



Title: The journals of Sir John Benn-Walsh relating to the management of his Irish estates 1823-64

Author: Donnelly, James S., Jr

*Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 1974, Vol. 79, No. 230,  
page(s) 86-123

Published by the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society

Digital file created: September 7, 2016

---

Your use of the JCHAS digital archive indicates that you accept the Terms and Conditions of Use,  
available at <http://corkhist.ie/terms-and-conditions/>

The Cork Historical and Archaeological Society (IE-148166, incorporated 1989) was founded in 1891, for the collection, preservation and diffusion of all available information regarding the past of the City and County of Cork, and South of Ireland generally. This archive of content of JCHAS (from 1892 up to ten years preceding current publication) continues the original aims of the founders in 1891. For more information visit [www.corkhist.ie](http://www.corkhist.ie).

# The Journals of Sir John Benn-Walsh Relating to the Management of His Irish Estates, 1823-64

By JAMES S. DONNELLY, Jr.

## *Introduction*

Between the close of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 and the Great Famine of the late 1840s, Irish agriculture was beset with enormous difficulties — intense population pressure, fragmented holdings, dwindling overseas markets, and depressed prices. For landowners, middlemen, and occupying tenants, these were indeed exasperating times. Yet it was not a period of unrelieved depression, nor one devoid of significant responses to the challenges of adversity. Tillage output, especially the production of corn crops, greatly expanded, the trade in live cattle and sheep grew rapidly, and important improvements in farming techniques were adopted. Still another response — the reform of estate administration — clearly manifested itself after 1815, particularly as the middleman system gradually decayed. Before 1845, however, this reform was seriously impeded by peasant resistance to the consolidation of holdings, by widespread landlord indebtedness coupled with formidable obstacles to the sale of incumbered estates, and sometimes by unexpired leases to ruinously negligent middlemen. Then, during the Great Famine and its immediate aftermath, the revamping of estate management gathered strong and often bruising momentum. For in the economic crisis of these years, pauperized tenants, bankrupt middlemen, and insolvent proprietors were uprooted and cast adrift. Thus, out of the predicted and predictable Malthusian catastrophe of the late 1840s, at a terrible human cost, emerged a stronger agricultural economy and a reinvigorated system of estate administration.†

Many aspects of this great economic transformation are mirrored in the extracts from the journals of Sir John Benn-Walsh, 2nd Bart. (1798-1881), which are presented below. Benn-Walsh was the owner of some 8,900 acres in Co. Kerry and of a further 2,200 acres in Co. Cork according to a parliamentary return of 1876. Having no Irish residence, Benn-Walsh lived in England, with seats at Warfield Park, near Bracknell in Berkshire, and at Ormathwaite, near Keswick in Cumberlandshire. In these two English counties together he possessed some 2,700 acres, but his most extensive and valuable estates were situated in Radnorshire in Wales, where he was lord of the manor of Treverne and the owner of over 12,400 acres. In Radnorshire Benn-Walsh took on lease another residence, Newcastle Court, near Walton.‡

† On agricultural trends, see L. M. Cullen, *An Economic History of Ireland since 1660* (London, 1972), pp. 100-133; on the reform of estate management before 1845, see James S. Donnelly, Jr., *The Land and the People of Nineteenth-Century Cork: The Rural Economy and the Land Question* (London, 1975), Chap. I.

‡ John Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (new ed., London, 1879), p. 338; *The Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter cited as *D. N. B.*), XX, 673.

Not only was Benn-Walsh a great landowner in Great Britain and Ireland, with some 26,300 acres altogether by the 1870s, but he regarded his estates very much as a business enterprise and constantly strove to increase the profitability of his landed investments. His keen interest in superintending the development of his properties prompted him to make repeated journeys to Ireland. Between 1821 and 1864 he visited his Cork and Kerry estates in twenty different years, usually during late summer and for a period of about two weeks on each occasion. While making these tours of inspection, he either wrote a daily journal or made entries as regularly as possible from notes and from memory. The volumes of his journals for the years 1821, 1825, and 1829 are missing from the collection now in the possession of the 6th Baron Ormathwaite, great-grandson of the 2nd baronet, at Penybont Hall, Llandrindod Wells, Radnorshire. But records of the remaining seventeen visits survive; fourteen of these visits were concentrated in the period from 1844 to 1864, the year of Benn-Walsh's last tour. These surviving records constitute an unvarnished, wonderfully detailed, and invaluable account of an absentee proprietor's relations with his tenants during a momentous epoch in Irish agrarian history.

By social background and political allegiance, Benn-Walsh was separated in fundamental ways from his Cork and Kerry tenants. Descended from an old north-country family, he was educated at Eton and matriculated from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1816 at the age of almost 18. Contemporaries must have thought that he married very well, for in November 1825 he took as his wife Lady Jane Grey, the youngest daughter of the 6th Earl of Stamford and Warrington. They had two sons, Arthur and Digby, and two daughters, Maria Katharine and Augusta Rosa. Soon after the birth of their second son Digby in 1829, Benn-Walsh displayed the ardent interest in politics that he maintained throughout his life. A staunch Tory, he entered Parliament in 1830 as one of the two members for Sudbury, a borough in Suffolk notable for its small electorate (about 750 voters) and notorious for its electoral corruption. The heavy expense of three contested elections at Sudbury between 1830 and 1832 no doubt helped to convince Benn-Walsh of the wisdom of presenting himself in January 1835 to the 1,000-odd voters of Radnorshire, where his extensive property gave him an important parliamentary interest and the hope of a safe seat. By a narrow margin, however, the Radnorshire electors preferred his Whig opponent, and Benn-Walsh was reluctantly forced back upon venal Sudbury, where he was returned at a by-election in March 1838, having unsuccessfully contested the borough of Poole in the general election of July 1837. When his erstwhile Whig adversary for the Radnorshire seat died in mid-1840, however, Benn-Walsh promptly put himself forward again and was accepted without a contest. Once installed, he was never dislodged and indeed only once challenged, in July 1841, when he trounced the Whig candidate Lord Harley by a margin of two to one in a swollen poll of over 1,650 votes. When Benn-Walsh's long and devoted service to the Conservative party was finally rewarded by Lord Derby with elevation to the peerage as Baron Ormathwaite in 1868, his elder son Arthur continued the family's representation of Radnorshire until the general election of 1880.†

† *D. N. B.*, XX, 673; Edmund Lodge, *The Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire as at Present Existing* (London, 1874), p. 449; F. H. McCalmont, *The Parliamentary Poll Book of All Elections from the Reform Act of 1832 to February 1910 . . .* (7th ed., London, 1910), pp. 239, 243, 340-41; Norman Gash, *Politics in the Age of Peel: A Study in the Technique of Parliamentary Representation, 1830-1850* (Norton Library ed., New York, 1971), pp. 160-64.

If parliamentary politics was Benn-Walsh's almost lifelong passion, estate development was for many years his principal avocation. And his domains in Ireland needed such expertise — to a degree that must have seemed incredible to him at first. Like so many other Irish properties in the early nineteenth century, the Benn-Walsh estates had long suffered from accumulating neglect. The original investments of the family in Irish land had been made in 1764 and subsequent years by John Walsh (1725?-95), a great-uncle of the 2nd baronet, apparently out of the profits of a successful career in the service of the East India Company. But neither John Walsh nor his niece's husband (and his heir) John Benn (1759-1825) showed much interest in their Irish property beyond the collection of rent. There was little, however, that John Benn, who assumed the surname of Walsh upon his succession in 1795, could have done in any case. For John Walsh had let the lands in both Cork and Kerry to middlemen on long leases for three lives during the last third of the eighteenth century. Though these middlemen enjoyed sizeable profit rents, they did almost nothing to improve the property entrusted to their care, and they were still deeply entrenched when Sir John Benn-Walsh succeeded his father as 2nd baronet in 1825. (The baronetcy had been created in 1804). In the early 1820s the father had purchased the interest of one middleman who had held almost half of the Cork estate, but Sir John Benn-Walsh was unable to recover the remainder until after the Great Famine. And of the eleven 'farms' which comprised the Kerry property, as many as seven were still in the control of middlemen as late as 1829. From his earliest acquaintance with these realities, which prolonged the unimproved and disordered condition of his Irish estates, Benn-Walsh conceived the strongest distaste for the middleman system and thereafter worked persistently to eradicate it.†

In view of what is known about the nature of nineteenth-century Irish landlordism, it can be said with assurance that Benn-Walsh was at once more exacting and more progressive than most of his fellow proprietors. Acquisitiveness and improvement were the salient characteristics of his management. As befitted a staunch Conservative, he held very strong views on the rights attaching to landownership. Tenant right he regarded as a species of socialism, which he loathed. For leases, whether long or short, he had no use; after eliminating middlemen, he invariably let his lands by annual agreement. He liked to think that his rents were no more than his tenants could comfortably afford to pay, but in fixing rents he was really guided either by what the traffic would bear or by a work-ethic estimate of the productive potential of a given holding. Tenants who were slothful, scourged the land, fell into arrears, or subdivided their holdings were not indulged but were evicted as expeditiously as possible. Though some writers would have it believed that such practices were characteristic of most members of his class, Benn-Walsh in fact belonged to a minority, albeit a significant one.

Though the weak and wayward tenant found Benn-Walsh's regime an excruciating experience, the strong and energetic farmer could thrive under it. By persistently pursuing policies of improvement, Benn-Walsh greatly enhanced the productivity of his estates. Rundale or partnership holdings were eliminated and farms rearranged and enlarged with a view to efficiency. Wet fields were drained and riverine lands embanked against the possibility of floods. New roads were cut, limestone quarries

† Sir John Benn-Walsh, 'Account of My Property and Income', 1829, pp. 75-76, Ormathwaite Papers; Journals of Sir John Benn-Walsh, 17 Aug. 1850, XXII, 164-66, and 17 Oct. 1852, XXIV, 19-21, Ormathwaite Papers; *D. N. B.*, XX, 673.

and tileyards opened, and adequate outoffices provided. No doubt Benn-Walsh was motivated by self-interest, but this kind of enlightened self-interest stimulated improvement among his tenants and substantially strengthened their economic position.

The record which Benn-Walsh compiled concerning his activities as a progressive landowner points towards a number of important conclusions about entrepreneurship in nineteenth-century Irish agriculture. One conclusion is that middlemen seriously hindered agricultural progress by disregarding improvement and by encouraging subdivision and subletting. The eradication of these shortsighted, improvident intermediate landlords was therefore an essential precondition for the reform of estate administration. Even after middlemen had been ousted, however, the evil they had done lived after them in a web of difficulties that often immensely complicated the task of reform. This consideration leads to a second conclusion, namely, that the obstacles in the way of a progressive proprietor were appallingly difficult. To establish compact farms of sufficient size, to find tenants possessed of unusual industry and large capital, and to win acceptance for technical innovations in crop rotations or livestock management — all these required a fierce if not fanatical determination and a dogged persistence on the part of the reforming landowner. Also necessary was a hardy, and occasionally foolhardy, readiness to withstand the public outcry or overt response which frequently and understandably followed the removal of unsatisfactory tenants. It is worth noting, however, that in framing and executing a policy for the consolidation of holdings, Benn-Walsh scarcely allowed the fear of public abuse or of violent tenant reprisal to enter into his calculations, or if he did, he managed to conceal the fact in his journals.†

Yet, if the difficulties in the path of the progressive proprietor were daunting, they were surmountable in most cases. Moreover, thoroughgoing reform could be highly profitable to the man prepared and equipped to undertake it: this is a third conclusion about entrepreneurship highlighted by the activities of Sir John Benn-Walsh. As a result of the termination of middlemen's leases, and of improvements Benn-Walsh subsequently made or encouraged his tenants to make, the rental of his estates in both Kerry and Cork rose from £3,439 in 1829 to £5,317 in 1847, a hefty increase of 55 per cent. There was a further rise of 41 per cent between 1847 and 1866, exclusive of some new income derived from a 700-acre tract in Co. Kerry which Benn-Walsh purchased in the Incumbered Estates Court in the early 1850s. Three factors were responsible for this 41 per cent increase from 1847 to 1866: the ouster of the remaining middlemen, greater investment than before in permanent improvements by both Benn-Walsh and his tenants, and a substantial rise in agricultural prices, of which Benn-Walsh took full advantage when determining rents. Together, reform and the post-Famine prosperity enabled Benn-Walsh to bring his annual Irish rental (including the new property worth £413 in 1855) to £7,933 by 1866, the last year for which a record of income survives.‡

Not all landowners, perhaps not even a majority of them, possessed opportunities for profitable management similar to those enjoyed by Benn-Walsh. For apart from

† Consolidation on the Cork estate provoked some unfavourable public comment long after the bulk of it had been carried out. See *Cork Examiner*, 25 Jan., 22 Feb., 2 Mar. 1864.

‡ Sir John Benn-Walsh, 'Account of My Property and Income', 1829, 1847, 1866, pp. 74, 87, 90, Ormathwaite Papers; *Journal of Sir John Benn-Walsh*, 6 Sept. 1855, XXVI, 149, Ormathwaite Papers.

the factors of consolidation of holdings and rising farm prices, his extraordinary increase in income was made possible by his acquisition of the profit rents of the middlemen he eliminated and by the extreme suitability of his lands for improvement through thorough drainage, embankment, and the application of lime and fertilizing sea sand. Where the intermediate interests of middlemen were less widespread, and where the land was less tractable, the financial returns achievable by reform would obviously be much less. Putting all this into sharper focus requires much more research than has so far been undertaken on the prevalence of middlemen, especially before 1830, on the opportunities for profitable investment within and between different regions of the country, and on the magnitude of the returns when promising opportunities existed and were seized.

One final question raised by these extracts from the Benn-Walsh journals will be answered differently by one reader than by another. The question is unavoidable, however, and historical study becomes somewhat sterile if we ignore it. Given the harsh economic and social conditions which existed in rural Ireland before 1850, or even the much improved ones prevailing up to the late 1870s, how does one assess the role of the progressive landowner of the Benn-Walsh type? On the one hand, his quest for improvement usually entailed the displacement of large numbers of tenants, which was socially both disruptive and oppressive. On the other hand, his activities were not just personally enriching but were also conducive to the growth of agricultural production and to the economic well-being of the farming community. Does one excoriate the improving landowner for callous insensitivity to human suffering or applaud him for his enlightened economic rationality? Or does one both condemn and praise him?

I wish to thank the present Lord Ormathwaite not only for his gracious permission to publish these extracts from the journals of his great-grandfather but for his unstinting cooperation and many helpful suggestions throughout the rather long period during which this work was in progress.

Throughout the text that follows, the spelling of the original documents has been retained, though in a few instances missing letters are supplied in square brackets. I have generally refrained from drawing the reader's attention to oddities of spelling, with one major exception. Sir John Benn-Walsh misspelled many names of persons and places mentioned in his journals. A spelling mistake of this kind is always corrected in a footnote, but only on the first occasion of its occurrence.

Preceding the journal extracts\* is a brief descriptive sketch of Benn-Walsh's Irish estates, written in 1829 and taken from his 'Account of My Property and Income'.

*\*The extracts in the present issue of the Journal cover the period 1823 to 1853; the remaining extracts (to 1864) will appear in the next issue. —Hon. Ed.*

## Observations upon the Foregoing Account of My Property

(75) No. 1. Kerry estates are generally underlet & improvable. The land is generally of a good quality & there are large tracts easily reclaimable by draining, banking, & liming. No capital has ever been expended upon them. The estate consists of eleven large farms; seven are in the hands of middlemen. Of these seven, one only (Inchmagullerah,<sup>1</sup> let to the Reverend R. Hickson<sup>2</sup>) is let to its present value. The other six are let on leases for lives, generally about forty or fifty years ago. Were they now out of lease, I should get a great increase of rent at their present condition & according to the actual price of land. Killarida<sup>3</sup> alone would bring £250. The whole six farms from £600 to £700. They would be very susceptible of further improvement. The other four are let to their present value but on easy terms. Some banks making at Tullamore<sup>4</sup> will enable me to raise the rent £150 per annum. Derivrin<sup>5</sup> ought to be raised £50 per annum. Derrindaffe<sup>6</sup> may in a few years be raised £50 per annum, as much has been done in draining & liming. I am not exceeding bounds in putting the improved value of this estate when the leases fall in at £1,000 above its present rental.

No. 2. Cork estates consist of four large farms: Grange,<sup>7</sup> Ballygromans,<sup>8</sup> Classis,<sup>9</sup> East & West Fergus.<sup>10</sup> The three first were let in the years 1764 & 1765 for three lives renewable during sixty years by payment of a fine certain on the dropping in of each life. The sixty years have now expired & they are held for the three lives now in being, without right of renewal. Grange is a very pretty estate of 597 English acres situated in an improved part of the country about 7 or 8 miles from Cork, a little to the south of the Killarney road. Part appeared to me admirable land in high condition. It extends over some hilly ground to the back of the house, which may not be so good. There is an excellent mansion house upon it for a moderate gentleman's family. It is in the possession of a Mr Hawkes,<sup>11</sup> who seemed to me a respectable man of the class of small Irish gentry. The three lives are his sons, young men. I must be an inaccurate judge of its value, as I never employed a surveyor & only visited it once, but taking as data that it let for £367 in the year 1765, that it is 597 acres, & considering the house, situation near Cork, &c., I should guess it from £800 to £1,000. Ballygromans is near Grange. I do not think that there is any house upon it. It is held upon older lives than (76) Grange. It is likewise good land & well situated. Acres 488, let for £288 in 1765. Probable value from 25s. to 30s. per acre, £610 to £730 per annum. Classis is a compact little farm beautifully situated at the confluence of the Lee & another river. It is about 4 & 5 miles from Cork & one mile from Ballincollig. The land is good & there are some very valuable lime quarries upon it. Probable value of this farm, £300 per annum. Acres 147. There is a neat,

<sup>1</sup> Inchmagullerah E. and W., par. Duagh, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>2</sup> Reverend Robert Hickson, 3rd son of Robert Hickson of Grove, Dingle.

<sup>3</sup> In par. Rattoo, bar. Iraghticonnor.

<sup>4</sup> In par. Galey, bar. Iraghticonnor.

<sup>5</sup> Derryvrin, par. Kilcaragh, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>6</sup> Derrindaff, par. Duagh, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>7</sup> In par. Athnowen, bar. Muskerry E.

<sup>8</sup> Ballygroman Lr. and Upr., par. Desertmore, bar. Muskerry E.

<sup>9</sup> Classes, par. Athnowen, bar. Muskerry E.

<sup>10</sup> In pars. Aglish and Magourney, bar. Muskerry E.

<sup>11</sup> John Hawkes, Sr.

small house upon it. It may be considered not merely as a farm but as an eligible villa for any of the merchants of Cork. East & West Fergus is a large farm. Acres 952. It is situated up the valley of the Lee on the left bank, 14 miles from Cork. It was originally let on the same lease as the others, but my father bought General Farmar's<sup>12</sup> interest, & it has been 4 or 5 years in my hands. The land is naturally very good but has been much abused & racked by bad tenants. The original rent was £460 in 1765. I have let it at £607 to the cottier tenants for the last few years, have encouraged them to lime, improve, & build houses. I hope now to advance the rent to £800 per annum. If well farmed & improved, it ought to be worth £1,000 per annum.

[Visit of 1823]

[Volume IV]

(194) [Friday, April 4th, 1823.] I have not given the reasons of my visiting Ireland at this time. Finding myself when in Radnorshire already half way, I determined to embrace the opportunity of making a short visit to my estates, as my affairs now very much require my presence. I have brought an ejectment against Wall<sup>13</sup> & am likely to recover possession of Derimdaff, as he cannot redeem. Hilliard<sup>14</sup> has (195) surrendered Forhane,<sup>15</sup> & I wish to arrange some plan for setting these two farms to good occupying tenants. The tenants are all in arrear, & I am anxious to examine into my affairs &, when I am on the spot, to take measures for securing the payment. Mr Gabbett<sup>16</sup> has been with me at tea & we talked over our affairs. He proposes going down to Kerry on Monday. I shall start Sunday.

Saturday, [April] 5th. I called on Mr & Mrs Leeson, the parents of Mr Leeson.<sup>17</sup> They asked me to dinner. I met young Cosby in the street. I dined with the Leesons.

Sunday [April] 6th. I left Dublin at six in the morning by a new coach, which brought me to Limerick by 10 at night. I travelled with a sharp, shrewd Paddy, a county of Clare man, whom I suspected to be a Captain Rock's man.<sup>18</sup>

Monday, [April] 7th. I travelled from Limerick to Tarbert & from thence arrived at Listowell by five o'clock. I talked a good while with one of the Highlanders quartered at Adare,<sup>19</sup> who told me that the country was still disturbed & that he had seen six fires a few nights since all blazing in different parts of the country at once.

Tuesday, [April] 8th. I went over Derimdaff & Forehane. (196) I think that I shall have no difficulty in setting Forehane to the occupying tenants. I saw Mr McMahon, who is surveying Derimdaff. In the evening I took a walk by the banks of the Feale in a pretty little valley above the bridge.

Wednesday, [April] 9th. I went with old Sheahan<sup>20</sup> to Leake's<sup>21</sup> farm of Killarida.

<sup>12</sup> General Robert Hill Farmer (1755-1839) of Barnhill, Co. Cork.

<sup>13</sup> A middleman.

<sup>14</sup> William R. Hilliard, a middleman.

<sup>15</sup> Furhane, par. Kilshenane, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>16</sup> Sir John Benn-Walsh's agent.

<sup>17</sup> Sir William Edward Leeson (b. 1801), son of Robert Leeson; appointed Chamberlain of Dublin Castle, 1835; Usher of the Black Rod of the Order of St Patrick, 1838-41; became Genealogist of the Order of St Patrick, 1841; created Bart, 1838.

<sup>18</sup> I. e., a member of an agrarian secret society. 'Captain Rock' was a common code name for the leader of such an organization, and the rank and file were generally referred to as Whiteboys.

<sup>19</sup> In Co. Limerick.

<sup>20</sup> John Sheahan, Sir John Benn-Walsh's bailiff.

<sup>21</sup> George Leake, a middleman.



It is a very improvable one. I met Julian<sup>22</sup> & Mr Hewson<sup>23</sup> in my way. I took my accustomed walk in the pretty little valley after dinner. Mr Gabbett arrived in the evening.

Thursday, [April] 10th. I saw Mr Kane the land drainer, Mr & Captain Hilliard in the morning. I proceeded with Mr Gabbett to Derimdaff & Forehane, which farms we went over. Mr Gabbett went to his nephew Mr Hewson's. I dined alone, took my usual walk in the valley, & wrote my journal in the evening. . . .

Friday, [April] 11th. I went over the farms of Derimdaff & Forehane (197) again, accompanied by Mr Gabbett & Kane the land drainer. The latter assures me that Derimdaff in particular is an admirable subject for improvement. The peasantry of this part of the world are by his account totally idle eight months in the year; they will therefore cheerfully assume very high rents for their farms if they are allowed to work out a portion in labor, & thus a landlord may carry on very extensive improvements at little expense. On Derimdaff there is a superabundant population; however, as there is so much work to be done, this is less to be regretted. I shall set to the tenants by the year, take a part of the rent in labor, & get rid of the poorest by degrees. We returned by Forehane where much may be done, though it is not so good a subject for improvement as Derimdaff. I looked at a farm that is on sale adjoining Forehane. It would be a pretty addition to my estate.

Saturday, [April] 12th. We spent the whole morning arranging the setting of Derimdaff & Forehane, which we at (198) last concluded very satisfactorily, at least so far as regards Forehane. The Derimdaff tenants are poorer & seem less regular characters.

Sunday, [April] 13th. We finished with the tenants. I made an arrangement with Julian to allow an abatement to him on condition that he pays up his arrear. I walked with Mr Hewson to the Knight of Kerry's.<sup>24</sup> After dinner I walked in my favorite valley.

Monday, [April] 14th. I left Listowell after breakfast & took up Mr Gabbett at Mr Hewson's. We went over Moriarty's farm of Derivrin. He is so much alarmed by the combination of his undertenants against him that he refuses any longer to hold the whole farm. We let it accordingly to the undertenants, Moriarty holding only the dwelling house & that part of the ground which he previously held in his own hands. The poor man seemed quite relieved. His tenants were deeply imbued with the White-boy spirit & he has lived for months in dread of his life. I was less satisfied with the manner of these tenants than with that of the Forehane & Derimdaffe people. We proceeded (199) to Tralee, where we saw one of my tenants, a Mr Elliott, a shrewd fellow from whom we got some valuable information on the state of the country. We called on a lawyer who is engaged for the sale of the farm of Beheens,<sup>25</sup> but on examination the title was found defective.

Tuesday, [April] 15th. We left Tralee by an early coach & arrived at Cork by five.

Wednesday, [April] 16th. The subagent who has been acting for Mr Gabbett, a Mr Holland, called after breakfast & accompanied us to Fergus. This farm is let

<sup>22</sup>? James Julian (d. 1846), a middleman who held Tullamore from Sir John Benn-Walsh.

<sup>23</sup> John Francis Hewson of Ennismore, Listowel.

<sup>24</sup> Maurice Fitzgerald, 18th Knight of Kerry (1774-1849), of Glanleam, Valencia, and Ballinruddery, Listowel; M.P. for Co. Kerry for 37 years.

<sup>25</sup> Beheens E. and W., par. Kilshenane, bar. Clanmaurice.

to the undertenants since it has come out of lease. Some of the poorest & worst have been refused & their lands let to others. They have kept possession, however, & it requires some firmness & address to get them out. We went all over the farm, followed by a rabble of tenants. We at length appointed them all to come to Cork tomorrow.

Thursday, [April] 17th. We were engaged all day in settling the claims of these tenants. I paid a short visit at the Bishop's & returned to my labors. We adjusted all these pretensions at (200) last, except some people of the name of Danahy<sup>26</sup> who must be proceeded against.

Friday, [April] 18th. I left Cork, having taken leave of Gabbett last night. I posted to Kilkenny where I arrived rather late.

Saturday, [April] 19th. I went outside a coach from Kilkenny to Dublin. It was a wretched day. I proceeded from Dublin to Howth.

Sunday, [April] 20th. I crossed the Channel & had a fine passage. I took the Mail to London & set off at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7.

[Visit of 1824]

[Volume V]

(203) Tuesday, [September] 14th, [1824]. Digby<sup>27</sup> & I walked about the town.<sup>28</sup> We found that Mr Gabbett had just set out for Kerry, where we hope to overtake him. Leeson dined with us. He has been here ever since our memorable winter together in Edinburgh. He amused me very much by his great mortification when he heard that Miss Stein had 30,000 £.

Wednesday, [September] 15th. Digby & I left Dublin by the Limerick coach at six o'clock & reached Limerick by 10.

Thursday, [September] 16th. We left Limerick by the steamboat, which took us down the Shannon to Tarbert — from whence we took a chaise to Listowell, where we found Mr Gabbett busy receiving rents for me. I did not keep my journal regularly during my stay at Listowell, which I left on Wednesday 22nd. I was occupied while there in arranging the affairs of Tullamore, which is now set for the six months, & as Julian has no intention of redeeming it, I ordered it to be surveyed & valued by Kane & McMahon. I likewise allotted the new divisions I have (204) caused to be made at Derrimdaff, & the tenants are to take possession of them in March next. All these arrangements gave birth to an infinity of petty squabbles, extremely difficult to settle or even understand. However, I am sanguine in my expectations that a little time & perseverance will compose all the jarring elements. Everything confirms my first opinion that setting to the occupying tenant, though more troublesome, is in the end much more advantageous to the landlord. I am well persuaded that if the times continue tranquil & the prices as at present, this portion of my property will gradually rise most considerably in value — if I continue to visit & superintend it. This is absolutely necessary. Gabbett is in many respects a useful agent. He is a good lawyer, a man of excellent understanding, good disposition, & integrity. His practice at the police office & his naturally conciliating character gives him a great readiness in managing the (205) lower orders, & he is a ready accountant & man of business. But he is a nonresident, he is not deeply interested in the business, he has

<sup>26</sup> Dennehy.

<sup>27</sup> Captain Charles G. Digby, R.N. (d. 1829), brother-in-law of Sir John Benn-Walsh.

<sup>28</sup> Dublin.

many partialities in the country, & he would go over the business in a very slovenly, negligent manner if I were not to accompany him.

Wednesday, [September] 22nd. We took Moriarty's farm in our way, whose tenants are a bad disposed set. We went on to Tralee where we slept.

Thursday, [September] 23rd. Gabbett went on to Cork. Digby & I rode hacks to Killarney. We took a boat & rowed about the Lower Lake, the variety of which delighted us.

Friday, [September] 24th. We set off early in a jaunting car, went to the Gap of Dunlo,<sup>29</sup> where we walked over the chain of hills, & joined our boat on the Upper Lake. We were accompanied by a bugleman. We rowed home.

Saturday, [September] 25th. We left Killarney & reached Cork by the coach, where we rejoined Mr Gabbett. . . .

(206) Sunday, [September] 26th. We called at the Bishop's who is absent.

Monday, [September] 27th. I had a grand settling day with the tenants of Fergus. They seem, with some exceptions, good tenants. We likewise received a large portion of the arrears from Miss Austen.<sup>30</sup> I took leave of Gabbett tonight. He starts early tomorrow.

Tuesday, [September] 28th. Digby & I hired a boat & went down to Cove. The banks of the river are very pretty. We came up by land after dining at Cove. He was formerly two years upon the Cork station. One of the sailors remembered him.

Wednesday, [September] 29th. We staid at Cork & went to hear a missionary meeting. A Mr Roe, a clergyman of Kilkenny, spoke remarkably well.

Thursday, [September] 30th. We left Cork by the Mail at 8 in the morning & reached Kilkenny by eight at night through (207) torrents of rain.

[Visit of 1834]

[Volume XI]

(184) Thursday, [August] 7th, [1834]. I got up again at eleven & found the day so disagreeable that I remained at home, writing letters, &c. Mr Gabbett made his appearance by the two o'clock coach, & we spent the evening looking over our accounts & papers.

Friday, [August] 8th. A fine day. We made the most of it, setting out by half after nine in the britschka<sup>31</sup> & going entirely over the farm of East & West Fergus. This farm seems to be much improved; the houses are nearly all comfortable, slated dwellings. We are now going to apportion a raised rent among the tenants, & I purpose at once settling with the clergyman for the tithe. The new rent will be £815, tithe, 92. We returned to a late dinner & worked in the evening at the apportionment of the advanced rent among the tenants.

Saturday, [August] 9th. We went to see Ballygromans, a farm which has just fallen into my hands by the death of the last life in the lease. It was belonging to one of the Hawkes's. It is a fine farm & the rise will be £200 a year at least.

(185) Sunday, [August] 10th. A wet day. I took two Paytherus<sup>32</sup> & worked all day at the apportionment of the rent of Fergus, copying the commissioners' valuations of the tithe & other accounts.

<sup>29</sup> Dunloe.

<sup>30</sup> The holder of an intermediate interest.

<sup>31</sup> Britska, a long, roomy carriage with a calash top.

<sup>32</sup> A medicinal compound named after Thomas Paytherus, a London surgeon and apothecary.

Monday, [August] 11th. We set out at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 9. . . . We spent three hours at Dripsey Bridge where Mahony<sup>33</sup> lives, one of the Fergus tenants, whom Gabbett has made a sort of steward. We met them all & they were tolerably well satisfied with my arrangement. After going through some of their accounts, which was a tedious & troublesome business, we started again at 2, & pushing on very briskly, we got to Killarney by nine & found a nice, comfortable inn.

Tuesday, [August] 12th. We got to Tralee by twelve. Here we met old John Sheahan, who is still sharp & active in his business. He is a shrewd old dog but not to be depended upon. (186) We called at Derivrin on our way to Listowell. Here a curious circumstance occurred. In my last visit to Kerry in 1829 I passed this farm, & finding reason to suppose that Mrs Moriarty made a great profit of the sale of turf, I took the bog away from her & advertized it. Connell & Sheehy bid 50£ for it & the west mountain pasture, but as I had not intended to deprive her of the latter, I did not accept their offer. After my return to England I got a letter purporting to be a proposal from them of sixty pounds for the bog & east & west pasture. I deducted £10 for the pasture & authorised Gabbett to make them tenants to the bog at £50 if they were so minded. They have constantly been claiming the pasture too, & in consequence of the dispute, young Moriarty, who is a sharp fellow educating to be a Catholic priest, came over to Binfield<sup>34</sup> when I was recovering in the winter, & I then referred to all the letters, among others to this (187) proposal of Connell & Sheehy's, of sixty pounds, which in fact governed me. Today on shewing them this proposal, they peremptorily denied that they ever had sent it & declared it to be a forgery. They did this with so much apparent earnestness as really to stagger me, though what motive anyone could have to commit this forgery I really could not see. . . .

Wednesday, [August] 13th. While Mr Gabbett settled accounts with some of the tenants, I rode out to see Knockburrane,<sup>35</sup> a farm of about 220 Irish acres which came into my hands last March by the death of a lady on whose life it was held. Mr Gabbett set it as follows, to Michael Rahilly, £75; Regan, £65; widow Connor, £36 18s. 6d.; Thornton, ditto; McElligott, ditto. Total, £250. This is a rise of about £140 a year. They seemed good, improving tenants, particularly Rahilly & widow Connor. The former is a tobacconist in the town of Listowell. He has planted (188) an orchard & made some good improvements. He also has drawn stone to build himself a house.

Thursday, [August] 14th. This morning I went to Tullamore & inspected the banks & road. I also visited Julian's house, which seems to want repair, & as he has been a punctual tenant lately, I determined to allow him a gale's rent. The banks are all to a trifle completed & the road is made through three-fourths of the farm. These are great & real improvements, & I think that Tullamore is now very moderately set. But on some of the divisions, Shronoun<sup>36</sup> & Shronedrislig,<sup>37</sup> there are far too many tenants. Mr McMahon, the surveyor or land valuer recommended by Spring Rice,<sup>38</sup> came to meet me today; he has lately mapped & surveyed Ballyhaurigan<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Patrick Mahony.

<sup>34</sup> In Berkshire.

<sup>35</sup> In par. Kilfeighny, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>36</sup> Shronowen, par. Galey, bar. Iraghticonnor.

<sup>37</sup> In par. Galey, bar. Iraghticonnor.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Spring-Rice, 1st Baron Monteagle (1790-1866), M.P. for Limerick City, 1820-32; for Cambridge, 1832-39; Chancellor of the Exchequer under Melbourne, 1835-39; raised to the peerage, 1839.

<sup>39</sup> Ballyhorgan, pars. Dysert and Rattoo, bar. Clanmaurice.

& Ballyrehan,<sup>40</sup> the two farms Mr Hilliard holds upon a very old lease. Date, I think, 1773. He now pays £220 a year & McMahon computes the rise at £447; when out of lease, they will set for £687. I have a good opinion of his fairness & integrity.

(189) Friday, [August] 15th. Mr Gabbett set out for Dublin at five in the morning. I went with Mr McMahon to see Gortshanavoe, or Kilbee.<sup>41</sup> He thinks it a poor farm & that double the present rent of 90£ would be all that could be obtained for it. It is wet & clayey.

Saturday, [August] 16th. I had a long day over Derrindaffe & Forhane. These were my pet farms on which I first tried improvement, & certainly I have much reason to be satisfied with the result. The whole appearance of them is changed. The tracts of coarse, wet, mountain, heathy pasture have disappeared, & good pasture meadows, fields of potatoes, oats, & wheat have taken their place. And all this has been done upon Derrindaffe, although from some flaw or alleged incorrectness in the ejectment, the heir of Wall has been bringing suit after suit against me to recover possession, & now there is a trial pending in the courts in Dublin. These poor people have great merit in reclaiming all this land on so uncertain a tenure. They admitted to me that their (199) farms would now bring a great increase of rent. It is admitted on all hands that the Kerry farms, particularly those called mountain farms, by which is meant a wild, heathy pasture, have been vastly improved of late years. Whole tracts have been brought into wheat & other tillage, & sea sand & lime drawn to them in great quantities. The rents of all my farms used to be made by butter & stock; a great portion is now paid by corn. Forhane is quite as much improved as Derrindaffe. As usual, I was beset by a levée of petitioners when I entered Listowell.

Sunday, [August] 17th. . . . Went to church. I took a walk by the river in the wooded valley opposite to Ballinruddery. . . .<sup>42</sup>

(191) Monday, [August] 18th. I rode to see Crotto.<sup>43</sup> This is an estate with a pretty moderate park, or demesne as they call it in Ireland, belonging to a Mr Ponsonby,<sup>44</sup> & which is shortly to be sold under a decree of the court to pay off numerous charges upon it. Gabbett mentioned it to me, having just heard of the proposed sale, as a purchase which, if I were inclined to invest here, would square my property, as it joins both Ballyrehan & Derivrin, and Mr Ponsonby, who is a young man, called upon me two or three days back to try & coax me into it. I promised at least to ride over & see it, & accordingly I mounted Mrs McElligot's<sup>45</sup> pony & trotted over. It is six or seven miles from Listowell on the Tralee road. It is quite a Castle Rackrent<sup>46</sup> as far as the building is concerned, an old ruinous house nearly two hundred years old, but the place altogether has capabilities of being converted into a very pretty gentlemanlike residence. There is a great deal of wood on the (192) property, covering some hilly ground.

Mr Ponsonby is, I find, a second son. The elder was disinherited by the father. This one was in the navy but left it & married on coming to this fortune, which is in fact a mere nominal thing, as it is eaten up with debts & charges. He seems a com-

<sup>40</sup> Ballyrehan E., par. Kilfeighny, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>41</sup> Kylebwee, par. Listowel, bar. Iraghticonnor.

<sup>42</sup> In par. Finuge, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>43</sup> Crotta, pars. Kilfeighny and Killyn, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>44</sup> Captain William Ponsonby, R.N. (1813-55).

<sup>45</sup> MacElligott.

<sup>46</sup> A reference to *Castle Rackrent*, the famous satiric novel by Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849).

plete specimen of the embarrassed, broken down Irish squire — with rather pleasant, open manners & some plausibility, but with a thousand schemes & points & objects to carry, against whom one must be perpetually on one's guard. It was his plan, by getting me to buy the demesne & one or two farms at an extravagant rate, to raise money enough to pay off the charges & to clear the remainder, but I have no idea of purchasing at all, except it be the whole under the decree of the court. Then he had another design of getting himself appointed my agent & living at Crotto in that character. A pretty agent, a man overwhelmed with debts & incumbrances! Then, in case he could manage to retain his place, he (193) wants to take Ballyrehan when it comes out of lease by Hilliard's death, & in truth it lies very handy to him, being close to his gate. I neither intend to make him my agent, nor to let Ballyrehan to him, nor to give him more than the market value, nor to purchase only a portion of his property, but I endeavoured to parry all these attempts & to extract what information I could from him. He shewed me the rental & old surveys, & here at least I think there could be no great mistake. The rental, exclusive of the demesne, is about £850 a year, & the greatest part of it upon old lives fifty years ago, which would afford a great rise. The demesne itself would let for £300 a year. There is certainly a temptation to purchase in Ireland from the low rate. This estate [worth] £850 [per annum], with the demesne £300 more, a good deal of timber, & rises upon the farms at the dropping in of old lives to the amount of £350 or 400 more, with pretty ground & improvable residence, would fetch in England, I should guess, near £40,000. (194) Here they seem to think that it will go for about 20 years' purchase on the present rental & that the timber & the future rise will be thrown into the bargain. It certainly would make a pretty addition to my property in this part of the world &, by adding a place & residence, give it more importance. No property is more improving than Kerry, & this would pay a good interest now, with ultimate increase. Yet on the other hand, there is the agitation here, the clouded political horizon. The chance of a combination against rents similar to that against tithe, and the trouble & risk of making & accepting a title to an encumbered Irish estate. I took some luncheon with Mr and Mrs Ponsonby. She is a pretty young woman.

I forgot to mention that McMahon rode over this morning & brought me the maps & valuation of Ballyhaurican & Ballyrehan, the two farms old Hilliard holds upon his own life, date of lease, 1773. They are more valuable than I was aware of. McMahon values them (195) at £687 a year, which would give me a rise of £440. I appointed him to meet me at Tullamore tomorrow.

Tuesday, [August] 19th. I set out accompanied by Mr Julian for Tullamore. We met McMahon & Kane the land drainer there. I went with Julian & McMahon to examine a tract of heathy bog, where he thinks that I might locate some of the superabundant population. The sole objection seems to be that it would trespass upon the summer pasturage attached to Tullabeg.<sup>47</sup> I also went to the end of Shronoun & saw the line of road as it is proposed to carry it on. The improvements on this farm have been very great. I have banked in Shronoun & Shronedrislig above 100 acres of choice dairy ground which, while open to the inundations of the river, would only rear dry stock, & I have nearly completed a road which affords access to the remote divisions of the farm, formerly unapproachable in winter. This farm may very shortly be raised if the prices of produce improve. My great (196) object at present is to thin Shronedrislig, upon which there are five scrambling tenants

<sup>47</sup> Tulla Beg, par. Kilconly, bar. Iraghticonnor.

always in arrear, though it is so much underlet. Kane may be useful in directing improvements, but I have little confidence in him as a valuer; he positively said that neither Shronoun nor Shronedrislig would bear an advance, though I find that they rear cows instead of dry stock. It turned out wet & I rode home & spent the afternoon endeavouring, with Julian, McMahon, & Kane, to arrange with the Shrone-drislig tenants to make them give up possession. I had some conversation with Mr Fitzgerald, an attorney, on this subject.

Wednesday, [August] 20th. I left Listowell after breakfast, & Mr Hewson accompanied me a short distance to show me the house & ground of a tinker, an industrious undertenant of W. R. Hilliard at Ballyhaurican, who has done miracles in reclaiming about 7 acres of sheer bog & building a comfortable house, garden, planting trees, &c., upon it. I paid some money (197) into the Tralee bank in my way & travelled on to Killarney, having spent just a week in Kerry. I never yet came over to this country without deriving some substantial advantage from it. This time I have had an opportunity of judging of the great impulse of improvement which has taken place within the last five years, particularly in the coarse farms, in getting them into tillage. I have satisfied myself that, owing to this, Knockburrane is not overlet & that Forhane & Derrindaffe are considerably below their value. I have ascertained through McMahon the value of Hilliard's farms, & I have made myself master of the state of Tullamore, which requires much attention. In Cork I have visited Ballygromans, & I have apportioned the advanced rent upon the tenants of Fergus. All these are important arrangements & I trust that they will prove beneficial. My Irish property is certainly a very improving one & my tenants becoming every day more comfortable & (198) independent.

[Visit of 1844]  
[Volume XVIII]

(184) [Tuesday, August 20th, 1844.] . . . We put up at the Commercial Hotel.<sup>48</sup> Arthur<sup>49</sup> and I went out to Classis in the afternoon. I found that this farm has been greatly improved. It has got entirely into the hands of an enterprising & improving tenant of the name of Callaghan. He has let the old house at Classis & about 30 acres of land to a young man of the name of Reardon<sup>50</sup> for 60£ a year. He has built a comfortable, snug farmhouse & offices with cowstalls & stables, & a very excellent orchard. He drills turnips, grows clover & vetches, & pursues the improved systems of husbandry on an extended scale. He not only farms Classis but about 300 acres besides. He has the limekilns also. From all I could see, the land of Classis is of a superior quality — rather light, but warm & quick, all upon limestone. I have no doubt that, considering its vicinity to Cork & Ballincollig, it would be worth £300 a year. We got back to Cork to a seven o'clock dinner. I answered my letters in the evening.

(185) Wednesday, [August] 21st. We set out in a car after breakfast & went over Grange & Ballygromans. I never visited this former property but once. It was held,

<sup>48</sup> In Cork City.

<sup>49</sup> Arthur Benn-Walsh (1827-1920), elder son and heir of Sir John Benn-Walsh; educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge; entered 1st Life Guards, 1847; retired as Captain, 1855; married Lady Emily Somerset, daughter of 7th Duke of Beaufort, in 1858; M.P. for Leominster, 1865-68; for Radnorshire, 1868-80; succeeded his father as 2nd Baron Ormathwaite, 1881.

<sup>50</sup> Riordan or Rearden.

like the others in this country, upon a lease for three lives renewable, as the lives dropped, for 60 years from the year 1764, after which the right of renewal ceased. It happened that the old lives dropped a short time before the right of renewal expired, & Mr Hawkes, the lessee, put in the lives of his three sons, who are all young men, or at least men in the prime of life. The lapse of this lease is therefore probably remote; still, it is as well to inform myself of the circumstances of the property. There is a very comfortable, respectable looking, two storied house which, with 205 acres of the land, is tenanted by a Mrs Clebborne, the widow of a Dr Clebborne, who died quite suddenly about six months since. She has a lease from Mr Hawkes of this portion, concurrent with his own term, & she pays £229-14-6 per annum for it. The land round it appears of an excellent quality, light, dry, & fertile. (186) We went on to Ballygromans. There is a very comfortable house upon this farm, which is occupied by a Catholic priest, a Mr Walsh. He gave us some dinner & walked over the farm with me. He has improved his own division, which is about £30 a year rent, & he wants a lease for his life. There is another tenant, Dennis Lane, who has a good division. The other tenants appear poor & needy. We went on to Macroom where we slept at a wretched inn.

Thursday, [August] 22nd. We went out to Fergus in a car. I went over this farm. With my newly acquired farming lore, I criticised the management of this farm. There were scarcely any green crops, the fields were very full of weeds, & it bore the appearance of having been cropped too hard. I spoke very strongly about introducing turnips & stock. I found that one or two partitions of the farms had been made without my knowledge, against which I strongly protested. We returned to sleep at Macroom.

Friday, [August] 23rd. We went on by post to Cloghereen,<sup>51</sup> a little village close to Muckross, where there is a pretty hotel. (187) Mr Gabbett and his family are residing close to it. I & Arthur walked to see Muckross Abbey & also a splendid Elizabethan house which Mr Herbert<sup>52</sup> has just built. It will be a very fine place. The stone has been brought all the way from Liverpool to cover it, & it is a fine freestone with a slight tinge of red in it. Mr Gabbett overtook us, & I was glad to see my worthy old agent very little altered by the ten years which have rolled over our heads since I saw him last. He is now about 74. We spent the evening with the Gabbetts. He has a son & a large family of daughters.

Saturday, [August] 24th. We went with Mr & Mrs Gabbett & their family on the lake in a boat. I once before visited this lake with poor Digby in 1824. We had a fine day & enjoyed our excursion very much. In the evening we heard a singular concert, a blind Irish piper of the name of Gantsey & his son accompanying him on the violin. He was really a wonderful performer & drew sounds from his Irish pipes which quite surprised us. (188) He was a fine old man, full of taste & enthusiasm in his art, & put me quite in mind of Wandering Willie in Redgauntlet.<sup>53</sup> But Gantsey is a celebrated person in his way, & two years ago he travelled to Edinburgh & gave a concert at which he realised £50. The Irish bagpipe is far softer than the Scotch.

Sunday, [August] 25th. Went to church at Killarney with Mr Gabbett. I walked to see Mr Herbert's Scotch bailiff, who has grown a fine crop of turnips. He told me

<sup>51</sup> In par, Killarney, bar, Magunihy.

<sup>52</sup> Charles Herbert of Muckross, Killarney.

<sup>53</sup> A novel by Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), first published in 1824. Wandering Willie appears as a blind fiddler who recounts the tale of Sir Robert Redgauntlet and his son Sir John.



that the Irish were very industrious & peaceable, but that they could not on their present diet do very hard work, that of light work they could do a great deal, but that, though the wages were so low, any laborious work cost as much as in Scotland. We dined with Mr and Mrs Gabbett.

Monday, [August] 26th. We set off at seven for Tralee where we joined Mr Gabbett & his son. We sent William<sup>54</sup> on to Listowell, & all four started in a car to see Derivrin & Ballyrehan. Derivrin, though a fine farm & good limestone soil, has always had a bad set of crazy tenants. (189) Mrs Moriarty has given the farm up to her son, who seems not a very stirring young man, though he is a fine strapping fellow. A road has lately been made into the farm, for which I have allowed him £25, but he complains that it is very inadequate. Three of the other tenants upon this farm are in a state of insolvency. Except this road, no improvement has been made in this farm since I first knew it. From hence we proceeded to Ballyrehan, which has come into my own hands since I was last here. This is a promising farm. In the last two years I have embanked the whole length of the river Brick and two brooks, by which the meadows are secured from floods. The tenants are draining, manuring, & shew every desire to improve their farms. We heard a long story of complaints between the other tenants and two brothers McCarthy who have been lately introduced upon the farm, & I intend to get rid of them. We arrived at Listowell by 6 o'clock.

(190) Tuesday, [August] 27th. We went over Tullamore, which I have improved very much by making a road through it & repairing the banks. From thence we returned home by Killarida, where Mr Pierce Mahony<sup>55</sup> has got a county road established & a quay made upon the river Gale<sup>56</sup> for the conveyance of turf & sea sand.

Wednesday, [August] 28th. We went over the farms of Derrindaffe & Forhane. Almost all the tenants have built limekilns to burn lime on their farms.

Thursday, [August] 29th. We saw Ballyhaurigan which Mr Hewson took us over. I walked over a road which has been trunked out across the bog from Ballyhaurigan to Lissihane<sup>57</sup> & which will give facility for the transport of lime to those farms, Knockburrane, & Lissihane. We went over them. We arrived at Tralee by dinner time.

Friday, [August] 30th. Arthur & I travelled by the Mail to Cork. Mr Gabbett & his son went with us as far as Killarney where they took leave of us. Arthur & I arrived in Cork by 4. He was not very well & we settled to (191) remain a day that he might take a dose of calomel.

Saturday, [August] 31st. Arthur all the better for his physic. We left Cork by the 2 o'clock steamer & reached Monkstown by 3. Pat Mahony<sup>58</sup> came up to me just as I was getting on board the steamer, & I took him on board the Amazon & sent him back by the next steamer.

Sunday, September 1st. We sailed from Cove the first of the morning. When we cleared the harbour, we were becalmed for two hours and poor Arthur was dreadfully sick. A breeze sprang up about one & carried us a good way towards the Tuskar.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> A servant.

<sup>55</sup> Peirce Mahony (1792-1853) of Wood Lawn and Kilmorna, Listowel, 4th son of Peirce Mahony of Wood Lawn and The Castle, Newcastle.

<sup>56</sup> River Galey.

<sup>57</sup> Lissahane, par. Kilfeighny, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>58</sup> A steward or bailiff of Sir John Benn-Walsh's Cork estate.

<sup>59</sup> Tuskar Rock, off Co. Wexford.

Monday, [September] 2nd. We had little wind & a long tiresome day beating about in sight of the Tuskar, which we could not weather till the tide turned.

Tuesday, [September] 3rd. The morning found us beyond the Wexford Lights. We were able to lie on course & were off the loch of Stangford<sup>60</sup> by sunset, but we could not find a pilot & were obliged to stand off again till morning. It was rather rough during the night.

[Visit of 1848]

[Volume XXI]

(75) Tuesday, [October] 3rd, [1848]. I went off by the express train at 9 & arrived at Holyhead by 6. Here I embarked in a fast new steamer, the Scotia. It blew a gale of wind, but we made our passage to Kingstown by eleven & I got to Morrison's Hotel, Dublin, by twelve. Mr Matthew Gabbett<sup>61</sup> met me at the station & we agreed to set out for Limerick by the 10 o'clock train.

Wednesday, [October] 4th. Mr Gabbett breakfasted with me & we started by 10. The Great Southern & Western is a slow railway. We arrived at Limerick at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past five.

Thursday, [October] 5th. We left Limerick by the Tarbert steamboat at 10. The day was cloudy and windy, with occasional heavy showers. We had a pleasant sail nevertheless to Tarbert. Opposite Stafford O'Brien's<sup>62</sup> place we picked up Sir William Clay<sup>63</sup> & Mr Parker<sup>64</sup> of Sheffield, the Lord of the Treasury, who were going to Killarney. Mr Gabbett & I found a car at (76) Tarbert which took us to Gortshanavoe, where we stopped & went over the farm. I have not visited it since the middleman was ejected & it came into my hands about two years ago. Much has been done to improve it. I have got some good tenants & ridded the farm of some bad ones and some cottiers. Thorough draining has effected an improvement on several lots, & altogether it is now a very improving estate. But the failure of the potatoe crop seems universal. We rode into Listowell & took up our quarters at Mrs McElligot's.

Friday, [October] 6th. Mr M. Gabbett & I started, accompanied by O'Connor<sup>65</sup> & Trant.<sup>66</sup> We went all over Tullamore & returned by Gortshanavoe. At Tullamore I have got rid of Buckley & got another, more promising Buckley in his place. It was a lovely day & we had a pleasant excursion. On several parts of Tullamore the tenants are too much crowded. Little improvement has been effected there since I was last in the country.

(77) Saturday, [October] 7th. We went all over Derrimdaffe. This farm & Forhane were the first upon which I began extensive improvements under Kane & McMahon's direction after my first visit to my Irish estates in 1821. I am better acquainted with them than with any & can estimate the advantage conferred. Derrimdaffe is wonderfully improved & in a few years more, if everything is not destroyed, will be extremely

<sup>60</sup> Strangford Lough, Co. Down.

<sup>61</sup> Matthew Gabbett succeeded his father as agent of Sir John Benn-Walsh.

<sup>62</sup> Stafford O'Brien (1783-1864) of Cratloe Woods, Cratloe, Co. Clare, and Blatherwycke, Wansford, Northamptonshire.

<sup>63</sup> Sir William Clay (1791-1869), M.P. for Tower Hamlets, 1832-57; Secretary of the Board of Control under Melbourne, 1839-41.

<sup>64</sup> John Parker (1799-1881), a Lord of the Treasury, 1837-41; First Secretary of the Admiralty, 1841, 1849-52; Joint Secretary of the Treasury, 1846-49; M.P. for Sheffield, 1832-52.

<sup>65</sup> John O'Connor, surveyor and bailiff for Sir John Benn-Walsh in Kerry.

<sup>66</sup> John Trant, bailiff for Sir John Benn-Walsh in Kerry.

enhanced in value. Wall, the middleman I ejected, paid me 180£. I raised it on getting possession to 260 or 70£ & in 1838, after having made all the fences & roads, to £400. I am now underdraining it, & it will eventually, I dare say, be worth £600. I have resolved to remove two of the younger tenants, Neligan & Hartnett, & to emigrate them. The farms will then be all large ones for the country, ranging from 35 to 62 Irish acres & averaging near £40 rent.

Sunday, [October] 8th. Mr Gabbett & I went to church. Met Captain Holmes,<sup>67</sup> Lord Listowell's agent. Mr M. Gabbett & I (78) walked to Gortshanavoe & paid old Mrs McCarthy a visit.

Monday, [October] 9th. I did not feel very well. However, I went over Forhane. Captain Holmes called and asked us to dine with him tomorrow. Both on Derrindaffe & Forhane we have got rid of some bad tenants & are throwing the farms into larger divisions. I have dispossessed young Corrigan from Forhane & given his division, which was £50 per annum, to one of the Curtins, who throws in his farm to his brother's & thus makes another £50 tenancy. At Derrindaffe I am going to emigrate Neligan & young Hartnett & shall thus have two lots to throw into the others. We got home early, & Captain Fairfield called, who is acting as agent for the Lock estate.

Tuesday, [October] 10th. We started early to Lissihane & Knockburrane. Met Captain Fairfield, who shewed me a quarry in a farm adjoining Ballyduhig,<sup>68</sup> (79) from whence he wishes me to join in making a road in the direction of Forhane. I went over Lissihane & Knockburrane, then walked across the bog to Ballyhaurigan, over which Mr Hewson<sup>69</sup> shewed me. He is an enterprising tenant & has built a good house. We dined with Captain Holmes & met Mr Hewson and the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Captain Hart. The poors rates are awful & are engulfing all the property of the country.

Wednesday, [October] 11th. Took 2 Paytherus. At home & in bed most of the day. . . .

Thursday, [October] 12th. I saw Ballyrehan, where Thomas Quinlan has built a very neat, two storied house & range of farm buildings. We proceeded on to Derivrin, but the afternoon was so wet that, after my Paytherus, (80) I did not like to get wet, & therefore I only went to Moriarty's house & saw his new bride. Great clearance has been effected here. We have got rid of a whole nest of bad & crazy tenants. Two families of Walsh have been evicted three years ago & one of the Horgans of Deriwhena introduced. Since that, Martin Sheahy's<sup>70</sup> family & Barrett's have been induced to emigrate. We have now only four tenants & no partnerships: Moriarty, £70; Maurice Connell, £90; Horgan, £80; & Connor, £36. We reached Tralee at 3 & pushed on to Killarney by 6.

Friday, [October] 13th. Mr M. Gabbett & I started by a coach for Cork at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 8 & arrived at the Imperial Hotel at 5. Shortly after, John Digby<sup>71</sup> came & we dined

<sup>67</sup> Captain James Murray Holme of Gurbenard, Listowel; became agent of the Earl of Listowel's estates, 1841.

<sup>68</sup> In par. Kilshenane, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>69</sup> George Hewson (1813-96), younger son of John Francis Hewson of Ennismore, Listowel.

<sup>70</sup> Sheehy.

<sup>71</sup> John Almerius Digby (b. 1826), 2nd and only surviving son of Captain Charles G. Digby, R.N. (d. 1829) and his wife Elizabeth, only daughter of Sir John Benn-Walsh, 1st Bart.; nephew of Sir John Benn-Walsh, 2nd Bart.; entered the army, 1844; became a Lieutenant-Colonel in Grenadier Guards.

& spent the evening together. He is looking very well & seems pleased with the country, though his outquaters are dull.

[Visit of 1849]  
[Volume XXI]

(217) Monday, [August] 6th, [1849]. Our fair wind continued the whole day. We made the land a little to the north of Point Roche by about 4 o'clock & got safely to anchor at Monkstown by six. We were very lucky, for the weather, which had been beautiful since we left London, changed just as we got inside the harbour. It began to rain tremendously & continued without cessation all night.

Tuesday, [August] 7th. The morning was very wet, but it cleared about one, & we left the Amazon at two & went up to Cork in a steamer. The afternoon was fine. Established ourselves at the Imperial Hotel in my old quarters. Digby<sup>72</sup> & I walked out to the cavalry barracks & just missed my nephew J. Digby, who is quartered at Ballincollig.

Wednesday, [August] 8th. Digby & I took a car to Classis & Grange. Met my nephew John driving in to see us. Asked him to dinner & went on to Classis. Callaghan the farmer is quite in the English style. He farms Classis & another large farm contiguous quite in the English way & has (218) excellent crops. Classis is beautiful land on a fine limestone and fit for any cultivation. We went on to Grange & walked all over it. I had never gone regularly over this farm before. As it is held on an old lease & the three lives are still in being, I felt but little interest in it formerly. It is now much in arrear, but we were not able to prosecute an ejectment brought last term, as Gabbett found it so difficult to trace all the interests, which had become very complicated. It is a very fine estate of about 600 acres & is let, the mansion to Mrs Clebborne, another division to a Mr Curtis who seems a good tenant, another to one Magner who holds it under the Court of Chancery, it being a part of the farm which had been alienated by the original lessee, & another division divided out among a set of low, wretched tenants by Mr Hawkes. The condition of this farm is a striking exemplification of the evil of these very long leases to middlemen. Found J. Digby on our return.

(219) Thursday, [August] 9th. Mr Matthew Gabbett arrived from Dublin. He is in good spirits about the prospects of the harvest & anticipates a considerable collection of rents. We went out to Ballygromans & had a fine day for going over it. Some of the tenants are very weak & crazy here.

Friday, [August] 10th. We went over Fergus. Here things looked very well, the farm much improved, the tenants all in good spirits, & the buildings I had ordered when last here, principally barns & cowhouses, adding greatly to the appearance of the homesteads. The day turned out wet, to my great regret, as a wet harvest will be very serious indeed. J. Digby dined with us & we settled that he should come with us on a little excursion to Glengariff<sup>73</sup> & Killarney.

Saturday, [August] 11th. A dreadful, blowing, stormy, rainy morning. Mr Gabbett, my son Digby, & I started from Cork at nine and picked up John Digby at Ballincollig. We changed horses at Macroom & proceeded on two open Irish cars (220) to Glengariff. The day was rather better after we left Macroom, but with heavy

<sup>72</sup> Digby Benn-Walsh (1829-69), 2nd son of Sir John Benn-Walsh, 2nd Bart.; became an Anglican clergyman.

<sup>73</sup> Glengarriff.

showers & squalls of wind & rain.

Sunday, [August] 12th. We left Glengariff in torrents of rain, which continued all day to Kenmare, where we stopped. Had a long conversation here with a Mr Austin, a Vice Guardian who had been some months in the Listowell union & had been moved in consequence of a disagreement with Captain Hart, the former inspector. He gave a lamentable account of the state of that union, which he attributed in great part to the recklessness of this Captain Hart & to the want of system. In speaking of the outdoor relief, he said, 'You must resist them at the point of the bayonet'. In Kenmare he mentioned that since his arrival the outdoor list had been reduced from 8,000 to 3,000.

Monday, [August] 13th. We had rather a better day for our drive to Killarney, which was very pretty. I have not indulged in descriptions of scenery in this tour, though it is extremely pretty the whole way, particularly about Glengariff. But we could not judge of it from the mists & rain, & besides, (221) descriptions of scenery are always rather insipid, though I retain all my early love for the thing itself. . . .

Tuesday, [August] 14th. As this is the return day at the Horse Guards, J. Digby's leave terminated & he left us early for Cork. We took a boat & saw the lower and middle lakes & Ross Island. Lord & Lady Kenmare<sup>74</sup> keep their grounds beautifully. We had a stormy day with heavy showers. Dined at the hotel at five & went on to Tralee by a coach at seven. We arrived there by 10.

Wednesday, [August] 15th. We started for Listowell at 10. We saw Derivrin first. This farm, very good land, has always been impoverished by bad tenants. I have emigrated the Sheehys & Barretts & it is now held in four divisions only. Moriarty has lately absconded & left the demesne, of which I have recovered possession. He is the only one of my tenants who has yet played (222) me this trick, so common now in all the distressed districts. I went all over the farm, which the rain prevented my doing in my visit last October. Maurice Connell is the only improving tenant as yet. I have thorough drained some fields for him, & he is burning lime, top dressing, & improving them. We went on to Quinlan's at Ballyrehan, but the evening was so wet that we could not go over the land & went on to Listowell, where we arrived to dinner.

Thursday, [August] 16th. The day was showery, but we proceeded first to Gortshanavoe & afterwards to Ballyduhig. At Gortshanavoe changes have taken place since last year. The fever & dysentery have made great work among my tenants in different places. Stack died of it. Michael Nowlan gives up his land & I emigrate him, & we have got a promising new tenant, Dillane, for these two lots. We then returned through Listowell & visited Ballyduhig, which has (223) come into my hands since May by the dropping of the last life, the late Knight of Kerry. It was a fine farm, about 500 English acres, chiefly dry & good land. It payed me £160 & the lessees, the Supples,<sup>75</sup> had a profit rent of about as much more. In better times it would have been a very pretty windfall, but now everything is a blank. There are six principal tenants: Walsh, Neville, Norton, Kenagh,<sup>76</sup> Loughnan,<sup>77</sup> & Fraley.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Valentine Browne, 2nd Earl of Kenmare (1788-1853), married Augusta Wilmot, 2nd daughter of Sir Robert Wilmot of Osmaston, Derbyshire, in 1816.

<sup>75</sup> ?Kerry Supple of Ballyhorgan, agent of Thomas A. Stoughton.

<sup>76</sup> ?Kenna or Kennagh.

<sup>77</sup> Loughnane.

<sup>78</sup> Frawley.

Walsh, Norton, & Kenagh are good ones. There are some cottiers. Two of them, an old pensioner & a man named Harding, are independent & cultivate their little lots very well.

I had this evening a conversation with Mr Flood, the Vice Guardian appointed by the poor law commissioners, which utterly dismayed & appalled me. The picture he draws of the union is frightful. Since last year the debts have increased eightfold & the union owes about £40,000. There are now 22,000 paupers on outdoor relief out of a population by the last (224) census of £78,000 [*sic*], now probably 10,000 less. He estimates that there are not potatoes to feed the people three months even if the crop be good, & the blight has reappeared in many parts. The vice guardians have already collected all the produce of the butter in rates, & they are prepared to strike another in September to secure the produce of the harvest. The fact is that the landed proprietors are now the mere nominal possessors of the soil. All the surplus produce is levied by the poor law commissioners. If, after they have stripped the tenants of all their returns, the landlord presses for his rent, the stock is sold, the tenants abscond, the land is laid waste, rates accumulate, & finally the land is sold under the powers of the new act<sup>79</sup> to pay these charges, which are enforced by powers so arbitrary & tyrannical.

Friday, [August] 17th. I am deeply affected by this most heavy stroke, by which my Irish property is rendered (225) as valueless as a Jamaica estate.<sup>80</sup> I went today over Derrindaffe. This was, as I mentioned in my last visit, one of the farms in which I took the greatest interest, as it was, with Forhane, the first upon which I commenced my improvements in early days. Since last year I have emigrated the families of three insolvent tenants: young Hartnett & his wife, Cornelius Guerin, & Neligan. They are, I should think, nearly twenty persons. Patrick Guerin died of the fever, and these vacancies have enabled me to consolidate the farms among the good tenants, which in better times was my great object. Derrindaffe has been much improved and is still capable of great additional improvement. The tenants all appear in good heart & are trying all they can to manure & improve their lots. I was grieved to see upon Connor's farm one great instance of the potato blight in a whole field. (226) We are bored every night by a certain Mr Leslie Foster, a son of the late judge,<sup>81</sup> a pragmatistical coxcomb who besieges us with jabber.

Saturday, [August] 18th. I devoted this day to Tullamore. It turned out tolerably fine. Here also clearances have been effected. Widow Murphy of Inchimore<sup>82</sup> has given up her farm & Keefe from Ballyrehane has succeeded her. Some of the cottiers have been emigrated & their cabins levelled. Bat Madigan died, his family have been emigrated, & his lot thrown into the others. All the partnerships have been dissolved, & though some of the lots are too small, the tenants all appear improving with energy. My estate offers the singular spectacle of great prosperity, improvement, & progress as far as the tenants & state of the land is concerned, yet neutralized by all the

<sup>79</sup> The Incumbered Estates Act of 1849.

<sup>80</sup> This anguished lament over the passage of the Incumbered Estates Act of July 1849 was unnecessary. The new law was indeed a hard blow for the many bankrupt or heavily incumbered proprietors whose estates were forced to sales at very low rates in the early 1850s. But Benn-Walsh was perfectly solvent and not seeking to sell land. After 1854 land values dramatically improved.

<sup>81</sup> John Leslie Foster (1780-1842), a Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland, 1830-42; appointed a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Ireland, 1842.

<sup>82</sup> Inch Moor, par. Galey, bar. Iraghticonnor.

exactions of the government & of the poor rate. We got through Tullamore early & had time to visit Forhane. Here (227) also the worst tenants have been got rid of at the expence of emigrating them. Corrigan & Patrick Guerin are gone & instead of seven, we have only five lots: the two Curtins, Regan, Leary, & widow Stack. The Curtins are excellent tenants. In addition to the overwhelming amount of poor rates, the tenantry have to contend with unprecedentedly low prices, particularly for butter.

Sunday, [August] 19th. We went to church. I paid Captain Holmes a long visit. He is quite out of humour with the government proceedings, though a Whig. They shock all his principles of political economy. Walked with Mr Walsh of Ballyduhig in the valley near Ballinruddery, which was always my promenade in earlier days.

Monday, [August] 20th. I went over Ballyhaurigan with Mr George Hewson. We then passed by the road across the bog to Lissihane & Knockburrane & finished with Ballyrehan. We had quite an affecting scene with the (228) pretty heiress of Knockburrane, Regan's daughter. It seems her mother has taken to drink, uses her ill, & is running through the property as fast as she can. The poor girl in despair thinks of going to America.

This day completed the survey of my estates, with the exception of Killarida which, as being held by a middleman, I do not care to visit. At any other time I should have derived great satisfaction from the evidences of their improvement & the advantages perceptible from my having always kept the population in check & latterly reduced it so much by emigration. Now all is poisoned by the reflection that it is done in vain.

Tuesday, [August] 21st. We left Listowel at eleven & took the steamboat to Limerick at Tarbert. We met on board an agreeable, intelligent man, a Mr Speight,<sup>83</sup> of a great firm of merchants & corn dealers at Limerick. He mentioned (229) that they had lately (within the last two or three years) purchased a considerable estate in Clare, from which they had emigrated 1,400 persons, that this estate was now to be formed by the boundary commissioners into an electoral division to itself, & that he then anticipated that the poor rates would be within his controul & that the property would be a valuable & improving one.

Wednesday, [August] 22nd. We left Limerick by the 9 o'clock train & arrived in Dublin by three. We found Morrison's & Gresham's both full & established ourselves at Tuthill's in Dawson St. . . .

Thursday, [August] 23rd. I went with Mr Matthew Gabbett to the Boundary Commission Office & met Captain Larcom<sup>84</sup> & the other two commissioners. They are, I think, desirous of doing all they can to put properties together. It is very unlucky that my Kerry farms are so scattered. They shewed me the plan which they had proposed. (230) The electoral divisions will be greatly reduced, & I think that mine will be thrown with better partners than at present. The union also is to be diminished, a part thrown to Tralee & a new union formed at Castleisland. This will be a great improvement, as the workhouse accommodation will be larger in proportion to the district. This may do something in time for the properties if they

<sup>83</sup> Francis Spaight (1790-1861) of Derry Castle, Killaloe, Co. Tipperary.

<sup>84</sup> Sir Thomas Aiskew Larcom (1801-79), eminent Irish civil servant; supervisor of Ordnance Survey, 1828-46; appointed a Commissioner of Public Works, 1846; became Deputy-Chairman of the Board of Works, 1850, and reorganized the boundaries of the poor-law unions in accord with the recommendations of the Boundary Commission, which he headed; Irish Under-Secretary, 1853-68.

can outlive the immediate strain upon them.

We took Digby to shew him the Phoenix Park, [Trinity] College Library, &c. There were the garrison races in the park, and as the day was fine, it was a beautiful scene. In the evening we went to a mimes theatre & saw 'Othello' & 'The Irishman in London'.

Friday, [August] 24th. I got my letters & at three o'clock we started for the yacht. . . .

[Visit of 1850]

[Volume XXII]

(153) Tuesday, [August] 6th, [1850]. I intended to have seen John Digby, whose regiment is quartered at the Royal Barracks, before I left Dublin, but I found that there was only one morning train, at 10 o'clock, & that I must therefore lose another day, so I postponed it till my return. I left at 10, secured a place in the coupée, & enjoyed a most lovely day, though there were one or two thundershowers. The carriages, line, &c., are most admirable on this Great Southern & Western, but I observed very little traffic; they run but few trains & I could not but deplore my rashness in investing 5,300£ in 100 shares in this undertaking. I reached Limerick by  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 3, wrote to Arthur from where I received a letter this morning, & to J. Digby. Cruise's is a comfortable hotel. I walked on the quay after dinner & saw an emigrant ship. They may talk of the horrors of the middle passage, but I cannot think there is much difference between the accommodation for the whites & the blacks.

(154) Wednesday, [August] 7th. I left Limerick by the Kilrush steamer at 7, which landed me, or rather placed me, on board a lighter moored off the quay, in the midst of a pelting rain at Tarbert. I went on in the public car & stopped at Gortshanavoe, sending Charles<sup>85</sup> on to Listowell. I went over Maher's farm, to which Curtin's has been annexed since I was in the country. I have emigrated Curtin & his family. Mr Matthew Gabbett, with Trant & Connor, joined me at Maher's & I went over the rest of the farm. McCarthy shewed a good specimen of the beneficial results of thorough draining in a meadow with rich grass, formerly a rushy field. Old Mrs McCarthy is in great distress, as one of her younger sons has run off, it is supposed, to America with £14 which she said was my rent. I was grieved to find the potato disease general in this part of the country; the crop is destroyed here, although it looked well between Dublin & Limerick. (155) I was also greatly disappointed to find that Mr Gabbett had made a most unsuccessful collection of rent & that there was little probability of the times improving.

Thursday, [August] 8th. We set out rather late for Tullamore, for my usual luck pursues me and the weather has set in very rainy, wild, & stormy. However, the afternoon turned out fine, with occasional showers. Mr Julian of Tullamore has fallen a victim to the times and Tullamore is let to a working farmer named Buckley, a wealthy elderly man who is a promising tenant. He shewed me a fine stock of cows, pigs, &c. I visited some repairs of the banks at Shronebeg<sup>86</sup> & Inchimore & then went round the back of the farms of Mount Hayes<sup>87</sup> to Tullabeg, where a bog trench has been cut & a great deal of land reclaimed from the bog. The tenants here are very industrious & haul a great deal of sea sand.

<sup>85</sup> A servant.

<sup>86</sup> In par. Galey, bar. Iraghticonnor.

<sup>87</sup> In par. Galey, bar. Iraghticonnor.



(156) Friday, [August] 9th. We went today to Derrindaffe & Forhane, my two first essays in the way of improvement. Here, after I evicted Wall the middleman from Derrindaffe & took up Forhane from old Billy Hilliard about 1823 or 4, Kane & McMahon laid out a number of new banks & ditches, & Derrindaffe was redivided into new farms & boundaries & subdivided into five acre fields. I built for them new houses & barns of mud & some of stone. All these improvements are still in existence. I of late years, since the introduction of thorough draining, have drained a great part of them. Since the potato famine I have emigrated several of the worst tenants & enlarged the farms. Everything now is promising & would be in the most rapid progress of improvement, did not the famine, the poor's rates, & the adverse spirit of legislation defeat all my endeavours. The tenants are still in good heart & exert themselves to improve. (157) We crossed the bog to Ballyduhig, which has come into my hands since March 1849 by the death of the Knight of Kerry, the last life in the lease. We are now making fresh divisions and reletting the farm. I have some promising tenants upon it, particularly Walsh & Kenagh. The latter is a most improving tenant and has a notable, stirring wife. They gave us a little entertainment of tea, eggs, bread, & butter. It was pleasant to see so much activity & spirit. They seemed such good creatures. She exhibited her dairy, her calves, & her homespun linen & towels with great pride. How hard it is that the times should be so adverse to these industrious people. . . .

(158) Saturday, [August] 10th. We went over Ballyhaurigan, Lissihane, & Knockburrane. Mr George Hewson, who holds Ballyhaurigan from me & Ennismore<sup>88</sup> from Lord Listowell, is a good specimen of the Irish gentleman farmer. He is a remarkably handsome young man, active, intelligent, & enterprising; he has done a vast deal on his farms in every way & has most magnificent stock. He has short-horns, Devons, & a black breed of Dutch cows he esteems much as milkers. I appointed to go over with him on Monday his banks & improvements at Ennismore. From thence we crossed the bog & saw Lissihane & Knockburrane. . . .

(159) Sunday, [August] 11th. Went to church. Mr Coffee, Lord Burghersh's<sup>89</sup> new agent, paid us a long visit.

Monday, [August] 12th. Mr Gabbett appointed this day to receive some rent. I went over Killarida, Kiltean,<sup>90</sup> and Derrimlought,<sup>91</sup> accompanied by O'Connor. These farms have been always held by a middleman, a Mr Leake, on a doubtful sort of title, a letter of my uncle Walsh<sup>92</sup> to Dr Maunsell,<sup>93</sup> promising 3 lives & two in reversion on condition of spending £400 in improvements. This has never been done & in these times Mr M. Gabbett hopes to evict the interest. We have given him notice to quit. It is in a wretched condition & the tenants appear paupers, but there are great capabilities. (160) There is a great tract of fine land on Kiltean & another on Killarida subject to flood at high water but to be reclaimed by banks. There is

<sup>88</sup> In par. Dysert, bar. Iraghticonnor.

<sup>89</sup> Ernest Fitzroy Neville Fane, Lord Burghersh (1824-51), 2nd son of 11th Earl of Westmoreland; married Augusta Selina Elizabeth Lock, only child of William Lock, in 1849.

<sup>90</sup> Kiltean, par. Galey, bar. Iraghticonnor.

<sup>91</sup> Dromalught, par. Galey, bar. Iraghticonnor.

<sup>92</sup> John Walsh (1725?-95) of Warfield Park, Bracknell, Berkshire, bequeathed his property to his niece's husband John Benn of Ormathwaite, Keswick, Cumberland, who assumed the surname and arms of Walsh by royal license in compliance with the terms of John Walsh's will.

<sup>93</sup> Apparently either Thomas Maunsell, LL.D., or William Maunsell, D.D., 1st and 4th sons respectively of Richard Maunsell of Limerick.

lime, turf in abundance, & clay for bricks and tiles upon it. An old house there was built of brick made on the premises & wonderfully hard & enduring.

I crossed the river in a boat Mr Hewson sent & he met me on the other side with a horse. We rode all round the banks he has recently made here with a government loan. It is just the same subject as Killarida is opposite & the banking would be equally beneficial. Mr Hewson has about 500 head of cattle. He gave me an early dinner at his house & drove me into Listowell. I met there Mr May Dennis,<sup>94</sup> a gentleman in the neighbourhood, & a young Mr Hickson,<sup>95</sup> son of my old tenant. Mr Hewson is urgent for an abatement.

(161) Tuesday, [August] 13th. We left Listowell and visited Ballyrehan & Derivrin in our way to Tralee. At Ballyrehan there was little new to remark. Mrs Quinlan shewed me a hat of her son which had been cut through by some fellows who waylaid him at Listowell fair at the instigation of Keefe, who has been moved to Inchimore but still retains a grudge against Quinlan, whom he considers to have procured his removal from Ballyrehan, though Inchimore is a better farm. At Derivrin we saw a great change for the better effected by the new tenant Morgan Connell who has succeeded Moriarty. This Morgan Connell was a very improving tenant on the estate of Mr Leslie Foster and was ejected by him very summarily last year, partly through some animosity between Connell & Foster's agent Nolan, partly because Mr Leslie Foster had some idea of farming the lands himself. The case created much sympathy in the country & my giving Connell the preference for Derivrin, then vacant by Moriarty's absconding, (162) was a popular act. I have been very lucky in him. Old Connell is a sort of industrious, painstaking fellow who has worked his way on in the world. He has a son, a very active, intelligent young man who appears to have a taste for improvement & embellishment. In Moriarty's days the house & premises looked like the garden of the sluggard; now the house is neatly whitewashed & all round it made neat, a quick fence planted in front, a number of shrubs on the lawn, everything looking in order. They have also done a great deal of improvement on the farm. The canal is cleaned, deepened, & enlarged, which is a most important benefit. All the new tenants have been great gains to the estate: Buckley of Tullamore, Dillane of Gortshanavoe, Carey of Derrimdaffe, & this Connell. We posted on to Tralee & Killarney, where we arrived at about 8 o'clock, having been delayed by a restive horse.

(163) Wednesday, [August] 14th. We left Killarney by  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10 by a coach to Mallow, where we met the train, & got to Cork by 5. Put up at the Imperial Hotel.

Thursday, [August] 15th. . . . We went out to Grange & Ballygromans. Mr Salkeld<sup>96</sup> was to have met me here from Cumberland, but I have not heard from him. The general impression is that he will not redeem. We went to Ballygromans. Priest Walsh met us.

Friday, [August] 16th. . . . We went over Fergus. Many of the tenants are going back rapidly & falling victims to the free trade & to the failure of the potatoes which is extending everywhere.

<sup>94</sup> Meade Caulfield Dennis (1810-91), of Dromin, Ballybunnion, Co. Kerry, and Fort Granite, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow; married Margaret Katherine Crosbie, daughter of Major Peirce Crosbie of Ballyheige Castle, in 1855.

<sup>95</sup> A son of Reverend Robert Hickson, formerly the middleman of the townlands of Inchimagilleragh East and West in Duagh parish.

<sup>96</sup> Joseph Salkeld of Temple Sowerby, Penrith, Cumberlandshire, and Avoca, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, a middleman who held Grange from Sir John Benn-Walsh.

(164) Saturday, [August] 17th. We left Cork by the 9 o'clock train & reached Dublin at 4. My dear nephew John Digby met me at the station & dined with me at Morrison's. Mr Salkeld wrote to say that he could not meet me but should be in Dublin next Wednesday & would call on Mr Gabbett. His connexion with Grange is a curious instance of the danger & mischief of middleman interests. He is the son of a Cumberland gentleman of independent fortune & is sheriff for the county this year. His father, who had been in India, married a Miss Wiseman from the county of Cork & received as part of her fortune a mortgage of the original lessee's interest of Grange. Mr Salkeld, the father, subsequently purchased the equity of redemption in this mortgage & thus became the representative of the original lessee, subject to several leases he had previously made. The estate was, until these sad times, worth about £700 a year & paid a head rent of 365£ to me, a profit rent of £113 to Mr Salkeld, (165) and the remaining profits distributed among a number of sub lessees' mortgages, &c. My head rent was always paid by Hawkes & Curtis who held together two thirds of the lands. Latterly, Hawkes let the demesne to Mrs Clebborne, reserving the rents of about £90 let to 3 tenants of the name of Mahony as his profit. My head rent of £365 was thus paid in the proportions of about £225 by Mrs Clebborne & of £140 by Curtis. The real circumstances of this complicated tenure were never understood either by me or by Mr Gabbett, Senior. It was always supposed by us that the Hawkes's were the representatives of the original lessee Patrickson. But in these bad times Mrs Clebborne got greatly in arrear & I brought an ejectment for £800. Mr Matthew Gabbett, with great industry & sagacity, through the aid of the registration courts, unravelled this tangled skein, & the liability for this arrear to me is traced to Mr Salkeld, who is the only person in a position to redeem. He wants to make various terms, but in the actual (166) condition of Ireland, being now in possession under the ejectment, I shall hold fast to the alternative: either let him pay me my £800 or, by my holding where I am, the original lease to Patrickson & all the complications resulting from them [*sic*] will be extinguished. There are several other interests carved out of these. Mr Salkeld gave a lease of all the upper part of the farm to a butter merchant named Scanlan. This man failed & this part is in Chancery & let to a tenant of the name of Magner, who has quite run it out. Mr Lombard<sup>97</sup> the clergyman has about 7 acres close to the parsonage house, & an old man named Leary has 17 acres more of Curtis's part, but this is the general outline of this complicated affair.

Sunday, [August] 18th. Mr Matthew Gabbett called after church. We talked over the different matters connected with the estate: the arrangement with Mr Salkeld, the chances (167) of getting rid of Leake from Killarida, the eviction of the Nowlans, Buckley, & Connor from Kerry & of William Forde, the Danahys, & Learys from Cork. I find that at this season of the year they can be emigrated for £2 10[s.] a head, which I am anxious to do. I am very fortunate in Matthew Gabbett. He is a very gentlemanlike, intelligent young man. His father had many good points, but though an honorable, upright man & a good man of business, he was far from having the same zeal or entering so cordially into all my plans as his son. If it had not been for the lamentable times, I am sure that my Irish estates would have paid better & been more improving than they ever were.

John Digby called for me about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 2 & we drove out to see Lolotte Light.

<sup>97</sup> Reverend Edmund Lombard.

Sir Henry<sup>98</sup> & Lady Light<sup>99</sup> are established at a pretty villa just beyond the Phoenix Park, the property of Mrs Holmes, the mother of the gentleman who has married Lolotte's sister. (168) Lolotte was delighted to see me and we passed the afternoon there. I dined at the mess with John Digby. They appeared a gentlemanlike set of officers: Captain Mansell, Mr Fox, Mr Clifton, Dr Lennox, Mr Oakes. John took me to the station where we parted. I went down to sleep at Kingstown to be ready to embark.

Monday, [August] 19th. I left at 9 in the Anglia, Holyhead Railway packet. It was a fine day overhead, but a strong wind WNW & a good deal of sea. We were four hours & a half. I left Holyhead by the express at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 2 & arrived at Leamington<sup>100</sup> by ten. My dear Liz<sup>101</sup> was just gone to bed, but the servants were up & I found all prepared for my arrival.

[Visit of 1851]  
[Volume XXIII]

(131) Wednesday, [August] 20th [1851]. I left Kingstown by the nine o'clock train & caught the Limerick one by 10. I travelled in the coupé with a very entertaining Irish Roman Catholic priest who had travelled for three years all over the United States, soliciting subscriptions to rebuild the Roman Catholic chapel at Askeaton which was destroyed by a fire. He returned, having been appointed by the Bishop of Limerick Dr Ryan<sup>102</sup> to a parish of Ballingarry. His name was Father Wainright or Enright.<sup>103</sup> It is an odd story, but his accounts of the U U States [*sic*] were very interesting. I got to Limerick at 4 & put up at Cruise's Hotel.

Thursday, [August] 21st. I had the pleasure of hearing that Mr Matthew Gabbett had arrived in the course of the night. We went by the steamer to Tarbert & took a coach to Listowell. We got down at Gortshanavoe & walked over that farm. Considerable improvements have been made since last year, particularly a new cut by which the Douglas stream, which used to flood (132) all the lower meadows, has been diverted. Two of the Nowlans & Curtins have been got rid of, & Maher, McCarthy, Dillane, & Shanahan are fine, good tenants who hold all the farm with the exception of one little corner of about 8 Irish acres of coarse ground held by an industrious labourer of the name of Mahony. Almost all the paupers & cottiers have been removed.

Friday, [August] 22nd. It was a wet morning. We went over the workhouse & saw the paupers in a state of mutiny at the establishment of a capstan mill for them to work at. However, they succumbed at last. We went on to Ballyduhig, as the afternoon turned out fine. On this farm I have three very good tenants: Walsh, Naughten, & Kenna. Neville & Loughnane not so good.

Saturday, [August] 23rd. A showery day. We went over Killarida. This is a very important addition that has been made to my property in this county by the eviction of the middleman (133) Leake, who was the last of those in Kerry holding under

<sup>98</sup> Sir Henry Light (b. 1783), appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Antigua, 1836; Governor and Commander in Chief of British Guiana, 1838-48; created Bart., 1848.

<sup>99</sup> Lady Charlotte Light, daughter of Richard Parry of Warfield, Berkshire.

<sup>100</sup> Leamington Spa in Warwickshire.

<sup>101</sup> Elizabeth Benn-Walsh, only daughter of Sir John Benn-Walsh, 1st Bart., and sister of Sir John Benn-Walsh, 2nd Bart.; married Captain Charles G. Digby, R.N. (d. 1829).

<sup>102</sup> Dr John Ryan (d. 1864), Bishop of Limerick, 1828-64.

<sup>103</sup> Enright is a common Limerick name.

leases granted by my great uncle Walsh. I dare say that in my former journals, when I have been visiting Ireland & giving an account of my progress through the property, I have not omitted some mention of this farm, which was always described to me by old John Sheehan & others as one of the best I had. But it was held on a long & doubtful term by Leake, & I had little practical knowledge of it till last year when I went carefully over it.

The history of it is this. A middleman of the name of George Leake occupied it from the year 1778 on a promise of a lease for three lives at £330 a year. He made various applications for an abatement, & it appeared that a letter was written from Mr Walsh to his agent Dr Maunsell in which he consented to reduce the rent from £330 to £300 &, moreover, to grant to Mr Leake a power of nominating two new lives at the expiration of the three original one [*sic*], on condition that Leake would immediately take out a lease on these terms (no lease at all, but merely (134) a promise of one having heretofore been made), & also that he would lay out £400 in permanent improvements, particularly banking. No lease was ever executed, nor any money laid out in permanent improvements, nor was there any distinct evidence in our possession of what had taken place between the parties consequent upon this letter, but Mr Walsh dying shortly after & Mr Leake being left so many years in undisturbed possession of Killarida at the abated rent, Mr Gabbett, Senior, always thought that a court of equity would enforce the execution of the lease on the terms stated in Mr Walsh's letter. I took two or three very able Chancery opinions, both English & Irish, on the point. Lord Plunkett<sup>104</sup> gave one strongly in my favor that Leake had no title whatever, but Sir Anthony Hart<sup>105</sup> gave the direct contrary opinion, & another eminent Irish lawyer, I think Saurin,<sup>106</sup> said the case was doubtful & a fit one for a compromise. One of the original lives, Bolton Waller,<sup>107</sup> still survives, & during the thirty years that I have been in possession of (135) my Irish property, I always felt this doubtful claim of a right of putting in two additional lives one of the greatest stumbling blocks in my way. But we always thought it the better course to wait the demise of this Mr Bolton Waller & then to endeavour to set aside this claim to a renewal. However, last year Mr Leake was getting into arrear, & in consequence of the distressed state of the country we understood that he had little or no profit out of the farm, & Mr Matthew Gabbett, who had always taken a view more in favor of the validity of my case than his father had, recommended me strongly to bring an ejectment at once & throw Mr Leake upon his defence, which could only be in equity & not at law. We accordingly brought an ejectment, to which Mr Leake took no defence, & entered into possession last July. Mr Matthew Gabbett considers that I am now secure in my possession, for as Mr Leake took no steps at the proper time to stay the proceedings at law by filing a bill in Chancery to establish his equitable right to (136) have a lease executed, he cannot now that he has suffered an eviction set

<sup>104</sup> William Conyngham Plunket, 1st Baron (1764-1854), appointed Irish Attorney-General, 1822; made Chief Justice of Ireland with a peerage, 1827; Lord Chancellor of Ireland, 1830-41.

<sup>105</sup> Sir Anthony Hart (1754?-1831), appointed a King's Counsel, 1807; made Vice-Chancellor of England, 1827; promoted to Lord Chancellor of Ireland by Lord Goderich, 1827, but superseded by Lord Plunket, 1830.

<sup>106</sup> William Saurin (1757-1839), Irish Solicitor-General, 1807-22; indignantly refused both a peerage and a judgeship when superseded as Solicitor-General, and returned to the bar; retired, 1831.

<sup>107</sup> Bolton Waller (1769-1854), 2nd son of John Thomas Waller of Castletown Manor, Pallas-kenry, Co. Limerick; succeeded his brother John Waller in 1836.

up this claim. In the midst of all the losses & anxiety which my Irish property has caused me of late, it is some compensation to have put an end to this term of Mr Leake's & to enter into possession of this very improvable portion of the property.

It was a nasty, showery day. We set off after breakfast with our two aid de camps Trant & O'Connor in a car. Trant preceded us by the bye, as I had sent him on to examine different portions of the estate to discover where the best clay might be found for making bricks & tiles. There was an old house on Killarida which I noticed last year, built with very hard, good brick, which gave me the idea that this might be a good situation for a tile yard. It has a good road connecting it with Tullamore, & as it lies on the banks of the Gale & the Cashion<sup>108</sup> & close to the junction of the Feale & Cashion, it has (137) a facility of water carriage to my quay at Ballyhaurigan & to all parts of the estate. Killarida, Kiltean, & Derimlought are three townlands lying together & held heretofore under the same lease. This farm on the map used to remind me a little of the figure of Euclid's 47th proposition, 1st book, Killarida having a rude resemblance to the square of the hypothenuse, & the other two, of the two sides. Killarida is bounded for a mile & half by the Gale, which joins the Cashion a little below. The Cashion again comes to the lowest part of Kiltean. One farm not belonging to me, Ballyouneen,<sup>109</sup> being at the extreme point at the junction of the Gale & Cashion. Both on Killarida & Kiltean there is a tract of very rich grazing land along the banks of the two rivers, at Killarida about 220 English acres & at Kiltean about 100 ditto, but both rendered comparatively useless by the want of drainage & of embanking against the floods. These were the improvements which Mr Walsh originally stipulated for & which were never executed by Leake. (138) We walked all over the three farms. They contain upwards of 1,100 Irish or 1,800 English acres. They have a great tract of bog. Perhaps the arable meadow & pasture may be about 1,000 acres & the other 800 bog. There is one good tenant, Danahy, with a stock of 50 cattle. Dillane on Kiltean, Connor, Wolfe of Derimlought, & one or two others may be tried. There are three or four to be got rid of. This estate affords the finest field for improvement of all my property, but the banks will be very expensive. It is something like draining the marshes of Essex, as the rivers are tidal ones &, at high spring tides, flood the lowlands. There must be high & strong banks & then deep, open drains & sluices to discharge the water of the interior at low tide. We have also the hope of finding limestone, as there is a good deal of running stone on Derimlought, & it is related that the solid rock has been found on Kiltean. Trant was successful in finding excellent clay near the high road. There (139) is also the greatest facility of procuring the sea sand in lighters to all parts of the farm. We had a nasty, windy, showery day, but we returned much gratified with all the capabilities we had observed on this estate. We think of embanking Kiltean first, which is a less work, & then proceeding to the great work of Killarida.

Sunday, [August] 24th. I went to church. The afternoon was fine. We walked to Gortshanavoe, or Koilbee as it is now generally called. We went to see where we could build a new cowhouse for Maher. We walked over McCarthy's farm & noted well the effect of draining on the coarse, rushy fields. Here are several undrained & on which one can scarcely walk; others, drained, are rapidly changing into good meadows, the rushes gradually dwindling & good grass pushing its way among their branches. McCarthy has already converted one into a good meadow by top dressing

<sup>108</sup> River Cashen.

<sup>109</sup> In par. Rattoo, bar, Iraghticonnor.

with sand, a safer mode of improvement in these times than breaking (140) up, though the latter way is strenuously insisted upon by a Mr Fane, a Scotch agricultur-[al]ist sent by the Dublin Society, & with whom we had a long conversation. We dined with Captain Home<sup>110</sup> & met Mr Coffee, Lady Burghersh's agent.

Tuesday, [August] 26th. The weather is very stormy & wet. I went over Derrim-daffe, which is now in a very satisfactory state. No paupers, the farm let to good tenants, & the drainage & other improvements telling. The great criterion in these times is to watch whether the farmers are increasing their cow & dairy stock. If they are reducing their cattle & ploughing up their lands, depend upon it, they are going to the bad, but if they are adding a collop<sup>111</sup> or two to their stock, the productiveness of their farm & the security for their rent are both increasing.

Wednesday, [August] 27th. We went over the part of Derim-daffe we had not seen yesterday & Forhane. I hope the Curtins are getting over their difficulties. We went on to (141) Lissihane, Knockburrane, & Ballyrehan, but the afternoon was so wet that we could not go over these farms. Staid some time at Quinlan's. He is adding to his outbuildings.

Monday, [August] 25th. (In writing up my journal at Leamington, for I was too busy to do so at the time, I found that I had assigned Monday & Tuesday's proceedings to Tuesday & Wednesday, omitting the real Monday's work, which was the visit to Tullamore. In the last page, on finding my mistake, I altered the dates to their proper days, & I now insert Monday 25th out of its proper order.) We had a fine day for going over Tullamore. There has not been much done here since last year. Some cottiers & Richard Walsh have been got rid of. Mulvihill, Foran, & Sheahan have made neat farmsteads & outoffices. The Tullabeg tenants are eating into the bog, but slowly. The two Buckleys, father & son, are going on well. They have drained three large fields & the father has nearly 50 head of milch cows & makes (142) a firkin of butter every other day.

Thursday, [August] 28th. We left Listowell. Saw Derivrin in our way to Tralee. Great improvement is making here by Morgan Connell, whose son appears a most active young man. Lady Burghersh has deepened her canal on Gurtadrislig,<sup>112</sup> which has given us three feet additional fall & enabled us to sink our portion still more & dry more of the coarse, reclaimable land. Two neat little stone bridges have been built over the canal. The aspect of this farm has been quite changed since Moriarty & the swarm of bad tenants have all been got rid of. Trant & O'Connor took leave of us here. The latter has triumphed over his accusers & is now surveying & altering the rates for the union. We got to Killarney by 8 o'clock on a car.

Friday, [August] 29th. We left Killarney at 8. I got the box seat by O'Brien the stagecoachman, who is a great whip & a character. Reached Mallow by 2 & Cork by  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 3.

(143) Saturday, [August] 30th. A lovely day. The weather has taken up at last. We went over Ballygromans & Grange. The latter was an interesting visit, since it has now come into my own hands, Mr Salkeld having declined to redeem it. The determination of the two middleman leases of Killarida & Grange are the great events of the year. On Ballygromans I have lost my tenant Dennis Lane. His widow

<sup>110</sup> James Murray Holme, Lord Listowell's agent.

<sup>111</sup> I.e., as many cattle as can be fed in an Irish acre. An Irish acre is equivalent to 1.62 statute acres.

<sup>112</sup> Gortadrislig, par. Kilcaragh, bar. Clanmaurice.

is the most masculine hag I ever saw. I went all over Grange. The Hawkes family are in possession of the house & demesne, & young Hawkes<sup>113</sup> is to be the tenant. This is the only part of the arrangement I do not like. He is an amiable young man, & as the Hawkes's were so long in possession of Grange, Gabbett thinks he has a claim, but I doubt his having adequate capital, & his father is an old, broken down Irish squireen living with his family on the lands. He is a disagreeable tenant. The other arrangements are promising. Curtis is a good tenant, & we have got rid of old Leary & (144) annexed his division of 18 acres to Curtis's. Two of the Mahoneys, who had the flat land across the road below the demesne, have been got rid of & there are several applicants for it. Callaghan, the good farmer who lives at Classis, is one & a man of the name of McSweeney another. As Cork depends on corn, the rents appear to have fallen more than in Kerry. We paid a visit to the Reverend Mr Lombard, the clergyman who has a portion of Grange adjoining the glebe.

Sunday, [August] 31st. Mr Gabbett was indisposed. I went to the cathedral church & afterwards walked along the quays.

Monday, September 1st. We went over East & West Fergus. Here we have been following out the same process of weeding out the smallest & weakest tenants and adding to the size of the farms. William Forde, the Danahys, & the two Fordes, Corkery's partners, have been got rid of. There are still several tenants who must go: (145) Corkery, Crowley, & the two Dolohenys.<sup>114</sup>

I must not omit a very Irish story which amused me much at Grange on Saturday. Old Mr Hawkes shewed me all over the house, which is a very large, plain, two storied mansion built by his father on the walls & site of an old castle. The walls are very thick. In one of the upper rooms, used as a lumber room, I spied two holes in the wall, one blackened with smoke & opening into the flue of a chimney, the other made downwards in a slanting direction towards the back door. I asked what the first hole was & Mr Hawkes replied, 'Sure, the kitchen chimney was badly built & apt to take fire, so we made this hole for the convenience [*sic*] of pouring down water & putting out the fire'. This Hibernian expedient seemed to me more likely to cause the burning of the house than the putting out the flame. And what, I asked, was the other hole for. 'Why', said (146) old Hawkes, 'in 1822 the country was in a disturbed state & the people went about attacking the middlemen's houses, who were a bould, intrepid gentry, & we defended your property for you & kept down the people. Perhaps some day next time you will have to do it for yourselves & won't find it so easy. Now, this house was a very strong house & the walls built of the thickness of the ould castle on which it stood, & it was well garrisoned too, for there was my father & his three sons & plenty of arms & ammunition. And we bricked up the windows & barricadoed it below, so that it would not have been easy to get in without artillery, & that hole you see was made to command the back door, that we might fire down upon the people if they tried to break in.' I remember visiting this old John Hawkes, the father, on my first visit to Ireland in 1821 or '22,<sup>115</sup> & a fine looking old man he was. He was a wealthy (147) and respectable man & took a certain place among the lesser gentry of the country, but at his death the family went downhill.

Tuesday, [September] 2nd. I left Cork with Mr M. Gabbett by the 9 o'clock. We arrived in Dublin by four & I went down to the hotel at Kingstown. . . . Mrs Gabbett

<sup>113</sup> John Hawkes, Jr.

<sup>114</sup> ? Doheny.

<sup>115</sup> In fact, 1821.



sent me an invitation to dinner & I had the pleasure of another evening with my old agent, for whom I have a real regard. However, his son Matthew is a much more active & efficient agent than he ever was & enters far more fully into all my views. I think that it is greatly owing to his good management that I have a chance of getting through the crisis which has been fatal to so many Irish proprietors.

I leave Ireland with far more hope & in better spirits than on any of the three former (148) occasions since the potato failure. First, I see that the poor's rates are diminished owing to our having got rid of outdoor relief & diminished the size of the electoral divisions. Between Matthew Gabbett & Captain Larcombe,<sup>116</sup> my farms have been put into the best electoral divisions of the union. Secondly, my own estates have been very much weeded both of paupers & bad tenants. This has been accomplished by Matthew Gabbett without evictions, bringing in the sheriff, or any harsh measures. In fact, the paupers & little cottiers cannot keep their holdings without the potato &, for small sums of 1£, 2£, & 3£, have given me peaceable possession in a great many cases, when the cabin is immediately levelled. Then, to induce the larger farmers to surrender their holdings when they became insolvent, I emigrated several, either with their whole families or in part. This was expensive, but it enabled me to consolidate & make comfortable sized farms of (149) from £30 & £40 up to £140 per annum. Then, the improvements I have carried on have greatly increased the value of the farms & given the tenants courage. I have introduced some good new tenants of a solvent description. From all these causes I see the estate coming round, the tenantry more comfortable, & though there are still great fallings off in the receipts, yet things are righting themselves.

[Visit of 1852]

[Volume XXIV]

(9) Monday, [October] 4th, [1852]. We went out to Fergus. A wet day. The farm seems improving in spite of the times. The removal of some bad tenants has been a great godsend.

Tuesday, [October] 5th. We went out to Ballygromans & Grange. Mr Gabbett made a good collection of rent. I think the tenants here are improving. They are increasing their stock of cattle & sheep & depending less on tillage. The potatoes have failed very much here.

Wednesday, [October] 6th. We left Cork by 10, travelled by railway to Mallow, & thence by cars to Listowell, where we arrived at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past six.

Thursday, [October] 7th. We paid our visit to Ballyduhig & Forhane. Ballyduhig is much improved since it came into my hands by the death of the Knight of Kerry, the last life in the lease to Supple, which took place March 1849. A promising young tenant of the name of Naughten has a large division at the upper part of the farm. Neville was moved to Kiltan to (10) enlarge it. Naughten has married the only daughter of Lawrence Buckley of Tullamore since I was in the country. Ballyduhig is now divided into five lots. Walsh has the lower part, Dennis Loughnane next to him to the south, then widow Loughnane, then Kenna, & then Naughten. I have omitted two small tenants or cottiers at the lower end of the farm, Harding, a very industrious man, & Daly, an old pensioner. I have been at a great outlay in the three years I have had possession of this farm from the middleman. I have made a great number of new fences dividing the farms, and I have completed three considerable

<sup>116</sup> Thomas Aiskew Larcom.

works. 1st, opening the lime quarry at the lower end of the farm opposite Coolaleen.<sup>117</sup> (This work can scarcely be said to be finished, as the men are now employed in removing the earth and preparing it for being worked.) 2nd, making an excellent road at the east of the farm into Kenna's & Naughten's divisions. 3rd, cutting a watercourse to irrigate Walsh's land. (11) We walked across the bog from Ballyduhig to Forhane. Here too improvement is going on. Dennis & John Curtin are draining improvable mountain & Regan making a house.

Friday, [October] 8th. I went out to Killarida with Mr M. Gabbett and the two aids de camps Connor the surveyor & John Trant. I walked over a mile & quarter of embankment against the river Feale and two tributary streams on Kiltean. This has cost about £170 & seems a good and cheap work. Next year we intend embanking Killarida, which will be a valuable improvement. It is illustrative of the evils of letting to middlemen on long leases that this improvement was recommended in all the old surveys of my great uncle Walsh & was one of the conditions upon which he let the farm to Mr Leake some seventy years ago, but it was never carried into execution till now.

Saturday, [October] 9th. Mr Gabbett had a rent day & a very unsatisfactory one, only collecting £170. (12) I went to see the workhouse. Phillips, the clerk, a very active, intelligent officer, gave me a good deal of information. There are now only about 1,500 paupers in the workhouse, & the great majority of these are deserted children. All the auxiliary houses are now shut. Still, the rates this year have been heavy in consequence of our paying old debts & balances & building a large addition to the workhouse. Phillips is anxious to leave his situation & begged my interest to get him some employment. The active, resolute matron Miss Fitzall,<sup>118</sup> whose manner of managing the unruly paupers struck me so much in former visits, is absent and, alas, I heard from Captain Home that she is vehemently suspected of having left for the purpose of being confined. Phillips is supposed to be the father. I went afterwards over Gortshanavoe, or Kylbee as it is more generally called. This farm is improving. Maher & McCarthy are adding to their stock, & a new tenant, Connor from Killarida, has taken the (13) farms occupied by Dillane and the Nolans.

Sunday, [October] 10th. Captain Home asked us to dinner both today & tomorrow. Lord Listowel<sup>119</sup> is expected tomorrow to take the chair at an agricultural meeting of the North Kerry Association. Mr Gabbett & I walked after church to the Ballyduhig lime quarry which we are opening. It promises to be a good one & useful for Derrindaffe & Forhane & Kylbwee as well as for Ballyduhig. On the opposite side of the dingle, on Lady Burghersh's farm of Coolaleen, a quarry of the same vein was opened, which is the only one on all the extensive estates of the Lock property, now Lady Burghersh's. These estates extend over the brownstone district towards Castleisland and they are out of the limestone country. I called today upon Mr Coffee, Lady Burghersh's agent. We had a family dinner at Captain Home's, nobody but his daughter, her governess, & a Miss Elliott. (14) Captain Home is a sensible, calculating, reasoning Scotchman, full of metaphysics & political economy but rather too cautious & fond of finding objections to do much good in action.

Monday, [October] 11th. I have issued the most stringent orders that if the tenants do not come in to pay their rents, they shall be distrained. I see that though the

<sup>117</sup> Coolnaleen Lr. and Upr., par. Kilshenane, bar. Clanmaurice.

<sup>118</sup> ? Fitzelle.

<sup>119</sup> William Hare, 2nd Earl of Listowel (1801-56), of Convamore, Ballyhooly, Co. Cork.

prices are better, they are holding back. I am very glad I came over, as I am sure Gabbett wanted a spur. We went over Tullamore today. We drove through the farms of Meen,<sup>120</sup> Knockane,<sup>121</sup> & Coolclarig,<sup>122</sup> of which I recently purchased the head rent, amounting to £37 10s. a year. We entered by Inchimore & walked up the farm to the demesne. I have been doing a great deal here & the farm is manifestly improving, particularly Tim Buckley's & the demesne. Thorough draining is greatly improving them, as they were very wet. We returned by six & dined at Captain Home's. Met (15) Lord Listowel & Mr Crosbie of \_\_\_\_\_,<sup>123</sup> a very active & useful country gentleman. He goes the whole length of saying that the destruction of the potato is a blessing to Ireland. It seems universally admitted that the country has greatly improved; prices are really good for stock, butter, pigs, & sheep, and while in the old days of outdoor relief there were 30,000 souls on the lists out of a population of 70,000, there are now not more than 1,500 and these principally children. Diminished areas and the abolition of outdoor relief have effected these improvements in our condition.

Tuesday, [October] 12th. We sat all day at the receipt of custom & only walked in the afternoon to Ballinruddery to see the cattle shew. My threats have produced a good effect; the tenants are now dropping in with a number of small sums. Met Herbert<sup>124</sup> at the cattle shew. The society met at a room at the workhouse for dinner. Rather prosy speeches, except one flaming one from a Counsellor Leahy. Last year at the meeting (16) there were three Catholic priests & a party with them who refused to rise when the Queen's health was drunk, & a cry was raised of 'Long live the French Republic'. The wishes of the Listowel agitators have not been fulfilled. The French Republic has not outlived the year, but this little toast shews all the disloyalty in the hearts of these people.

Wednesday, [October] 13th. Derivrin & Ballrehan were one day's work. Derivrin is going on well, but Ballyrehan, with the exception of Quinlan's farm, is doing badly.

Thursday, [October] 14th. Went over Knockburrane, Lissihane, & Ballyhaurigan. Great grumbling & clamour for a reduction of rents at the two first. During the famine years the rents were merely nominal & the tenants cared little what they were, encouraged by the works & drainage I was carrying on. Now that times are better & payment begins to be a reality, they are inclined to grow restive.

Friday, [October] 15th. Went over Derrimdaffie, my favorite farm, (17) as it was here I first began my attempts at improvement thirty years ago, & I certainly have changed the whole face of it. A sad misfortune befell poor Cronin on this farm last January. A stroke of lightning first threw down the roof of his sleeping room & then, passing on to the outhouses, killed a fine mare in the stable, leaving her foal untouched, and going on to the cowhouse, killed four cows, sparing two. Paddy Molony has lost his wife. The tenants are beginning to learn the use of irrigation upon the drained fields.

Saturday, [October] 16th. Rahilly came in & I promised him, after a long dis-

<sup>120</sup> In par. Listowel, bar. Iraghticonnor.

<sup>121</sup> In par. Listowel.

<sup>122</sup> Coolaclarig, par. Listowel.

<sup>123</sup> Omission in MS. Probably William Talbot Crosbie (1817-99) of Ardfert Abbey, Ardfert, though James Crosbie (1832-97) of Ballyheige Castle, Tralee, is possible.

<sup>124</sup> Henry Arthur Herbert (d. 1866) of Muckcross, Killarney; M.P. for Co. Kerry, 1847-66; Irish Chief Secretary, 1857-58.

cussion, another year's trial. Since my threats the tenants have come in. The first day we had only £170; now we have made up £630, which, with the Cork levy, makes a sum of £1,200. This is the best haul I have had since the famine. We left by the coach at 11, got to Tarbert (18) to meet the steamer, & arrived at Limerick by  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 5. Mr Gabbett went out to a farm he has recently purchased.

Sunday, [October] 17th. Mr Gabbett came into town early & took me to his parish church at his new purchase about 8 miles from Limerick. The farm he has bought under the Encumbered Estates Court is in the centre of the property of his family. We passed a little stone tower, something like a martello tower . . . , which this Mr Matthew Gabbett's uncle (whom I remember meeting at Rome in 1819) built as a fort & place of refuge in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. After church we drove again into Limerick. Mr Gabbett returned to his farm. He goes by an early train to Dublin & we meet at the Dublin terminus at 4. I dine with my old agent Mr Gabbett, Senior, at Bray, & on Tuesday I cross the water. . . .

(19) So ends this visit to my Irish estates. How easily is the communication & transit made now, compared with what it was. My first visit to Ireland in 1821 was in the first year of the establishment of mail steam packets. I well remember the alarm felt when, about mid channel, something in the machinery broke & we were left floating without any progress for about an hour. It then took three good days to travel from London to Holyhead, one to cross, three to get from Dublin to Listowel. Now I get easily from London to Dublin in one day, from Dublin to Cork or Limerick in another. I can visit all the estates & return to London in little more time than it took me then to travel to and fro. But even the facilities I then enjoyed were very great compared with those which existed when my great uncle Walsh made the purchases in 1764 & subsequent years. His motives for his Radnorshire investments were intelligible enough. Its contiguity to Shropshire, where the first Lord Clive<sup>125</sup> (20) had established himself, & the smallness of the county, giving him a prospect of acquiring parliamentary influence, explain this selection, but what first led him, an Englishman returned from India, having no Irish links or associations that I ever heard of, to select such a remote county, the very ultima Thule<sup>126</sup> of Ireland itself, I have never heard explained. I don't think that my dear mother had ever heard of it. She often spoke of his love for scattering his investments & mentioned that he had even bought an estate somewhere in Scotland which he subsequently sold. She quoted a criticism which her father Mr Fowke<sup>127</sup> passed upon him. 'There's Walsh now has bought land in Ireland, Scotland, & Wales & has ended in seating himself down at Warfield where he can't shoot a partridge.' Yet I have always great respect & regard for the memory of my great uncle, who died before I was born, but to whom I am so largely indebted, & who may (21) be considered the founder of our family. His Irish investments, though singular, were not unwise. He bought very reasonably in those days what has turned out a valuable and improving estate & now that the famine crisis is past, promises still to prove so.

Monday, [October] 18th. I left Limerick by the 11 o'clock train. Travelled with Sir

<sup>125</sup> Robert Clive, 1st Lord Clive (1725-74), son of an impoverished country gentleman in Shropshire; became Governor of Bengal and builder of Britain's Indian empire, amassing an enormous personal fortune in the process.

<sup>126</sup> Among the ancients, 'Thule' was the northernmost part of the habitable world. Thus *ultima Thule* means remotest corner.

<sup>127</sup> Joseph Fowke of Bexley, Kent.

David Roche<sup>128</sup> and Mr Butt.<sup>129</sup> Met Matthew Gabbett at the station. We proceeded to Kingstown, where old Mr Gabbett's carriage met me, and we drove out to dinner at a villa he has taken at Bray. I was glad to see my old agent still in possession of his mental faculties & not worse than last year, except a little feebler. Their carriage brought me back to Kingstown.

In former days I remember feeling that I never visited my Irish estates without exploring some new source of profit & improvement. One time it was getting rid of Hilliard from Forhane, another (22) evicting Wall from Derrimdaffe, another settling with Julian for him to surrender Tullamore, except the demesne, & getting good rents from the occupying tenants. Very different was the result of my last melancholy visits during the famine years when poor laws were devouring us. This time I leave Ireland with some of the old sensations. I feel both that my visit has done good & that better hopes are dawning upon us. I came just in time to spur Gabbett to make a determined stand at a moment when the tenants had really had good prices & yet were trying to hold back their money. I see the poor law become manageable. I watch the effects of draining & other improvements. If politics will but let us alone, & no tenant right or other device of socialism & Jacobinism marr our prospects, we shall yet regain our property.

[Visit of 1853]

[Volume XXIV]

(204) Thursday, [September] 22nd [1853]. It blew hard in the night. I left my dear old Amazon<sup>130</sup> after an early breakfast. Had great difficulty in landing owing to the extensive banks of mud. Got a car to the railway station at Belfast & arrived in Dublin by 4. Saw Mr Matthew Gabbett, dined & slept at the Bilton.

Friday, [September] 23rd. Started by the 10 o'clock train & reached Cork by 5. Mr M. Gabbett joins me tomorrow.

Saturday, [September] 24th. Mr Matthew Gabbett arrived at 10 o'clock & we took a car to Grange & Ballygromans. Reid<sup>131</sup> the new bailiff accompanied us. (205) There is not much to remark since last year, but the tenants are all in spirits, prices good, & the farms improving. The only one going down[h]ill is young Hawkes of Grange. I have noticed Murphy & widow Lane of Ballygromans, as they are racking their farms. Returned to dinner at seven.

Sunday, [September] 25th. Went to the cathedral with Mr Matthew Gabbett, after which we went in a steamer to Queenstown & saw the fleet. It was a gallant sight. It blew a gale of wind & they all had their top gallant masts struck. I am anxious about the Amazon, which is probably out in this gale, which must be a heavy one at sea.

Monday, [September] 26th. Went with Mr Gabbett in a car to Fergus & walked over that farm. The tenants are all in good spirits & considerable improvement is perceptible. They are all increasing their cow stock & growing more clover &

<sup>128</sup> Sir David Roche, 1st Bart. (1791-1865), of Carass, Croom, Co. Limerick; M.P. for Limerick City, 1832-44.

<sup>129</sup> Isaac Butt (1813-79), eminent barrister who defended Smith O'Brien, 1848, and the Fenians, 1865-68; founded Home Government Association, 1870, and Home Rule League, 1873; led Home Rule party in Parliament, 1870s; M.P. for Harwich, May-July, 1852; for Youghal, 1852-65; for Limerick City, 1871-79.

<sup>130</sup> Sir John Benn-Walsh's yacht.

<sup>131</sup> John Reid.

turnips. I have now only two old tenants, (206) the two brothers Doloheny, to get rid of & the farm will then be very comfortably settled. It will then give an average of between 70 & 80 acres, which for Ireland is a respectably sized farm. The prices are very good this year, for butter as high as during the war, for wheat about 60s. a quarter. How strange and uncertain are these prices. They are as uncertain as the seasons.

Tuesday, [September] 27th. Letters from Whittaker,<sup>132</sup> who persists in resigning the command of the Radnorshire militia because Lord Palmerston will not make him Colonel; from Dyer,<sup>133</sup> who got into Kingstown harbour on Sunday morning at seven. He was in the beginning of the gale & said the Amazon behaved very well under a double reefed mainsail, reefed foresail, & third jib. He must have got into port before the height of the storm, which I see from the papers was a very severe one. Mr Gabbett & I left Cork by the 9:15 a.m. & arrived at Killarney by  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 12. We took a car to Tralee, where we put up at (207) Benner's. We walked to see the work-house. The matron, a tall, dignified lady very much like the Dowager Lady Listowell,<sup>134</sup> lamented over the emptiness of the house. The numbers about 1,600. Last year in September they were 2,700.

Wednesday, [September] 28th. We sent David<sup>135</sup> on to Listowell & took a car to see Derivrin & Ballyrehan. Connell of Derivrin, Moriarty's successor, is doing well & reclaiming the bog & coarse meadow at a great rate. The scouring and sinking of the main canal through this farm has been everything for it. Richard Connell is now cutting turf drains, a cheap mode of draining coarse, boggy ground where tiles or stones would fail. We walked over the bog to Ballyrehan. Little fresh to remark here. I was amused with a great family feud & quarrel between Mrs Molony & Mrs Maurice Sullivan. They have had a pitched battle together.

(208) Thursday, [September] 29th. . . . (209) It was a wretched, wet day. Went over Gortshanavoe, which is more improved by draining than almost any of my farms. Returned early, as it was so wet. Called on Major Home & Mr Coffee. Both were out.

Friday, [September] 30th. We had a fine day for visiting Killarida, Kiltedan, & Derimlought. The Killarida bank has been executed this year at an expense of £230. It is apparently a very substantial work about two miles in length, & I am really astonished at the smallness of the cost. About 160 acres of very fine land are protected from the floods & spring tides by this embankment. A road —————<sup>136</sup> perches long has also been made into the farm. Last year the Kiltedan bank was made. These are great works to have completed in two years. A good deal will still be required to put these farms in really complete order, when they will be among the best on the estate.

(210) Saturday, October 1st. We went to Tullamore. A very showery day. Not much done here since last year. Young Buckley is building a good house. Poor old Lawrence Buckley is half brokenhearted at the loss of sixteen cows by the distemper.

<sup>132</sup> John Abraham Whittaker (1802-69) of Newcastle Court, Walton, Radnorshire, Major Commandant of the Royal Radnor Militia, 1841-53.

<sup>133</sup> The skipper of Sir John Benn-Walsh's yacht 'Amazon'.

<sup>134</sup> Lady Anne Listowell (d. 1859), 2nd wife of 1st Earl and 2nd daughter of John Latham of Meldrum, Co. Tipperary.

<sup>135</sup> A servant.

<sup>136</sup> Omission in MS.

Sunday, [October] 2nd. Went to church. Walked with Mr Gabbett to Ballyduhig. The lime quarry is now opened & 580 tons have been sold to the tenants at 6d. a ton.

Monday, [October] 3rd. Mr M. Gabbett had a collection & got nearly £400. I went over Forhane, Derrindaff, & part of Ballyduhig. Saw the workhouse. 905 inmates, about 700 of them children. Last year the number was 1,500.

Tuesday, [October] 4th. We left Listowel at 10 & concluded my tour of my farms by visiting Lissihane & Knockburrane on our way to Tralee. I have allowed Rahilly another trial. I had a long interview with Macarthy,<sup>137</sup> who has married the widow Regan's (211) eldest daughter. The widow, a dissolute, drunken woman, was unable to hold her farm, & I thought that I was doing a great kindness to all parties in giving it to Macarthy, a thriving, substantial farmer married to the eldest daughter. Mrs Regan & her second daughter have been endeavouring to get from me a promise to give the farm to any husband who may marry the second, alleging stories of ill treatment and unjust appropriation of their means against Macarthy. I refused to interfere.

I may repeat this year the remarks of the former one upon my Irish estates. . . . It is to be hoped that the period of distress has passed away. Prices never were higher, particularly for butter, pigs, & cattle. Oats also are bringing very fair prices. Potatoes are here little affected this year & those in the bogs escape entirely, which is a great inducement to reclaim them. I have got rid of many bad tenants, wrested Killarida, Kiltan, & Derimlought from the middleman's grasp; my various improvements have greatly enhanced the value & increased the production of my estate, & altogether the prospects are cheering of this property.

*Note (Hon. Ed.): The remaining extracts (1855-64) will appear in the next issue of the Journal.*

<sup>137</sup> MacCarthy.