Anti-Grazing Agitation is Regaining Irish Land

DUBLIN, June 29.—The Irish peasants have triumphed. They entered upon a war to gain the grass lands, and although the sounds of battle are still heard here and there their victory has been complete. This will be the last year of the grazier as a tenant of the great grass farms, for both landlord and cattle owner have made up their minds that cattle ranching is a thing of the past.

It cannot be denied that the Liberal government of England has materially helped the people. Past administrations would have sent to jail by order of the coercion court every man found in conspiracy against the grazier and the landlord; but the present rules adopted another course. They hauled out as an instrument of punishment an act passed by King Edward III., which does not imprison but merely binds the wrongdoer over to keep the peace. True, some men have been sent to jail, but only because they refused to give bail for good behavior. The policeman appears in a new role. He has been turned into a cowboy to watch the cattle raider, and to mark him down if identified to come under the law of the long dead monarch. The bulk of the Royal Irish Constabulary have thus been drafted into the south and west of Ireland, but the days of buckshot and bludgeoning are over. The constabulary man is a mixture of peaceful persuader and cowherd, and the whole thing is only fun to the people. Fun and profit. For the grazier and the landlord have at last recognized that the transfer of the land must be full and complete—that the land commission must buy for the peasantry not only the bog land in the country, which has for long been given over to grazing.

This land question dates far back. It goes away to the days of Oliver Cromwell, who invaded the country and brushed back the Irish. As history relates, he told them that they must go either to a warm place or to Connaught, and to Connaught he drove them. The worst curse the peasant can heap on his enemy is "the curse of Cromwell," and no matter where you find the battered ruins of a castle in the country you hear that the masonry gave way under the guns of the vandal Oliver. Then Cromwell was not always able to pay his army in cash, so he made the soldiers grants of the lands that had been conquered, and the officers bought the share of the privates for a small consideration. Thus came into being the Irish landlord.

The old stock Irish were driven to the western bogs and the stony mountain side, and there they remain until this day, when a government department is considering how they may be taken away from their barren surroundings and planted on profitable land. What Cromwell did not do the landlord of a few generations ago did. The growing of wheat and corn became unprofitable; the raising of cattle became vastly profitable. Therefore, the landlord drove his tenants off the good grass lands and turned their holdings into grazing ranches, which he rented to cattlemen on an eleven months' lease. There came agitation, then a congested district board to remove the dense bogland populations onto untenanted land, and there came the land purchase act, by which the government is gradually purchasing the agricultural districts and handing them over to the people, who will be government tenants until the price is paid off, the people getting their farms from the state on the hire purchase system. The owner of the bogland and the unprofitable estate was keen to sell; he who owned the profitable cattle ranch held back. Hence the anti-grazing agitation, which after a few months has succeeded. Many graziers have bowed to the will of the people, and the majority of the remainder have given undertakings never to graze cattle again. The landlords of the ranches are approaching the government to buy, and the government is quick and anxious to purchase.

A drive through Connaught and Munster shows how miserably most of the peasants live. It is common to find families grouped in one-room mud hovels situated in black bog where the toiler is compelled actually to make the land for himself. A pair of goats, a wretched cow and perhaps a donkey may make out a precarious living among the coarse grass and reeds on the outer bog, and from the miserable soil the peasant by incessant labor wins a crop of vegetables if the fates are good and draws blank if the potato blight comes along. The ordinary self-respecting human being would refuse the land as a gift and would rather go to the poorhouse than face the fates on the Irish bog farm.

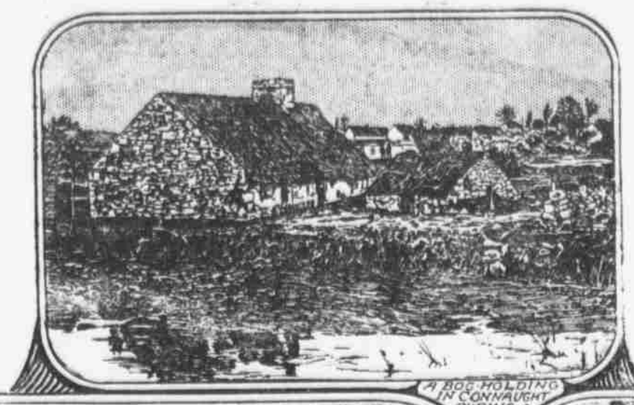
I have found people living on "farms" that are subject to periodical floods, on land that cannot be drained, on unproductive soil, on holdings which they have actually made by clearing away rocks and stones and conveying the land up by donkey load. More, I have seen hundreds living on the brink of a horrible disaster. Those people in the bogs in hilly districts are in wet seasons ever under the shadow of the bogburst. The rain descends and sinks under the peet. An underground lake is formed; there is a tremble, a shiver, and in a moment the bog comes sliding down in a mass of black liquid mud to overwhelm everything in its course. There have been many fatal bogslides in the past and several in the recent past. In one peat rush which the writer saw the ooze flowed down, fortunately, in the daytime so that the people had time to escape to safety. The bog moved, it encircled the cottages in its course; it climbed up them; it buried them.

The most comfortable house of the ordinary peasant met in two provinces was a thatched stone structure with an opening in place of a chimney. It was but a single room, and in it lived five human beings, some fowls and a goat. Other houses had not the live stock in them; but they were not stone houses. The man with a stone cottage is well off. The man near a town who has a cottage with tiles on the roof is a nabob; he who has a "slate house" and possesses a pony and cart is one to whom hats must be raised.

But if the peasants are not well housed it must be admitted that the majesty of the British law is upheld in structures not much better in many districts. Several "courts" might well be turned into barns or cattle houses. Low ceiled, whitwashed cottages, with leaky roofs of straw thatch, built for the accommodation of a single family. Into such were crowded magistrates, lawyers, policemen, prisoners, the members of the press and the public. No can ever left the Chicago packing houses more closely filled than the Irish petty sessions court when a case of public interest is on. In one in the County Roscommon we were tightly wedged against each other from wall to wall; there was no ventilation beyond a small window, and the place was solid with the smell of peat smoke that is borne by the clothing of every peasant in Ireland.

One of the most saddening things that strikes the returned Irishman who travels through the mournful west and south is the depopulation of the country. Where twenty years ago one saw in the towns and villages large populations of vigorous, husky young people, he now finds the people to be mostly very young or very old. Little is seen of the old time crowds of strong, well set up youth that were the pride of Ireland. They have scattered. They have gone over the Atlantic or crossed the channel to work in the English fields or factories. So few have been left behind that at harvest time the farmers cannot obtain laborers. The country has been bled and its still bleeding. At almost every railroad station in Munster and Connaught on steamer days you may see mobs of young men and women with their traveling bags waiting to be conveyed to Queenstown to cross to the states. They were so numerous a week ago that the steamers had to leave behind several hundreds to wait for berths in other ships.

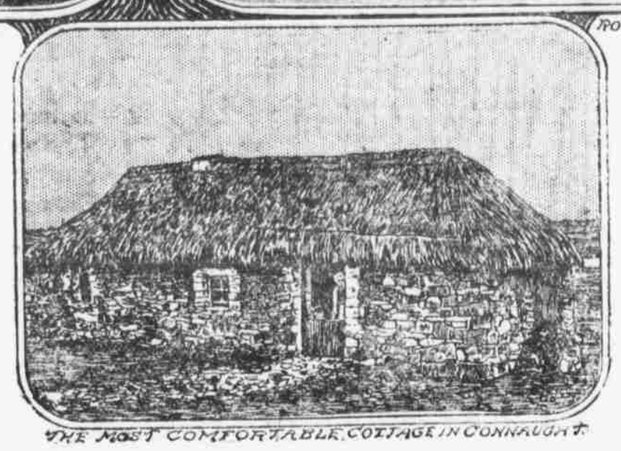
Stand at any of the railway depots in Dublin when the big trains come in with excursionists from the country for the exhibition and you see one of the most striking results of the emigration drain. The excursionists are mostly women, who are generally old, with a sprinkling of men, also mostly old. Of joyous youth little is seen.



A BOG HOLDING IN CONNAUGHT DURING A BOG-SLIDE

AN IRISH COUNTRY LAW COURT.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY HOLDING A VILLAGE.



THE MOST COMFORTABLE COTTAGE IN CONNAUGHT

Twenty years, ten years, even five years ago those trains would have disgorged loads of muscular, strong limbed young Irishmen, fit to go anywhere and to do anything.

The disease is there, and it is for the politic doctor to diagnose the case and procure it. Mr. Croker tells me that a measure of home rule would in his opinion be an adequate remedy. He believes that with self-government Ireland would revive, industries would be started, employment would be provided that would keep the youth at home, agriculture would improve, and he is confident that many Irish-Americans who have made fortunes would like himself make an eastern course over the Atlantic to spend the eventime of life in a contented Ireland. The nationalist political physician agrees that home rule will restore the patient to health, but the independent onlooker at the patient's bed sees complications that will retard the cure. Without union we are told there can be no hope of obtaining the home rule medicine from the English dispensary. This unity is becoming more and more remote

In its recent turning the political kaleidoscope had evolved the Sinn Fein party, which wants Ireland to stand by her own efforts at home and to withdraw the Parliamentary party from Westminster. The Sinn Feiners are the youngest and most vigorous of the politicians and their doctrines have taken a firm hold upon the country. So popular is the movement that it is declared by the politicians that the United Irish league can only thrive by falling in with the organization and following its lines. As the United Irish league is controlled by the Parliamentarians, the latter will admit that they are on the horns of a dilimma, since they refuse to march shoulder to shoulder with Sinn Fein. Added to this, the party has the refusal of Messrs. Healy and O'Brien to re-enter their fold and a further split in the camp caused by the desertion of a trio of Sinn Fein members of Parliament because Mr. Redmond refused to withdraw from Westminster to lead a vigorous campaign in Ireland.

Thus stand the fighting forces at the moment. There is a pause in the operations, but the army is forming up for a further advance, and it is a noteworthy fact that the people, whether they belong to Sinn Fein or the other side, are imbued with a spirit equal to that which impelled Mr. Parnell's movement forward. The revival of the league is to be pushed forward and arrangements have been made for the holding of meetings throughout Ireland from sea to sea which will be addressed by the most strenuous speakers that the country can produce.

The first shots of the renewed battle will soon be fired and the leaders are confident of victory. The authorities of Dublin castle are more perturbed over the situation than they have been for the last twenty years. They know that the old physical force spirit has been revived throughout the country and that the men who are about to fight will court the prison cell. They are ill equipped to deal with the coming struggle. Even now, with the anti-grazing movement in a quiescent state, they have every available constable in the west and south, while owing to the scarcity of men they have had to call out the military to help the police in the north.

Carpenter's Letter

(Continued from Page Three.)

weighed upon steelyards and paid for at about $10 a ton. It is then baled up like hay and shipped on the steamers to England, where it is used for making the best of book and writing papers.

Some of the great newspaper companies of England have put up factories in Algeria for the handling of alfa grass; and it is said that its value was originally discovered by the Lloyds of Lloyd's Register. It makes a much better paper than wood pulp; but it is more costly, and there is no possibility that it will displace the latter.

Merchants of the Sahara.

A large part of the caravan business at the ports is handled by Greeks and Italians. The alfa grass is bought by Italians, who act for the English, shipping this stuff to Liverpool and London, and bringing back hardware and Manchester cottons. The date exports also are in the hands of Italians; although the bringing of the dates here is largely through native tribes, who make a specialty of merchandising.

Have you ever heard of the Mozabites? They are sometimes called the Jews of the Sahara. The Arabs say that while it takes five of their people to beat a Jew at a bargain, it requires at least five Jews to get the better of one Mozabite. Indeed, many believe that the Mozabites are of Jewish origin. They are the descendants of the old Carthaginians and settled there. Carthage was founded by Jews, and it was ruled by Queen Dido the Jewess. At any rate, the Mozabites are superior to the Jews in their trading ability, and they have monopolized certain kinds of trade in the desert.

They have seven cities far down below Algiers in the middle of the Sahara, at just where the caravan tracks cross. They are engaged in commerce there, and also in Algiers, in Tunis and in nearly every trading center of North Africa. These men stay away from home only for two years at a time. Their laws require that they come back every so often, and their wives can claim a divorce if they remain longer. If a man absents himself more than two years his wife has not only the right to marry again, but she can take possession of all the property belonging to the family and keep it.

I am told that the Mozabite women are true to their husbands. They wear black while their husbands are absent, and make great feasts when they come home. Among the viands served on such occasions are barbacued camels and sheep. At the same time a dinner is given to the poor, and this, strange to say, takes place at the cemetery. Here the wife plays the Lady Bountiful, sitting on the tomb of her parents, while she hands out the soup and dispenses her alms.

I have seen many of the Mozabites during my travels. They are short, stout and light complexioned, with features Jewish in cast. They are noted for their stinginess. Most of them sleep in their shops, where they sometimes do their own cooking, saving every cent to take home.

Love and Marriage in the Sahara.

All the women of the Sahara marry young. A girl is often betrothed at 8 or 9; she is married at 12 or 13, and is an old woman at 30. At 10 she begins to primp and look at the men, and something is supposed to be wrong with her if she is not married at 17 or 18. As to the age of the husband, that matters not. He may be 16 or 60, and he may have several wives.

The marriage is usually arrranged by a female matchmaker, employed by the groom, who is supposed to find out all the details as to the character and wealth of the bride. She goes with her to the bath and investigates her beauty; she makes such inquiries at home about her cooking and housekeeping ability as enables her to furnish a full description. The groom is supposed to pay a certain sum for the bride, and she is expected to bring him a small fortune in jewelry and household effects.

Preparatory to the wedding the bride is put through a course of training. She is bathed and greased again and again, and her skin is coated with powder. On the wedding day she is wrapped up in so many veils that she looks more like a bundle than a woman, and in this shape she is carried on a camel or donkey to the home of the groom.

The first home of the desert bride is with her husband's family; but only when she is the first wife. If he has other wives she goes to the common tent, and there takes her place as boss of the establishment. She holds this position for a year or so, but after that comes down to everyday life and does her share of the work. She aids in the cooking, in gathering fuel and in weaving the cloth for tents and the family clothing.

Ouled Nails.

Have you ever heard of the Ouled Nails? They are to be found in every oasis, and there is a whole street given up to them in Biskra, the so-called Paris of the Sahara. They are noted for their beauty and are professional entertainers, much like the Nautch girls of India, the Ghawazi of Egypt or the Geishas of Japan. Robert Hichens rather effusively describes them in "The Garden of Allah," making them more beautiful than I have found them either in Biskra or here. The Ouled Nails sing and dance for money in the Moorish cafes. Any one who will pay for a cup of coffee can see them, and scores of these dark-faced, turbaned, long-hearded Arabs will sit and watch them for hours. The girls are paid by the owners of the establishments, but they also collect contributions from the foreigners present, coming to them and kneeling down at the close of each dance. Thereupon the foreigner wets a silver coin with his lips and presses it upon the forehead of the dancer. The coin sticks and the girl rises and goes through the wild abandon of another dance, moving her head so gently that the coin remains where it was placed.

The dance of the Ouled Nails is the well known stomach dance, in vogue throughout the orient. It consists of a series of contortions of the hips and abdomen, while the rest of the body remains stationary or perhaps sways back and forth. The girls are fully dressed; there is no exposure of person, and they lack the ballet tights of our wicked stage. Nevertheless, their actions are more demoralizing than those of the worst of our dance halls. Their profession is considered respectable, and after a time they take the money they have thus made and go home and marry their lovers.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Prattle of the Youngsters

"If you multiply six prunes by seven bananas, what's the answer, Willie?"

"Sum."

"What is the matter with mamma's little boy?"

"O, mamma, I feel so bad in my shoes! They can't digest my feet!"

"Oh, Willie, what's this queer lookin' thing with about a million legs?"

"That's a millennium. It's somethin' like a centennial, only it has more legs."

Mother—Now, Tommy, remember I've told you not to go away from this house. You know where bad little boys go—.

Tommy (sulkily)—Yes, they go fishin' an' swimmin' an' have a gen'ral good time.

Genial Clergyman (visiting the village school)—Well, my little man, what do you do in school all day?

The Most Promising Pupil—I wait till it's time to get out, sir.

Young Man (in parlor)—Willie, do you think your sister cares anything for me?

Small Willie—I don't know, but I'm betting her other fellow will win.

Young Man—Why do you think so?

Small Willie—Because mamma makes me keep out of the parlor when he calls.