

AS SLOW OUR SHIP

SARAH WARD

1973

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Notes on names used in this book

The correct spelling of the name QUILLMAN is spelt variously as

QUILLINAN
QUILAN
QUINLAN

AHERNE is spelt variously as

AHERAN
AHERN

JOSIE is spelt variously as JOCIE

REEDY is spelt variously as

READY
REDDY

!

AS SLOW OUR SHIP

There is a prayer that's breathed alone
In dear old Erin's land.
'Tis uttered on the threshold stone
With smiles and clasping hand.
And oft perchance 'tis murmured low
With sigh and falling tear,
The grandest greeting man may know
The prayer, "God save all here."

.....

Looking back over sixty years since we left Ireland, I recall the little greeting prayer so often heard on the threshold of my mother's old home in Ballysheedy. This time honoured greeting was sometimes said in the old Irish tongue, "God save all here", and the reply, "God save you kindly".

I lived with my grandparents from the time I was about four years old and my twin sisters, Mary and Winifred, were babies.

The seven of us were born in the village of Ballagh, where our parents had a grocery and bar business.

We were only six miles from the historic Rock of Cashel. In ancient times it was the seat of the Kings of Munster. Situated on its rocky eminence, it is all that is left of a royal and ecclesiastical city of Ancient Ireland and it was here St Patrick baptised King Aengus, the last pagan King of Munster. The spot on which the King stood is marked by a large Celtic Cross. The ruins of the Dominican Friary and Hoar Abbey, a Cistercian foundation, are close by.

Cashel of the Kings still looks down over the Golden Vale, unchanged by the passing centuries. The old buildings are still in a fairly good state of preservation in spite of war and pillage. They are a striking landmark in the centre of the great plain of Tipperary

The traditional legend of the Rock of Cashel says that the Devil, flying across Ireland one day, took a savage bite out of the mountain peak and dropped it in the centre of the great plain of Tipperary. The mighty mouthful dropped by His Satanic Majesty was 300 feet high and an area of a couple of hundred acres.

The gap in the centre of the mountain peak looks exactly the shape of the Rock.

This famous outcrop is limestone. In ancient times it was the seat of the Kings of Munster and the site of the most venerable and ancient ruins. Both Royal and Monastic – Royal and

Saintly Cashel. Nearly all of our relatives were farmers in the hills and mountains that bordered the fertile plain.

Glenough, where my father's people lived, was admired for its rugged beauty of hills, glens, little streams and waterfalls. The farm was 150 acres.

There was a pretty waterfall on the land owned by my grandparents called 'Powelonash', which was a favourite swimming hole in summer.

The gently sloping hills on Bonerea and Ballysheedy were more fertile and the farms were mostly smaller. Our cousins, the O'Dwyers lived in Bonerea.

The river was skirted on the hillside by a heavy growth of vines and reeds. Behind the foliage on the riverbank was a cave, wherein was a sacrificial altar whose origins go back to pagan times. It was in this cave that Con, Dan and Paddy O'Keeffe hid from the Black and Tans during the 'Troubles'.

The homestead where I spent most of my childhood days was a peaceful and rather isolated spot, being out off from the road and village of Anacarthy by the big grazier of the district, a Mr. Bagwell Purifoy. He was an adopted son of the last of the Bagwells, and the property was still known as Bagwells, who had it from the time of confiscations, when the old stock was pushed back in the hills and bogs to make room for the new settlers from England after the fall of Clonmel. In my great grandfathers time, some more land was taken from them to make a bigger grazing paddock for Bagwell. He grazed his black poll cattle on land that would have provided a comfortable livelihood for seven or eight families. It was good farmland.

All of our relatives were tenants of Thomas Maud, Lord Hawarden, who owned the Dundrum estate. It was given to his ancestor, Thomas Maud, who was a drummer in Cromwell's Army. The descendants of the drummer boy, Thomas Maud held despotic sway over their tenants till the end of landlordism over 200 years later.

It was the end of the Maud family also, as old Lady Florence Maud died in England at the turn of the century. She was the last of the family. The big Georgian Mansion then remained vacant until our Archbishop Rev. Dr Fennelly bought it for a boarding and industrial school for the Presentation Nuns about 1907.

From our home on the hill, we had a grand view of the plain. Like most Irish landscapes, there were the stately homes of the supplanters and the ruins of old Abbeys and castles.

Lord Hawarden's mansion or the 'big house', as it was called, was only a mile from us.

Cromwell paid his soldiers and those who gave money to carry on the war with grants of confiscated land. The dispossessed families who were mostly of the old Catholic nobility were forced under pain of death to cross the Shannon into Conaught. Being deprived of all they had, thousands died of want, not having the way or the means of starting a new life in the most barren part of Ireland.

One of Cromwell's generals said that a big area of land there could be described as-

"Not containing sufficient trees to hang a man – water to drown him – or earth to bury him".

The edict that caused this great exodus of the old Irish Catholic stock is known as the 'Curse of Cromwell'. "To hell or to Connaught by the first of May, 1654", was Cromwell's edict.

Some of those outlawed families were, after a time, taken on as under-tenants on their own land by the more kindly disposed new settlers. Bands of outlawed men carried on guerrilla warfare on the supplanters from their refuge in the mountains and bogs until they were all either killed outright or captured and sold into slavery in the West Indies.

In the course of time, some of those families who became tenants of the new settlers intermarried with the new settlers. Although, by a section of the penal code, marriage between the old Irish and the new settlers from England carried a heavy penalty. Assimilation was against the law.

A few years ago, I had a reminder of those poor people who were banished to the limestone ridges of Connaught. Monsignor Steele brought two nuns to visit me and in the course of conversation about home, one Sister asked me, "Do you remember the tinkers?". "I do, very well, and weren't they a nuisance, as they wandered through the countryside breaking into fields at night to graze their donkeys and picking up anything they could use for firewood". Sisters' companion, a much older nun, said to me, "Now don't be saying unkind things about the poor tinkers, don't you know that they are the descendants of the best blood in Ireland – innocent victims of the 'Curse of Cromwell'."

I heard this rebuke with a feeling of sorrow for this remnant of a great people who had now become a tribe of nomads and social outcasts in their native land.

Since Independence they are slowly becoming once more assimilated with their countrymen. The land that was taken from their ancestors was one of the three major confiscations and involved five million acres. The condition of our aborigines here reminded me of the tinkers.

Their descendants still know the places and boundaries of their confiscated properties of hundreds of years ago and continue to bequeath these areas to their next of kin in their wills in the hope of getting this stolen land back. (refer – page 26- 'Great Hunger' Cecil Woodham Smith)

To find employment for those six thousand itinerants and get them settled in homes of their own is a problem the Republican Government has not yet fully solved. Modern progress has wiped out their old trade of making and repairing tinware and occasional dealing with horses and donkeys.

II

The parish church in the small village of Ancarthy was a fine gothic building opened in 1871 by their beloved parish priest Reverend Father Fennelly. It replaced the small plain building built in 1832, which then became the National School. These schools were established by 1832 after religious and educational liberty was allowed.

The new National Schools system replaced the valiant old Hedge Schoolmasters, who has carried on for 150 years, a system of education unknown in the history of other countries.

In 1905, Mr James O'Dwyer of Bonerea, who had been head teacher of Anacarthly Boys School from 1869 to 1905, retired.

Mr O'Dwyer was succeeded by Mr Michael Slattery, a County Clare man. Mr Slattery was young and full of enthusiasm for the revival of the old Irish language which he was familiar with from his childhood days.

County Clare, like the other counties across the Shannon, still spoke the old tongue well. Although by the end of the 19th century, English had become the language of the people, except in Connaught and remote places where gaelic was still spoken in the homes.

Dr Douglas Hyde of Anglo-Irish stock, started the revival in 1893. He was familiar with it and loved it from his childhood days in Roscommon when he used to converse with the people in old Gaelic. Dr Hyde was Professor of Modern Languages in the National University of Ireland. He wrote much in the Irish language and made many translations from the Ancient Irish to English.

In 1938, in acknowledgement of the major part he played in the cultural revival of their country, the Irish people conferred upon Dr Hyde, the honour of first 'President of Ireland'. He died in 1949.

With my cousins, the O'Dwyers and the Hogans, I attended Mr Slattery's after-school class. Our teachers – Miss Ryan and Miss Moran- joined us and teachers and pupils began the study of our native language from Rev Father Eugene O'Growneys' little primer. The little ones were taught to say their prayers in Irish.

Sad to say, the revival never caught on completely – the people had been speaking English too long. But at least it is no longer called the dead language.

During the 18th century, the transition from the old language to English was mostly accomplished without the benefit of textbooks, as education was still banned. To transact business of any importance it became necessary to know English and many of the people had acquired a good knowledge of it, interspersed with much Gaelic.

An old relative in Glenough, who was very proud of her English, had engaged a Bonerea man to do some work for her. He arrived early in the morning and she greeted him in English, "It's hither you're early from Bonerea to your Brekus".

HEDGE SCHOOLS

The Hedge schools carried on until 1832 when Catholic emancipation allowed religious and educational liberty

These Hedge schoolteachers braved the penalties of the penal code to preserve the national culture from destruction. A few of these old masters taught for a time in National schools later.

With their passing the last link with the ancient Gaelic schools of the Monks and the Bards was severed.

Here is how Dr P J Dowling describes a Hedge school in his book – The Hedge Schools of Ireland:

Quote - “Because the laws forbade the school master to teach he was compelled to give instructions secretly, because the householder was penalised for harbouring the school master, he had purforce to teach, and that only when weather permitted out of doors. He therefore selected in some remote spot the sunnyside of a hedge or bank which effectively hid him and his pupils from the eye of a chance passerby. There he sat on a stone as he taught his little school while his scholars lay stretched on the green sward about him.

One pupil was placed at an advantage point to give warning of the approach of strangers, and if the latter were suspected of being officers of the law or informers the classes were quickly disbanded for the day, only to meet again on the morrow in some place still more sheltered.”

Father O'Keeffe comments:

The English like to say the Irish were illiterate. This letter will surprise you as it has surprised me. Instead of full stops my father's mother made lavish use of the semicolon.

Extracts from a letter to Michael O'Keeffe from his mother Ellen, nee Heffernan.

From Father D M O'Keeffe's collections.

'Glenough'

Thursday morning.
(Circa 1875).

My dearest Michael

I received your very welcome letter this morning which, in the first place, grieved me a little to know that you were left so much in suspense waiting for my letter but my dear son, I tired myself of writing to you until at length I failed. I have not got a letter or even heard from you this length of time---Secondly, my dearest it affords me great pleasure to hear that you are in good health and able to work hard.

My dear, could you not meet an easier job than to be working under the boiling heat;---I do not know whether I approve of land---but above all remember your religious duties;---It is always consoled to think that you were very clever and that you would live where another would die---dear William (has) purchased 150 acres in the Canadas;(sic)---he would sell it again and that he had 500 dollars in his bargain; in the place where he is the general inhabitants are Scotch and English all bigoted Orangemen and hate the name of an Irishman.

Remain assured my dearest son that the affection of your dear mother is unchangeable.

Sincerely and devotedly yours

Ellen O'Keeffe.
Glenough, Clonulty,
Cashel Co. Tipperary.

The endeavour to anglicise the Irish and eradicate the old language was still carried on by the new school system. The teachers were obliged to cane any child speaking a word of Gaelic in school. The result of this system was by the end of the 19th century, English had become the language of the people, except in the west and the islands off the west coast where it was still the only language spoken in the home. It had almost completely died out in the rest of the country.

However, in spite of all this suppression, there was a great upsurge of the Nations spirit in 1898, when branches of the Gaelic League spread throughout the country, mainly with the object of restoring the old language before it was too late. Dr Douglas Hyde of Anglo-Irish stock was the founder of the league. A fluent speaker of Gaelic from his childhood days in Roscommon, he resolved to save it for future generations of his countrymen.

It was thanks in great measure to the devoted people of Clare and Connaught that Dr Hyde, Dr Hickey, Boin McNeil, Father Eugene O'Growney and many other men of letters, were able to save the old Irish language from extinction. The League also included Irish dancing, music, handicrafts and study of our ancient history.

Feis or open air concerts were held during the summer and trips were organised to historic places to enjoy the beauty of our country. A member of the League would give a talk on some section of history or folklore. During those trips, it was a great joy to meet old people who could carry on a conversation in the 'old tongue'.

When Druidic hymns were chanted
And when Bardic songs were sung
The language of our fathers
Was the dear old tongue
The sweet old tongue
What memories around it
In the past have clung
Through ancient times descended
With our countries glory blended
The speech of Saint and scholar
Was the dear old tongue.

.....

Irish was taught after school and a night classes. We had a very active branch of the League in our district. At first it was difficult to find enough teachers, and Nell and I had not acquired much knowledge of our native speech up to the time we left home, and we soon forgot it. We enjoyed the old Fenian ballads/the Irish Brigade of songs and dances.

In the days of the land war, the priests gave strong support to the cause and often acted as the president for branches of the Land League. Father Mathew Ryan of Knockavella, the parish next to ours, served a term in jail for his part of activity in the League. He was still a hale and hearty old warrior in our time and foremost in the Gaelic language. Father Matt, as he was always affectionately called, was a well - known and deeply revered figure as he toured through the countryside on his bicycle.

The Knockavella Feis or open-air concerts every summer were the best and most popular in our part of the country.

In our branch, we had a good amateur theatrical group. Some of the plays were aimed at those, who had become so anglicised that they kept aloof from Gaelic revival. They were the sheznachi (shoo neen) or snobs.

For a while we had a very good teacher, Miss Denihey from Cork. She was an accomplished actress and was the moving spirit in our branch of the Gaelic League and in the production and success of those plays. Nell sometimes had a part in them.

I remember on of those plays held in Rossmore. Mr and Mrs Thomas English, parents of the late Reverend Dr John English of Brisbane, taught at the Rossmore school until their retirement. Their son, Mick, was popular at local concerts and his stage Irishman act was very funny. Although not wanting in Fenian loyalty, Mick had not yet caught on to the new feeling of pride in our National heritage. The stage Irishman buffoon was no longer tolerated and poor Mick got a hostile reception when he came onto the stage with his usual ludicrous performance.

Another son, Paddy English, succeeded his father in the Rossmore School. Paddy had become well versed in the old language and encouraged his pupils to speak it in school hours for which he was dismissed from the National Schools service. Afterwards, he taught in the Christian Brothers schools. The Brothers were not under the control of the National schools department.

The new National schools were denominational – we had our National schools and teachers who gave religious instruction daily.

In our part of the country the population was almost all Catholic, especially in the hills and sometimes their schools were obliged to close for lack of enough pupils. They then attended the nearest Catholic school until their own school was open again, and it worked out pleasantly for all. On the first stroke of the Angelus bell, those pupils would walk outside taking their lunch with them and we joined them after prayers. Three of those pupils had an uncle in Queensland who became a leader in Labour politics. He was Senator Tom Givens who migrated to North Queensland in 1882.

The curriculum in the National schools was good as far as it went. Anything pertaining to Ireland was given scant space in our schoolbooks, more especially history and any knowledge of the glorious history of our ancient nation.

The poem below was never included in the English readers in Ireland.

LOVE OF COUNTRY

*Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself has said
“This is my own, my Native Land”.*

.....

Thomas Davis (1814– 45), saw the establishment of those schools. He once questioned some National school children – they had not heard of Tara of the Kings siege of Limerick – the battle of Clontarf, but hey could name the famous geysers of Iceland and give latitude and longitude of the British possessions.

In my school days this system of anglicising had relaxed to some extent – we had more Irish history and could sing our nation’s songs in school and after school. If the teacher had some knowledge of the old Gaelic speech, the older children attended the Gaelic class. The Gaelic league had established branches in many parts of the country.

In the days before butter factories, it was a great advantage for a girl to be a good butter maker and my aunts in Ballysheedy were excellent dairymaids. There were eight girls in my mother’s family and Aunt Norah went to help grandmother O’Keeffe in her big dairy in Glenough. My sister Nell, who was a frequent visitor at the old home in Glenough, told me the neighbours still talked about Norah and Denis singing together while they milked the cows. They evidently had lovely voices – people passing by on the road would stand to listen.

The IRB – Irish Republican Brotherhood was already formed in Dublin some years, and by 1905 became known as ‘Sin Fein’, the new freedom for Ireland movement. (*Sin Fein means ‘ourselves alone’*). Many of the older generation were dubious about all this ferband nationalism and they feared another rising. They had bitter memories of the famine years of the 1840’s and the failure of the Fenian rising.

They had seen the long agrarian strife to wipe out the curse of landlordism come to a victorious end. They still hoped for Home Rule, their own parliament restored to Dublin and a measure of self-government similar to the colonies.

Our grandmother was a gentle placid old lady and was troubled at the idea of more conflict. “They should ‘lave’ well alone”, was her usual comment.

I daresay grandfather carried a pike in the “64 Fenian rising”. This rebellion was ruthlessly quelled, but it was not quite a failure as it led to the revolt against landlordism that gained for them the security of their homes and land and the end of evictions.

Great faith I have in moral force
Great trust in thought and pen
I know the value of discourse
To sway the minds of men
But why should words my frenzy whet
Unless we are to strike
Our despot lords who fear no threat
But reverence the pike
Oh, do be wise, leave moral force
The strength of thought and pen
And all the value of discourse

To lily-livered men
But if you covet not to die
Of hunger in a dyke
If life we prize is liberty
A Pike-A Pike-A Pike

During the latter part of their occupation, the landlords had been making, what they considered a very generous concession. It was really imposed on them by an act of parliament, that a seriously sick tenant must be given a few days grace before being thrown out on the roadside.

I remember what must have been one of the last evictions on the Dundrum estate. Patsy Carey of Rossmore was being evicted and Patsy put on a good act of being a sick man. It caused some hilarity among his neighbours. He had swallowed a piece of soap to induce retching in the presence of the sheriff and police.

The repeal of the corn laws in 1846 which abolished the duty on imported grain, was a great relief to the working class in England, as they were enabled to get bread at a more reasonable price. Formerly Ireland had grown grain extensively for the English market. But now was obliged to compete with corn growing countries where the land was not weighted with such oppressive rents. The Irish farmer found himself ruined by tillage or grain raising.

Coincidentally came an increased demand for cattle to supply the English meat market. Corn might be safely and cheaply brought to England from even the most distant climes – but cattle could not. Ireland was close at hand, but turning a country from grain raising to cattle raising meant annihilation of the agricultural population, for bullock ranges and sheep runs need consolidation of farms and the sweeping away of the human occupants.

Two or three herdsmen or shepherds would be required throughout miles of such ranges and runs where under the tillage system thousands of families lived and found employment, thus cleared farms came to be desirable with the landlords.

“For as a consequence of free trade, either the old rents must be abandoned, or the agricultural population swept away enmass”.

(From History of Ireland)

.....

Quotations from the book-

Gladstone – Parnell

The Great Irish Struggle

“In 1816 an act was passed---which gave the landlord power to seize growing crops and keep them till reaped...and charge the tenant the accumulation of

expenses...and ruin the tenant.

Under an act passed in 1818 the landlord received the power to turn his tenant out of his holding. Act followed act then in quick succession, for the purpose of making eviction easy...never in the history of mankind was there a code more complete in the interests of one class against another...absentee landlords had no feelings about their tenants...the Irish landlord compared unfavourably with the English landlord...(who) was always conscious of his social obligations...in sickness and misery the children of the English labourer have been visited by the ladies bountiful of the landlords' house.

But in Ireland the absentee landlord never saw his tenants. To him they were mere ciphers representing so much money for his interests and pleasures”.

Turning farmland into pastureland applied to Scotland also. The author and statesman, John Buchan, in his book 'Memory Holds the Door', says, "since my boyhood, I had seen land slipping out of cultivation into pasture, and glens where once a dozen hearths smoked, now inhabited only by a shepherd and his dog".

Not all of the landlords made such a dramatic clearance of their tenantry, but this was the case in Kings County, when those 600 families were brought to Queensland under the Queensland Government land settlement scheme, organised by Bishop O'Quinn in 1862 and which ended in 1865.

In a land where unemployment was prevalent, the Irish policeman had a good steady job, with a pension on retirement. This was no doubt the motive that induced so many men to join the RIC.

"The Irish constabulary – They were no ordinary civil force, as police in other countries are, but a military body armed with rifle, bayonet and revolver, as well as the baton. Their history was a continuity of brutal treason against their own people"

(Eamon De Valera)

.....

In the 1916 rising, the best of them left the force and joined their countrymen in the fight for Independence. Their fine military training was very useful to the volunteers. Naturally the people were very hostile to those who remained in the force and worked with the Black and Tans, and a great many of them were shot by their own countrymen in the fight for independence.

The Easter rebellion in Ireland broke out in 1916 following the declaration announced by the patriot Padriag Pearse from the portals of the post office in O'Connell Street, Dublin. The British government organized the Black and Tans to quell the rebellion. The Black and Tans were comprised of criminals released

from British gaols, THE SCUM OF ENGLAND, who were given a pardon conditional on their ready participation in the Irish rebellion. The name Black and Tan originated from their uniform – a black shirt and brown trousers or visa versa. The Black and Tans were the brainchild of Winston Churchill.

At first the Black and Tans were known as British soldiers but the ordinary British foot soldiers, the Tommy, objected to the name 'British Soldier' being given to these low class murdering rapists and wearing their proud British uniform. Perforce the British government gave them the black and tan clothes that then became their name.

III

Sometimes after school, I was sent on an errand to the village to get something at Bradshaw's shop or collect the mail at the Post Office. The mail was only delivered twice a week.

Usually when I ascended the rise beside the police barrack, I would see old Billy Todd walking slowly up the street behind his little herd of Kerry cows, driving them home to be milked. He was a tall stooped old man and this peaceful scene on a summer evening has remained a pleasant memory.

In his young days, old Mr Todd was a staunch patriot and prominent among the Fenians, and spent some time in jail for his part in the 'Rising'. It was an anxious time for the womenfolk and when Gran talked of these days, she'd say, "I never liked to see Billy Todd coming to the house". He was evidently an organiser and would bring word of more secret meetings, which would involve grandfather in danger of arrest and probably jail.

Sometimes, sitting by the fire, grandfather would sing softly to himself parts of the old Fenian song, "The Rising of the Moon".

"Oh, come tell me Sean O'Farrell
Where the gathering is to be?
At the spot by the river
Right well known to you and me.
One word more for signal token
Whistle up a marching tune
With your pike upon your shoulder
At the rising of the moon."

.....

Grandfather claimed descent from the famous outlaws and rapparee, Galloping Hogan. He was noted for his horsemanship and his familiarity with his native hills. On this account, O'Hogan volunteered to lead General Patrick Sarsfield and 300 picked men on their secret mid-night ride to capture the cannon then being convoyed to the besieged city of Limerick.

They camped one night at Keeper Mountain before crossing the Shannon near Ballineety where they ambushed and wiped out the convoy and artillery. This was, however, only a brief victory. More artillery was brought to storm the walls of Limerick and after a second siege, the last stronghold of Catholic Ireland capitulated after an honourable treaty had been agreed upon. By the treaty, the old stock were to enjoy full civil and religious liberty, the same as their protestant Anglo Irish countrymen. By the terms of the treaty, they were deprived of all means of carrying on the war.

Sarsfield and some thousands of his army sailed for France. This exodus of so many of Irelands best is known as the 'flight of the wild geese'. In France, they formed the famous

Irish Brigade, which was famed on the continent of Europe for over a hundred years.

Seven weeks after the departure of the Wild Geese the treaty was broken in the year of 1691.

“After the breaking of the treaty a confused and involved era began in Ireland. The National continuity had been broken. The attempt was made to wrench a heritage out of human minds. The effort was made to alter the philosophy of a people and to make a nation forget more completely with each passing generation the significance of its origin.

Now the national body of the country was ruled by the foreigner who made the laws but the soul of the nation was nourished by the poets who made the songs.”

(Quoted from the Capuchin Annual 1952)

The Bards may go down
To the place of their slumbers
The lyre of the charmer
Be hushed in the grave
But far in the future
The power of their numbers
Shall kindle the hearts
Of our faithful and brave.

From – ‘Songs of our Land’.

After the betrayal of the solemn treaty of equality for all, the powerful minority of the ascendancy reigned supreme.

“Then indeed, the Gaelic and Catholic Ireland was driven under and Anglo Irish society formed itself, an – English colony like America, which like that of America developed a local spirit and patriotism of its own. Dublin of the eighteenth century was the creation of that colony, and eighteenth century Dublin was one of the great capitals of Europe.”

From – The Charm of Ireland by Stephen Gwynn.

Grandfather was very proud of his doughty ancestor. He did not depart with the Wild Geese to seek glory on the battlefields of Europe. Instead, he organised a band of outlaws like himself and led forays on the planters of Tipperary. Taking cattle and food for the impoverished supplanted families. Needless to say, this Irish Robin Hood and his band of Rapparees had the loyalty and esteem of the people and the one hundred pounds offered for his capture was never taken.

The Planters were always well armed but the sudden attacks led by O’Hogan caused great havoc among them

The frustration and despair caused by the penal laws and enforced with the greatest rigour led to the rebellion of 1798. The failure of this rising robbed a desolate people of all its best leaders, namely Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Wolf Tone, Robert Emmet and Michael O'Dwyer.

The first batch of the 98' political convicts arrived in Botany Bay early in 1800 and by 1806, the total number amounted to 770.

In our young days Robert Emmet was our most popular hero because of his youth, his famous speech from the dock and his love for the gentle Sara Curran, commemorated in Thomas Moore's poem

"She is far from the land, where her young hero sleeps."

Emmet was only 24 years old when he was hanged with eighteen other patriots in 1803. This was the rebellion of the 'United Irishmen' in which all classes and creeds took part in the endeavour to throw off the yoke of England.

The great Anglo Irish statesman, Henry Grattan, during his years as leader of the Irish Party in the House of Commons tried in vain to gain civil and religious rights for his countrymen. He died in 1812.

Daniel O'Connell carried on the contest in the English parliament, but like Grattan, O'Connell strove in vain for the repeal of the union, which meant the restoration of the Irish parliament to Dublin and full civil rights, which were still withheld when Catholic emancipation and educational liberty became law in 1829.

O'Connell died at Genoa in 1847, while on his way to Rome. The big famine was then devastating the country and the 'Liberator' was broken in health and spirits after a lifetime spent in the service of his country. O'Connell was an eminent barrister and was one of the most notable orators of the nineteenth century.

IV

We have many happy recollections of our maternal grandparents, who were still living when we left home.

It was only a short walk from their home through Bagwells big field on the Mass path to the village of Anacarthy. Those paths through private property were allowed by the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. Although we were within the law in using the path, there was one old diehard who was reluctant to allow it. The stile onto the village street was on his land. With the excuse that his cattle got out, every now and then he used to build a high fence over the stile but it was always knocked down again.

I remember one Sunday morning when I was a very small girl, waiting with grandmother and the aunts, while Matt removed the barricade. This intolerance used to embarrass the old chaps family, as they had very friendly relations with their catholic neighbours.

When using a vehicle, we had to go the long way around through our neighbours, the Ryans, who were relatives. Ryan (Castles), as the old ruined castle or circular keep of Ballysheedy was on their land close to the house. It was usual to see Mrs Ryans's geese emerge from the old ruin with their flocks of goslings.

MASS PATHS

When the flat fertile agricultural land was confiscated from them, the Irish farmers were pushed back into the hills without access to a road to a town for business or to attend mass.

Agitation by decent brave men prevailed on the landlords to allow paths through their stolen property. This permission was granted provided they were not wide enough for an ass and cart.

As these narrow strips were used mainly by people walking to Mass, they became known as 'Mass Paths'.

Uncle Mick's mother's eldest brother was married and lived in Knocklass near the old family home. He often came over in the evenings and joined the family circle around the fire, while they listened to Aunt Katie read the news from "The Weekly Freeman" or the "Cork Examiner". Irish people were keenly interested in the debates in the House of Commons. The Land League had accomplished its purpose and the Nationalist Party was striving for Home Rule.

Lord Aberdeen was Viceroy and needless to say opposed any movement for more civil rights.

Quote

"Lord Aberdeen was Viceroy of Ireland on two occasions between 1886 and 1915. His wife Ishbel described aspractically inexhaustible and head strong.

Some called her insufferable, others called her a saint....she took on the bureaucrats of Dublin in order to further her passionate belief in the Irish arts and crafts industry and to tackle head on the causes of the high level of tuberculosis suffered in Ireland”.

Unquote

This was before the Irish people were aware the Aberdeens were to take their side against English oppression and an Irish peasant wit wrote an account of her address as follows:

*I am Lady Aberdeen
Just one step below the Queen
Who loves you dearly
I love you too
And have come to live with you
For a measly thirty thousand yearly.*

One of the most intolerable of all the penal laws was the tithe tax imposed on the Catholic people for the upkeep of the protestant church. If the money was not on hand, goods were taken by distraint and household articles or stock were carried off. In grandfathers boyhood it was his task to take their only horse to the bog and keep it concealed there when the tithe collectors were on their rounds. They were always accompanied by a guard of police in case of resistance. This tax was abolished in 1869 by J E Gladstone, Prime Minister.

In the old landlord days, there was no law to stop a land hungry neighbour from grabbing a farm joining him until the Land League put a stop to it.

Grandfather had this tale of his childhood days, when his father’s cousin, Donal Kelly had taken over a few small farms joining him. The Hogan land also joined the Kelly land and great grandfather Michael Hogan must have been a bit cautious that Donal had designs on him also. When Donal boasted to him one day, “I am spreading my wings Michael”. Great grandfather replied, “You had better not try spreading your wings over me Donal” and grandfather would add with keen enjoyment, “My father gave Don Kelly a terrible trouncing”.

Our fine old grandfather was rather deaf in his old age and this caused him to live a good deal in the past. He used to talk to himself sitting by the fire, while he enjoyed his pinch of snuff. I heard this tale and many others I have forgotten, sometimes spoken in the old Irish tongue, although the grandparents could not carry on a conversation in the old language, at least, not very well.

Sometimes to emphasise a point in these one-sided conversations, he would wave his right hand, still holding a pinch of snuff between the thumb and forefinger. Gran, from her seat at the other side of the fire would smile and shake her head. They had a family of eleven children, three sons and eight daughters. Four daughters went to America.

Bridget adds a bit of interest to the family history. When she was sixteen she came to help

mother in the shop and then the Irish Sisters of Charity came seeking postulants for their Order in America. Bridget joined the order with her cousin, Mary Tracy. She was not much over seventeen at the time. It was in 1887.

Soon after their arrival in America, some of those young postulants were sent to help in the start of a new branch of the order in a wild outback part of the country. Those young girls had to endure great hardships and privations and Bridget's health broke down. The Mother Superior told her she was not robust enough for the hard missionary life. She was very disappointed when she had to leave and went to her elder sister, Winifred, in New York. After Winnie had nursed her back to health again she said to Bridget, "I will pay your fare home again, if that is what you would like". However, she preferred to stay and said she would see if the Sisters of Mercy would have her. While she was ill she told Winnie, "I had a dream about them – I was in a convent parlour". When Bridget went to see the Mother Superior of the Sisters of Mercy in New York, she recognised the parlour as the one in her dream and said to herself, "Now I have come home, it is here I will spend my life".

After her novitiate, Bridget spent the remainder of her long life in St Joseph's Hospital, Hot Springs, Arkansas. She had her Diamond Jubilee before she died. Her name in religion was Sister Mary Hilda.

In 1909, Sister Mary Hilda had the privilege of visiting her native land and her aged parents. Her companion was Sister Mary Dominica from County Sligo.

The joy of Bridget's homecoming was soon clouded by the seriousness of uncle Micks illness, the eldest son of the family. Mick owned a fairly large farm near his fathers but it was mostly steep hills and bog land. Draining and reclaiming this worked-out bog in all kinds of weather, he sometimes worked for hours knee deep in icy water and this injured his lungs. He died at the early age of fifty- two. The two nuns nursed him for part of their stay. He left a wife and family of six children.

One day, during her visit to the old home, Sister Mary Hilda buried a crucifix in the land of her ancestors, of which they had been deprived by Bagwell and said to the family, "It will be yours again some day".

About the end of the first world war, Bagwell Purifoy sold all his property in Ireland and retired to England and Uncle Matt was able to buy back a part of what had been taken from them and this gave him a boundary fence along the road. There is now a nice drive to the village from the old house on the hill, and farms and dairy cattle, where once the black poll Angus and thoroughbred horses grazed.

We used to enjoy watching the horses race across the flat in the evenings to their comfortable stables, when Bill Ryan Ryster, the caretaker, called out that their feed boxes were ready. Sometimes, there was a winner in the big English races among them. In our school days, there was one called 'Lally' and another was 'Rob Roy'. The cousins from Knockglass would be with me on our way to school through the big field. It was not big by Queensland standards. I think the two fields into which the Bagwell property was divided comprised less than 200 acres.

In those days, Bagwell's was a harbour for rabbits and they were a great pest on the nearby farms. Sometimes Mr Bagwell Purifoy brought a party of men for a days shooting and they brought ferrets with them to get the rabbits out of their warrens. However, the rabbits were wiped out.

V

Aunt Sarah helped mother in the shop after Bridget entered the convent. During the years she was with mother, Sarah used to make frequent visits to the old home, as Maggie, Katie and Matt were still there. The distance from Ballagh was only about seven miles.

Often on pleasant summer evenings, after the milking and other chores were done, the three sisters would take a walk through the fields and sit on a moss covered stile to have a talk: sometimes Matt joined them with his flute. Those walks, with my aunts in the twilight, or as grandmother would say “in the heel of the evening” have always remained a lovely memory. On those walks the aunts often talked of their absent sisters.

Annie, who entered the Presentation Order in 1892 used to bring a breath of the busy world into their quiet lives on her visits home from the Teachers Training College, Dublin.

Both Annie and Katie taught at the Anacarthy School, which I attended. However, Katie could not continue because of bad health, so she was the only one of the eight daughters to remain in the home. She was more like an elder sister to us, being a good many years younger than mother.

Katie loved to talk about the days when Father Mockler was curate in the parish. He used to join the young people in a social evening after choir practice. Katie had a lovely voice and was a good pianist. Miss Clancy, their head teacher, taught music. Those social evenings were held at the teacher’s residence, which was shared by the two teachers. The girls’ school had roll call of over one hundred. Katie was a pupil teacher then.

There was a special song of Father Mocklers that he had set to music and it had an interesting history. It was composed by a Tipperary priest in Newfoundland to express his joy on receiving a warm homespun overcoat from his family. The wool was from his father’s sheep and the frieze was woven in the home.

MY COAT OF FRIEZE

**You’re welcome, you’re welcome,
My coat of Frieze
Long, long, I’ve sighed to wear you.
More welcome by far
Than a golden prize
My frieze of Tipperary.**

**On Glenculu, good men and true
From snow white lambs
Hath shorn thee
Old Venagh town**

**Hath napped thee down
And kindred hands hath woven thee.**

**Across the wild foam
Where sea monsters roam
A friendly hand hath born thee
When my coat I don
What thoughts come on
Of home and pleasant faces there.**

(all I can remember)

.....

This Tipperary priest would have found many of his own countrymen among his flock in far away Newfoundland. In the early days of the colony, fishermen were brought from the west of Ireland to work in the great fishery industry then being established there. Many of their descendants became prominent in the development of this land.

The first sunny day in spring was a great joy to grandmother, as she was unable to go outdoors much during the cold winter days because of her rheumatism. She had a greeting for the spring she used to say in Irish. I am afraid I cannot remember the exact words now. However, it was a thanksgiving for the blessings spring brought us.

Grandma Hogan was a Ryan of Solohead, near Donchill and her family had been evicted. I think she was the only one of her family to remain in Ireland. She had brothers and sisters in America and often talked about them.

After landlordism was over and done with, the next of kin of evicted families could put in a claim for some land and gran was eligible for such a claim, which had to be made in person at the land court in Dublin.

She was about eighty then and rather infirm and did not want to take the train journey to Dublin, so the claim was never made. There would hardly be enough land available to satisfy all the claimants. Matt was disappointed, as his mothers claim was pretty strong and he and his father and brother, Mick, were loyal members of the Land League.

Grandmothers branch of the numerous Ryan clan had many noted athletes amongst them. She had a tale about the marriage of her cousin Con Ryan of Solohead. The marriage, as was the custom, was arranged by the parents. Con was in his twenties and the bride, not quite fifteen. Her mother was a widow and having no son badly needed help to work the farm. When they returned from the church after they were married, the childish bride went out to play with the children. Con continued to live in his parents home and came every day for some years to work the farm of his mother-in-law.

It turned out a very happy marriage and two of their sons used to travel the district with a pair of horses and their potato -spraying machine and threshing machine.

“Country marriage in Ireland follows an ancient and widespread pattern. It is called matchmaking and is the sort of marriage involving parental negotiations and a dowry that is nearly universal in Europe.

In Ireland its importance is such as to make it the crucial point of rural social organizations.

For the match is made up of many things. It united transfer of economic control and advance to adult status. It is the only respectable method of marriage and the usual method of inheritance in the Irish countryside. It is embedded in the Gaelic tongue in joke and story and in folklore.”

From the Book of Ireland – Frank O’Connor.

Father O’Keeffe’s story on his Aunt Ellen O’Keeffe’s marriage to William O’Dyer:-

Evidently Aunt Ellen had her admirers, yerra wisha Ellen! I did hear she was a local beauty. She used to say so herself and she ought to know!

.....she often told me of her betrothal. Said Ma to Ellen, “you are to be married on Shrove Tuesday Ellen”, and says Ellen, says she, “who to Ma?” “To one William O’Dwyer” says Ma. “Where does he live Ma?” says Ellen says she. “At Bonerea near Anacarty” says Ma. “He has fifty acres and a stone two storied house” continued Ma. “Very well Ma” says Ellen says she and William came to see Ellen and they met for the first time. The second time they met was when each said, I will at the alter and they lived happily ever afterwards and had eleven children and never sought a divorce.

THREE LOVELY LASSES

**There are three lovely lassies in Bunyan,
Bunyan, Bunyan, Bunyan
There are three lovely lassies in Bunyan
And I an the best of them all.**

**And me mother she says I can marry
And she'll leave me her bed when she dies.**

**So I'm takin' me shoes to be mended
And me petticoat to be dyed gree.**

And next Sunday mornin' I'll met him, And I shall be dressed like a queen.

.....

On threshing day, Matt fed the sheaves of oats into the machine. The sheaves were stacked in the haggard, while grandfather and Mick made a stack of the straw.

The little haggard beside the house, which could be called an outdoor barn was a sheltered corner of the farm, with its stack of hay and straw and pits of turnips, potatoes and mangels. It also contained a few gooseberry bushes and currants and a cherry tree. A big holly tree and a few elm trees grew up through the hawthorn hedge that enclosed it.

A few of grans fowls perversely roosted in this tree and on nights of heavy frost, they were sure to fall off stiff with cold. When picked up and left in the warm kitchen all night, they recovered.

Some wise person said – “Memory is like a child walking along a seashore, you never know what pebble it will pick up and store away it's treasured things” – so I am sure many interesting events must have slipped from my memory through the years and I am only relating the every day homely things.

One of my childish memories is of a lovely black horse Matt had. He raised him from a foal and named him 'Dandy'. A white mare of Uncle Micks was Dandy's mother. The brothers put much care and patience into the training of Dandy and Matt had an elegant horse to ride. Dandy was a great pet with the family and the aunts wiped away a tear when Matt, after riding him into the town of Tipperary one day, returned without him. An English officer on the lookout for a nice gentle horse for his wife took a great fancy to Dandy. Although Matt had no intention of selling him at the time, he thought it was a chance of getting a better price than he would fetch at the fair of Thurles. When the officer asked Matt to put a price on Dandy, he asked of seventy - five pounds and got it without any demur. Matt said later, “I believe he would have given me a hundred”.

I dare say seventy-five pounds was a very good price for a horse in Ireland over seventy

years ago. A change from the penal days, when a Catholic could not own a horse worth more than five pounds. If he had a valuable horse, any protestant could take possession of it by tendering five pounds.

When Pat O'Keeffe was here in Queensland working for Tommerups, O'Reilleys and others he had a smart horse he named 'Dandy' in nostalgic memory.

VI

The old farm house in the midst of the fields did not have neighbours dropping in very often, as it was a bit off the beaten track. The occasional callers were made very welcome.

One evening Tommy Ryan (Vahl) and his brother Mick, walked down the boren carrying a gramophone. It was the first we had ever seen or heard and the Ryan boys gave us a very pleasant surprise. Tommy was just back from Scotland and brought the gramophone with him. He had several of Harry Lauders among his records. The grandparents were especially delighted with the evenings' entertainment.

Old Dan Mahoney was perhaps, our most frequent caller. He was a pleasant little man with red hair and twinkling blue eyes. He was always known as The Boucal. At the beginning of winter, the Boucal did the rounds of the neighbours and killed and dressed the pigs they had ready for bacon. This was a self appointed task, which he evidently enjoyed doing for his neighbours. When the pig was cut up, Matt started the salting and Aunt Maggie began preparations for making the black puddings.

He used to scare the little children by feeling their arms and legs, saying they would soon be ready for the butcher.

The curing of the bacon included several days in brine before it was hung up in the wide chimney place for smoking. It was believed that the smoke from the turf fires is what gave the Irish home cured bacon its fine flavour. The turf smoke was not a sooty black like coal. It gradually browned the white washed kitchen walls like a piece of toast.

In those days, few families tasted meat more than two or three times a week. The farmers, who used to raise flocks of geese, turkeys and ducks, could have poultry for Sunday dinner sometimes. American bacon of inferior quality was sold.

The Boucal was a carefree bachelor and walked to Dungarven every summer to spend a few days by the sea. Like most of the old people he was never in a train.

Grandmother travelled by train once in her lifetime. When I was about five years old, Aunt Winnie returned from America to spend a holiday with her people and took Gran to see Annie in her convent in Listowel, Kerry.

Dear old grandmother still talked about that train journey and the lovely cup of tea Winnie got for her at the Limerick Junction. She liked to have goat's milk for the use of the house but those goats were the bane of grandfather's life, forever breaking into his little vegetable garden and leaving a trail of destruction. He would say, "The curse of Cromwell on ye". Finally, for his peace of mind, the goats had to go.

Aunt Maggie's marriage left a great void in the home as she took care of everything in the household, as well as a major share of the outside chores. Maggie's dairy was a cool and pleasant spot with its wide shallow dishes of milk set on trestles and the big barrel shaped churn on an iron stand. In very cold weather, it was hard to get the butter to break and Matt

would be called to take hold of a handle to get the churn in motion. One wall of the old dairy was thickly covered with ivy and used to send long green fingers through the thatch.

After Maggie left home, the milk was sent to the creamery. The farmers did not use separators, as they had their co-operative dairy association. Maggie used to raise flocks of geese, turkeys and ducks. It was my task after school to drive the ducks home from the big pond in Bagwells.

The death of uncle Mick, their eldest son, saddened their old age. His wife died a few years later, leaving an only son, Patsy, and his five sisters. During the direful occupation of the Black and Tans, those poor girls suffered a lot of hardship and intimidation, as families, who were known to be active in the fight for freedom were singled out for special treatment and Patsy was imprisoned for a time. He was the eldest of the family, when his father died. Sarah, the eldest girl was the only one to marry. We were the same age and named after our grandmother. Two of Sarah's daughters did their nursing training in England.

Those Hogan cousins were the companions of my school- days as well as the O'Dwyers. We all attended the Anacorthy National School.

The grandparents celebrated their Diamond Jubilee in 1914.

VII

I realise now that we grew up in the last stage of the old regime. The Union Jack was still flying over Dublin Castle and the country was comparatively peaceful. Although the police were kept busy protecting the emergency men from the Land League, who frequently harassed them to force them to give up the farms they had taken from the rightful owners.

A great many evictions had taken place on the good land between Cashel and Thurles. As a consequence some farms were occupied by emergency men. The emergency men cared for the farms of the landlords until a new tenant could be found.

The main weapon used against the land grabbers was the boycott, which was carried on even by the children in the schools. I went to school with two boycotted families and it was treason to lend even a slate pencil to one of them. One family lived near us. They had built a new house on the site of the old house demolished by the crowbar brigade, when the Murphy family was evicted.

There were the remains of an old castle on this property. One tall grey angle of a wall was still standing like a dead tree. The grabber built his home with stone from this old ruin. He could not get stone from the quarry because of the boycott.

There was a large limestone quarry in the village. My father owned a part of it. The house next to the boycotted family was known as Land League House. Such houses were built by the League as temporary shelter for evicted families.

THE LAND LEAGUE 1879

In 1870 the Prime Minister of England, Mr J E Gladstone got a land act passed to put a stop to capricious evictions and the confiscation of tenants property.

But the landlords and their agents being the class that controlled the administration of the law, forced the people (tenants) to demand justice in the law courts. (To have their case heard in court that the peasants could not afford).

Extracts from the Land League 1879

In this way they (*the landlords*) easily evaded the conditions of the act and confiscations and evictions went on as before...public meetings were held...Michael Davitt was home on parole after serving 10 years in an English prison...started the Land League... the Land League was banned and Davitt again arrested...more troops were brought from England...it was Prime Minister Arthur J Balfour...declared the Irish land system intolerable and absurd, the worst of any country in the world...even so it was A J Balfour who filled prisons all over Ireland...and issued the famous words to the police, "Don't hesitate to shoot"...the Leagues main weapon against fellow Irishmen who did not conform

was the 'Boycott'.

The revolt of the Irish tenant farmers in the second half of the 19th century was the inevitable result of English misrule. To quote from the eminent English economist and philosopher, John Stewart Mill (1806-1873), about the distress of the Irish tenant farmers, he said, "Returning nothing to the soil, they, the landlords consume its whole produce, minus the potato, strictly necessary to keep the people from dying of famine. And when they have any purpose of improvement, the preparatory step consists in not leaving that pittance but turning out the people to beggary, if not starvation.

When landed property has placed itself on this footing, it ceases to be dependable and the time had come for making some new arrangement in the matter".

THE BOYCOTT

Captain Charles Boycott reluctantly gave his name to a new tactic of moral compulsion by the tenant farmers.

.....Parnell was a man of contradiction, a protestant Anglo-Irish landlord in a Catholic country, championing the rights of the Irish peasantry. Parnell, on September 19th 1880 in Ennis, addressed a rural gathering:

Quote- "When a man takes a farm from which another has been evicted - (loud cries – shoot him) – you show him on the roadside when you meet him, you must show him in the streets of the town, you must show him at the shop counter, you must show him in the fair and in the market place and even in the house of worship, by leaving him severely alone, by putting him in moral Coventry, by isolating him from his kind as if he were a leper of old, you must show him your detestation of the crime he committed."-Unquote.

SOUPERS

The Protestants offered a 'bowl of watery soup' to a starving family if they renounced their Catholic beliefs to become a protestant. Some took the soup and were known as 'Soupers' ever after. To give them credit their descendants have kept this wicked promise to this day.

In talk with Nellie Ryan she mentioned the Souper Cartys. I said, "surely they are not still called souper Cartys", she said "yes".

One would wonder why the Catholic Church did not also offer 'watery soup' so its members could keep the faith?

In 1877 with famine again facing them, because of the failure of the potato crop, Michael

Davitt, who was home on parole after serving ten years penal servitude, (he had been sentenced to fifteen years for his part in the Fenian rising) decided to organise the tenant farmers to hold out against the landlords (as their condition could not be much worse than it was in any case) and pay no more rent and hold their harvest at all hazards and combine to resist eviction and demand the abolition of landlordism.

William O'Brien, J E Sexton, John Dillon and other Irish Members of Parliament in the House of Commons, joined with Michael Davitt in organising the Land League. In 1879, it was formally established with Charles Stuart Parnell as the chosen leader.

Its object was explicitly affirmed – the liberation of the tenant farmer from landlord despotism by obtaining for him, through constitutional agitation, the ownership of the soil he cultivates, with the tender of fair compensation to the landlord for the extinction of his claims therein.

The main weapon of the league was the boycotting of the emergency men or land grabbers, who were given possession of evicted farms, and also the farmers, who did not conform to the conditions of the league. The Land League was banned and Davitt was again arrested. This cold war was carried on with great determination until 1903, when the land purchase bill was passed and an annuity to the government agreed upon.

AN EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM PAT TO HIS BROTHER JOHN OF BLENHIEM, QUEENSLAND.

....I mentioned of pay no rent to the resolution passed by the executing of the Land League in Dublin to pay no rent. We are all willing to stand out when the landlords are at their work, serving the tenants with writs and process ejection and I need not tell you that Maud is not in the rear. Maud, otherwise Lord Harwarden served about twenty tenants a month ago, he decreed some small farmers at the Tipp quarter sessions the week before last that their rent exceeded twenty pounds. He sold their farms by auction at the courthouse in Thurles yesterday.

According to the above resolution no man is allowed to buy there at the auction but let them be canted by the emergency committee called Goddards and Co. This wretched company has an immense number of farms canted all over the country and yet the miserable devils sheriffed no-one yet as far as I know, any tenant that was decreed at quarter service.

The landlord himself has to bring the sheriff and a few emergency men to leave as keepers on the place. He must have an escort of police and a regiment of soldiers commanded by a stipendary magistrate to protect them. According to the first and last resolution of the great movement no man can take a farm from which another has been evicted.

If anyone is foolish enough to do so, no man dare speak to him nor deal with him

in any way. To speak short he would not get an ounce of tobacco, he should live in himself and soon be hungry.

....Our brother tenants whose farms were canted in Thurles let their farms to the Goddards and to Emergency but I can assure you that Goddard will keep well away from those farms, that they will be waste until those worthy tenants occupy them again. Goddard knows as much about farming as I do making a watch. We have Maud a long time on his knees and he is now falling on his belly.

If I could write a week I could only give you an outline.

*I am now as ever
Your fond brother Pat.*

Pat died 3rd October 1883.

After the farmers had gained security of their home and land, the Local Government Boards resolved to provide suitable accommodation for the numerous homeless families, many of them victims of eviction: great numbers of these families had gone to America. Deserving families were to be given a cottage built by the Rural Council on, I think, half an acre of land purchased from the bigger landowners. In return, a small rent was to be paid to the Council for 10 years.

Those cottages were still getting built at the time we left home in 1911. Uncle Dan was a member of the Cashel Rural Council and Poor Law Guardian until his retirement.

There was still a lot of hardship and unemployment with which the local authorities were unable to cope. Ireland had no big commercial interests to give employment and the people without land were not much better off than before. Even when work was available, the pay was so low.

Quotation:

“Manufacturers might have helped to draw away a section of the people from agriculture and would have thus relieved the pressure upon the soil. There would then have been less of the competition, which placed the tenantry at the mercy of the landlords. The landlords would have been compelled to offer the tenants lower rents and thus manufacturers would have fulfilled a double purpose – they would have given employment to the persons immediately engaged in manufacture and would have made life easier for those outside of manufacturing altogether, to those especially engaged in cultivating the soil.

However, even this outlet was barred and a series of laws were passed, the effect and the deliberate object of which were to kill Irish manufacturers.”

What has been the result of such a system pursued with relentless pertinacity for over 259 years? This – that debarred from every other trade and industry, the entire nation flung itself back on the land with as fatal an impulse as when a river whose current is suddenly impeded rolls back and drowns the valley it once fertilised.

The entire nation flung itself back on the land, with the result, the tenants were placed at the absolute mercy of the landlords”.

From – The Great Irish Struggle, Gladstone – Parnell

The dearth of employment caused thousands of young men to take the Saxon shilling: They were always recruiting sergeants about and a great number joined the army in the Boer war. Also great numbers joined in the First World War.

Beggars, ballad singers and tinkers roamed the countryside. There were a few old soldiers among those itinerants, who returned to be a burden on their native land after a lifetime in the army. I remember Uncle Matt employed one for a time. The poor fellow had a lump on his temple about the size of a ping pong ball from a wound and the family was relieved when he left. He had spent most of his life in India and was not quite the same.

He used to sing an old army song, ‘Come back to Bom, Bombay’. We used to call him poor old Bombay. He only stayed a few weeks. We were afraid of him and his rages.

The British had recruiting officers who would parade the villages with their entourage of pipes and drums, offering young men a shilling if they joined the British Army. They would sing a song to the tune of ‘Waltzing Matilda’. “Who’ll come a sodgering , a sodgering with me”. (The tune of Waltzing Matilda originated from an Scottish ballad ‘Craigelee’).

Some desperate unemployed men took the ignominious ‘Queens Shilling’.

William O’Keeffe, Tim’s (Thady) elder brother, went to America in 1873.

Father Denis O'Keeffe writes, circa 1945.

He (William) went later to Canada and joined the army there, under the name of William King. The idea of changing his name was that he would be ashamed to have those at home know that he had joined an army that had to do in any way with England, Canada being a British Colony.

The ballad singers were often accompanied by a companion on a fiddle or concertina and would do a bit of step dancing. One old chap known as 'Con the Bones' used to keep time clicking a pair of bones.

Old Peggy Donohue, the pedlar from Cappawhite used to call on grandmother with her basket of various household commodities. There was a row of thick crockery mugs on the kitchen dresser, all bought from Peggy, who always had some news to relate while she had a rest. Although she was not too reliable as a newsreader she amused Gran. Gran used to say Peggy was as good as a newspaper. She travelled around the district in her donkey cart.

Our Parish Priest was Reverend Father Fuohy, who one day in our school in Anacarthy was instructing the first communion class. Little Nora Byron, who was not too bright or as the old people would call her 'a poor innocent', was asked where do they go, who die in venial sin? Nora promptly replied, "up to Bonerea".

I have some slight memories of the Boer War. Old Mick Dwyer (Smith) who was at one time, the village blacksmith (but retired by old age and poor eyesight) would hobble down from the forge every fine day with a pair of hungry greyhounds at his heels. However, Micks' hunting days were over. From a stone seat, he could enjoy the sun and a yarn with his neighbours.

During the Boer War, Mick was eager to hear the latest war news and he hailed every Boer victory with delight. "More power to them", he would say". Sometimes to tease him, the boys would say "Ah, Mick, the papers say the Boers are bate".

However, I would scarcely remember the Boer War at all, but for the exploits of Arthur Lynch, an Irish Australian. He was the son of John Lynch, who was with Peter Lalor at the Eureka Stockade in 1854. His son, Arthur was born in the goldfields town of Smythesdale, Victoria. He graduated at the Melbourne University and went to London. In the Boer War, he was a newspaper correspondent at the front. Seeing the Boers gallant effort to hold their own, he resolved to help them and organised a brigade of Irish volunteers. The Boer President, J B Kruger made him a colonel and his brigade took part in several engagements.

After the war, he went to Paris where he learned he had been elected a top seat in the House of Commons for a Galway electorate. He had won the esteem of the Irish people for his defence of the Boers and for the time being was hailed as a national hero.

Lynch went to London to claim his seat and was immediately arrested for treason against the State and spent some months in prison awaiting trial before being sentenced to death. King Edward VII at the personal request of President Theodore Roosevelt commuted the

sentence to life imprisonment. Friends again interceded for him. President Roosevelt, Sir Thomas Lipton and Michael Davitt and as a result, he gained pardon a year later.

In spite of great opposition he subsequently gained a notable career in public life in England and Ireland.

At his trial in 1903, Arthur Lynch declared, "I took arms against the British for the same reason that my father joined the Ballarat miners at the Eureka Stockade. Because, to both of us, it was the strong oppressing the weak". After his retirement, he returned to Australia and gained some fame as an author.

VIII

In 1902 a letter arrived from Uncle Michael in Queensland to tell us his son Denis was leaving shortly for Ireland to study for the priesthood at Mt Melleray. We were all eager to see a real Australian born. I think we younger ones had some idea that he would not look quite like us. It is now seventy years since Denis arrived – a shy and homesick lad of sixteen. He must have felt very strange and lost among all these new relatives. He tells us about it in his memoirs, “I GO TO THE LAND OF MY ANCESTORS”, written during the last years of his life.

He soon fitted in to the family life as he visited among the relatives. In the holidays, he got a bicycle and with another student used to take long trips in the summer. I think he saw more of Ireland than any of us born there.

Denis collected a lot of family history and made interesting notes on the old letters his father and uncle John had received from Ireland and had preserved throughout their long lives. They date from the 1860's onwards for over sixty years, until all of the old family had gone to their eternal reward.

We saw our first silent movie in 1902. It was Queen Victoria's funeral. The old Queen died before the end of the Boer War. It was early in the war that the red uniform of the British soldier was changed to the inconspicuous colour it still has. The red coats were an easy mark for the Boer snipers.

I remember some soldiers being camped near us early in the war: they still wore the red coats. They were an Irish company and became very friendly with the people during their stay in the village. I would have been about nine years old then.

Of the eleven children in mother's family, Hogan, three entered religious orders. Bridget, a Sister of Mercy in America, Annie, a Presentation nun in Ireland – she was Mother M Joseph and John, the youngest son entered the Christian Brothers.

After John had finished at the local National School he was sent to board at the Brothers. His parents fondly hoped he had a vocation for the priesthood but John stayed with the Brothers and became a prominent member of the Order. He was inspector of their schools for some years and Assistant General from 1920 to 1947. During those years, he travelled in many countries inspecting the schools his order had established. He made his visitation of Australia and New Zealand in 1929. John was Brother Hogan, his name in religion was Brother Gregory. He died on 1st February, 1960 aged 88 years and in the sixty second year of his religious life.

So far I have told you only about my mothers side of the family. I spent all my early life with them and still have many tender memories of my childhood home. Nell knew all about Glenough, the O'Keeffe side of the family much better than I do.

There were nine sons and two daughters in my father's family. The youngest son, Denis, entered the Cistercian Order at Mt Melleray, County Waterford.

IX

Father D M O'Keeffe writes -

The members of Dads' family, William O'Keeffe and Ellen Heffernan were:

- 1. John – went to Victoria 12.6.1861.*
 - 2. Patrick – died 2.10.82.*
 - 3. Margaret – became a nun in France*
 - 4. Timothy – lived in Ballagh (Sarah Wards father).*
 - 5. Thomas – came to Queensland in 1875.*
 - 6. Daniel – lived in the old home.*
 - 7. William – went to Canada 1873 – joined the Canadian Army as 'King'.*
 - 8. James – died in USA 1905.*
 - 9. Michael – came to Queensland 1876.*
 - 10. Ellen – married in Ireland*
 - 11. Denis – became a monk at Mt Melleray in 1880 – died 1.10.1934.*
- Edmund and two Sarahs died in infancy.*

Our great grandfather, John O'Keeffe, who was born in 1760 and died at the age of fifty-seven, came from Ballyrood, County Limerick to marry Margaret Corcoran of Glenough. They had a tenancy on the Dundrum Estate of 150 acres.

Glenough and the surrounding districts were steep and rugged and a lovely background for the Golden Vale or Great Plain of Tipperary, with its rich pasture land.

Our great grandfather had four or five daughters and four sons. Timothy and John died young. The two remaining sons were William, who was our grandfather and Patrick. The farm was divided between them. They had a family of nine sons and two daughters.

Patrick, after the death of his young wife, went to America. It is Father O'Keeffes' idea that Pat had developed TB like his brothers and left Ireland hoping a warmer climate would benefit him but he died shortly after in the USA. He left his three young children, a boy and two girls in the care of relatives.

The married names of the daughters, in our great grandfathers family were Ryans, O'Dwyers, Lysaghts, Breens, Hogans and Comans. They all lived around Upperchurch, Ballysheedy and Keeper Mountain – except Comans, who lived near Cashel.

Of the three children left by Pat, the son Willie was reared by his uncle, my grandfather and when he grew up went to Victoria. He later sent for his two sisters. The girls married in Victoria. One was Mrs Leahy and the other, Mrs Breen.

They have numerous descendants in Victoria. Their brother left Victoria and settled in New South Wales when he married.

My fathers' eldest brother, John, came to Victoria in 1861. He worked on railway

construction for a few years and then selected a farm at Trenthan, Victoria where he resided during the rest of his long life. He married a widow, Mrs Baldwin nee Bridget Lorigan of County Waterford. She had a son Ned who then took the O'Keeffe surname. John and Bridget had sons Willie, Jack and Philip and a daughter Ellen. Two of the sons married and there are many of their descendants in Victoria.

Father Denis O'Keeffe and his father met some of those relatives when they went to see Uncle John at Trentham in 1917.

The cousin, Willie O'Keeffe, was dead. His son, Kieran, was there with his family to greet the Queensland branch of the family.

Several Heffernan cousins also went to Victoria from Glenough in the sixties. Our grandmother O'Keeffe was Ellen Heffernan.

After their parents' death, (their father died in 1870 and their mother in 1881) John ceased writing home and the family lost all contact with him. He was believed dead. Masses were offered for the repose of his soul at Mt Melleray. However, with the help of the Heffernan cousins, Michael and Tom located him at Trentham, Victoria with a wife and family settled on a farm.

Father Denis Mathew O'Keefe writes-

Uncle John went to Victoria (Australia) leaving home December 6th, 1861.

...The following letter written after he was found about 1869 had many scribes...

Dear Brother John

Remember me, accept of the love tears for thee.

*Yours truly
Thomas O'Keeffe.*

Dear Brother John

I have nothing to relate to you at present except of the love I bear in my heart for you. I'm about uncle Dans' height, stout and healthy, thanks be to God. I got a tremble in my hand when I began to speak to you far away, so I hope you'll excuse the writing.

*Your truly and loving brother
Daniel O'Keeffe
Sweet Glinaugh (sic)*

Dear Brother

Thank God you did not forget us as you are as fresh in mind as the moment you left us. I am glad you consoled dear Father and Mother that often send us, in search of your Letter, to the post.

*My love to you, I will say no more
Yours truly, William O'Keefe.
James, Michael and Denis are at school, excuse them.*

Dear Brother John

We feel happy at the sight of your handwriting and I hope you will never again forget me. We are all happy together and Feel very lonely for your absence. Please tell us of the work you are at.

I send you a mark of devotion and a token of love. I love you in my heart and let me know if you get it, dear brother. So no more at present.

*From your loving sister
Margaret.*

(Dear Son John)

They are good and industrious and I think if God spares me life I'll be able to do well for them, although it's hard to get a place for a young man at present. I have nothing more of importance to relate to you at present but that we are all in good health and all your uncles and aunts and cousins and all friends and (illegible) this will reach you in the same, is the present wish of your loving Father and Mother, brothers and sisters and remain your affectionate father.

William O'Keefe.

To John William O'Keefe

Dear Brother

My father left nothing to say. We amuse ourselves together. Thomas and Daniel plays (sic) on the violin: they have one each and they plays excellent together. I'm just about the size you were when you left home and about 24 years of age.

Thomas is growing well but not as tall as the rest of the brothers of their age; all of them are going to sign their name and joins with me in sending you our brother, best love and respect and remain your loving brother.

Timothy O'Keefe.

The good news was sent to Denis at Mt Melleray who was ordained a few years then monk of the Cistercian Order. His name in religion was Father Benedict.

John died in 1922, at the age of eighty-four. There was a family of three sons and a daughter, Ellen, who gave devoted care to her father. During the last few years of his life he was completely paralysed on one side and unable to speak clearly.

Two more of the family left the old land in 1875. Michael and Tom came to Queensland.

Father D M O'Keefe, Michael's son, says, "My father carried his swag for a year or two and with another Irishman named John Wood built many of the post and rail fences near Gatton". In 1905 those fences carried the advertisement, 'Vote for O'Keefe'.

Uncle Mick selected land in the Sandy Creek district near Laidley. He made his home at Blenheim and after his marriage in 1884 to Elizabeth Ryan from Hollyford County, Tipperary, they carried on farming and dairying. He was prominent in promoting the dairying industry. They called their farm 'Hollyford'.

On February 11th 1899 Mr Peter Larsen of Ma Ma Creek was the convener of the first meeting of dairy farmers to discuss the wisdom of starting a co-operative butter factory and to elect provisional directors. R Cutbertson was elected first secretary, William Berlin, of Rosewood, chairman. The association became known as – The Queensland Farmers Co-operative Dairy Association Ltd.

In 1900, Uncle Michael visited New South Wales in the interests of the Queensland Co-operative Dairying Association Ltd., of which he was an organiser and first chairman of directors. He took this opportunity of looking up his relatives with whom he had lost contact for many years but had been renewed again through the children's column of 'The Freemans Journal', a Sydney Catholic paper. Father Denis says that his two elder sisters, Ellen and Annie, used to write to this column when they were children. Two boys named Kieran and Willie O'Keefe of New South Wales also wrote to this column in the 'Freemans Journal'.

After making enquiries, Uncle Mick found they were the children of his cousin Willie who grew up in the old home in Glenough.

We do not know if Willie's father was evicted or just gave up the farm after the death of his wife and went to America.

However, it was their neighbours, the Ryans (Martins) stepped in and grabbed a large part of

what should have remained in the O'Keeffe tenancy for young Willie O'Keeffe when he grew up. This unfriendly act started a feud between the two families that lasted for three generations.

The Irish people were land hungry because the land, even with excessive rents, was their only hope of earning a livelihood. Consequently, force of necessity, drove some to this despicable practice until the Land League put a stop to it.

X

In 1880 more relatives came to Queensland from Ballysheedy. The Breens and the Quillenans went to North Queensland with their families and became well known in the civic and business development of Mackay.

I think our first connection with the Quellinans was when the Breens and Quellinans intermarried. The mother of those Breens was a Heffernan of Glenough and a sister of our grandmother O'Keeffe – I am not sure about this, the connection with the Quellinans may have been farther back. The two families were close neighbours, in the vicinity of the old castle of Ballysheedy.

All of those relatives belonged to the parish of Anacarthy and were tenants on the Dundrum Estate.

There were three (six) Heffernan sisters. My grandmother, Ellen, Mrs Rosenskjars grandmother, Kate, and Father Henry Ryans grandmother.

Dan Breen who came to Queensland from Ballysheedy in or about 1898 returned to Ireland in 1902. Dan was an uncle of Mrs Rosenskjars.

The Ryan (Castles) and the Kellys were related on the O'Keeffe side but Mrs Ryan (Castle) was also a Heffernan, which would make a fourth daughter of old great grandfather John Heffernan of Glenough. Uncle Jimmy Heffernan lived to a great age and was still living when we left home. I have more about him elsewhere in my narrative. Our grandmother O'Keeffe was a great letter writer. She kept up a regular correspondence with all of her absent children. Five of her nine sons left Ireland. William and James went to America and John, Michael and Tom to Australia. One daughter, Maggie, was a nun in France. She died in 1901.

Ellen, the other daughter, ten years younger than Maggie, was Mrs. William O'Dwyer of Bonerea. They had a family of eleven children and were the parents of Nell and Margaret who came to Queensland with us. There is none of the O'Dwyer family in Bonerea now. Paddy, who got the farm, sold it and went to Dublin with his family where the eldest brother, Willie, was sometime established in the hotel business.

Willie O'Dwyer was manager of the Gurtnaskeha Butter Factory when it was blown up by the Black and Tans. His home and general store narrowly escaped at the time. Tim, the youngest son, was a student at Mt Melleray. Failing health retarded his progress and he died shortly before his ordination. Their father died about the same time. Joseph, the other son, went to America in 1904 and died in 1966.

May and Bridget entered the convent in England. Four other cousins became members of the same order. Uncle Dan's daughter Maggie, entered in 1904 and Maggie and Julia Aheran a few years later. It was the Order of the Christian Retreat.

Aunt Ellen O' Dwyer also had four grandaughter's nuns.

Aunt Maggie, in France, prayed and worried a lot about the brothers who had left the old land, especially Tom. He did not marry and gave up the selection he had taken. He seems to have spent some time in western Queensland. In 1878 he wrote from Roma but he spent most of his life in New South Wales. Father D M O'Keeffe said, "Tom was a rolling stone that gathered no moss".

I picture him as being like Sainly Matt Talbot. After a few years of aimless wanderings, he took the total abstinence pledge and kept it all his life and for many years before his death attended Daily Mass.

Tom always kept his violin that he brought with him from Ireland.

In the famous letter to John in 1869, in which each member of the family added a bit, my father said, "Dan and Tom each have a violin and they play excellent together". I can imagine him playing forcountry dances. Sometimes accompanied by an accordion in the old bush style.

I only met Uncle Tom once when he was living with Uncle Mick at Albion, who had retired after Aunt Eliza's death. May lived with her father until her marriage and was very good to Uncle Tom. He was very deaf in his old age and took pleasure in a game of cards. May always found time to have a game with him.

On my occasional visits to Glenough in my childhood days, I loved to hear Uncle Dan play the violin, mostly the old Irish airs. Helena and Nora played well too. Nora took her violin with her to America and I daresay, still had it when she returned in 1916. With her brother, Paddy, they both took part in the fight for Independence.

Our brother Willie was the eldest in our family and went to America in 1906. Poor Bill had a heavy handicap from an accident in his early childhood. A wagonload of hay knocked him down and the edge of a wheel crushed his temple and the side of his forehead. He was so badly injured his life was despaired of and all his life he bore a thin red scar on the side of his face.

At school great things were expected of him. He was so good at mathematics but he was always unstable as a result of an injury to his head. Willie died in 1926 at the age of forty-two years. Aunt Sarah and her husband, Jack Ryan, went to America in 1900 and Willie stayed near them for a time.

One of my memories of Willie is as an alter boy in the Clonoulty Parish Church. Every Sunday morning before church, several of the older men assembled to say the Rosary in Irish. As the old Irish speakers died out it was continued in English.

My father never missed this Rosary.

Poor Bill met his death in a train accident on Thanksgiving night, 1926. He was unconscious when brought to the hospital. The nurse sent for a priest when she found rosary beads in his pocket. He was conscious on the priests' second visit and he was able to give him aunt

Sarah's address in Norwich, New York.

Aunt and her daughter, Margaret, came as quickly as they could but he had died before their arrival. Willie had a peaceful, happy death – fortified by the last sacraments of the church. Aunt had him taken to Norwich where, after Requiem Mass, he was buried beside aunt Winnie in St Paul's cemetery.

Willie was only forty-two years. Father died less than a year later aged eighty-three.

My father's granduncle Jimmy Heffernan, was considered quite a character in Glenough. Father Denis O'Keeffe, in his student days, used to enjoy Uncle Jimmy's quaint sayings. When Nell and I went to Glenough to say goodbye to the relatives before leaving home, probably with the idea of giving us courage, he told us we were going to a country where we would be wearing our Sunday clothes every day.

EXTRACT FROM FATHER D M O'KEEFFE'S WRITINGS.

He had heard a lot of Australia and used to say, "Austreelia is a great place, beed, beed in your belly and beef, beef on your back and gold shoes on your horses begob, begob, begob".

Uncle Jimmy got into a faction fight in Clonoulty long ago and grandmother and her son John were present. Grandma called on John to go and assist his uncle, "Go on Johnny" she cried "and if you are to die, die like a man".

.....

For many years Uncle Jimmy suffered from arthritis and Julie, his daughter-in-law, was very good to him.

Julie had a brother, a priest in Western Australia. He was Reverend Father John Fahey, who arrived in Perth in 1907, shortly after his ordination.

Father Fahey was a chaplain in the first AIF and served during the whole period of the First World War. He won the DSO for gallantry under fire in the landing at Gallipoli and was one of the first presidents of the RSSILA in Western Australia. Like the late Reverend Dr J English of Brisbane, he was born in Rossmore County, Tipperary. Father Fahey died at Cottesloe, Western Australia in 1958.

Another Rossmore boy whose family we knew well was the late Reverend J J Morrissey, who spent all of priestly life in New South Wales. He was ordained in 1932 for the Maitland Diocese and was the Parish Priest of Morpeth, New South Wales at the time of his death in 1972. Father Morrissey had made arrangements to visit his people in Ireland.

Father Morrissey's kindly old aunt Johanna Matt was noted for her quaint habit of quoting proverbs in her conversations, beginning with "as the saying says". Johanna's full name was O'Dwyer Matt, one of the numerous branches of the O'Dwyer clan. In the same district there were O'Dwyer Posts and O'Dwyer Malachys. The Sr. M Joan at the Mater told me her father was an O'Dwyer Post.

XI

None of the relatives expected father to live to a good old age. He was never robust in health and he was subject to bad attacks of asthma all his life.

Not many years after his marriage he had a serious accident. He fell off the cliff on his quarry land onto the rocky lower terrace of the quarry. He was unconscious for several days and made a slow partial recovery with mother's devoted care. He remained a semi-invalid with a greatly impaired memory for the rest of his long life.

Father's condition made life very hard for mother as she had all the responsibility of looking after the business and the family. Her father and all of her own family were very good to her.

Our dear mother had a gentle, kindly nature and was held in great affection and esteem by her neighbours and numerous relatives. Even for some time before we left home, she had been doing a great deal of voluntary nursing among the neighbours – especially in midwifery cases. She was always available. Pat told us she continued this labour of love through the years.

Our good mother passed to her eternal reward on the 16th August, 1934 at the age of seventy-four years. She was laid to rest beside father in the old family burial ground at Kilpatrick. Pat's young wife, Jocie and three of their little children rests beside them.

Father was always called Thady. It was a common form of Timothy in Ireland. He was the fourth son in a family of nine sons and two daughters.

The three eldest sons left home before their father died. John, to Victoria in 1861 and Bill, to Canada a few years later. Pat had married Mary Whyte (White) and had a farm near the old home.

It was the father's wish that Thady should have the home but Dan's romantic elopement in 1877 put a stop to that. It was after their father's death. Our autocratic old grandmother probably felt humiliated by the runaway marriage and sent son, Jim, after them to Queenstown where the young couple were waiting to board a ship for America.

Dan and Ellen (Joe) returned to Glenough and lived with her people the Ryan (Joes) till the changeover was made. They had three children by that time and some settlement had to be made for Dan and his family. Grandmother asked Thady to let Dan have the place and he would get the dowry that Ellen, Dan's wife would get from her father.

Uncle Dan's wife did not come in to the O'Keeffe home, Bonerea for some years as the house was full then, they were still unmarried. Living at the home were uncle Tim, uncle James, uncle Denis and aunt Ellen.

However, it was not that simple. Aunt Ellen's father, Paddy Ryan (Joe) was not able to find the required four hundred pounds to give his daughter and grandmother agreed to three hundred pounds. Even then, father Thady had to wait a few years as Paddy Joe had to wait

until his son Joe's wife got her fortune from her father, John.

Father was never happy about giving up the farm. He was some years older than Dan and was thirty-seven when he left the old home. He would normally have been married and settled in the old place but there were still too many of the younger members dependant on it. Aunt Ellen was not yet married and Denis was being educated for the priesthood at Mt Melleray. Jim, although employed in a hardware store in Tipperary town, had a share to get too. He only got twenty pounds a year in the shop. He went to America but he was too old to prosper.

Our grandmother O'Keeffe, who was Nellie Heffernan, was a great letter writer. She kept up a regular correspondence with all of her absent children. Five of her nine sons left Ireland. Two went to America and two to Australia and one daughter in France. She never saw any of them again. She died before she was seventy. She had an old aunt living in Thurles who outlived her by over forty years.

XII

Uncle Dan writes to Uncle Mick in 1921 to tell him about the Black and Tan raid on his home. This is an extract from his letter.

Glenough.
May 14 1921.

The military came and blew up my place as a reprisal for a DI (district inspector of police) that was kidnapped or killed eighteen miles from here. Of course, it was a great consolation to us that they didn't catch any of the young fellows at home. They would shoot them like dogs.

They beat Con unconscious at a big round up they had at Hollyford. They have Dan in prison for the past sixteen months, without charge or trial. They arrested Paddy for deportation to America and kept him four months in solitary confinement in an English prison. Then they would not let him go to America fearing he would tell too much. Paddy also had a month in prison in Limerick for telling his name in Irish.

We had letters of sympathy from Father Denis, Joe Ryan and Mary O'Keeffe. I forget her name in religion. Pat Heffernan died the morning our place was blown up.

I was in Melleray this summer and the last. Father Benedict complained he was not getting any letters from Australia. He is very strong and healthy.

My dear brother, we are not fretting over what happened to us. There is many a poor father and mother had to make greater sacrifices – when they had to look on while their sons were shot in their beds or taken out of their beds naked and shot on the roadside.

There was a fine young man from Upperchurch, named Ryan, who was stricken with the flu and was anointed. The Black and Tans, headed by an Irish policeman, came the same night and shot him in his bed – in the presence of his widowed mother and sister.

There were several cases like it in Upperchurch.

(end of letter missing)

An extract from the eulogy paid to Dan O'Keeffe of Glenough.

“...there came a day when the soldiery of the Empire came up the Glenough road in a great force to blow up and burn the O’Keeffe home (Bonerea).

On that day the O’Keeffe and O’Reilly families were thrown out of their homes.

Because they loved Ireland and scorned to sell”.

Many years before, Oliver Cromwell, in a report to the House of Commons said ...you gave me money, you gave me guns...every house in Ireland is a house of prayer and when I bring these fanatical Irish before the muzzle of my guns, they hold up in their hands a string of beads – and they never surrender.

Quote: “It is curious that those qualities of grim determination and dogged perseverance that are supposed to be purely English characteristics should have been shown to a far greater degree by Ireland. Her struggle has been one of the most consistent in history. When banishment and immigration drove her people overseas, they broadened the base of rebellion and returned to the attack. The history of Ireland is the struggle of the Gael. The old stock was disposed but never suppressed...The germ of Nationalism never died even in those times when England and Ireland seemed to be blending into one nation”.

H V Morton 1930

Uncle Dan’s daughter, Maggie, gives a more detailed account of the destruction of the old home, gathered from the family when she came home to see her parents a few days after it had happened. She was seventeen years a nun then. She wrote to Uncle Michael (*Blenhein, Queensland*) and gave her account of it.

St Anthonys Convent,
Rugeley Staffs,
England.
August, 1921.

Dear Uncle

I think I had better begin by introducing myself for a just recompense in not writing to you. You will have forgotten me.

I suppose you have heard a great deal about the recent trouble in Ireland. Well, we were raided frequently here and the boys have not slept at home for

more than a year. In March last Dan was captured and is interned ever since.

Joe and Con have been arrested twice and are safe thank God and since the truce are working and sleeping at home. Alas, we have no home now, for in May last, several lorries filled with machine guns and armed men arrived here and announced their intention of blowing up the house. One of the girls, who acted as a scout, gave the alarm and Con escaped by the back. Joe was not in but saw all from Carhue. Dad was up at Pat Heffernans. Poor Pat died that morning.

Mother was ill in bed and God be blessed for it, aunt Ellen Aheran was there.

One of the girls ran for father and the other ran away for fear of the brutal soldiery. They read a proclamation and then gave them an hour to clear out foodstuffs and clothes but not a single article of furniture or bedding. At the end of the hour they forced mother to leave her bed. One of the soldiers gave her a drink of water and Jer Martin led her to the well gate with aunt Ellen's help.

And there, before father and mothers eyes, the dear old home, where you and all my dear uncles and aunts and my revered father and fifteen of us, saw the light, was blown to atoms. I am begging some of the others to write to you.

Next day, the neighbours came and examined the ruins. The two small rooms and the loft were still standing but in a most shattered condition. The old kitchen chimney was also standing.

Willing and devoted hands got to work to remove the debris and put a temporary roof on the kitchen – and so. The Sacred Heart, in whom they had trusted so much, has not left them without a shelter. They had Mass in the house in February and had the house consecrated to the Sacred Heart.

God is good and they are far better off than so many who were not left a stone upon a stone and had their boys dragged from their beds and shot before their eyes. There can be no question of rebuilding for the present, until peace is really established.

When I heard of the troubles at home, I applied to the Superior General for permission to visit my dear parents and console them in their distress. I got permission for a fortnight. I was left home just seventeen years next March. I don't find much change in my parents. They are wonderful – but the young ones grown up confuse me.

Your ever affectionate Niece,
Sr Margaret Mary O'Keeffe.

.....

Maggie wrote this letter to her uncle in Queensland while she was home. She mentions fifteen in her family. Thirteen grew up in the old home and two died in infancy.

The girls mentioned, were her two young sisters, Sara and Bridget. After the war, Sara entered the convent, the same order as her sister Maggie and the O'Dwyer and Aheran cousins.

A strange fact about this big family of thirteen was they were never all together under the old roof-tree at the same time except on one night.

Helena, the eldest of the family was in France for some years. Bridget, the baby of the family was born while she was away. Then Lena got her appointment to the Glenough School and came home. She had not been home at all during her years as a governess near Paris. Bill and Maggie were working away from home when she returned. Bill, in the CPS Office of Cashel and Maggie in a shop in Cork.

Some of those houses built on the edge of the cliff have been demolished long ago as the quarry men kept encroaching farther in.

Mr fathers' bit of land was reclaimed quarry, a narrow terrace, which extended along the base of a cliff – I think, sixty feet high. There was a road above this cliff and some caves extended under the road. We used to enjoy the echoes reflected back from cliff.

My father owned a part of this quarry, a long wide strip that had been quarried back to the high cliff where there was a road along the top. This was the old bog road that went past the school.

His main interest was cultivating his little farm in the quarry. To make this bare rock arable, much soil had been brought in to it by previous owners and father added more. He used to bring loads of moreen from the bog. Every spring his nephew Joe O'Keeffe came to plough it for him.

On a lower terrace of the quarry there was a much smaller farm. It was owned by an old woman who dug and planted it all herself.

In the little ledges and crannies of the cliff she had wallflowers and sweet William growing.

When the quarry men were blasting these little farms we were showered with splinters of rock and when Jim Baun gave the warning cry that a blast was about to go off, people near ran to a safe distance. Father was a capable worker in his younger days and did a lot of improvements on the farm and home during his parent's lifetime.

After he and mother married they had to stay awhile with her parents, Hogan, till they could get a home and a place to make a livelihood and during that time with the help of mother's brother, Mick, they put up substantial stone outbuildings, with slate roofs to house cattle and pigs and a stable etc.

It was well set up and a comfortable looking homestead as I remember it with its shady elm

trees and the old Castle of Ballysheedy in the near background. The old castle was still in a fairly good state and a landmark for many miles as it stood on the rise above Anacarthy Village, a mile from Dundrum Village.

My brother Pat told me during the war with the Black and Tans they used the caves as a safe hiding place for their munitions.

The homes were frequently searched by the Tans for firearms. They brought along a rusty old gun to our home one day and told mother they found it on the place and demanded ten pounds or they would wreck the place. Mother chose the lesser of two evils and handed ten pounds to the ringleader.

It was the custom in many families for one of them to read aloud in the winter evenings, from a newspaper or religious magazine, while the family sat around the fire. Aunt Katie often did. It was also the custom in Bonerea.

A lot of the old people took snuff and some not so old. Grandfather had a fine collection of snuffboxes.

Grandmother used to fill grandfathers clay pipe, which was a wifely duty in Ireland in those days and he would smoke it after supper, the only time he smoked. The tobacco was kept in a jar at home. Smokers never carried tobacco with them.

Clay pipes were common, smoked by some women as well, although my female relations never smoked.

The Irish believed smoking preserved their teeth.

A fine marble cross was erected in the old churchyard at Kilpatrick by the cousin from New Zealand. Jerry had hoped to be laid to rest there with his ancestors but God willed it otherwise. He returned to New Zealand but meant to come home again and end his days in Ireland. He died soon after his return to New Zealand.

Jerry had a great love for his native place and used to enjoy the fine view from the house. The Anacarthy police barrack was an imposing looking building and stood prominently in the foreground. Jerry said it was the only blot on the landscape.

Old Kilpatrick is no longer used for burial. It was a very ancient cemetery and has been closed in recent years.

Our small village of Anacarthy, about half a mile from Kilpatrick, was a very quiet little spot. It had no fair days or market days like some adjoining villages.

The Hogan cousins were the companions of my school days as well as the O'Dwyers. We all attended the Anacarthy National School.

The National School that my sisters and brothers attended was on a lonely road about half a mile out of the village, it was more like a jail than a school, the windows were so high even

the teachers could not look through them. In a field across from the school there was a fairy ring or rath.

There were very few pupils in this big old barracks of a building.

Old Mrs Ryan, never a fully trained teacher, could not advance the pupils to the sixth grade, so they went on to the good teacher schools after a few years with Mrs Ryan.

Bill, Nell and Jack went to Clonoulty and Winifred and Mary also.

Pat went to Bishopwood near Dundrum. He was the only one to ride a bicycle to school.

A bit farther on this road which led to the bog was a wrought stone house. Those houses were built to give temporary shelter to evicted families during the land wars. The next house on the road was owned by a boycotted family who had built a new house on the site of the old mud walled house, demolished by the crowbar brigade when the Murphys were evicted.

Nell remembers the Murphys' well, they went to school with her.

There were the ruins of a castle on the property...with stone from this ruin the grabber built his house...because of the boycott he could not get stone from the quarry. At one time there was a lime-kiln also.

Then, in 1904, Maggie came home to make her preparations for entering the convent in England.

All the family gathered to spend a night with their parents before the first permanent break in the family and the only time they were all at home together.

Bill left for Perth, Western Australia shortly after. He suffered badly from asthma in the damp climate at home. He married in Western Australia and was in the first AIF. His son was the in the second AIF and visited the relatives in Brisbane while on leave.

This was Dan, he visited us several times here at Kerry in his latter years.

Denis, who went to America about the same time as we left home, was in the USA Army and had a happy reunion with his family while on furlough.

Bill, in the AIF was not so fortunate. After the 1916 rising there was a ban on Dominion soldiers visiting Ireland.

Nora and Paddy, who had gone to America a few years before we left home, had returned for a holiday at the time of the Rising and remained to take part with their brothers Joe, Con and Dan. The two younger girls also played a valiant part.

During the 'troubles', as they called the war in Ireland, the old O'Keeffe home was a haven of refuge for boys on the run. So, became one of the houses marked for demolition by the

Tans.

Dan, a younger son of the family, was one of the fortunate boys to get a farm when the Maud Hawarden Demesne was divided up. It would comprise a few hundred acres, including a deer park and the Dundrum Wood. All the private property of Lord Hawarden, the landlord.

The deer were running wild after the demesne was cut up into farms. Aunt Katie called me one day to come and see the deer. They had come across from Dundrum and were making up towards Bonerea. They were not the native red deer, as they had been wiped out for a century or more. Some of the deer from the Hawarden Park were most likely taken to Phoenix Park, Dublin. It had an area of three hundred acres.

There is an old tradition about Dundrum Wood, associated with Reverend Father Nicholas Sheehy – a priest who was hanged in Clonmel in 1766. A Maud was the sheriff and carried out the sentence himself as the hangman was absent. Father Sheehy was hanged, drawn and quartered on the 15th March 1766.

While the priest's dismembered body lay on the ground Sheriff Maud kicked the head and said, "this would make a fine crows nest in my wood".

The priest's head was then stuck on a high iron spike of the jail gatepost. The people dare not remove the martyr's head from the spike, as a guard of soldiers were put to watch it night and day. This continued for over twenty years, till one bitterly cold night the guard relaxed and two of Father Sheehy's nephews returned the poor skull from the iron spike.

It was well known and authentic local history that a crow never made a nest in the wood after the despot, Maud, had kicked the priest's head.

Not long after the execution of Father Sheehy, Sheriff Maud became violently insane from a pain in his big toe. In fear of him, his family and servants locked him in his room and left him to die there – uncared for and left unburied.

Lord Hawarden's mansion remained vacant for some years. Then our Archbishop, Reverend Dr Fennelly, bought it for a convent and boarding and industrial school for the Presentation nuns in 1907.

When the house was being put in order for the nuns, the locked room revealed the skeleton of the old sheriff Lord Hawarden. It would be more that 140 years after his death. The nuns were not long in residence when it was noticed the crows had come right back to build their nests in the wood again.

The Maud's day was over.

Reverend Father Nicholas Sheehy was the parish priest of Clogheen Co Tipperary. For his zeal in advocating the cause of his oppressed parishioners the Ascendancy determined to get rid of him.

Rather than incriminate his parishioners by giving him shelter Father Sheehys usual sleeping place was an old vault in the local cemetery.

In 1765 a proclamation was issued offering a reward of three hundred pounds for his arrest as a person guilty of high treason. Father Sheehy was accused of inciting Whiteboyism, a secret society condemned by the church, which had become rife in the south of Ireland. The Whiteboys carried on a system of harassment on the landlords.

Father Sheehy, being conscious of his innocence, wrote to the Secretary of State offering to surrender provided he was tried in Dublin instead on Clonmel. His request was granted and after a close investigation of the charges against him he was acquitted. The only witnesses produced by his accusers being three prisoners taken from the Clonmel jail and suborned to prosecute him, being a woman of abandoned character, a man charged with horse stealing and a vagrant boy.

Father Sheehy's accusers, who were mainly the Mauds and the Bagwells, anticipating such a verdict, had trumped up a murder charge against him and had him brought back to Clonmel, where, on the sole evidence of the same perjured witnesses, whose testimony failed in Dublin, he was convicted and three days later hanged 15th March 1766. Also his cousin, Edmund Meehan, who gave evidence on his behalf.

WHITEBOYS

Quote: "In 1760 the disturbance of the Whiteboys became rife in the south of Ireland. They commenced in Tipperary and Cork and were occasioned by the tyranny and rapacity of landlords, who having set their lands far above the value of the condition of allowing the tenants certain commonages to lighten the burden, subsequently inclosed those commons and thus rendered it impossible for the unfortunate tenants to subsist.

The people collected at night and demolished the fences from which circumstances they were first called 'levellers'.

Their name of 'Whiteboys' been given from the white shirts they wore outside their clothes at their nightly gatherings.

Another cause of the discontent was the cruel extractions of the tithemongers, harpies who squeeze out the very vitals of the people and by process of citation and sequestration dragged from them the little which the landlord had left them".

Unquote.

Father Sheehy had many narrow escapes from informers and military when he had a price on his head. On one occasion, he was being conveyed to a place of safety by his brother in law, whose name I've forgotten, when in the bright moonlight they espied a group of men approaching, whom they rightly suspected to be priest hunters.

Fortunately, there was an old vacant house near which was often used as a meeting place for the Whiteboys.

Father Sheehy's companion decided to put up a daring bluff for their safety. They took cover in the old house. The brother in law then took off his coat and stood in the doorway, his white shirt, showing clearly in the moonlight and roared out, "up boys and at em!"

Thinking there was a great number inside the Red Coats took to their heels.

The brother in law was not likely to be a member of the 'Whiteboys', a secret oathbound society banned by the church, who in their misguided zeal committed many outrages.

...the Irish topography, the 'Corrig-an-affrion' – the Mass Rock.

What memories cling around each hallowed moss clad stone or rocky ledge on the mountainside wherein, for years and years, the Holy Sacrifice was offered in stealth and secrecy, the death penalty hanging over priest and worshipper. Not infrequently mass was interrupted by the approach of band-dogs of the law: for, quickened by the rewards to be earned, there sprang up in those days the infamous trade of priest hunting, ' five pounds being equally the government price for the head of a priest as for the head of a wolf'.

XIII

It would have been a great joy to grandfather if his brother, Matt, had been spared to see them all again. He died at the early age of thirty-five. The other brother, whose name was Michael, may have gone to the gold diggings in North Queensland.

Several old friends and neighbours came to Queensland in the sixties. Besides Tim O'Dwyer, there were the three Ryans, brothers of Aunt Eliza. There was also Mr Billy Hayes, who was the father of Sister Mary Brendan Hayes. She was in charge of old St Annes, Brisbane for many years. Sr M Brendan had two trips to Ireland for postulants and met all the relatives.

Tom Vowels, who taught at Nindooindah school years ago, was a grand nephew of Mr Hayes. Tom's maternal grandmother, Mrs Con Hayes, lived next door to my parents. Mrs Hayes had two daughters in Gympie, Mrs Vowels and Mrs Cryan. Another daughter, Mrs Tom Martin, stayed with her mother. Mrs Martin had two sons both priests.

Strange to say, this old Mrs Hayes who lived near my parents was half German. Her father's name was Chidle.

The railways were constructed by English companies which brought over German engineers. They also brought some of their own workmen. One of them was John Chidle who married a local girl and remained in Ireland.

It was the usual thing for the girls preparing for marriage to have at least one white crochet bedspread and perhaps one or two patchwork ones also among her possessions – as well as her feather mattress and pillows.

Old Mrs Hayes, who was very infirm on her feet, used to sit all day in her big sugan chair, making those bedspreads for sale. She did beautiful work, every stich by hand. Sewing machines were almost unknown then. Mrs Hayes knitted socks and stockings too. When we were children one of us was often called on to hold the skeins of wool while she wound it into balls.

Elderly women with no one to care for them eked out a living by knitting for the farmer's wives who had big families. They also helped on the farms with the spring and harvest work. Some of the old houses had stone seats outside their doors. They used to gather fallen sticks from the landlord's wood but were not allowed to break from the trees. This small kindling would give them a few brief moments of warmth in the cold night. The village was partly built on the big limestone quarry. The women would sit and chat in the pleasant summer twilight.

Cappawhite, the next village to ours, was really a small town and an important business centre.

Father Pat O'Keeffe was the Parish Priest of Cappawhite. His grandfather was a brother of my great grandfather. They came from County Limerick to settle in Tipperary.

Father Pat had a stepbrother, Father Tom O'Keeffe, who was curate to old Cannon Ryan of Rossmore and Clonoulty, the parish of most of our relatives.

Heavy rain during the haymaking season often caused a serious loss to the farmers in lack of fodder, as the cattle had to be stall fed all through the winter and early spring. The cows were kept in their warm sheds all the time, except for an hour so in the middle of the day when they were let out for a drink.

When due to calve, the cows were fed a daily ration of sliced mangels and cotton cake. When let out on the young spring grass they looked sleek and well cared for. The spring rain started the thaw and softened the frozen ground.

'Soft April showers Bring forth May flowers'

The primroses were among the first of the spring flowers. They used to shoot up through the snow in an old sandpit near the house. I looked for them every year.

If there had been heavy snowfalls during the winter the snow still lay in shady places till into summer.

Nell had a tale of getting bogged in snowdrift when she and another little girl were coming home from school. Kitty Murphy, who was coming home, heard their cries and pulled them out. The old school was a good way out of the village on a lonely road.

Kitty took care of her aged mother who had gone senile and used to talk about the little people coming for her at night. We used to listen to her with awe. She was such a thin little wisp of an old woman. She looked like a fairy herself – one of the little people.

In our childhood days we half believed in the fairies. There was a rath or fairy ring in the field across the road from this old school that my brothers and sisters attended. I only went to school there for a short time as nearly all of my childhood and schooldays were spent in my grandparent's home of happy memories.