

their slanders. Father McFadden, the noblest and purest priest in Ireland, has been not merely accused, but committed on a charge of murder. That is the answer. The man whom America delights to honour can well afford to treat the slanders of the howling pack of Coercionists with the most supreme contempt.

The good old Penal days are being rapidly revived in Ireland, and the priest-hunts are grown as common as fox-hunts. The priest-hunters had a splendid time of it last week. Father McFadden, in the county of Donegal, was committed by the Removables on a charge of murder so grotesque that the prosecuting counsel dare not ask for a committal. Father Farrelly's house, in the county of Wicklow, was broken into with violence and gutted, on the mere pretence of searching for the rev. Coercion criminal. When, to prevent further raids, he went to surrender himself at the police-barrack he was brutally assaulted. Father John Maher, in the county of Kildare, was summoned before the Removables for daring to take the part of the evicted tenants against the Most Noble and Viceregal exterminator the Marquis of Lansdowne, and will get his sentence in due course. In the county of Tipperary, Father Michael Morris, of Newport, and Father John Cunningham, of Silvermines, are dragged into a Coercion court for attending a public meeting to protest against the extortion of Mr. Toler R. Garvey, of Birr, the agent of Mr. Lalor. The Removables have not yet announced the terms of imprisonment the Castle has decided on. Not a bad week's work this for the Coercionists. The priest-hunters of the Penal days hardly did better, though they employed blood-hounds where Mr. Balfour employs Removable Magistrates. We are inclined to think the blood-hounds were the more respectable brutes of the two, if we are to judge from the Roche and Segrave standard. Segrave, it will be remembered, was the dog that ran down Father Kennedy.

From the report of the Scotch Crofters' Commission, which has just been issued, there are some facts obtainable which shed a light upon the cause of the tranquility which now reigns in the western islands. To put the matter in a nutshell, landlord exaction and unreasonableness have been effectually stopped by the operation of this Commission—so far as it has been enabled to apply its machinery. Arrears, and the demand for irrevocable arrears, were the whole causes of the late troubles in the Scotch islands and in the Gaelic-speaking mainland districts. They are the fruitful source of disturbance here; and they will continue to be the source of disturbance until we have some legal machinery for dealing with them similar to the Crofters' Commission. The Commissioners report some very sweeping reductions in rent, as well as a wholesale extinction of arrears. In the county of Caithness they dealt with 27 holdings, the landlords' rent for which came to a total of £346. It was reduced to £169—a reduction of over 51 per cent. In Orkney they considered 443 cases, and reduced the rents on an average over 30 per cent. They reduced it to £1,519. In Inverness-shire the average reduction exceeded 31 per cent. The average reduction in the whole of the arrears dealt with by the Commissioners was 68 per cent. In the county of Ross and Cromarty nearly ten thousand pounds were swept away—a reduction of 74 per cent. In Orkney nearly £2,300 was wiped out—an average reduction of 55 per cent. In Caithness the reduction averaged 74 per cent. Vast as these reductions are, they were perfectly necessary to enable the tenants to live. In Ireland it is exactly the same case, with this difference, that the population affected by arrears of extortionate rents is infinitely larger.

MIDNIGHT BURNING AT CLONGOREY.

(Correspondence of the London *Daily News*.)

TO-DAY (March 29) I went down to the Clongorey estate, in the Co. Kildare, and saw one of the saddest sights that could probably be witnessed in any European country in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The landscape looked charming as the train steamed along through the valley of the Liffey and into the heart of peaceful Kildare. A beautiful spring day it was, with a sky flecked with blue grey clouds and half smiling, half-frowning on a land that seemed happy and prosperous; but there are landlords in Co. Kildare as well as at Glenbeigh and Portlanna. There has been "devil's work" going on in this smiling Co. of Kildare, and there is land scarce to-day twenty miles from Dublin which presents a picture one would have thought had long since become, even in Ireland, only a reminiscence of history associated with the burnings and the pillagings of Cromwell's soldiers. The stories of Woodford, Glenbeigh, Bodjke, and Fallcarragh, have shocked the public of other countries. The story of Clongorey will, when it is fully known, appear incredible to people who live in a civilised land. The Clongorey estate lies in the very centre of the great level plain of Kildare. Standing in the centre of the property, and looking south, you see in the distance the dark blue outlines of the Wicklow mountains, and to the north the Hill of Allen rising up sheer out of the plain. This landscape would be very dull and very uninteresting were it not for the numerous groves and woods that break up the monotony of a piece of country almost as level as a cricket ground. I arrived at Newbridge at two o'clock. My carman was full of the Clongorey evictions and of the midnight burning scene. Turning a corner as we drove through the village, he suddenly exclaimed: "Do you see that fellow? that's one of the Emergency-men; that fellow was put of court yesterday by the magistrates for perjury." This, thought I, is a very good beginning. We drove out towards the doomed townland. After we had gone about a couple of miles my carman pointed to a house on the left side of the road. "That," said he, "is one of the evicted houses. When the Emergency-men arrived there they found a young boy of thirteen years of age who had been bedridden for seven years. The local doctor had given a certificate that he was not fit to be removed; but they removed him all the same, and he is now living with one of the neighbours." Further on, turning a sharp corner, we came in full view of a wooden structure in course of erection, out of which the sounds proceeded of carpenters and other tradesmen busy at work. "That's the League hut," said my cicerone. "That's where the tenants that were burned out are going to live." I shall refer to this

but further on, and the extraordinary scene I witnessed at it later as the shadows of evening began to obliterate from the vision the outlines of the distant mountains. Not long after, turning a sharp curve on the road, we suddenly came in view of a scene which will long live in my memory. Before me were the ruins of the village, or, as the people here call it, the "bawn" of Clongorey. "I was here a month ago," said a gentleman to me, "and this little community seemed to be happy enough. There was, it was true, all the evidence of a strong struggling existence. There was not what you could call plenty, but these people, though they found it almost impossible to pay their rents, appeared to live peaceably and happily together. This little "bawn" was, in fact, leaving out the hard struggle of the people to live, a fair picture of rural contentment. My car drove up the road between two rows of black poplars, dwarfed by the meagreness of the nourishment of the soil. "There's some of it," said my carman, as he drew up his horse in the centre of the village street. To speak honestly, though I was prepared from what I had heard for a scene notable even among Irish eviction scenes, I was not prepared for this. I spoke of the village; there was no village left. Of the collection of houses forming the "bawn" of Clongorey one stood intact only, that of the Widow Kelly on the left side of the road. A few meagre fir trees nodded their heads at each other over the bare walls, and the black poplars swayed to and fro in the breeze that came over the great plain of Kildare. As the trees swayed in the wind, the shadows moved up and down and in and out of the lonely mud walls and bare gables—a hard sight it must have been to the poor evicted people who yesterday called these walls "home." I couldn't help noticing that while the habitations of humanity lay desolate and destroyed, the fowls of one holding were left a covering against March cold. There was, I afterwards found, one house in this little hamlet left intact as well as that of the Widow Kelly. At the further end of the village on a little rising ground stood a farm house whose roof had not yet fallen in, but the roof did not cover its old owner. He had been driven away with the rest. In the door as I passed stood a surly-looking Emergencyman talking to his protecting policeman. I walked round into the farmyard. It was strewn with furniture, which nobody seemed to claim and the emergency cart was standing in the middle of the yard painted with the defiant-looking flaunt red. I inquired how it was that these houses were not burnt down like the others, and was led to the one unevicted house in the village, and found myself in the presence of an old woman of 80 years of age, who has been bedridden for the last five years. This old woman, I learned, could not be removed. The dispensary doctor had furnished a certificate that she was too weak to be taken from her bed. The leader of the Emergencymen thought this was all nonsense. The old woman, it was said, was only excited. She was put about by the crowd of people about the house, and in the meantime the ambulance wagon stood at the door to carry her away from her home. But this was rather a delicate business. The Sheriff became nervous, and the emergency doctor brought there for the occasion would not vouch for the strength of the venerable invalid. The sheriff would not accept the responsibility of the removal, and so she had perforce to remain. "He said I was put about," said the old widow to me, "but I was not put about a bit. An' if he had brought me out, an' if I had died in five minutes, I would not have been put about. I came to this house sixty years ago. I'm a widow for fifty years, and have always paid my rent, I have ten grandchildren, and my son and daughter is thirteen of us altogether, and they wanted to put me out now. But if they would wait awhile it would be all over." And so indeed it will be with the Widow Kelly. Finally, the emergency army left the house, and the only harm they did to the widow's house was to knock the roof off the porch, and it was probably because they couldn't evict the widow and were afraid of burning her to death that they did not set fire to the building. Leaving the village, I was taken up the road about a quarter of a mile to the centre of the district in which the burned houses are situated. We walked across the fields to see the work of Clongorey landlordism; never have I seen such a sight. Dotted over the plain, sometimes hidden behind dwarfed poplars, sometimes standing out in grim relief against the distant Wicklow hills, stood a number of black ruins. "A short time since," said one of my informants, "those were happy enough homes. The tenants never were what you would call very comfortable, not to say prosperous, but they struggled on, and up to recent times the landlord treated them in what was thought in those days a fair spirit. But recently differences have arisen. The tenants are not able to pay their rents. The landlord failed to recognise the exigencies of the times, and eighteen months ago the majority of the tenants joined the Plan of Campaign. Since then it has been a struggle between the two parties—the tenants sinking by degrees into the deepest poverty." To go into details of the struggle would occupy too much space, but it is saying the very least to declare that the Clongorey tenants have an overwhelming case for the demand for a reduction in the rents of from twenty to thirty per cent. The trustees of the estate refused to agree to any such terms. Proceedings were taken against tenants last June, and a number of evictions were carried out in November. On Tuesday and Wednesday a second batch of evictions was consummated, and at the present time about eighteen families are living on the charity of their neighbours. Most of those evicted had tried to cling to their dwellings, and some members of different families have daily visited their former homes. Under considerable difficulties must these visits have been paid—for a regular army of Emergencymen kept watch and ward over these evicted houses. This was the state of affairs on the estate on Wednesday. On Thursday morning some of the evicted tenants and their hospitable neighbours wakened up to witness a scene of desolation the like of which has not been witnessed in Ireland for many years. Burning cabins lighted up the landscape on every side. Very few of the poor tenants saw the actual burning of their houses. It was only at eight or nine o'clock in the morning that they knew what had become of their hereditary homes. As I was leaving Clongorey at about five o'clock my car drew up near the borders of the estate opposite a large wooden structure erected in a field close to the roadside. This is the hut being erected by the National League for the