

## LADY-DAY AT KNOCK.

(From the *Freeman* Special Commissioner.)

WHEN I last stood on the dreary plateau of Knock it was in the terrible fall of last year, when the shadow of famine and death lay heavy upon the dismal moors and upon the hearts of the people. Surely an angel might well have touched the scene since to transform it into the smiling thing it appeared to me in the rich haze of last evening's sunset. Its bare undulations were lighted with harvest colours and exhaled harvest perfumes. The crops looked healthy and abundant, the very farmhouses seemed to have put on a new and happier face, as indeed they have done, for the trade of lodging pilgrims has grown to be so good a one that nearly every little country cabin has got whitened up and papered and furnished with its iron bedstead and its mattresses, even to the out-offices. But once more the religious aspect of the place was the overruling and ever-present element in the change. The only thing unaltered is Archdeacon Kavanagh's own modest little thatched cottage and his own gentle piety, which is the same in the noon of his church's fame as it was in the days of its obscurity. The scattered cabins of the village have been linked together by a street of timber sheds, arranged into shops, with a large turf fire burning in a stone enclosure in front of each of them. Here there are long dinner-tables spread, good rough country cookery, and you can have meat, milk, mild refreshments, pastry, fruit, floury potatoes, and all the luxuries of a little peasant town.

Passing through this busy bazaar, and noting the groups spread in picnic fashion over all the adjoining fields, we entered the chapel yard shortly after the Angelus bell was ringing. The wondrous spectacle of living, passionate faith which it presented at once absorbed all other thoughts. The most hardened unbeliever would take off his hat and involuntarily sink upon his knees in presence of such a sight. Several thousand people were at the moment collected in or around the church. Immediately fronting us was the sanctuary wall or gable, on which the apparitions are said to have been manifested. It was boarded half-way up to prevent the too eager pilgrims from tearing away the whole of the cement, or perhaps the whole of the wall, but so enormous has been the demand for the cement that the whole face of the gable has been stripped all but a square foot or so of plaster at the apex. Rows of disused crutches, sticks, trusses, armcases, and bandages, are fastened up along the whole width of the timber hoarding, having been left there in testimony of miraculous cures. Almost every day adds something to the list of these sacred trophies. A little temporary altar was erected in the open air about the spot assigned to the apparition of the Blessed Virgin. In front of this altar, in front of the humble mission cross close by, in the church, at the doors, and in fact on every foot of ground around it, people were prostrated on their knees praying aloud. Some one in a group of half-a-dozen would commence the Rosary aloud. The responses would be taken up all round, until they rose into a sort of solemn chant welling up from the very soul. Cripples, paralytics, deformed persons, blind men, an epileptic child were led around the church, raising their supplications aloud with a tender truthfulness which no words can survey. Others were hammering here and there at the walls for a fragment of the precious plaster, or even for a morsel of the church's earthen flooring. Within the church itself the Rosary rose in a solemn, measured swell, with all the fervour of overflowing hearts. At times the intensity of the prayer somehow almost took one's breath away with a feeling of indefinable suspense and expectation.

In one corner of the churchyard a group was listening eagerly to the delighted narrative of a boy who had suffered for years from a paralysis of the tendons of one leg, and who had that day for the first time stretched the injured leg with perfect freedom. I heard tell of several similar circumstances within the past few days, but I was not able to get any particulars that would warrant me in expressing or forming any opinion on the subject. It is certain that numbers of people profess to have themselves witnessed miraculous cures and visions. This is not the place to say more than that the faith therein seems to be in itself little short of miraculous. Darkness was beginning to fall as I was leaving, and the appearance of the sacred encampment, with its line of watchfires burning like an army's, the groups of dark figures circling around the church, whose bold bell-tower was still distinctly defined against the paling sunset sky, the fresh streams of pilgrims that were now still coming up, regardless of the night, with their carpet bags slung over their shoulders or their mattresses carried in carts, was such as nobody seeing it once was likely to forget.

## THE EVIL DAYS OF OLD.

(A recently republished letter of J. K. L. to Spring Rice, Lord Monteaigle).

CARLOW, October 30, 1827.

MY DEAR SIR,—I wish to state to you something of the impression with which I returned from a late visit to the counties of Kilkenny, Cork, and Tipperary, especially as I delayed some days in the county last mentioned, where barbarous scenes are frequently occurring. You are also well acquainted with the state of this country, especially of the south, with the several events which happen there, and you know so well the character of those who furnish information to the Government that no general remarks can be valuable to you. It is quite true that the present murders, burnings, strife and hatred arise from precisely the same causes as similar and and greater atrocities arose in times past. The two parties are still struggling; the character of the warfare is changed, but the animus of those engaged in it is the same. The people are oppressed beyond all endurance, and great portions of them, but not by any means the majority, are savage. The gentry, great and small, with a few excep-

tions are not less savage. Some of them are like fiends; they would devour the people and insist that they are all lost to every sense of morals and humanity. Whilst the truth, as far as I can ascertain it, is:—the peasantry are generally industrious and peaceable, rendered outrageous and cruel only by oppression which human nature cannot—another person would say ought not—to bear. William C—k, who was murdered lately, and from whose murder arose several others, he, I was told, after a series of cruelties set fire to a widow's house, who with her little children were ill of fever, in order by that process to eject them from their tenement. He was only more cruel and rash than many others of the same spirit; and I sincerely believe, if the influence of the Catholic clergy did not arrest the people, you would have murders, military executions, martial law, or insurrections throughout one half of the counties in Ireland.

A great number of the real disturbers of the public peace, under the name of magistrates, assembled lately at Thurles, and, as is reported, prayed the Government for the Insurrection Act, etc. If you grant it to them, you assist them to depopulate the country and starve the people; but you also alienate the affection of those who now hope you will extend the strong arm of power, not for their oppression but protection. If we ever are to be blessed with a change of system, begin now; give no aid to the real and efficient instigators of the barbarities which occur; tell them to spare the peasantry, not to instigate them, and no extraordinary aid will be required to curb their passions. If they be only taught that oppression will not be sustained, fear will make them moderate, for they have no resource but in the Government. Good feeling may then succeed, for fear often introduces charity to the heart, particularly of the high-minded. And as to the peasantry I am fully satisfied that if permitted to be humane, industrious, and benevolent they will be so, and even contented so far as is consistent with the deep feeling of dissatisfaction generated in them by the penal laws and the daily parade of ascendancy.

If on the other hand, you abet and support by power the tyranny now prevailing, you only claim the passions of the multitude, and every sigh they heave to heaven will be for vengeance against you and your proteges.

Pardon, my dear sir, the almost unpardonable length of this letter. I shall not again trespass on you for a long time, and remain, etc.,

✕ J. DOYLE.

## GERMAN CATHOLICS IN INDIANA.

(From the *New York Herald*.)

OLDENBURG, Ind., July 26, 1880.

UNBOUBTEDLY this is one of the most peculiar communities in the United States. It has probably over two thousand inhabitants, which number is augmented on Sundays to considerably over three thousand, all Democrats (even the postmaster), all Catholics, and all Germans, and that of the class known as Low, who speak a dialect of their own. Though by far the larger majority of these people were born in this country they still inherit the customs of their German forefathers.

Oldenburg is situated about seven miles from Batesville, a small station on the Indianapolis, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Chicago Railway, and reached from Batesville by the stage, which meets the two trains which stop there daily. The country is exceedingly hilly, but the soil appears to be very fertile; opulent vegetation surrounds the traveller on every hand. Oldenburg itself nestles comfortably in a pleasant valley. Its principal industry is a large cotton mill; its finest building is the Young Ladies' Academy, conducted by Sisters of one of the many Catholic Religious Orders. Next to the convent is a monastery of the Franciscan Fathers, and opposite to both convent and monastery stands the village church, a large brick edifice. Of hotels there was a plentiful supply; also of beer saloons and country stores. Though, as I said above, all the inhabitants are German, still they address strangers in the English language, and the English they speak is remarkably pure, considering the fact that all business is carried on in German.

Before going further into the backwoods I concluded to remain in Oldenburg a few days to observe the customs of the natives, and with ease could have imagined myself transported into some village of Central Germany. On every hand I met with uniform courtesies and liberal portions of the Teutonic beverage, retailed at most places at two and a half cents per glass. Though old and young, without regard to sex or wealth, seemed to imbibe freely, still in my three days' sojourn I did not see the least intoxication, though the quantities which some succeeded in disposing of convinced me that there must be a science in beer drinking. It was Friday, and I dined sumptuously. Eggs, fresh from the barn yard, butter just churned, fresh fish from a neighbouring stream, native wine and beer, with all the entrees of a good Catholic Friday dinner, I did not notice the absence of meat. On the following day we had chicken and various kinds of meats, and though I was stopping at the most aristocratic hotel in the place, the charge was only twenty-five cents per meal. A neat room with all the accommodation we could wish, was furnished at a similar figure. I spent several hours in one of the country stores, where the anomaly of a Democratic postmaster under a Republican administration was explained by the statement that there was no Republican within ten miles of that place. The bartering between the countrymen and the storekeeper was a source of a great deal of amusement. Money was only a dernier resort, and the products of other places paid for in butter, eggs, etc.

Butter is worth six and eight cents per pound, eggs six and eight cents per dozen, spring chickens eight and ten cents each, large chickens fifteen cents each, etc. Speaking to the most prominent politician of the place, a man who is considered by his neighbours as well up to the times in everything, and who speaks English fluently, I ventured to inquire how Indiana would vote in October. "This part will certainly go for the Democratic nominee, and our folks are just enthusiastic for Hancock. As far as I have heard, there seems little chance for the Republican ticket anywhere in the State; but then we read nothing but solidly Democratic papers here."