothea Barker, 1827 : MS 2194.

III :Other MSS

L. Letters relating to Parnell's estate management, 1875-91, preserved at Avondale House.

2. Autograph letter of C.S. Parnell in T. C. D., MS 2241

3. Autobiography of Alfred Webb in Library of Society of Friends, Dublin.

4. Some letters from the Doran and Davitt papers shown to me by Professor T.W. Moody

5. Papers in the Land Commission Records, Dublin, relating to the purchase of Ballyknockan farm, Avondale, 1888-90 : Box 902, Schedule A-D, nos. 1-6, Record no. 1159

6. Diary of George M. Drought, R.M. Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow, 1839-43 in S.P.O., Dublin : VII, Centre T/48

IV : Printed contemporary correspondence

1. Historical Manuscripts Commission :

Report on Manuscripts in various collections, VI (London, 1909). Report on Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue, preserved at Dropmore, vols. III (1899), IV (1905), VI (1908), VIII (1912)

2. Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland, with a preface by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, G. Hogge, (4 vols. London, 1860-62)

3. Memoir and correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh, 2nd. Marquess of Londonderry, edited by his brother. C.W. Vane, Marquess of Londonderry (12 vols, London, 1848-53)

4. Correspondence of Charles, first Marquis Cornwallis, ed. C. Ross (3 vols. London, 1859)

5. Devoy's Post bag, ed. Wm. O'Brien and Desmond Ryan (2 vols, Dublin, 1928)

6. Memoir of the life and correspondence of the rt. hon. Henry Flood (Dublin, 1838)

7. Lord Melbourne's papers, ed. L.L. Sanders, with a preface by Earl Cowper (London, 1890)

8. Memoirs, journal and correspondence of Thomas Moore, ed. Lord John Russell (8 vols., London, 1853-6)

9. F.W. Newman, A personal narrative in letters, principally from Turkey (2 vols, London 1856)

V : Parliamentary records

1. The parliamentary Register : or history of the proceedings and debates of the house of Commons of Ireland, 1782-1800

2. A report of the debate in the house of Commons of Ireland on 15 and 16 January 1800 on the subject of a Union (Dublin, 1800)

3. Parliamentary Debates, ed. T.C. Hansard, first, second and third series

4. Summary of the returns of owners of land in Ireland, H.C. 1876 (422) vol. LXXX.

VI : Contemporary Periodicals

As my footnotes indicate, reference to periodicals formed an important part of my source-work throughout. I have therefore only given the dates for those newspapers and magazines which I merely consulted for limited periods or specific topics; the rest were used generally at almost every stage of my work.

1. Cambridge Independent Press, 1869
2. Celtic Magazine (New York), 1882
3. Celtic Monthly (New York), 1880-82
4. Daily Express (Dublin)
5. Daily Nation (Dublin)
6. Edinburgh Review, 1805, 1821
7. Evening Herald (Dublin)
8. Evening Mail (Dublin)
9. Evening Telegraph (Dublin)
10. Freeman's Journal (Dublin)
11. Irish Independent (Dublin)
12. Irish Sale Catalogues, 1901

13. Irish Times (Dublin)
14. Leinster Express (Laois), 1859-75
15. Nation (Dublin)
16. Quarterly Review (London),1815-21
17. Scots Magazine (Edinburgh), 1821
18. The Times (London)
19. United Ireland (Dublin)
20. Walker's Hibernian Magazine (Dublin)
21. Wicklow Newletter and General Advertiser
22. Wicklow People

VII : Contemporary works of reference

1. S.A. Allibone, A Dictionary of English literature (London, 1870)

2. Annual Register

3. M. Archdall, The peerage of Ireland (Dublin, 1789)

4. J. Bateman, The great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland (1883; ed. D. Spring, Leicester University Press, 1971)

5. Burke's Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland (6th ed., 1835)

6. Burke's Landed gentry of Great Britain and Ireland (6th ed., 1879, and 9th ed., 1989)

7. Burke's Peerage and baronetage (42nd ed., 1880, and 44th ed., 1892)

8. Debretts illustrated Peerage and barontage (London 1864)

9. Dictionary of living authors (anon., Dublin, 1816)

10. F.M. Farrar, Irish marriages, being an index to the marriages in Walker's Hibernian Magazine, 1771 to 1812 (2 vols. London, 1897)

11. J. Foster, Alumni Oxoniensis, 1715-1886 (Oxford, 1886)

12. J. Foster, Men at the Bar (London, 1885)

13. Foster's Peerage (London, 1883)

14. Vicary Gibbs, The complete peerage of England, Scotland and Ireland (London 1910)

15 R.J. Griffith, General Valuation of Ireland (3 vols. London, 1836-48)

16. J.H. Hayden, A book of Dignities (London, 1890)

17. Irish law Reports, 1859-75

18. J. Lodge, The peerage of Ireland (Dublin, 1789)

19. Thom's Irish almanac and official directory (Dublin, 1844)

20. Thom's Irish Who's Who (Dublin, 1923)

21. Walford's county families of the United Kingdom (London, 1920)

22. Alfred Webb, A compendium of Irish biography (Dublin, 1878)

23. Who's Who (1913)

VIII : Memoirs by contemporaries

Under this heading I have included biographies, autobiographies, contemporary biographical articles, and historical works (e.g., nos. 16, 25, and 32) which have an important content of contemporary biography.

1. Sir Jonah Barrington, Personal sketches of his own times (3 vols, London, 1817-32)

2. W.S. Blunt, The land war in Ireland, being a personal narrative of events (London, 1912)

3, Sir William Butler, An autobiography (London, 1911)

4. Frances Power Cobbe, The life of Frances Power Cobbe, by herself (2 vols, London, 1894)

5. W.J. Corbet, 'Parnell as a prisoner in Kilmainham' in Irish Weekly Independent, 7 Oct 1893

6. M. Davitt, The fall of feudalism in Ireland (London and New York, 1904)

7. J. Devoy, 'How Parnell acepted the leadership' in Gaelic American, 26 Sept. 1906

8. _____, Recollections of an Irish rebel (London, 1929)

9. E. Dickinson, A patriot's mistake : reminiscences of the Parnell family, by a daughter of the house (London, 1905)

10. 'Fanny Parnell' (anonymous) in Celtic Magazine, vol. i no. 2 (Sept. 1882), pp 28-92

11. R.B. Cunninghame Graham, 'An Tighearna : a memory of Parnell' in Dana (Nov 1904), pp 183-99

12. J. Grant, Random recollections of the house of Commons (London, 1836)

13. H. Grattan, Memoir of the life and times of Henry Grattan, by his son (5 vols, London, 1839-46)

14. H. Groves, A memoir of the second Lord Congleton (London, 1884)

15. P.J. Hanway, 'Mrs Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell' in Celtic Monthly vol. v, no 4 (April 1881), pp 326-9

16. H. Harrison, Parnell vindicated : the lifting of the veil (London, 1931)

17. T. M. Healy, 'A great man's fancies : some reminiseences of Charles Stewart Parnell' in Westminster Budget, vol 2 no. 41 (10 Nov. 1893), pp 9-11; and no. 43 (24 Nov. 1893), pp 23-5.

18. T.M. Healy, Letters and leaders of my day (2 vols, London, 1929)

19. J.J. Horgan, Parnell to Pearse : some recollections and reflections (Dublin, 1948)

20. A Kettle, The material for victory, ed. L.J. Kettle (Dublin, 1958)

21. J. McCarthy, Reminiscences (Dublin,1899)

22. J. McCarthy and Mrs. Campbell Praed, Our book of memories (London, 1912)

23. S. MacNeill, What I have seen and heard (London, 1925)

24. R.M. McWade, 'Anna Parnell', in Celtic Magazine, vol. i, no. 2 (Sept. 1882), pp 251-2

25. _____, The uncrowned king : the life and public services of the Hon. Stewart Parnell (Philadelphia, 1891)

26. Wm. O'Brien, An olive branch in Ireland, and its history (London, 1910)

27. _____, Evening memories (Dublin, 1920)

28. _____, Recollections (London, 1905)

29. _____, The Parnell of real life (London, 1926)

30. T.P. O'Connor, C.S. Parnell, a memory (London, 1891)

31. _____, Memories of an old parliamentarian (2 vols, London, 1929)

32. F.H. O'Donnell, A history of the Irish parliamentary party (2 vols, London, 1910)

33. Standish O'Grady, 'Parnell: some personal reminiscences' in The story of Ireland (London, 1904), pp 202-13

34. J.O'Leary, Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism (2 vols, London, 1896)

35. E.I. O'Reilly, 'Charles Stewart Parnell' in Celtic Monthly vol. iii, no. 1. (Jan. 1880), pp 80-82

36. K. O'Shea, Charles Stewart Parnell : his love story and political life (2 vols, London, 1914)

37. J.H. Parnell, C.S. Parnell : a memoir (London, 1916)

38. Recollections of Dublin Castle and Dublin society by a Citizen (anonymous), (London, 1902)

39. W. Stewart Trench, Realities,of Irish life (London, 1868; reprinted 1956, with an introduction by Patrick Kavanagh)

40. K. Tynan, Memories (London, 1924)

41. _____, 'Mr. Parnell's home, sketched by a lady' in Weekly Freeman, 6 Sept. 1884

42. _____, Twenty-five years (London, 1913)

43. J. Wyse-Power, 'Recollections of Anna Parnell' in Dublin Metropolitan Magazine (spring, 1935), pp 15-17, 28

IX : Other Contemporary writing

(This classification includes pamphlets, contemporary histories, and works of the Parnell family specifically referred to : a full bibliography of Sir Henry Brooke Parnell's works will be found in the text).

1. Sir Jonah Barrington, Historic memoirs of Ireland (2 vols, London, 1835)

2. _____, The rise and fall of the Irish nation (Dublin, 1833)

3. Sir John Carr, The stranger in Ireland (London, 1806)

4. W.P. Coyne, Ireland, industrial and agricultural (Dublin, 1902)

5. T. Cromwell, Excursions through Ireland : a complete guide for the traveller and tourist (London, 1820)

6. M. Davitt, The 'Times' Parnell Commission : speech delivered by Michael Davitt in defence of the Land League (london, 1890)

7. R. Frazer, A general view of the agriculture and mineralogy, present state and circumstances, of the county of Wicklow, with observations on the means of their improvement, drawn up for the Dublin Society (Dublin, 1801)

8. Samuel Hayes, A practical treatise on planting in Ireland (Dublin, 1794)

9. F.M. Jennings, An enquiry into the causes of poverty and discontent in Ireland with suggestions for their removal Dublin, 1866)

10. Anna Parnell, Old tales and new [poems] (Dublin, c. 1905)

11. C.S. Parnell, 'The Irish land question' in North American Review., vol. cxxx (April 1880), pp 388-406

12. Sir Henry Brooke Parnell, A history of the Penal Laws against Irish catholics from the Treaty of Limerick to the Union (London, 1808)

13. William Parnell, An enquiry into the causes of popular discontent in Ireland by an Irish country gentleman (Dublin, 1805)

14. _____, An historical apology for the Irish Catholics (Dublin, 1807)

15. _____, A letter to the editor of the Quarterly Review (Dublin, 1820).

16. _____, Maurice and Berghetta, or, the Priest of Rahery: a tale (London, 1819).

17. F. Plowden, Historical review of the state of Ireland (London, 1803)

18. The Post-chaise companion through Ireland (Dublin, 1803).

19. Proceedings at a farewell dinner given to James Redpath by the New York Land League, 1 June 1881 (anonymously compiled, New York, 1881)

20. E.K. Purnell, Magdalen College (Cambridge College Histories, London, 1904).

21. T. Radcliffe, Report on the agriculture of Wicklow (Dublin, 1812)

22. M. Wingfield, 8th Viscout Powerscourt, A history and description of Powerscourt (Dublin, 1903)

23. G.N. Wright, Guide to the County Wicklow (London, 1822)

B : LATER WORKS

I : Biography

1. D. Cashman, Life of Michael Davitt and the secret history of the Land League by Michael Davitt (London, 1883 or 1884)

2. St. John Ervine, Parnell (London, 1925)

3. Marie Hughes, 'The Parnell family: Dublin associations' in Dublin Historical Record, xvi no. 3 (March 1961), pp 86-97.

4. _____, 'The Parnell Sisters' in Dublin Historical Record, xxi, no. 1 (March, 1966), pp 14-27.

5. R. Johnson, Parnell and the Parnells (London, 1888).

6. F.S.L. Lyons, John Dillon (Dublin, 1968).

7. E. McCracken, 'Samuel Hayes of Avondale' in Irish Forestry, vol. 25, no. 1 (Spring, 1968).

8. R.B. O'Brien, Life of Charles Stewart Parnell (2 vols., London, 1898).

9. M.M. O'Hara, Chief and tribune: Parnell and Davitt (London, 1919).

10. F. Sheehy-Skeffington, Michael Davitt (2nd ed., London, 1967).

11. T. Sherlock, Charles Stewart Parnell (London, 1882).

12. 'William Parnell's death', with bibliography, in Irish Book Lover, viii, (December, 1921)

II : Works of reference

1. Admissions register of Lincoln's Inns, vol. ii (London, 1896)

2. Burke's peerage, baronetage and knightage (London, 1970)

3. J.S. Crone, A concise dictionary of Irish biography (Dublin, 1928)

4. Dod's electoral facts (London, 1889).

5. S. Lee (ed.), Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1915-)

6. J.A. Venn (ed.), Alumni cantabrigiensis, part ii, vol. v, (Cambridge, 1953)

7. J. Vincent and M. Stenton (ed.), McCalmont's parliamentary poll-book (8th ed., Brighton, 1972)

III : Special subjects

1. D.J. Beattie, Brethren: the story of a great recovery (Kilmarnock, 1940)

2. Sydney Buxton, Finance and politics: an historical study (London, 1888)

3. R.D. Edwards and T.D. Williams (eds.), The great famine: studies in Irish history, 1845-52 (Dublin, 1956)

4. J.A. Froude, The English in Ireland in the eighteenth century (3 vols., London, 1881)

5. E.M. Johnston, Great Britain and Ireland, 1760-1800: a study in political administration (St. Andrews, 1963)

6. W.E.M. Lecky, History of Ireland in the eighteenth century (5 vols., London, 1892)

7. F.S.L. Lyons, 'The economic ideas of Parnell' in Historical Studies, II (1959), pp 60-78

8. L.J. McCaffrey, 'Home Rule and the general election of 1874' in I.H.S., ix, no. 34 (September 1954) pp 190-212.

9. J.R. McCullough, The literature of political economy (2nd ed., London, 1938)

10. R.B. McDowell, The Irish administration, 1801-1914. (London, 1964)

11. _____, Public opinion and government policy in Ireland, 1801-46 (London, 1952)

12. _____ (ed.), Social life in Ireland, 1800-45 (Dublin, 1857)

13. C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and his party (3rd ed., Oxford, 1968)

14. J.A. Reynolds, The Catholic Emancipation crisis in Ireland, 1823-9 (Yale University, 1954)

15. P. Rogers, The Irish volunteers and Catholic emancipation (London, 1934)

16. 'The Rosanna press' in Irish Book Lover, vol. iv, (October 1912), p. 54

17. D. Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule (London, 1964)

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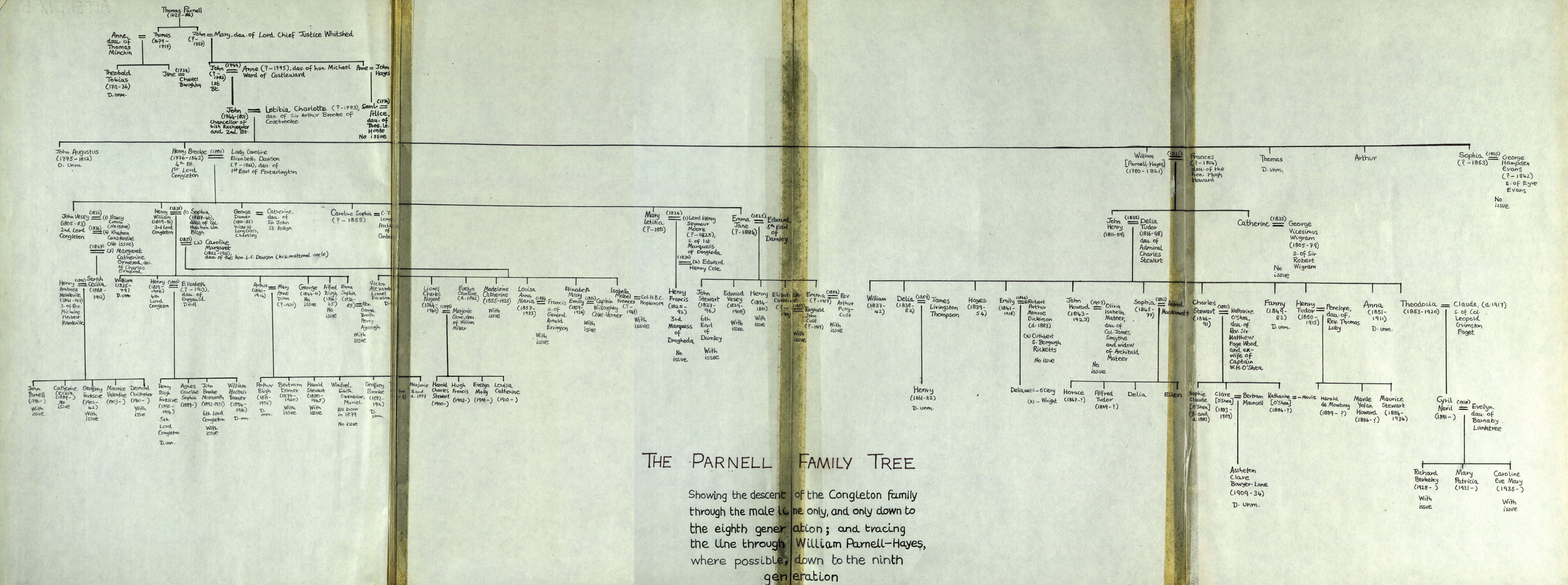
IV : Unpublished works

(Both of these were shown to me by courtesy of Professor T.W. Moody)

1. Ged. Martin, "Parnell at Cambridge: the education of an Irish Nationalist'; a paper to be published in I.H.S.

2. T.W. Moody, 'Anna Parnell and the Land League'; an as yet unpublished paper delivered to the Conference on Irish Studies in New York, 20 March 1965.



THE PARNELL FAMILY TREE

Showing the descent of the Congleton family through the male line only, and only down to the eighth generation; and tracing the line through William Parnell-Hayes, where possible, down to the ninth generation