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LIFE OF JOHN MITCHEL



Your affectionate Son
John Mitchell

Ætat 39

Portrait by J. H. Smith

LIFE OF JOHN MITCHEL

BY

WILLIAM DILLON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1888



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PREFACE.



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AT the request of John Mitchel's widow, and of the surviving members of his family, I consented to undertake the task of writing his life. All the materials in the possession or within the procurement of the family were placed at my disposal. John Mitchel's private correspondence formed by much the most valuable part of these materials. I am assured that the number of the letters preserved would have been greater than it is had it not been for an unfortunate accident. The occurrence I refer to took place during the American Civil War. Mrs. Mitchel, wishing to join her husband in the Confederate States, tried to "run the blockade." The vessel in which she sailed was hotly chased by a northern cruiser, and was run ashore and burned. On this occasion many letters and other valuable papers were lost.

HARDING
DEC 1 6 1840
I will not repeat the stereotyped form of regretting that the task of writing Mitchel's life has not been entrusted to one better fitted for the work. It has been entrusted to me by those who have the best right to choose, and I have

done it as well as I could. But there is one ground which causes me to sincerely doubt the wisdom of Mrs. Mitchel's choice, and which also, I think, entitles me to claim some indulgence from the reader. During the whole time spent in writing this life my place of residence was such as to render impossible any oral communication either with the surviving members of Mr. Mitchel's family or with any others who had known him intimately. The reader will easily understand how very serious a disadvantage this was I am bound to say, however, that anything that could be done in the way of written communication to lessen the difficulties of my task was done for me, and done promptly, zealously, and efficiently. I have received most efficient help from the surviving members of John Mitchel's family (including in that term sisters and brother as well as wife and children), as also from several of his more intimate friends.

If I were asked to select the motto which would best epitomize the lesson to be learned from John Mitchel's life, taken as a whole, I think I should select that inscription which, as Herodotus tells us, was written over the Spartans who fell at Thermopylæ—"Stranger, tell thou the Lacedæmonians that we are lying here, having obeyed their words." This Mr. Ruskin calls, and rightly calls, the noblest group of words ever uttered by simple man concerning his practice. They were lying there—that is to say, in the ordinary and vulgar sense, they had been worsted; the enemy had proved too many for them, and had passed on over their prostrate bodies. But let us not suppose for a moment that the men who wrote the inscription meant it as a message of defeat. Unquestionably they meant it as a message of victory; and they were right. In

the best and highest sense the men who lay beneath that inscription were victors. They were lying there, but why? Because they had obeyed the commands of their state; because they had won the victory which of all others is the hardest to win; because they had stood face to face with death, and had not swerved one hair's breadth from the line of duty.

Amongst public men nowadays it is rare indeed to find one whose life is in accord with the spirit of this inscription. It is rare, in the first place, to find a public man who has any clear and precise conception of duty as distinguished from expediency; and, in the second place, it is rarer still to find one who, having this conception, is prepared to act up to it, regardless of consequences. It will, perhaps, be said that the exigencies of practical politics do not admit of a too rigid adherence to principle; that the man who seeks to work out results in politics must be prepared to handle the needful tools, even though he soil his hands a little in the process. It may be so. Upon this question there is no need that I should express any opinion. I do not intend to claim for John Mitchel that he was a practical politician. But this I do claim, and hope to establish: from the time when, in 1845, Mitchel first became a public man, down to the time of his death some thirty years later, in every instance in which public duty, as he saw it, and self-interest came in conflict, duty was followed, and interest disregarded. To do what he believed to be right, and to say what he believed to be true, let the consequences be what they might—this was the guiding principle from which Mitchel never swerved. Indeed, so strictly did he act upon this principle, that upon one or two occasions he illustrated the truth of the saying that a

virtue, if carried to excess, may become a fault. It is always the duty of a man to tell "nothing but the truth," but not always his duty to tell "the whole truth." It would be easy to put cases in which "the whole truth," if told, may work mischief, and in which there is no positive duty to break silence.

It matters comparatively little whether we do or do not agree with Mitchel, either as to the practicability of his methods or as to the soundness of his views of duty. This statement may not at first meet with universal assent, and it will be well to explain it. In this, as in so many other matters, a line has to be drawn between two opposing extremes. It is one extreme to say that we are bound to admire every man who acts earnestly and from a sense of duty, whatsoever his course of action may be. The other extreme is to say that we must never admire any man, however absolute may be his sacrifice of self-interest to duty, until we have satisfied ourselves that his view of duty in all respects coincides with our own. When we read of Leonidas and his Spartans resolving to stand and die at Thermopylæ, after the chances of a successful defence there had become manifestly desperate; or, again, of Regulus advising the Romans to leave himself and his companions to their fate—in such cases our first impulse is towards admiration and respect. A more careful consideration might lead us to the conclusion that in each of these cases the line of conduct pursued was decidedly unwise, and, in some respects, hard to justify. Yet in such cases our first impulse is our best guide. It is a sound impulse which prompts us to admire a man the moment we are satisfied that he is prepared to give his life rather than do what he believes to be wrong or dishonourable; and we shall do well

to yield to that impulse without being over-nice in inquiring into the moral character of the act in question. It would be a mistake to require that the view taken of duty should in all respects coincide with our own. We have a right to require that it shall not be such as to shock our moral sense ; and that is all.

I am not ignorant of the fact that many of John Mitchel's countrymen, and several of his best friends, dissented strongly from the views he advocated on certain important public questions. For example, it is well known that, during the American Civil War, John Mitchel was strongly for the South and for slavery, while the great majority of Irishmen, both at home and abroad, were as strongly for the North and abolition. But while we may find several acts in Mitchel's public life which have been regretted by men who were his sincere friends, we can find nothing which any countryman or admirer need feel ashamed of. This is the great test ; and when this can be said with truth of a man's public life, considered as a whole, the biographer's best course will be to just tell the story as he finds it, without stopping to excuse or explain such details as may not seem to him entirely praiseworthy.

In writing John Mitchel's life, I have, as a rule, avoided justifications and excuses. I have simply aimed to tell how he thought, spoke, and acted, and I have left it to the reader to form such judgment upon the facts as he may deem right. In three cases only of any importance have I departed from this rule. In each of these three cases the conduct of Mitchel has been severely and publicly criticised. So far as was needed to make clear my view regarding the justness of the hostile criticism, I have reluctantly departed from the rule by which in general I have been guided.

From the opening of the year 1848 down to the day of his death, John Mitchel's mind was dominated by a ruling passion. That ruling passion was hatred of the British Imperial system—hatred of the system in all its workings, but, above all, hatred of the system as it worked in Ireland. He hated cant, and he hated oppression; and the least suspicion of either of these was sufficient to rouse him to anger. Now, in Mitchel's view, canting oppression was the very essence of British Imperialism. For this, as well as for other causes, he hated the British empire. Whatever cause he might for the time being champion, the great central motive was always active. His interest in the cause was keen in proportion as he hoped that, in some way or other, directly or indirectly, it might be turned to account towards weakening "the enemy." Now, I will say at once that I, for one, regret that Mitchel should have been dominated by such a master passion. Upon a mind so rarely gifted as his the effect was decidedly narrowing. I am aware that, in holding this view, I differ from a great many of Mitchel's countrymen. To most Irishmen John Mitchel is the very embodiment of Ireland's passionate protest against English rule; and it is in this character that they best love to contemplate him. It is natural that Irishmen should take this view, and they will probably continue to take it. To the majority of his countrymen Mitchel will always be a hero rather of the type of Robert Emmett and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, than of the type of Berkeley and Swift. But, for myself, I must admit that the character in which I best like to regard John Mitchel is that of a man of letters. His natural gifts qualified him to be, and in many respects he was, the greatest man of letters that Ireland has produced since

Swift. His "Jail Journal," his "History of Ireland," his "Last Conquest," his lives of Hugh O'Neil and of Clarence Mangan—all these have been published in book form, and are familiar to numbers of Irish readers. But with the exception of some parts of the "Jail Journal," and of a few passages here and there in the other books named, his best literary work has never appeared in book form, and is known only to those, comparatively few, who subscribed to and read the weekly journals which, at different periods, he edited in the United States.

The expediency, from a political point of view, of publishing just now the life of the greatest Irish Irreconcilable of the century will probably be questioned. John Mitchel was for separation, simple and absolute; his one hope of salvation for Ireland lay in the break-up of the British empire; his dying boast was that he had made no peace with England; and John Mitchel is the idol of his countrymen. *Ergo*, etc.—it is easy to see the use to which this argument may be turned. But I hardly think the argument will carry much weight; certainly not with any one who understands the Irish people. And, however the lesson of Mitchel's strange career may be interpreted, it can hardly fail to be an instructive lesson to those engaged in the effort to solve the problem which, up to the present, has proved insoluble. He was the most gifted Irishman of his generation. His sincerity was above question. He commenced public life by joining a constitutional, moral force, agitation for repeal of the Union. After a few years of experience and close observation of English methods in Ireland, he came to believe with the utmost intensity of conviction that for Irish misery and degradation there was absolutely but one cure—the complete separation of the two

countries. As regards the belief itself, we may accept it ; we may dissent from it ; or we may suspend our judgment until we see what the next few years will bring ; but, in the case of such a man as Mitchel, we can hardly fail to learn something in studying the process by which the belief was reached.

WILLIAM DILLON.

CASTLE ROCK, DOUGLAS CO., COLORADO,
July, 1887.

INTRODUCTION.



AMONGST the generations of Irishmen who have grown to manhood during the last twenty-five years, I doubt whether any name has had a firmer hold of their imaginations, any memory a greater power to arouse enthusiasm, than that of John Mitchel. He had all the qualities calculated to awaken intense devotion in the Irish race. He was brave to a fault ; full of fire and energy ; and he had in the very highest degree the faculty of putting striking thoughts in vivid and delightful language—a gift which no race appreciates more keenly than do the Irish people.

The story of his life, too, although it was so full of cruel and terrible reality, had in it much that was dramatic and romantic. And there is hardly a man now in the ranks of the Nationalist party in Ireland who cannot recall how his blood was fired and his heart beat faster, when as a boy he read of the scene at Mitchel's trial ; or when, under Mitchel's guidance, he followed the fortunes of the great chieftain of Tir-Owen, and read for the first time how O'Neill triumphed over the stranger at the Yellow Ford, and left the fields round Armagh piled with the bodies of his foes.

Mitchel embodied also in his own person ideas very dear to the Irish Nationalist. He was an Ulster man, with Scottish blood in his veins ; yet no man ever lived more devoted to the idea of Irish nationality. He was an Ulster Protestant ; yet he loved the southern Catholics, and was beloved by them ; and he hated Orangeism with a sacred hate.

And, finally, Mitchel, more probably than any other man, put into immortal language the deep and fierce anger which burned in the heart of every true Irishman at the unutterable degradation and shame to which his country and race had been subjected.

A life of John Mitchel, then, can hardly fail to be of interest to all Irishmen.

Whether this book will be read by the "British public" is another matter. And yet, to any one who takes an intelligent interest in the Irish Question, it must, it seems to me, be full of instruction.

The fact that John Mitchel, an Ulster Protestant, and the descendant of Scotch Puritans, should have been the fiercest of Irish rebels ; the steps by which he was led to this position ; his views, based on the largest experience, on the religious question in Ireland ;—all these matters must be of interest to any one who desires to obtain a real knowledge of Ireland. And I know of very few, if any, books through which a stranger can gain more rapid insight into the spirit which inspired the present land agitation in Ireland, and into the difficulties that beset the settlement of the Irish Land Question, than through this book and Mr. Mitchel's "Last Conquest of Ireland."

By nature John Mitchel was much more conservative

than radical. He was averse to change, and by no means fanatically opposed even to Irish landlordism.

And in these books one can learn the causes by which such a man was converted, almost in spite of his nature, into the fiercest and most radical enemy that Irish landlordism ever had—before the days of the Land League. John Mitchel's letters and articles on this subject are to me of singular interest ; and some of them read now like those prophecies which it is given to genius alone to utter.

I hope, then, that this book *will* find readers outside of Ireland. No man, I think, can read it without feeling that he has learned a great deal about Ireland and her people. And, if any Englishman or Scotchman should be surprised and pained by the deep hatred of England and her government in Ireland, which is so often manifested in the pages of this book, I would ask him to read the history of the ruthless oppressions and the crimes which begot that passion ; and to put to himself the question, " Had I been an Irishman and loved Ireland, would not the same hatred have burned in my heart ? "

JOHN DILLON.

2, NORTH GREAT GEORGE'S STREET, DUBLIN,

April 15th, 1888.



CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE—CHILDHOOD—YOUTH.

1815—1834.

Non-Celtic Irish leaders—National and race-distinctions not identical— The Mitchels of Scotch origin—Rev. John Mitchel—Dungiven, Derry, Newry—A friend of civil and religious liberty—His character —John Mitchel's mother—Childhood and school-days—John Martin —Delight in wild nature—Love for rivers—Mountain rambles— Trinity College—No honours—Influence of his mother	PAGE I
---	-----------

CHAPTER II.

EARLY MANHOOD AND MARRIAGE.

1834—1837.

Intended for the ministry—A path he could not follow—Disappointment of his father—Must try to be a bank-clerk—It would not do—Early letters—First attachment—A troubled love-dream—Bound to an attorney—A new love—Flight of the lovers—Marriage—Character —Personal traits and habits	17
---	----

CHAPTER III.

FIRST YEARS OF MARRIED LIFE—NEWRY—BANBRIDGE.

1837—1845.

An attorney in Newry—Birth of a son—Society and politics in Newry— Begins to take an interest in the latter—Dinner to O'Connell—Friend- ship with John Martin—Reading Carlyle—Reading aloud—First attack of asthma—Death of his father—His grief and self-reproach—
--

	PAGE
Removal to Banbridge—Riding to sessions—Familiar knowledge of the country—A trip to Derry and Donegal—Makes acquaintance of Thomas Davis—Banbridge friends—Rev. James Davis—Discussions of philosophy—In an Orange district—Party fights—Visits to and from Martin—Excursions, politics, new books, "Nicholas Nickleby"—Letters to Martin—Feelings awakened by spring—Birth of the <i>Nation</i> —His thoughts running on politics—The Devon Commission—The State trials—Tired of attorney's work, he longs for the mountains—A member of the Repeal Association—First public meeting—Thinks the Protestants are coming round—Dines at Mr. Duffy's with "the <i>Nation</i> people"	33

CHAPTER IV.

BANBRIDGE (*continued*)—SURVEY OF IRISH POLITICS—MOVE TO DUBLIN.

1845.

A political retrospect—State of feeling at this time—O'Connell's agitation for Repeal—Still under the shadow of the Penal Days—Appearance of Davis on the scene; his influence—The awakening of hopes which had been buried and supposed dead—"The Repeal Year"—Prohibition of the Clontarf meeting—O'Connell at a stand—The <i>Nation</i> party, a new element—Mitchel's acquaintance with Young Ireland—A walking tour in the North—Recollections of Davis—Their last meeting—Death of Davis—The "Library of Ireland"—"Life of Hugh O'Neil"—Offered an editorial post on the <i>Nation</i> —A turning-point—Gives up his profession and moves to Dublin	60
---	----

CHAPTER V.

FROM MITCHEL'S COMING TO DUBLIN TO DEATH OF O'CONNELL—WORK ON "NATION"—PUBLIC SPEAKING—SECESSION OF YOUNG IRELAND FROM REPEAL ASSOCIATION.

1845—1847.

As a public man—"Possessed by a great cause"—An intense life—His position on the <i>Nation</i> —An impossible one for a man of his character—Subsequent differences and quarrel with Mr. Duffy—Mitchel as an editor—Manner of working—His first attempts to speak, failures—O'Connell and the Whigs—The '82 Club—Losing faith in the Repeal Association—The "Railway Article"—Failure of the potato crop—Famine threatening—Mitchel's articles in the <i>Nation</i> —Review of Carlyle's "Cromwell"—Repeal of the Corn Laws—Coercion—O'Brien sent to the "Cellar"—The '82 Club sends him a deputation—Mitchel meets Carlyle—The <i>Nation</i> prosecuted—Speech of Robert Holmes—Resignation of Peel, and advent of the Whigs—O'Connell allies him-

sell with them—The <i>Nation</i> party resisting, he resolves to drive them from the Association—The “Moral Force Resolutions”—Secession of Young Ireland—Mitchel’s home and friends—Visit of Carlyle—Mitchel’s correspondence with him—Anecdotes and characteristics—The summer of 1846, famine—Relief measures of the Whigs—“The Irish Party”—First meeting of Young Ireland—Address to the country—His instincts Conservative—1847, famine growing worse—The Irish Confederation—The Galway election—Travelling through a famine-stricken country—An election as it used to be—Conference of Landlords—James Finton Lalor, his influence on Mitchel’s opinions—The land question acquiring prominence—O’Connell leaves Ireland for the last time—The Whigs letting the famine take its course—Death of O’Connell	PAGE 81
--	------------

CHAPTER VI.

DUBLIN (*continued*)—IRISH COUNCIL—DIFFERENCES AT “NATION” OFFICE—CONFEDERATION DEBATE—MITCHEL’S POLITICAL CREED—“UNITED IRISHMAN”—TRIAL AND SENTENCE.

1847, 1848.

Parliamentary action not available as things then were—The people have the *first* claim on the food grown in the country—The landlords might yet make fair terms, if they would—Father John Kenyon—Meeting of the “Irish Council,” Mitchel’s work therein—Inquiry as to the supply of food, and as to imports and exports—John Rea—The general election; Young Ireland nowhere—Irish Council dissolves, having effected nothing—Lalor’s views on the land question—Mitchel still has hopes of the landlords, and of the Protestants—Meeting at Belfast, disturbed by “Old Ireland” and practically a failure—The landlords demand coercion, and get it—Rapid development of Mitchel’s opinions in these circumstances—Differences with Mr. Duffy—His view of the Poor Law—Severance from the *Nation*—Outvoted in the Confederation—His opinions at the close of 1847 and beginning of 1848; how far modified by events—Appearance of the *United Irishman*—Extraordinary sale—Letter to Lord Clarendon—Outburst of revolution on the Continent, after thirty years of peace—Effect upon the Young Ireland leaders—Mitchel rejoins the Confederation—Letter to the “Small Farmers”—Address of the Confederation to the French Republic—A struggle approaching; *at* harvest, or *before*?—Prosecution of O’Brien, Meagher, and Mitchel for sedition—The juries disagree in O’Brien’s and Meagher’s cases; case against Mitchel abandoned—His arrest on a charge of treason-felony—There must be no failure this time—The panel; loading the dice—How a jury is packed—Found guilty and sentenced—Speech from the dock—Robert Holmes—The question of a rescue—Carried off on board the *Shearwater* 155

CHAPTER VII.

BERMUDA—PERNAMBUCO—CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

1848, 1849.

Mitchel's political creed—His hatred of British imperialism—On board the <i>Shearwater</i> —"Jail Journal" begins—Spike Island—To Bermuda, the <i>Scourge</i> —Arrival at Bermuda—The hulk <i>Dromedary</i> —The hospital-ship <i>Tenedos</i> —Dr. Hall—Garrett—The <i>Dromedary</i> again—"Keeping despair and the devil at bay"—Discussion on suicide, decision <i>contra</i> —Books—Dialogue between the <i>Doppelganger</i> and the Ego—A defence of destructives—John Martin a convict!—Discipline on the hulks—A vision of home—Anxiety about his family—Letters home—Asthma—Warned that the climate will kill him—Dismally ill—Dr. Hall insists on his writing to the Governor—Does write at last—Five more months of the hulk, then sent to the Cape—The <i>Neptune</i> —Three months in the tropics in a convict ship—Short rations; prospect of mutiny and cannibalism—Pernambuco—Sees slaves for the first time—A Brazilian Irishman—Representative government in Brazil—Onward to the Cape, South America vanishing "like an exhalation from the sea"—Albatrosses, are they ever asthmatic?—Moonlight on the Antarctic—Young Irish convicts—Cursing the British Empire—The Cape—Simon's Bay	PAGE 249
---	--------------------

CHAPTER VIII.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE—VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

1849—1852.

The Cape will have no convicts—Anti-convict association—No landing—Must lie at anchor pending instructions from London—Irish state prisoners had touched here on their way to Sydney—Boycotting before Boycott—No intercourse—The skipper's opinion—The commodore procures beef by night forays—Visit from a bishop—Return of the asthma—Comments on home news—The Cape Colonists victorious after five months—On to Van Diemen's Land—A six weeks' voyage—Coasting Van Diemen's Land—Hobart Town—Meeting with John Martin—The village of Bothwell—Improvement in his health—"Balsam in the forest"—Meagher and O'Doherty at Lake Sorel—Friendly settlers—Yearns for a home—"Invites his household to the Antipodes"—Letter to Dillon—Awaiting his family—Mrs. Mitchel at Adelaide—Goes to Launceston to meet her—A day in jail—Meeting of the family—Takes a Tasmanian farm—Nant Cottage—Martin a near neighbour—Sheep farming—Teaching the children—Riding in the woods—Letters to O'Brien—A visit to him—Feelings on seeing him—Return by Lake Sorel—A great lake on a mountain-top—Visit to Meagher, and sail in the <i>Speranza</i> —Movement in America to procure release of the prisoners—Letters to friends in Ireland—Letter to O'Brien 298
---	------------

LIFE OF JOHN MITCHEL.



CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE—CHILDHOOD—YOUTH.

1815—1834.

IT has been remarked more than once that amongst those Irishmen who have most fiercely hated and most sternly resisted British rule in Ireland, not a few have borne names which seem to indicate an English origin. Tone, Emmett, Davis, Mitchel—these names are certainly not Celtic. Indeed, some English writers have pointed to the fact with pride, as though believing that it needs a Saxon, or the descendant of a Saxon, to hate English rule in Ireland with that hearty, fierce, thorough-going hatred which the case calls for. But to me the effort to prove that an Irishman is not an Irishman because his grandfather may have come from some other country, seems labour thrown away. I do not at all deny that inquiries into the nature and effects of race-distinctions have their proper interest and utility. I only affirm that national distinctions, as they exist in Europe to-day, do not by any means coincide with race-distinctions; and further, that the existence of these national distinctions is to-day a fact at least as significant

and at least as effective in important results as the existence of race-distinctions. The people who inhabit Ireland are a composite race, just as the people who inhabit England are a composite race. Some of the names most common amongst the peasantry of Mayo are of Norman origin; while in Tipperary, as is well known, the soldiers of Cromwell have left a progeny who, while still bearing their English names, have become "more Irish than the Irish themselves." A Gleeson is an Irishman, despite of his name, just as a Sheridan is American, or a McMahon French.

We cannot, as in the famous German song, determine the matter by the test of language; and it would certainly be hard to frame a definition which would leave no case in doubt. John Mitchel himself gives us a hint as to where, in his view, the line might be drawn. In his "Jail Journal" he speaks of Ireland as the land where his mother bore him, and where his father's bones were laid. Without attempting to draw a precise line, this much, at all events, may safely be affirmed—every man born in Ireland of parents also Irish by birth, is an Irishman to all intents and purposes, so far as the national distinction is concerned; provided always that he is proud to claim Ireland as his country, as the one land upon this earth which can inspire in his breast the holy sentiment of patriotism.

I have thought it as well to make the foregoing remarks because the first thing I have to tell about John Mitchel is that his family was of Scotch extraction. The following account of the family is taken in the main from a narrative supplied to me by a near relative of John Mitchel's.

The first that is known with any certainty regarding the Mitchel family is that they were Covenanters, and having to fly from Scotland, they took refuge in Tory Island, off the coast of Donegal. There the family lived

for some considerable time, and then crossed over to a place called Dunfanaghy, on the mainland. David Mitchel, the grandfather of John, was one of six brothers who had one sister. They all lived together till they were fairly on in life. It was then decided that one of the brothers should marry, and the lot fell on David. He married one Martha Cuthbert. Of this marriage there were born seven sons and one daughter. The eldest son, Robert, was a land surveyor, and went to live in Scotland, where he amassed a considerable fortune. The second son, John, was the father of the John whose life is here to be written.

This John Mitchel, the father, was educated mainly at the University of Glasgow. He early entered the ministry as a Presbyterian clergyman, and about the year 1810, he was put in charge of the church at or near Dungiven, in the county of Derry. Here, in the year 1811, he met and married a Miss Mary Haslett. It has been often said that remarkable men have, as a rule, remarkable mothers, and John Mitchel was certainly no exception to this rule. Indeed, it may be truly said of him, that both his parents were remarkable persons. From his first charge at Dungiven, the Rev. Mr. Mitchel was, in 1819, called to Derry. At Derry he remained some four years, and while still a minister there he received at once "calls" from both Newry and Armagh. He thus had three important congregations soliciting his services at the same time; from which it appears sufficiently plain that he had already made for himself a high character in his church. He decided to accept the call at Newry. Here he lived, a minister beloved and respected by all classes, until his death in 1840, and here his memory is still revered.

About the year 1829 occurred a division in the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster. Some of the younger and more liberal-minded men advocated more advanced opinions

than were approved by the majority. Unitarianism was at that time looked on as little short of Atheism, and a large number of the older ministers determined to stamp out this heresy, which they sneeringly called "The New Light." They formulated a creed which was to be subscribed by all the members of the synod, and by this means they hoped to get rid of the objectionable element. This creed was not consistent with the Code of the Presbyterian Church, and upon that ground the younger party remonstrated, protested, and fought the battle for liberty of conscience as long as they could. It ended as such battles commonly do end: the weaker party were compelled to give up the contest and leave the synod. They formed a small synod of their own, and styled themselves the "Remonstrants."

To this weaker party the Rev. Mr. Mitchel joined himself heart and soul, incited not alone by conviction and sympathy, but also by that inherent love of freedom and fair play which belonged to his character. By taking this decided stand, Mr. Mitchel not only risked the whole worldly prospects of himself and his family, but—what to a man of his gentle and affectionate nature was *far* worse—subjected himself to odium, calumny, and the loss of friends. In this, as in most religious contests, the gall and bitterness overflowed all bounds. Yet, in process of time, the justice and charity of Mr. Mitchel's character enabled him to live down the calumnies of his enemies. He earned the respect of all good men on either side, and in the latter years of his life he was often called the Melancthon of the Remonstrants. In politics he was a Liberal; but he took no active part in such matters, his mind and thoughts being fully absorbed in the cares of his congregation and in the various charitable works of the town. In health or sickness, in joy or sorrow, he was with his people. In the first terrible cholera year, he would rise night after night to

hurry to the bedside of some poor victim, often in an underground cellar, such as abounded at that time in the older parts of Newry, and there on the earthen floor he would kneel and pray, strengthen the soul for its last conflict, or console the sorrowing survivors.

All this, it may be said, is nothing more than what good and devoted clergymen of every denomination constantly have done in all ages, and constantly do still. To the credit of human nature it may at once be admitted that this is true. We know that there are good and devoted clergymen in every form of religious belief, but we do not on this account the less respect particular instances of goodness and self-devotion when they come under our notice. The facts that have come to my knowledge regarding the life of the Rev. Mr. Mitchel—John Mitchel's father—justify me in saying that he was an exceptionally good and devoted clergyman, and I do not know that I could give him any higher praise than is conveyed in the simple statement of that fact. The poor of all sects of religious belief flocked to him for help and counsel. From some descriptions of characteristic scenes given by an old friend often present at the family table, I take the following: The minister, usually the life of the party, has just sat down to dinner, when the servant tells him that old Peter Brown or the Widow Donnelly, or some such person, wants to speak to him. Vain are all suggestions that he should allow the person to sit down and wait. Off he goes; and for perhaps half an hour or more, listens patiently to some roundabout tale, advising, suggesting, perhaps reproving. Meantime, the good wife fidgets around and laments bitterly the loss of the dinner. Or again, he is hastening along, intent on some urgent business, when an old woman tries to stop him. He cannot stop, but he bids her walk by his side, and tell him her story. Meantime, a heavy shower

comes on, and up goes the minister's umbrella. He thinks little of sheltering himself, and holds the umbrella over the old beggar-woman as carefully as if she had been a duchess. These are small things, and to some people may seem trivial and not worthy of being repeated. But to me it seems that these little things, trivial as they may appear, help us more to see what a man really was and what sort of life he lived than the greater part of those things which by many biographers are regarded as all-important. It was not the habit of Mr. Mitchel to make any fuss about trifles; but in matters where he considered there was a principle involved he was as firm as a rock. It was a saying in the neighbourhood where the Mitchels lived that they might be led, but could by no means be driven. The following anecdote regarding the Rev. Mr. Mitchel has been told me by one of the family. In the rude hospitality of that time excessive drinking was the rule, and in this practice the minister, a frequent guest, was expected to join. Mr. Mitchel was no enemy to moderate conviviality, but he was resolved not to be forced into the toping ways of the country. Once, at a dinner party, a huge bowl of punch was introduced, and the master of the house locked the door—a not unfrequent occurrence—and put the key in his pocket, saying, with a glance no doubt at the recalcitrant minister, "Not a man leaves the room until the punch is finished." "Finished?" said Mr. Mitchel. "Oh, very well; finished it shall be." And seizing the bowl, he flung it under the grate. He was not afterwards troubled by this kind of importunity.

A few words now as to John Mitchel's mother. I have seen Mrs. Mitchel myself in my early days, but was so young then that I retain but a very shadowy recollection of her. My father, however, was one of her most intimate, and perhaps I may add, one of her most valued friends.

From him, and from several others who knew her, I have often heard her character described. According to the unanimous testimony of those who knew her best, she was a woman of a very high order of mind. Her conversation was full of intelligence, wit, and fire. But her gifts of intellect, though very remarkable, were not so remarkable as her force of character. There was a clearness, an energy, and a decisiveness about her modes of thought and action which powerfully impressed and fascinated those who had the advantage of her friendship. By the members of her own family she was all but worshipped. She was entirely devoted to her husband during his life, and was his great support in all his troubles. She survived him many years. After her husband's death she always had some of her children living with her, and, in company with them, she travelled a good deal. When, in 1853, her son John escaped from his exile in Van Diemen's Land, and went to the United States, she, with her other son and two of her daughters, was there to receive him. She lived in America several years; then recrossed the Atlantic, and went to live in London. Thence she removed to Newry, where she remained till her death, which occurred in 1865. During her later years she did not see much of her loved son John, Ireland then being a forbidden land to him; but to the last she was most deeply loved and honoured by him, as indeed she was also by all her other children.

The following contrast has been supplied to me by one of the children: "My mother was in many respects a contrast to my father. He was tall, blue-eyed, calm, orderly; she small, vivacious, hazel-eyed, apprehensive, energetic. She had an excellent understanding and aptitude for business and management, but was withal of a quick, impatient turn, and liked off-hand, practical solutions. In many ways John resembled her. The ground-

work of his character he had, I think, from his father ; but his purely intellectual characteristics, I should say, were those of his mother."

As intimated in the foregoing extract, we may find in John Mitchel some of the leading characteristics of either parent. In private life he was of a singularly sweet and gentle disposition, most considerate for others, and taking little care for himself. In public life he was decisive, stern, uncompromising ; rapid in resolve, and inflexible in the determination to do, at any cost, what he deemed to be right. From both parents in common he probably inherited a certain personal magnetism which was very remarkable.

There is one other matter in reference to John Mitchel's ancestry which I ought perhaps to notice. He used to boast, half in jest, that his father was a United Irishman ; but this was only true in a somewhat limited sense. His father, when a boy of fourteen, was required by the insurgents to go some distance with them in charge of a cart of ammunition. Before letting him go, they made him take the oath, and beyond this he does not seem to have taken any part in the movement. But John Mitchel's grandfather, on the mother's side, *was* a United Irishman, and sheltered in his house at least one of the fugitives from English vengeance. Another member too of the Haslett family, also a near relative of Mitchel's mother, was a distinguished officer in the American Revolution. He raised and was Colonel of a Delaware regiment, and was killed at the battle of Princeton. So that it would appear that, even in the matter of his rebellious tendencies, John Mitchel to some extent took after his ancestors.

I have said that the Rev. Mr. Mitchel was stationed at Dungiven, in the county of Derry, at the time of his marriage with Miss Haslett. Here, on November 3, 1815, John Mitchel, the subject of the present memoir,

was born. He was the third child of the marriage, two other sons having died in infancy. When, in 1819, the Rev. Mr. Mitchel was called to Derry, John was four years old. There was then in Derry a classical school of some reputation kept by an old minister named Moore—"Gospel Moore" was the nickname he bore amongst his scholars. To this school the little John Mitchel was sent shortly after the family removal to Derry. John was a very bright, intelligent child, and it was deemed wise in those days to stimulate the minds of intelligent children by setting them to bookwork at a very early age. It is no part of my purpose here to discuss the wisdom of this policy or to write an essay on infantile education; wisely or unwisely, little John Mitchel was put to books at a very early age. When he went to Dr. Moore's school, he could read very fairly, and about a year later, when he was a little over five years old, he was initiated into the mysteries of the Latin grammar. He made very rapid progress for a child of his age; and his teacher, Dr. Moore, was quite proud of him. It would seem, too, that the little fellow became much attached to his teacher, and liked going to school. In later years, his mother used to tell of him that upon a certain night, when the moon was at its full, the child mistook the bright moonlight for day, and started off for school at two o'clock on a winter morning.

When his father left Derry, John was seven years old, and he was then fairly proficient in the Latin grammar.

Of John Mitchel's early childhood, several anecdotes have been told to me; but there is nothing to show that he was markedly different from other children. He seems to have manifested at an early age the germs of that aversion to the commercial spirit which appears in his later political writings. On one occasion, when quite a child, he was given three halfpence to buy a ball. He went to the shop

and asked for a ball. The man showed him one; and on asking the price, he was told—one penny. He produced his three halfpence and asked the man eagerly whether he could not have the ball for that. To this proposal the shopman at once consented; and the child brought home the ball in triumph, thinking he had made quite a bargain.

In 1823, the family settled at Newry. The Rev. Mr. Mitchel purchased a pretty place close to the town, called Dromalane, and this continued to be the home of the young John Mitchel during the years of his boyhood and early manhood. Here the boy was first sent to a school kept by a Mr. McNiel. He does not seem to have got on well there. He had been reading Cæsar; but Mr. McNiel or his subordinates were of opinion that Cæsar was too advanced for him, and he was put back to the “Rudiments.” He was discouraged by this, and made but little progress. Mr. McNiel then pronounced him stupid, and punished him. This only made matters worse, and it soon became evident that little John Mitchel and Mr. McNiel were not suited for one another. He was withdrawn from the school after having attended some six months. His third and last experience of school was at Dr. Henderson’s classical school, also in Newry. He was about eight years old when he first went to this school, and he continued to attend it until he entered college in his sixteenth year. Dr. Henderson was himself an excellent scholar, and a kindly, sympathetic teacher. Under his instruction, there was no more talk of young John Mitchel’s being stupid. On the contrary, he soon became a prime favourite with the doctor, and in process of time he came to be regarded as one of the show pupils of the school. At this school, with the assistance of Dr. Henderson’s instructions, John Mitchel laid the foundation of that classical scholarship for which he was afterwards distinguished. Here, too, he

made several friendships which lasted all his life. Amongst them there was one in particular which formed an important part of his after-life—that with John Martin. Of this very beautiful instance of friendship I shall have more to say hereafter.

But there were other influences which powerfully affected young John Mitchel during these school days, and which had much to do with the formation of his character.

The town of Newry is prettily situated in a valley some few miles distant from the head of Carlingford Lough. The country around is mountainous and picturesque. Now, from his earliest childhood, John Mitchel manifested a most passionate love for natural beauties, and especially for mountains and mountain streams. His mother used to tell of him that when only six years old, he was taken to the house of an uncle, where he got his first view of fine mountain scenery. A few minutes after they arrived, Mrs. Mitchel missed the child, and on going to look for him, she found him standing at the back of the house, looking up at the mountains, and seemingly unconscious of anything else. He was clapping his hands together, and crying out, “Oh, I’m very glad; I’m very glad!” During his boyhood and youth at Newry this love of mountain scenery was a conspicuous element in his character. He used constantly to go out on long and solitary rambles among the hills. Sometimes he would be out the greater part of the night. More often he would be on the mountain tops at sunrise, filling his soul with vehement and beautiful thoughts.

Thus he came to have a quick eye and a sympathetic love for all the different aspects of nature’s beauty. The various hues of the mountains at sunrise, at noontide, at sunset, and by moonlight; how they looked in storm and how in calm; the forms and colours of the mountain flowers, the springing heather, the clear cold streams—all

these things were as familiar to him as the inscriptions on the school benches or the dimensions of the playground are to the ordinary schoolboy. Every hill, valley, and mountain stream in the vicinity of Newry he had fully explored, and could call up before his memory to the end of his life. His love of scenery had, moreover, a peculiarly strong tendency to localize itself. He had a keen eye for natural beauty wherever he found it ; but his love for Irish scenery in general, and for the scenery of his boyhood in particular, was something quite to itself. From the time of his exile, in 1848, until shortly before his death, he never set his eyes upon an Irish hill. When at last, broken in mind and in body, he did visit his native land, I have been told, by those who were with him at the time, that when he caught his first glimpse of the Irish hills he was visibly and powerfully agitated. He trembled all over with eagerness and excitement. And when he reached his old home at Newry, it was most touching to see the light of memory kindle in his eyes as he was driven about to places where, fifty years before, he had roamed as a boy.

Of his special love for hills and streams he has told us himself in his "Jail Journal." During his exile in Van Diemen's Land, sitting on the bank of a river called by the familiar name of Shannon, he soliloquizes as follows :—

All my life long I have delighted in rivers, rivulets, rills, fierce torrents tearing their rocky beds, gliding dimpled brooks kissing a daisied marge. The tinkle, or murmur, or deep-resounding roll, or raving roar of running water, is of all sounds my ears ever hear now, the most homely. Nothing else in this land looks or sounds like home. The birds have a foreign tongue : the very trees whispering to the wind, whisper in accents unknown to me ; for your gum tree leaves are all hard, horny, polished as the laurel,—besides, they have neither upper nor under side, but are set on with the plane of them vertical ; wherefore they can never, never, let breeze pipe or zephyr breathe as it will, never can

they whisper, quiver, sigh or sing, as do the beeches and the sycamores of old Rosstrevor. Yes, all sights and sounds of nature are alien and outlandish,—suggestive of the Tropic of Capricorn and the Antarctic Circle—save only the sparkle and the music of the streams. Well I know the voice of this eloquent river : it talks to me, and to the woods and rocks, in the same tongue and dialect wherein the Roe discoursed to me, a child ; in its crystalline gush my heart and brain are bathed ; and I hear, in its plaintive chime all the blended voices of history, of prophecy, and poesy, from the beginning. Not cooler or fresher was the Thracian Hebrus ; not purer were Abana and Pharpar ; not more ancient and venerable is Father Nilus. Before the quiet flow of the Egyptian river was yet disturbed by the jabber of priests of Merœe ; before the dynasty was yet bred that quaffed the sacred wave of Choaspes, “the drink of none but kings ;” ere its lordly namesake river, in Erin of the Streams, reflected yet upon its bosom a Pillar Tower, or heard the chimes from its seven churches ;—this river was rushing through its lonely glen to the southern sea, was singing its mystic song to these primeval woods.

These solitary mountain rambles of the young John used sometimes to cause his mother considerable anxiety. She once consulted the family physician regarding the erratic ways of her son, so unusual in a boy of his age. The old gentleman listened in silence, “Gad, madam, I like that,” was his response. “The boy must have something uncommon in him. Don’t interfere with his fancies.” And so he was allowed to follow his bent in peace. When he was about fifteen years of age he produced the only poem which he ever perpetrated. It was called “The Mountains.” His own people thought the poem very good ; but he does not appear to have shared that view himself, inasmuch as he never repeated the attempt. The poem contains a description of the various aspects of mountain scenery, and an expression of the feelings excited in him by each. On the whole, the effusion seems to me to be decidedly above the average of schoolboy verses.

Besides the teachings of Dr. Henderson, and the teachings of the mountains and streams, there was yet another influence which powerfully affected the development of young Mitchel's character. I speak of the influence of home. His was such a home as one might expect to find presided over by parents like his.

Of the children, John was the eldest living. There were then four daughters, and, lastly, another son, William. William was thirteen years younger than John, and was therefore, at the period of which I am now writing, much too young to fulfil the part of companion or confidant to his elder brother. John's chief companions, while at home, were his sisters; more especially his sister Matilda, just two years younger than himself, who was his great friend and confidante. He used to take much pains in teaching his sisters their lessons. Generally, the lessons would last a considerable length of time; but when he had a mountain walk in view the lessons became much shorter. Occasionally he would allow one of his sisters to accompany him in his walk, but as a general rule, during his boyhood, he took these walks alone. Much of his time was also spent with his father. The father was proud of his son's abilities and early promise. The Rev. Mr. Mitchel was himself a good classical scholar, and the teaching which John received from Dr. Henderson's school was liberally supplemented at home. Father and son read together, and discussed and criticised what they read. They had many a bout of argument, half earnest, half playful, whilst the mother and sisters listened admiringly. I have already referred to the division in the Presbyterian Synod, and told how the Rev. Mr. Mitchel took sides with the "Remonstrants." At this time, John was a boy of fourteen. He took a keen interest in a matter which so vitally concerned his father. While the dispute was at its height, much of John's time was

spent in examining texts of Scripture, and passages in the Fathers, and in criticising the arguments of the "Old Light" theologians. His father had already destined him for the Church; and this keen interest in religious matters seemed to justify the hope that John might do well as a minister. This hope, however, was not to be realized.

In 1830, John Mitchel was entered at Trinity College, Dublin. He was then not yet fifteen years old, and by some friends it was thought a mistake to send him to college so young. But his master, Dr. Henderson, was eager to have him sent as soon as possible. John Mitchel was his pet pupil, and would, so the doctor believed, be sure to run a brilliant course at college. The result hardly justified the hopes. Young Mitchel never became a resident student at college. He used to go up regularly to the necessary examinations, but he continued to make his home at Newry with his parents. He passed all the examinations creditably, but without obtaining either honours or prizes. Indeed, he did not seem to try for such. It may be that he had already begun to doubt whether the getting of honours and prizes at competitive examinations was the best test of true merit; or, more probably, he felt that he was too young to compete with the men who were pitted against him. He took his degree in 1834, when he was not yet nineteen. During these years of his college course, the influences which surrounded him were still, in the main, home influences. No doubt he would sometimes stay in Dublin a few days longer than was actually needed for the passing of the particular examination in question. This extra time would be spent sometimes in seeing whatever there was of interest to be seen in the city, sometimes in reading in the college library. And during these visits to college, short as they were, he managed to form some friendships which lasted through life. But all the time, his

home, as I have said, continued to be at Newry, and the influences which surrounded him there were still such as I have tried to describe. But perhaps I have hardly said enough as regards the influence of his mother. During this time, as during all the rest of her life, John Mitchel was devotedly attached to his mother; and no doubt he owed much to her teaching and example. She used to suffer from rheumatism, and during after-life, when her son John was living far away from her, she used often to say of him that no daughter could be more gentle, loving, and useful to a mother than he was to her during the days of his boyhood and youth.

With the close of young Mitchel's college course, we reach what was to some extent a crisis in his life. His boyhood was over, and his manhood about to begin. The decision as to his career in life had now to be made.

This decision, as we shall see, was not made without a good deal of trouble and difficulty. Young Mitchel's conduct in the matter was the cause of much uneasiness to his parents; and the decision which ultimately was reached did not determine the course of Mitchel's life for more than ten years.



CHAPTER II.

EARLY MANHOOD AND MARRIAGE.

1834—1837.

VERY soon after John Mitchel obtained his degree at college, the work of preparation for the ministry began. The Rev. Mr. Mitchel had set his heart upon this—that his eldest son and favourite child should follow him in the profession which he loved so well. Young Mitchel's first examination by the Presbytery of Armagh was highly satisfactory. A text of Scripture—the hundred and sixty-fifth verse of the hundred and nineteenth Psalm—was then given him, and he was directed to compose a sermon upon it; such sermon to be submitted to the Rev. Fathers at their next meeting. So far things seemed to go smoothly enough; but in a few days, John surprised and distressed his father by declaring that he would write no sermon; that he had changed his mind; that he could not and would not be a minister, and that some other plan of life must be thought of. This was not a mere caprice on his part.

He was becoming conscious of the fact that his opinions on religious subjects were diverging widely from those held by his father and by the Church to which his father belonged. But he was desirous, if possible, to avoid any open difference with a father whom he deeply respected and loved. Hence it seemed to him the best course to simply declare that he had no vocation for the ministry,

and could not choose that course of life. But to his father the change of mind must have seemed sudden and capricious, and it certainly was to him a grievous disappointment.

Yet he never urged his son on the point. Friends and relatives were now consulted as to John's future course. Mrs. Mitchel's brother, Mr. William Haslett, was then living at Derry, and was the director of a bank there. He suggested that his nephew should try his hand at banking—*i.e.* at bank clerking, probably as a temporary expedient. It would give him habits of business and keep him employed until something suitable could be found for him.

Accordingly, in the spring or summer of 1834, John Mitchel left his home in Newry, and started for Derry. On his way, he visited some friends in Belfast, and stayed with them for about ten days. He had a fair share of parties and gaiety during this short visit, and seems to have enjoyed it all keenly. The earliest letter of his that has come to my hands is one written to his sister Matilda, describing this visit to Belfast. Before giving this letter to the reader, let me say a few words as to his letters in general.

John Mitchel's earlier letters have nothing very remarkable about them. In later life he came to be a very excellent correspondent, not in the sense of writing frequently, but in the sense of writing what letters he did write remarkably well. I have seldom, if ever, read more interesting letters than some of Mitchel's, written from Van Diemen's Land and from America, to his friends at home. Such letters as these will, of course, find a place in this biography, as being much more interesting to readers anxious to get a true view of Mitchel's character than anything I could write. But how about his youthful letters? Some readers may think that if there be nothing in these letters which any clever young man might not

write, there can be no object in reproducing them in print. But in this view I can hardly concur. When a man makes such a mark for himself in the world as to render it desirable that his life should be written at all, it is desirable that the life should be made as complete as possible. Acts and circumstances which in the case of others might be deemed trivial, and which are trivial, looked at from a certain point of view, become important as marking the course of development, and helping us to form a more correct estimate of a character worth studying. It is often observed that if a certain thing were said or written, or printed or done by any other than a certain individual, people would take no notice of it. But the criticism has not in truth at all as much force as those who make it seem to suppose. It is both natural and right that we should take more pleasure in reading a letter written by a certain individual in whom we take an interest than we should take in reading the same letter if written by some one else. In the one case, the production must stand or fall upon its own intrinsic merits; in the other, it has a value and an interest outside of its intrinsic merits.

In examining the letters of John Mitchel which have been supplied to me by his family and friends, I have had to use my best discretion in deciding what to use and what to reject. In the result, I may say, generally, that of the letters written during his youth and early manhood, previous to his entry into public life, I have rejected more than I have used. Of those written in his later years I have used as much as, perhaps more than, I have rejected.

To return from this digression. We left John Mitchel at Belfast, where he had stopped on his way to Derry. Of this visit he writes a long account to his sister Matilda. There is nothing very striking about the letter, but in the course of it he mentions, in a casual sort of way, as a

matter of no importance, that he had met at a friend's house a certain Miss Mary M——, who, he adds, "is a very nice girl." This meeting gave rise to an episode which had some important consequences. The reader will hardly need to be told what I mean. To use a very common phrase for a not uncommon incident, young John Mitchel fell in love. It is a complaint to which young men of nineteen or thereabouts are somewhat liable; and the only thing to be noted about young Mitchel's case is that, being of a nature at once ardent and deep, he had the complaint in a form of more than average severity. Considering that his entire stay in Belfast did not last much more than a week, and that during this time he was only an occasional visitor at the house of Miss M——'s father, the reader may perhaps think that the falling in love was somewhat sudden. But "who ever loved that loved not at first sight?" And the sequel showed that in Mitchel's case the feeling, however suddenly it may have arisen, was strong and deep.

After a stay of some days at Belfast, he went on to Derry. There he at once became a clerk in the bank of which his uncle was director, and was invited to stay at his uncle's house until he could procure suitable lodgings. Now, the life of a bank clerk would, under no circumstances, have been a pleasant one for a young man of Mitchel's ardent temperament. Had he not visited Belfast, however, on the way to Derry, it is possible that he might have made up his mind to endure the life at least for a time. But he had visited Belfast, and had there met Miss M——. With his mind full of a first attachment, a drudgery which in any event would have been irksome, became unendurable. In the letter above quoted, he refers to the fact that Miss M—— was about to go to Newry. And in fact, while he was attending to his duties at the bank in Derry,

she was on a visit to her relatives at Newry. This, of course, did not tend to mend matters, or to reconcile him to his enforced absence from home. He had frequent letters from members of his family (who had not the least suspicion of the state of his thoughts), dwelling on the merits and attractions of the young lady. At length matters reached a crisis. Some few weeks after his arrival in Derry he writes to his father:—

I have heard through Mr. H—— that you are not to leave home for the synod. I was waiting for your arrival in Derry for the decision of the bank question. But now that I am not to see you, I may as well write all I think on the subject. I have been making inquiries and observations since I entered the office, concerning the actual duties and circumstances of the situation, and I have come to the conclusion that the thing is really not fit for me, nor I for it. I know this must look like caprice and levity on my part both towards you and my uncle. But if we had known all that I now know before I left home, I think we would never have thought of it. I had no idea that the clerks were to be employed in the business of the office except during the public hours. I find, however, that they cannot call a single minute of any day their own. In winter, which is their busiest season, they are usually obliged to attend at six in the morning, and work without intermission, except while they take their meals, till twelve at night. This would not only require an utter sacrifice of all my habits and inclinations, but would preclude all sorts of reading, even, I think, for college. And even if my health would support it, I really cannot consent to inter myself so for life. To have a certain moderate portion of the day set apart for some business would be very well, provided I had the rest to myself; but such unintermitting slavery is intolerable. And what, then, you will say, am I to do with myself? That I really cannot tell; but I would make any effort rather than be a clerk in a bank.

Here we have a pretty strong statement of the case against the occupation of a bank clerk. But, as we know, the letter is not a full statement of all the motives which

influenced Mitchel at that time. There was a certain *suppressio veri* of a quite excusable kind, a sort of concealment which young men of nineteen or thereabouts most commonly do practice with their parents. His father was again disappointed; but this time the disappointment was not so severe as on the former occasion, inasmuch as Mr. Mitchel had never set his heart upon seeing his son a bank clerk. Moreover, he dearly loved his son, and he saw that there was some force and reason in his objection to the proposed career.

He wrote in answer to John's letter, telling him to throw up the bank place if it did not suit him, and to come home. This leave was at once accepted and acted on. The latter part of the summer of 1834 was passed at home in the society of a very pretty and attractive young lady, whom he had already learned to admire. The result was such as might have been foreseen. An engagement took place between the young people, which was kept a secret until after the young lady returned to her home. When John Mitchel disclosed the state of affairs to his parents, they were both distressed and displeased. They considered that such an entanglement would hardly help the prospects of their son, for whom they were naturally ambitious. The young lady was both amiable and agreeable, but she was some six years older than John, who had not yet completed his nineteenth year, and neither of them had any means of support. John Mitchel's parents insisted that there should be no engagement or correspondence for the present, whatever might occur in the future. Meantime, Miss M——'s family had also learned how matters stood, and had further heard of the opposition of young Mitchel's parents. They not unnaturally took offence. On both sides, a stop was put to all intercourse between the young people. The effect upon John Mitchel was for a time very

serious ; his nature being, as I have said, to feel not only ardently but deeply. He became silent and morose ; he absented himself much from the family circle, and spent long days wandering among the hills, often without food for many hours. Sometimes he would remain out the greater part of a winter's night and return towards morning pale and moody. He would brook no questioning as to his movements. His family were much alarmed, and even feared that his mind might become unsettled. This state of things lasted during the autumn of 1834 and into the winter of 1834 and 1835.

It was believed by his family that he must several times have attempted to open a correspondence with the young lady and that his letters were returned. At last, in despair, he started one winter's night to walk to Belfast, a distance of some thirty miles.

There were no railways in those days. In the morning his room was empty, and it was plain he had not been to bed that night. His parents were alarmed, but thought at first that it was only one of his rambles in the hills, somewhat more prolonged than usual. But as the day wore on, without his making his appearance, the dread of his parents became intensified. They knew well his proud, fiery, impetuous nature, and they at times almost feared the worst. For two days this suspense lasted. Meantime a friend, less agitated and more clear-sighted than the rest, hit upon an idea. He put a fast horse in his trap, and drove to Belfast. There he found some clue which induced him to think his surmise correct, and after an anxious search, he at last found the fugitive himself.

John Mitchel, when found, was just about to turn his steps homeward, baffled and weary, after an ineffectual attempt to see the object of his love. He had been to her father's house ; she was there, but her friends, giving as a

reason the opposition of Mitchel's parents, would not permit a meeting. His father and mother were of course overjoyed to see him back again. But a serious illness followed. Doctors were called in, and for some weeks his condition was considered critical. Ultimately his constitution and his youth carried him through the illness ; but for a considerable time afterwards he was gloomy and uncertain in his spirits. His temper, naturally sweet and even, became fitful and irritable. Time at length, and the feeling that his love-dream was irrevocably over, gradually restored his health of mind and body. But the impression left was deep, probably on both sides. The lady never married. Years after, when Mitchel, then happily married, met her in society, he was visibly and painfully agitated.

This love dream and its results covered the time from the summer of 1834 till about the same time in 1835. During this time, Mitchel was not in a mood to take serious thought as regarded the choice of a profession, and his parents did not deem it wise to press him on the point. But with the return of his health and mental composure, the subject again came up for discussion. The law was ultimately selected ; and somewhere towards the close of 1835 or beginning of 1836 Mitchel entered the office of a Newry solicitor—a Mr. John Quinn, who was a friend of his father's.

For the next four years his time was much taken up with the work of his profession. He was often in Dublin, attending the business at the Four Courts, but he found time for other pursuits as well. He was now, as always, an omnivorous reader ; and most of the time in Dublin that he could spare from business was spent in the college library. At home in Newry also he found time not only for reading and literary work, but for other matters more interesting and engrossing than any literary work could be.

A little more than a year after he had recovered from the effects of his first love affair, we find him violently in love again ; this time happily and finally. His first meeting with Miss Jane Verner occurred in Newry in the spring of 1836. She was then a schoolgirl of sixteen. Her father, Captain James Verner, had recently become a neighbour of the Mitchel family. The young girl, an only daughter, became a pupil at a day school kept by a Miss Bryden, and used to walk every day from her father's house to school.

John Mitchel was at this time attending Mr. Quinn's office studying the law. One morning, on his way to the office, he met Miss Verner for the first time, and was fascinated by her beauty. He speedily succeeded in ascertaining who she was. There happened to be another girl at Miss Bryden's school who was intimate with Miss Verner, and who was also a friend of Mitchel's. Through her the two young people became acquainted. Mitchel used to watch for the two girls as they walked to or from school, and often the three would go for a walk together. This romantic kind of friendship continued through the spring and summer, and on into the autumn of 1836. It is strange that the parents on either side should not have heard or suspected what was going on. But it seems they did not. Some time in the autumn, the young people became engaged.

It so happened that about this time Captain Verner decided to go to France, and to take his daughter with him. Miss Verner told her lover of this resolve. Young Mitchel was by this time deeply in love. He was naturally impetuous and headstrong, even in matters where his passions were much less deeply involved. He at once made up his mind that the parting should not take place. The only way of escape that seemed open to him was to

induce Miss Verner to consent to an immediate marriage. To address Captain Verner on the subject was out of the question. He would not have entertained such a proposal for a moment, since in his eyes his daughter was a mere child. There was nothing for it, then, but to persuade Miss Verner to elope. By a process of logic known only to lovers, he succeeded in inducing her to give her consent. He immediately set himself to devise a plan of campaign. He was then in the habit of going to Dublin several times in the year to attend the Four Courts. The time for one of these journeys was at hand. It seemed to him that this afforded a favourable opportunity, and he laid his plans accordingly.

He was to leave Newry with the ostensible purpose of going to Dublin, but to stop at some distance from Newry. The next day he was to return, and at an appointed hour he was to be at a place a little distance from Captain Verner's house with a chaise. There Miss Verner was to meet him. They were to drive to Warrenpoint, take the steamer to Liverpool, and there be married. When the appointed day came, Mitchel left on the night mail coach for Dublin, thinking he had everything arranged both secretly and securely ; but his secret was not so well kept as he supposed. A clerk in Mr. Quinn's employment had his suspicions, and confided the same to Mr. Quinn. Mr. Quinn at once went to Mr. Mitchel, senior, and told him what he had heard. However, the clerk was not quite accurate as to details. According to his warning, young John Mitchel intended to elope with Miss Verner the same night that he ostensibly left for Dublin ; whereas, as above stated, the plan was for the following day. The Rev. Mr. Mitchel did not put much faith in the story, yet he thought it his duty to warn Captain Verner. Accordingly, he went to the captain, and told him what he had

heard, saying at the same time that he did not believe it, as his son had gone to Dublin. It may be that Captain Verner already had his suspicions, for he seems to have believed the story. He was naturally very indignant, and put a strict watch on his daughter. The house and the bridge near by were both guarded during the night; but when night and morning passed, and there was no sign of young Mitchel returning, they began to think the story must be groundless. As the day wore on, the watch was taken off, and things went on as before the alarm. Early in the afternoon, Miss Verner saw from her window her lover with the carriage come to the appointed place. A visitor had just come in and was engaging the attention of her parents. She slipped on her bonnet and cloak, and passed out of the house by the front door. She met her lover, explained to him how things were, and in a few minutes he and she were driving off together in full view of both houses. I do not suppose, however, that it occurred to the parents to suspect who were in the carriage, since no immediate pursuit was attempted.

They drove rapidly to Warrenpoint, dismissed the driver, and walked to the beach, where they hired a boat to take them down the bay. They were rowed several miles down the bay, until they crossed the course of the Liverpool steamer. They waited in the boat until the steamer came up and took them on board. The young couple gave in their names as Lieutenant and Miss Johnson, travelling from Warrenpoint to Liverpool. The captain of the steamer made no difficulty, but took them on board without further question. On the following morning they arrived at Liverpool.

John Mitchel at once started to arrange matters for the marriage. He found, however, that the getting of a licence was a matter that would take some little time, and he was

told that the thing could be arranged quicker at Chester than at Liverpool. To Chester accordingly they went immediately after breakfast. Immediately on their arrival, Mitchel again went to investigate the licence question. He found that at Chester also a residence of some days would be necessary before the licence could be obtained. So they decided there was nothing for it but patience. Lieutenant and Miss Johnson took lodgings, and arranged for a sojourn of some days at Chester. The day after their arrival they spent walking about the town and visiting the cathedral. After dinner they settled down for a quiet evening of reading aloud. Lieutenant Johnson was reading the "Young Duke" for his sister, when suddenly the door opened and in came—Captain and Mrs. Verner. The reader can imagine for himself the scene which followed. There was no more reading of the "Young Duke" for that evening.

Captain Verner had young Mitchel arrested and taken back to Ireland in custody. He was kept a few days in prison before being released on bail; and this was his first experience of prison life—an experience which he was afterwards to repeat on a much larger scale.

Captain Verner was now more than ever bent upon going to France, as soon as he could put his affairs in order. In the mean time he resolved to make sure that his daughter should not again meet young Mitchel. He removed her to a remote part of the county, and put her in charge of some people in whom he had perfect confidence. But—"Inclusam Danaen turris aenea," etc.—the experience of all ages, from mythical times down to the present, have shown how vain are such precautions where young passion is concerned to baffle them. Mitchel succeeded in finding out where the lady of his love was concealed. He presented himself in person at the house, and—such

is the eloquence of passion—he actually succeeded in gaining over to his side the people in whose charge Miss Verner had been left. This once done, the rest was easy. A licence was obtained, and early in the morning of February 3, 1837, the young lovers were married by the Rev. David Babington, in the parish church of Drumcree.

I have told this romantic story thus minutely and at full length, because it seems to me eminently characteristic of the man. I do not justify Mitchel's conduct in the matter; I do not hold it up for imitation. I should hesitate to say to any young attorney's apprentice of my acquaintance, "Go thou and do likewise." But, as I have said, my object here is not so much to say what sort of man John Mitchel ought to have been, as to show what sort of man he was. Assuredly he was not formed by nature to travel along the smooth and beaten paths of this world. Reserves, accommodations, patient waitings on the slow births of time—these were not for him. "*Mensch sein heisst Fechter sein.*" Eager, impetuous, at times, if you will, headstrong—no sooner did he place before himself a certain goal as to be attained, than he at once started to reach it by whatever seemed likely to prove the straightest and shortest road. And if, in the case of the story above told, we are forced to admit that passion was the leading motive, it is only fair to add that in after-life he gave abundant proof that he could be just as impetuous in action and just as reckless of consequences where the leading motive was duty. Moreover, there are kinds of success which do go some way towards justifying antecedent conduct otherwise blameworthy. And perhaps the best defence that can be offered for Mitchel's conduct in this matter of his marriage lies in the fact that the lady of this romance never repented the step then taken, and that,

upon both sides, love survived the passion of youth and remained strong and faithful till the final parting.

Before entering upon the history of Mitchel's married life, it may be as well for me to speak of certain matters, some knowledge of which is needed to enable us to form an adequate idea of his personality. I will try to describe his personal appearance and a few of his characteristic habits and ways.

In person, John Mitchel was rather tall, slightly over five feet ten inches. His figure was slender, but well knit. When not suffering from asthma, he held himself very erect, and was active and prompt in his movements. His complexion was clear, but rather pale, except when flushed by excitement or exercise. His hair was brown; it was very abundant and but little grizzled to the last. It did not curl, but folded itself in rich locks, and those at the sides he would, when reading or abstracted, keep winding round and round his little finger, a habit known in the family as "twirling his lock." This habit began in his earliest childhood, and lasted through life. A few minutes before he died, his hand, already growing cold, was raised to his head, and the force of long habit asserted itself even on the very eve of death. When much absorbed in reading, he nearly always held the book in one hand, and "twirled a lock" with the other. His mouth was full and firm, the lips well closed. His eyes were blue-gray; sometimes they looked a dark blue, sometimes gray. He was near-sighted, and hence a habit of frowning at times and of squeezing up his eyes which made some people think them smaller than they really were. They were remarkably expressive. Sometimes the look was stern and sometimes affectionate; and again the eyes would have in them a peculiar twinkle of humour. His nose was originally straight and shapely, with well-opened nostrils; but owing

to an accident he met with while chopping wood in Tennessee, the shape of his nose in later life differed considerably from what it had been in youth. The head was not large, but singularly well made and typical; the brow straight and broad, and in youth very white and smooth. John Mitchel had in a marked degree the faculty of personal fascination. Of those to whom he cared to make himself agreeable, there were few indeed who did not feel powerfully attracted. I have felt the effect of this personal magnetism myself while in conversation with him, and I have heard others speak of having felt it likewise. Besides the habit above referred to, there were some other little peculiarities of habit which may as well be mentioned. He had a very hearty and pleasant laugh, and if much amused would throw back his head to indulge it freely. His sense of humour was exceptionally keen; it was impossible to look into his eyes at times without feeling this.

Like most men who think deeply, he was absent-minded. At times he would become absorbed in thought and forget where he was. From the time he became a journalist and man of letters, he was in the constant habit of committing his thoughts to writing, and this habit was probably the cause of a peculiar practice which often accompanied his fits of absent-mindedness. As he thought, he would write rapidly but carefully, with his finger on the tablecloth, dotting his *i*'s and crossing his *t*'s. If there did not happen to be a table before him, he would often write in the air. At such times he would commonly veil his eyes and become quite oblivious to all around him. If spoken to, he would generally rouse up at once, and join in the conversation, whatever it might be. He seldom showed any annoyance at having his reveries interrupted.

In the foregoing sketch, I have not deemed it necessary to confine myself to such habits or traits of character as

were fully developed at the period we have now reached. Strict adherence to chronological order is sometimes good, sometimes the reverse. When we speak of a man's character, we generally understand the word in a continuous sense, and not as referring only to habits and ways manifested at a particular period of life.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST YEARS OF MARRIED LIFE—NEWRY—BANBRIDGE.

1837—1845.

AFTER a short visit to Dublin, the newly married pair settled in Newry, close to where Mitchel's own people lived. His parents were naturally displeased by his action in the matter of his marriage. But they were too much attached to their son to keep up anger long, and from the moment of the return to Newry the young wife was received in their home as a daughter.

It was not till some three years after his marriage that Mitchel finished his apprenticeship and was admitted to practice his profession. These three years were spent in Newry, with occasional visits to Dublin. Perhaps I should be safe in saying that they were the happiest years of John Mitchel's life. He had a home presided over by a wife to whom he was devotedly attached. That home was near to the old home in which he had grown up to manhood. He saw his father and mother, his brother and sisters, almost daily, and the affection between him and them continued as strong as ever. On January 24, 1838, his eldest son John was born. This son afterwards proved himself worthy of his father. He became a captain in the service of the Confederates during the American Civil War, and being put in command of the important post of Fort Sumter, at Charleston, he was there killed by a Federal shell. But this is anticipating.

There was then in Newry a literary society which used to meet, I think, once a week. John Mitchel was a member of this society, and contributed essays from time to time. There was, too, a fair share of gaiety and amusement amongst the parishioners and friends of his father, and in this he took part with zest and keen enjoyment. He also found time for some general literary work, now and then, over and above his contributions to the literary society. It was during this period, I believe, that he contributed a series of letters to the *Times* on Canadian politics, which attracted some notice when published.

It seems to have been during this period of his life that Mitchel first began to take much interest in politics. His father had never been an active politician, although, as above narrated, he had once, under peculiar circumstances, become a United Irishman. But the Rev. Mr. Mitchel was a man of kind heart and wide sympathies, and he was entirely free from any trace of bigotry. In the struggle then going on between the Irish people and their rulers, Mr. Mitchel's sympathies were upon the whole with the popular side. On one occasion, not very long after the granting of the Catholic emancipation, it was decided by the popular party to start a Catholic candidate for Newry. Newry was then regarded by the ascendancy party as one of their strongholds, and they were very indignant at so insolent a proceeding on the part of the Catholics. Many of the members of the Rev. Mr. Mitchel's congregation took an active part in the election on the ascendancy side, and pressed Mr. Mitchel to do likewise. He resolutely refused to take part against the popular candidate, and for this he was nicknamed "Papist Mitchel." Up to the time of his marriage, John Mitchel had in the main taken his politics from his father. Yet, even already there was an element in his feeling on political matters which hardly

existed in his father's. He had begun to realize the degradation of his countrymen, and he felt already a something of that *sæva indignatio* which gnawed at the vitals of Swift. This feeling had not as yet got hold of him at all to the extent which it afterwards did; but I fancy I can find traces of it in the earliest letter in which he touches on political matters. Some time during the period I am now writing of (1837-1840)—I think it was in 1839—a project was started to get up a public dinner to O'Connell in Newry. It was the first time O'Connell had been so far north. And as Newry was then a stronghold of Orangeism, fears of violence were entertained. Mitchel took an active part in the preparations. There was no violence, though there was much excitement. The banquet passed off in a way satisfactory to those who organized it. The incident is interesting as being the first appearance of Mitchel on a stage upon which he was destined to take so leading a part.

During these years, he was in constant converse with his friend John Martin of Loughorne. I have already alluded to the friendship which began at Dr. Henderson's school. The friendship thus commenced lasted through life; and when the end came, the two friends, who had known and loved one another from boyhood, died in the same house and within a few days of one another. I have never myself known a more perfect example of human friendship. The character of the two men differed widely in many respects. John Mitchel was intense and vehement by nature. As a public man, in after-life, the least suspicion of cant or oppression was able to arouse in him a humour stern, uncompromising, and fierce; and while in that humour, he spared no man who seemed to him to be at all in league with the wrong he was attacking. John Martin, on the other hand, was by nature calm, quiet, and

charitable. He was always quick to believe what was good, and very slow to believe what was evil of others.

When I was a boy, Mr. Martin used to be a frequent visitor at my father's house; and I can still recall the pleasure which I used to feel in seeing him come to the door. Children, I suppose, are quicker than grown-up people in discerning intuitively a really sweet and loving nature. Yet, gentle and loving as he commonly was, there existed in Mr. Martin's character an element of firmness which, on several occasions during his life, asserted itself in a very remarkable manner. I suppose, as is often the case in friendship, the dissimilarity of character which I have been describing made the two men all the better suited to one another. Each found in the other what, to some extent, he lacked himself. At the period of which I am now writing the friendship begun in boyhood had matured, and John Martin was then Mitchel's most valued and intimate friend. Mr. Martin had inherited a small property known as Loughorne, upon which he lived. He had no regular occupation or profession, and led the life of a country gentleman and farmer. He was, like Mitchel, a great reader, and was a very fair classical scholar. The two had, as I have mentioned, studied classics together at Dr. Henderson's school. Martin afterwards studied medicine, but never attempted any regular practice as a doctor.

The distance from Newry to Loughorne was less than five miles—not so far as to prevent the two friends from constantly meeting and exchanging ideas. Among contemporary writers the great object of their worship at this time was Carlyle, then rising to the zenith of his fame.* The earliest letter of Mitchel's to Martin which has come to my hands tells of the effect produced on him by

* Perhaps I ought rather to say risen, "The French Revolution," the greatest of his works, having been published before this time.

Carlyle's "French Revolution." The letter is dated November 29, 1838, and is written from Newry :—

I have your school requisites here since Sunday, when I came down from Dublin. I would have written to you before, but thought you would be coming into town.

I spent two hours and a half regularly every morning in the college library reading Carlyle. The two remaining volumes are, as I anticipated, even superior to the first. It is the profoundest book, and the most eloquent and fascinating history, that English literature ever produced. The only thing that comes near it in *importance* (not in philosophy, nor in wisdom, nor in fancy, nor in liberality, nor in magnificence of language—what a long parenthesis) is the "Decline and Fall." Such men as Carlyle are the salt of the earth.

His admiration for Carlyle became much less enthusiastic and more qualified in later years; but he never ceased to regard Carlyle as a man of true genius, and to admire him accordingly.

In domestic life Mitchel was from the first affectionate, gentle, and thoughtful for others. To the end of his life he was beloved and respected by the members of his own family in a more than common degree. I have mentioned the birth of his first son, John, at the beginning of 1838. His second son, James, was born in February, 1840. James also afterwards became an officer in the Confederate service during the American war. Some time in the year 1838 or 1839, Mitchel first commenced the practice of reading aloud in his family. He continued to do this more or less regularly until his time came to be entirely taken up with politics. In after-life, too, he often resumed the practice, when able to spare a little time from his literary or journalistic work. His favourite author for this purpose was Sir Walter Scott. Sometimes, too, he would read Dickens, as his early works appeared in serial form; and they used to amuse him, as I suppose they did more or

less amuse every one who read them. But the taste for Dickens did not remain with him in after-life. His love for Scott he never lost. In his later years, when his health was much broken, and when at times he had to rest from literary work, his most common recreation was to read over again a favourite novel or poem of Scott's. Whether it was by reason of this practice in his family, or of natural aptitude—most probably it was the result of both combined—he certainly came to read aloud remarkably well. I remember once, when I called to see him not long before his death, he gave me a copy of Cobbett's "History of the Reformation." He asked me if I had ever read the book; and upon my answering in the negative, he opened it, and read aloud the passage about the celibacy of the clergy. The passage is in Cobbett's happy vein; one of the best specimens of his sledge-hammer style of writing that I know. It suited Mitchel's taste exactly, and he threw his whole soul into it as he read. In the tricks of elocution, he was not, of course, equal to many trained public readers; but, as he went along, I felt that the full meaning and force of the passage was being interpreted to me in a way which no other reader I had ever heard could have equalled.

It was also during this period of his life in Newry—some time in 1839, I believe—that he first made the acquaintance of a very unpleasant visitor, whose attentions he was never afterwards able to shake off. I mean the asthma. Mitchel had never had asthma before; but John Martin had suffered from it for some years, and sometimes, during a severe attack, Mitchel would stay with him and sit up at nights attending to him. Whether it was in this way he contracted the disease I cannot say, as I do not even know whether the complaint can be so communicated. The attack first came upon Mitchel in the middle of the night, without any previous warning whatever. But his

experience in the case of his friend enabled him at once to know what was the matter. From this time forward he was subject to severe attacks of asthma at intervals. Indeed, at one time, shortly after his transportation, and while he was detained a prisoner at Bermuda, the disease came very near killing him.

The year 1840 was an important one in Mitchel's life. I have already mentioned the birth of his son James early in the month of February of that year. In the end of the same month occurred the death of his father. The Rev. Mr. Mitchel died of an illness caused by a severe cold which he caught while performing the funeral service over the grave of a parishioner.

I have said that John Mitchel was devotedly attached to his father. His father's death was a deep and lasting sorrow to him; yet I fear it must be admitted that this sorrow was not unmixed with remorse. He felt that his conduct had more than once been the cause of severe anxiety and distress to his parents, not that he had ever shown the least tendency to indulge in dissipation or any of the grosser kinds of misconduct; but he had certainly, on several occasions, shown a want of due respect for his father's wishes. He had taken his own course in opposition to, or, at least, without consulting, his parents' wishes in a way that must have seemed to them proud, wayward, and headstrong. He was conscious of this himself; and, after his father's death, this consciousness was a source of keen remorse. There is a passage in his "Jail Journal," written while he was at Bermuda, some nine years after his father's death, which was obviously suggested by remorseful recollections of his relations with his parents in his early years. He is noting how, in the long lonely months of his imprisonment, his memory seems to work with preternatural activity; how he can recall without effort, lines and

passages from books, read “twenty golden years ago,” that he could not have begun to repeat two years previously. He wonders in what “limbo” those memories can have slept all that while; and then continues:—

. . . But not to go further towards the brink of the abyss profound, it is very certain my memory has improved at Bermuda. And *monuar! monuar!* I wish no darker memories crowded upon me than lines of Æschylus or Horace: but my whole life lies mirrored before me; and it is not bright nor fair to see. I would that I could find in it one single good action (besides the action for which I was convicted as a felon). I wish the mild shade of my father wore a less reproachful aspect—and I wish he had less reason—

* * * * *

Of ordinary troubles that befall men, indeed I had a good share before; but this peculiar sort, ignominious personal restraint, was a part of my education heretofore neglected. No human being ever enjoyed, prized, and exercised an unbounded personal freedom of action more recklessly, more haughtily than I; and there, where I had pampered my own pride most, even there it may have been needful for me to be made to feel my own helplessness; to feel that I am not, after all, stronger than the wonderful and terrible God. And so a gang of ruffians, in coronets and in ermine, were commissioned to conspire against me, and carry me off to a lonely cell, where a turnkey locks me up, and leaves me to learn and digest my hard lesson, and “ponder the path of life” at leisure.

Perhaps it is good for me to be here; but no thanks to the coroneted and ermined ruffians.

It may be mentioned here that the Rev. Mr. Mitchel for some time previous to his death resided close to the town of Newry, at a place named Dromalane. There was a house, with some land attached. When Mr. Mitchel's will was opened, it was found that he had omitted to make any disposition of Dromalane. The interest in the place being freehold, it passed, not to the widow, but to the eldest son,

as heir-at-law. The possession of such a place was no trifling matter to John Mitchel, inasmuch as he then was without any means of supporting his young wife and child. He did not hesitate a moment, however, but at once took the legal steps necessary to waive his own right, and to vest the place in his mother.

The day after his father's death, a parishioner and very dear friend of the Rev. Mr. Mitchel's, called at the house. John Mitchel took him to the room where the body was laid. The friend observed how brown the hair was still. And John Mitchel answered sadly, "I put more gray hairs on that head than ever time did." One of his sisters, who was sitting outside on the stairs, and who heard the answer, has told me that she never could forget the sadness of the tone in which the words were spoken. The same sister used to occupy the next room to that occupied by John during the few days he remained at his mother's house after the death. She has told me that during these nights she could often hear him moaning and lamenting.

John Mitchel rarely trusted himself to speak of his father, even after years had passed. For months after the death, he devoted much of his time to attempts to make a satisfactory likeness of his father, there being none which in his opinion did justice to the face which he had so honoured and loved. He drew well, and was especially fond of making landscape sketches.

In this same year, 1840, Mitchel completed his apprenticeship, was "sworn in" as an attorney, and commenced the practice of his profession. He formed a partnership with a Mr. Fraser, a successful attorney in Newry. The business was a large one, and extended over a considerable part of the county. It was thought advisable to found a branch office at Banbridge, a stirring little town some ten miles north of Newry. Mitchel undertook to

take charge of this part of the business ; and with that object he, in the year 1840, left Newry with his family, and took up his residence at Banbridge.

The life at Banbridge lasted something over five years ; that is, from about the middle of 1840 till near the close of 1845. During all this time he was in the constant and active practice of his profession. He never liked his profession much ; and, indeed, one could hardly expect that a man of John Mitchel's temperament and tastes would take very kindly to the life of a country attorney. But he recognized the fact that he had to earn money for the support of himself and his family, and for the time being he saw no other way of earning an independence open to him but the practice of his profession. He, therefore, gave his attention closely to his business, and succeeded at it remarkably well.

Except for the additional work and responsibility of his professional practice, Mitchel's life at Banbridge was very similar to what it had been for the preceding three years at Newry. He at first took a pretty cottage, with some few acres of ground attached, near the town. He always had a notion that he would make a good farmer, and, in order to demonstrate the truth of this belief, he devoted a good deal of his time, attention, and labour to the cultivation of a vegetable garden attached to his cottage. He was very proud of the vegetables when they turned out well ; but I have it on the best authority that it was then the opinion of the family that the said vegetables could have been bought for less than it cost to grow them. He continued to live in the cottage till the spring of 1842. He then took a house in town, in which house he lived until his removal to Dublin towards the end of 1845. During the Banbridge period two more of his children were born—Henrietta, the eldest daughter, in the month of October,

1842, and William, the third and youngest son, in the month of May, 1844. His son William, like his two elder brothers, afterwards fought on the Confederate side in the American war. He was killed in the last desperate charge of Longstreet's division in the great battle of Gettysburg.

The domestic life at Banbridge, like that at Newry, which preceded it, was peaceful and happy. There were some troubles arising from illness of children ; few families escape such. In 1842, shortly after the birth of his little daughter, his eldest son John was attacked by a violent form of typhoid fever. He lay for a week, before the crisis, speechless, and his parents were in great distress of mind, having but little hope of his recovery. He recovered, however, after a tedious illness, and lived, as already stated, to win high distinction as a soldier.

During these years of professional practice, John Mitchel was very fond of riding. His business frequently necessitated his attending the sessions of the neighbouring towns. When the distance was considerable, and when the weather was at all favourable, he generally went on horseback. These long rides through a picturesque country made him soon as well acquainted with the middle and northern parts of the county Down as he already was with the section around Newry. By nature and habit he had a keen eye for natural beauties. Wherever he went, he soon became intimately acquainted with the face of the country. When, years afterwards, he wrote his "Five Ends of Ireland," it was regarded by those who knew the country described as quite a model guide book.

In the summer of 1843, he made a trip to Derry, the scene of his bank-clerk experiences, with his wife and his sister, Mrs. Dickson—she was the same sister Matilda, one of his letters to whom has been quoted above. They made

the trip leisurely in their own conveyance—an outside car, stopping at every point of interest they cared to see. From Derry they went to Moville, a pretty place on the Donegal side of Lough Foyle, where Mitchel's uncle, Mr. Haslett, then Mayor of Derry had his country house.

This was the same Mr. Haslett who had offered the place in the bank to young John Mitchel when he pronounced against the ministry.

Mitchel seems to have much enjoyed this trip. The country about Moville is mountainous and very picturesque ; and the seeing of Irish mountains was always a source of the keenest enjoyment to John Mitchel. It was also, I believe, in this year, 1843, that John Mitchel first made the acquaintance of Thomas Davis, and began work on his "Life of Hugh O'Neill." Of these matters I shall have something more to say further on.

The society at Banbridge seems to have been brighter and pleasanter than one would expect in a little country town. John Mitchel took his full share in such social gatherings and amusements as there were, and he and his wife soon became general favourites. Among the residents in Banbridge, Mitchel's principal friend was the Rev. Mr. Davis, who had been an old friend of his father's. He was a great reader and a good talker, and he and Mitchel spent many an evening together. Mr. Davis had a fine library, to which Mitchel had free access. The two friends used to hold animated discussions upon subjects suggested by their reading. The following reminiscence of these discussions has been supplied to me by a near relative of John Mitchel's: "I recollect once hearing them discussing philosophy. John, I fancy, was maintaining the Berkeleyan view of things, when Mr. Davis replied that Dr. Reid and Dugald Stewart (Scotch 'Common Sense' school) said so and so. 'Dr. Reid and Dugald Stewart, sir, were a pair of

cabbage-headed dogs.' This was my first introduction to the vehemence of philosophic discussion."

I do not know that any others of his Banbridge friends were particularly noted for literary tastes ; but John Mitchel, although very literary in his own tastes, was far from insisting on similar tastes in those with whom he associated. He had a large faculty for finding out and enjoying what was good in every kind of society.

During the whole of this period, he took a keen interest in contemporary politics, and that notwithstanding his more or less constant occupation with business matters. Indeed, his professional business at session was not infrequently of a semi-political nature.

Banbridge was in an Orange district, and the Orangemen liked to "walk" on their party anniversaries. On their return homeward in the evenings some of them would often insist on "walking" through some Catholic clachan or neighbourhood, stopping before the doors of the Catholics to play party tunes. The Catholics would begin by keeping within closed doors ; but soon some old woman, perhaps unable to contain herself, would run out, and, kneeling down in the road, would curse them aloud. This would begin the mischief, which would often end in the wrecking of a house or two, and in beating or even killing, on both sides. In the legal proceedings arising out of these affrays John Mitchel was often employed by the Catholics. He thus had ample opportunity of observing how such cases were dealt with at the time by a bench of magistrates, many of whom were themselves Orangemen ; and this experience was well calculated to blow into a flame the hatred of injustice that was natural to him.

John Martin's place of residence was within some seven miles of Banbridge. The following reminiscence of these times is taken from a letter written to Mrs. Mitchel by a

sister of Mr. Martin's, who lived with him at the period I am now telling of:—

The clearest memories I have of John Mitchel are when you lived in Banbridge, and when John Martin and I would go to you for one of our great days. Do you remember a special pudding you used to have, and how your husband would look so comical and grave over "our pudding and our sauce?" (I never, by the way, have met the same pudding since.) And what endless gay talk the two men had over all that was being done and written in the world. Those were the days of Carlyle's books and of poor Dickens's. You and I were reading "Nicholas Nickleby," and, I think, John Mitchel thought us a little too appreciative. He used to ridicule what we thought very sentimental; but I have heard him read Mrs. Nickleby and Mr. Squeers with great enjoyment of the fun, and to our delight. And when you and he and the children would come to Loughorne, it was a sight to see him stretched under the shadow of a big tree, with his boys tumbling over him. He loved the sun and sky, and to watch the lights and shadows over the old lawn; and as he played with his children, he was the very type of a happy man. All the good days were before he threw himself into political life. But that was to be; and for my dear brother also. We might not, perhaps, have known all that was greatest in them, if we had not seen how they could sacrifice themselves.

Often as the two friends met, they do not seem to have been able to get through all they had to say to one another at these meetings. The letters between them were frequent, These letters, besides giving us interesting glimpses now and then into the course of Mitchel's life, throw much light on the development of his opinions, especially in political matters.

In September, 1840, a few months after the removal to Banbridge, Mitchel writes to Martin:—

My DEAR MARTIN,

I thought that I would have been the first (after your own family) to welcome you home; but when the news reached

me, I was just crawling out of bed, after ten days' confinement to it. And even yet, I have never gone out of the door, except once for a few minutes in the middle of a bright day; creeping out into the sun like some summer insect, and retiring to my cover when a cloud came.

Nevertheless, I have put off even writing to you from day to day, in the hope that each morning might be fine enough to induce me to drive to Loughorne. I have now given it up; at least, for some days.

Come you and see me, if that is not unreasonable to ask so soon. It is only six miles and a half, and I am longing greatly to have some talk with you.

Since you and I parted that morning in Kilmorey Street, some events have occurred, both public and private, that have changed the face of events a good deal. Besides, you must have brought a parcel of new ideas, or "notions," with you from that Loco-foco country, and, in short, I have not lost my propensity to communicate with you about things in general. Do come and see me.

A year subsequent to this, in October, 1841, he writes again (I select one here and there from the letters, which are quite numerous):—

MY DEAR MARTIN,

Partly the storminess of the weather, and partly the inability of the horse to travel, prevented our going to Loughorne to-day; though, perhaps, neither of those causes by itself would have had that effect. I hope Miss Martin and you will excuse us; and not only that, but that you will come over here to-morrow or next day yourselves, or, if Miss Martin be too busy, or otherwise engaged, or for any reason indisposed, then you by yourself. I have not seen Mr. Davis this long time, and will keep an evening for that purpose in your favour, until I hear of your having sailed for a foreign shore.

We remained in Newry till Monday. But I came down to Dromore on Saturday, and back to Newry again the same day, where I worked in the office all day on Sunday. If you should go away before I see you, which I think you won't, indite me a long letter from some point of your tour, and indicate to me where

I should address one in reply. You will tell me your adventures, and I will let you know how we get on at home under Sir Robert Peel's government and the spirit of the British Constitution.

The Mr. Davis here mentioned is not Thomas Davis, but the Rev. Mr. Davis above referred to. The reader will note here the same longing to see and talk with his friend as in the former letter.

In May, 1842, he writes to Martin, saying that he was just recovering from a severe attack of asthma. The previous day he had left his bed to go to Dromore for sessions. He describes in somewhat high-flown language the effect of the sights and sounds of spring upon his sick mind and body. Then he abruptly breaks off:—

But I am beginning to *blather*. Only this I may say, that when I cease to feel rapturously this “vernal delight and joy able to drive all sadness but despair;” when I see the first violet of any spring without a passionate yearning, without a fulness of the throat that makes me think the fountain of sweet tears is hardly yet hermetically sealed in me; when the singing of the birds is to me only a tuneless whistle, and that brave overhanging firmament nothing but a pestilent congregation of vapours,—then let my grave be dug, the sooner and the deeper the better.

In October, 1842, he writes:—

MY DEAR MARTIN,

I send you by this post the second number of the *Nation*, which I never received myself till Sunday, although I thought it would have come on Saturday. But it seems they keep the country papers for a later edition, which does not issue till Saturday afternoon. I think the *Nation* will do very well.

Since I saw you, I have been in perfect health. So that I do not think that cottage (as Kate Nickleby did in Mrs. Witterley's case) *disagreed* with my constitution. You, I hope, can give an equally good account of yourself since I saw you.

We are all well here, and expect my mother in Banbridge about Wednesday. It is wild weather here, and there is no

Banbridge news. Oats firm, and dead pigs dull. But for public news, what pleases me best is the arrangement that expediency has compelled Sir Charles Bagot to make in Canada.

Again, in October, 1843, there is a letter which gives hint of the political creed he afterwards came to hold so passionately :—

One thing pleases me well—that the twenty thousand Hanoverian troops who are coming over to us are “all Protestants.” But yet a subject of alarm occurs; for what if they should be Puseyites? At the very least, they are Lutherans, and hold the real presence.

How do you think the country will take all this? I think I know how it ought to take it; but if I put it on paper, you might inform the Attorney-General, and get me arrested. Indeed, I am tired of loud agitation: loud seditious rhetoric on the one side, and stern, contemptuous denial and fixed bayonets on the other. The matter is surely sufficiently at issue. The pleadings are closed; the speeches are made; no conceivable amount of objurgation will bring us one whit nearer to repeal. Repeal now lies between the two parties, like the dead body of Sarpedon over which Æneas and Meriones stood a-scolding; but I begin to be of opinion with Menætiades—

ὦ πέπον οὔτι Τρῶες ὀνειδείοις ἐπέεσσιν
νεκροῦ χωρήσουσι, πάρος τινὰ γαῖα καθεξεί.
ἐν γὰρ χερσὶ τέλος πολέμου, ἐπέων δ', ἐνὶ βουλῇ·
τῶ οὔτι χρῆ μῦθον ὀφέλλειν, ἀλλὰ μάχεσθαι.

I begin to be of opinion, with Jack Lawless, when the Catholic Relief Bill was thrown out in the House of Lords, “Now pikes on our shoulders, and wigs on the green.” If Ireland be not ready to achieve the repeal with a strong hand, she ought to make herself ready without delay; and if she be worthy of the place she seeks among the nations, she will *do* that.

In the month of December, in the same year (1843), he again writes in a strain which shows how strongly his thoughts are still running on politics :—

DEAR MARTIN,

It is a good while since I saw or heard from you. Have you been quite well? Is Simpson at Loughorne? Are you preparing to register your arms at Newry Sessions? Have you provided witnesses to satisfy the justices of your loyalty? Do you stand well with the police? And, finally, have you any personal enemy amongst the magistrates?

Again. As to Spanish affairs, are you a partisan of Olozaga or of Gonzales Bravo? A Progresista or a Moderado?

But, seriously, Mr. Martin, what do you think of Lord Devon's Commission? I have made up my mind upon it; and, as usual, I think O'Connell altogether right. It is a humbug, a hoax, a "cod." Some things there are that may be prejudged, that require to be prejudged, lest (before they be proved by their results to be humbugs) they cause mischief in the mean time. This commission is one of those. It is intended to operate a diversion from the movement you wot of; intended (as the Ecclesiastical Commission was, *and as all such commissions are*) to put by the pressure of the moment; to weaken, by dividing, the popular feeling; and then, then—ah, these statesmen are liars, and will go to hell!—then to put the people off with a sham of relief, with the minimum of justice (which is the maximum of statesmanship). But if I run on any longer, I shall get intemperate in my language. The most amusing article I have seen for a long time in that funny paper, the *Times*, is their commentary on O'Driscoll's prosecution of his refractory tenants who rescued the distress. They say his conduct was certainly naughty, but still "wish to speak of him with respect." They do not call him a grinder of the faces of the poor, a plunderer, a tyrant, a murderer—no, no; their worst language in rebuking his conduct is—fie, fie! But, indeed, I think even their language is too severe. I regard Mr. O'Driscoll as an instrument specially raised up by Providence at this exact time for wisest purposes. He stands forth a conspicuous example of brazen squiredom; he is a *type shoneen*, and, as a divine missionary, he ought to be treated with reverence. Like the "youngest gentleman," he has a mission, and will execute it. I most heartily wish him success.

If I had not arrived at the end of my paper, I believe I should communicate further instruction, being in the humour. As it is,

I must finish by modestly requesting you to ride over here some of these fine days and see how we get on. The child's leg, I think, and the doctors think, is getting better. All the rest well.

Regarding the Devon Commission, the result fully justified his view. As is well known, nothing was done for the Irish tenants for more than a quarter of century after the commission reported ; and when at last something was done, it certainly could hardly be said to be the result of the Devon Commission.

In 1844, the letters to Martin were more frequent than in the preceding years. They still evidence an increasing interest in politics, though it is plain, from occasional reference to business matters, that his time was mainly taken up with the practice of his profession. In February, 1844, he writes :—

DEAR MARTIN,

I thought you would have been at Banbridge before this. I am very busy preparing for the assizes, and don't expect to be away from this for a fortnight. I send you the *Post*, with speeches of O'Connell and Sir Robert. Nothing struck me in the debate more forcibly than the very clear and intelligible case Sir Robert makes for the Irish Church. Call it an anomaly after that speech ! I observe also that that portion of his speech pleases the *Telegraph*, which confirms me in my opinion, and emboldens me to express it.

However, the debate of debates is over, and the division is triumphant for ministers. Surely this pother about Ireland is over at last. Surely matters will go on smooth now.

In the following month, March, 1844, he writes :—

DEAR MARTIN,

I returned only yesterday from Down assizes, and found the *Nation* had not been sent to you. I send it along with this. Simpson, I hear, is at Loughorne. If I knew when you would all be at home, I think I would go over some day before he goes away.

A part of last Sunday I spent in an examination of the old ruin at Inch, which is very fine. I was detained three days longer than I expected at Down, and our Ballynary affair detained one of the judges there a day after the assizes opened at Carrickfergus. Yet we did not get all done, and twenty-four rioters, all Orangemen, stand over for summer assizes.

During the close of 1843 and beginning of 1844, Mitchel was much interested in the State prosecutions then going on in Dublin. His business frequently took him to Dublin, and he was several times present in the Court of Queen's Bench during the trial of O'Connell and his fellow-conspirators. In a letter written to Martin from Dublin in the month of April, 1844, I find the following :—

They are very busy in the Court of Queen's Bench doing nothing; and all thinking Protestants grow monstrously impatient for the end. What good, I ask, is our conviction doing us?

And again, on May 7, 1844 :—

You know what the "Kilkenny case" is by this time, I suppose. It is the instructions given by the ermined pettifogger, who is called Chief Justice of Ireland, to defraud the court and rob the public in a record tried some years ago between the corporation of Kilkenny and the people. It was an Orange corporation then; but these papers have now got into the hands of Philistines, who are not careful to conceal the delinquencies of the *gentleman on the other side*. They say in Dublin now that these trials are killing the old man. I hope that will be realized; and when he is gone, "may the Lord have mercy upon his miserable soul!"—a form of words used by him and the like of him when they have sentenced a man to be hanged.

You will consider this very acrimonious, I fear; but such language is good for me occasionally, and I feel quite amiable and placid after it. I met one day at dinner, Mr. Sheridan Knowles, Mr. Duffy, Mr. O'Donoghue (the "Irish barrister" wot keeps a note-book, and prints the same in the *New Monthly* and elsewhere), and other *literati*. Had also another literary day at Duffy's, and met many spirits of the *Nation*—a symposiac, in

short; but one would tire of literary fellows. I would wish to have a change of "medical fellows," as Bob Sawyer calls them, or rather a mixture of divers sorts of fellows, including even farmers.

The next letter I shall give is interesting as showing how, amid all the cares of his profession and the excitements of politics, his soul yearned for the mountains and the mountain streams. It also gives us some glimpses into his views of professional duty, and into the state of his feelings generally as regards his profession. On June 21, 1844, he writes:—

DEAR MARTIN,

When I got your note about the notice of registry, it was just two days too late to send one in time for Newry sessions. But, as you are a fifty pound freeholder, and therefore respectable, and as the law gives every facility and advantage to such, you can register without a notice by merely coming up before the judge of assize at Downpatrick next month. The cavilling and haggling, the production of title-deeds, cross-examination, and brow-beating which occur with inferior voters coming up to register their franchises, have no place with such respectable men as you. Besides, you have never seen Themis in her ermine, adjusting her scales as only she knows how, loading her dice, poisoning her sword, setting out her table of thimble-rig,—a truly imposing sight, which you might as well take that opportunity of seeing, especially as I will be at Newcastle at that period, and will drive to Downpatrick every day from thence. And I see a vision of certain wanderings we may have through silent glens that lie in the shadow of Slieve Donard, and send, every one, its own rill of crystal water murmuring to the sea. Ah, no hart panteth for the water brooks as my soul longs for those "times of refreshing!" It is not that the place has virtue in itself, nor any place inland or coastward; for the sun shines everywhere, and even here in Banbridge are summer airs whispering among the trees, and waters gleaming in the sunlight, and on the blessed earth her glorious robe of green. But to rid myself a little while of the fret

and noise of vexatious litigants, to forget their cursed business, and to fly where no client's eye may see me, that is the luxury, John, that I want and lust after. Idle, dreaming days those will be, *dies non* in the professional point of view; but what will it profit a man though he gain the whole world, and damn his own soul? You will think all this extravagant, because your ordinary employments are not of the tormenting character that mine are. But if you want to understand me quite well, spend seven years quarrelling for other people about matters that you would see at the devil rather than quarrel about on your own account, guarding and fencing your client against all injury and loss more anxiously than you would guard your eldest son, arguing eternally with "shrill attorney logic" about less than nothing, and pocketing your fees for the same. Do that, and you will know what it is to have a week or two of idleness in the long vacation.

The study of the law is a very fine thing in the abstract; but to most men, the practical work of the profession is more or less irksome. It must have been so in an especial degree to a nature such as Mitchel's. Yet he was not much given to complaining about it. The above outburst is the only one of the kind that occurs in his letters to Martin. Allusions to professional matters rarely occur in these letters.

On the 23rd of the same month, two days later, he writes again:—

MY DEAR MARTIN,

I send you the *Nation*, in which you will see, amongst the list of those who have paid their repeal subscription for this year, the name of John Martin, Esq., of Loughorne. It is probable that (as I expected) Mr. Davis was not at the meeting at all, and has sent your money and address to the secretary.

We had a great meeting at Tullylish last Sunday evening (the only repeal meeting I ever took part in) of the three parishes of Tullylish, Seapatrick, and Clare, and the chair was taken by James Fivey, of Woodbank, near Gilford, a new convert, and a very good one. A deputation goes this night to Dublin with

address and rent, of which deputation I was named one, but totally refused to go, as I could not leave my business. The *Vindicator* and *Newry Examiner* of yesterday are full of our proceedings, and the *Examiner*, in particular, puffs us immoderately. So that I think that powerful organ of public opinion, the *Telegraph*, cannot get over showing us up in our true colours (beg pardon, *colors*) in Tuesday's publication.

Seriously, I am very much pleased at Fivey's coming out. He is, like yourself, simply a farmer; but also a graduate of T. C., D., and the intimate friend and college chum of Whiteside, the lawyer. The Protestant public hereabouts, I assure you, look on with alarm at these doings. The police of Banbridge and Gilford were concentrated upon us at the meeting, and occupied a strong position, to blow us up in case of our commencing, then and there, a rebellion. The best of it all was that, although Tullylish is the very stronghold of Orangeism in this neighbourhood, there was not the slightest manifestation of ill-will towards those who attended the meeting, either in going to it or returning. I think I see a growing interest about repeal amongst Protestants: and when *they* once join it, or any considerable number of them—— But I had better stop my politics.

Then follows some half a page or so of abuse of Sir James Graham, the then Postmaster-General. There are frequent references to Sir James Graham in the letters at this time, and Mitchel seems to have been exceedingly indignant at the practice of "Grahamizing" letters, then under inquiry in Parliament. Early in 1844, it was discovered that certain correspondence of Mazzini's had been opened and inspected, by order of Sir James Graham, in the Post Office. The matter gave rise to much discussion in Parliament, but nothing particular was done.

We have it recorded in the letter last quoted that it was in the month of June, 1844, that Mitchel for the first time attended a public meeting. Such occasions were destined to become familiar to him afterwards.

In October, 1844, he writes:—

DEAR MARTIN,

I was not much surprised to hear you are still in Ireland. But you are letting the last remains of the summer slip away. And if I were going to merry England, I would like to see her in her summer fashions. But I won't get away at all. The office is full of business, and my going away now would be just as if you chose the seed-time to make a tour. Talking of Manchester, have you seen by the papers how Young England has been revealing itself there, at the Athenæum? A hell of a fellow is Young England, and has handsome language at command, as also very gentlemanly clothes, and most respectable hats.

I am reading a very interesting book, Dr. Mant's "History of the Church of Ireland," meaning the Church of England established here, with a "preliminary survey from the Papal usurpation in the twelfth century till its legal abolition in the sixteenth." A curious book, and a good book, and possibly an honest book. But this religious public is the devil.

I think I will see you before Saturday week; and if I can manage to go away a few days, I will.

A letter written towards the end of the following month (November, 1844), informs us that he spent some part of the month in Dublin. He had been to dine at Duffy's, and had there met the "*Nation* people." He went also to Conciliation Hall and heard O'Connell speak for two hours. O'Connell, he tells us, was "wearing his Mullaghmast cap, and speaking words as 'high and haughty' as ever. Long life to him, and may his shadow never be less."

During the first six months of 1845, his time was much occupied with professional business, and the letters to Martin are not so frequent as in 1844. I do not find any reference worth noticing to public affairs in the 1845 letters until the 6th of July, under which date he writes:—

DEAR MARTIN,

Jenny and I will have great pleasure in dining with you to-morrow; but you have mentioned no hour. I suppose we may take chance of five?

I have been very ill for three days, and had to sit up last night and the night before; but am a good deal better to-day. Since I saw you I have been monstrously busy, spent nearly a week at Hillsborough doing sessions work, and expect little leisure for some time to come. Ministers (long life to them!) are carrying things with a high hand. Indeed, I sincerely trust they will force Lord Stanley's Bill through this session; and I think they will. Sir Robert is a great fellow, of the kind; and as for Sir James, I begin to love him.

What pleases me in the Cavan business is that the Catholics have made it apparent that they will not be *wrecked* with impunity. *That*, and the speeches at the Cavan meeting, and the cries about rent, are all pleasant to my mind. Indeed, I agree with you that Orangedom will come round; that is, the "lower orders" of it. After which, the better classes may go to blazes, unless they repent and do penance.

The prophecy about the lower orders of Orangedom can hardly be said to have been fulfilled so far; though of late years signs of its fulfilment have not been wanting.

We are now nearing the time when John Mitchel was to become a public man, and the whole tenour of his life was to change. With such material as was at my disposal, I have tried to give the reader some idea of Mitchel's early life, while he was still a professional man, and not yet an active politician. To me it is both curious and interesting to look back upon this period of John Mitchel's life, and to think how little it seemed to give any indication of what was to follow. Those who were intimate with him knew even then that he was a rarely gifted man, with great force of character. Yet he would have been a rash prophet who, visiting John Mitchel in his quiet home at Banbridge, would then have ventured to predict for him a life so strange, stormy, and eventful as his was destined to be.

But during all or the greater portion of the Banbridge period the influences were at work which in the end

revolutionized his life. I have already mentioned that his business frequently called him to Dublin; and in the extracts above given from the correspondence with Martin, reference is made to certain meetings with literary young men and the "*Nation* people." Mitchel, himself, was then far from foreseeing how important an influence upon the future course of his life those meetings were destined to have.

In order to understand fully the nature of the influences which eventually induced John Mitchel to leave his profession and become a public man, one needs to know something of the history of those times. Strictly speaking, indeed, no one can fully comprehend the story of John Mitchel's life and the lessons to be learned from that story, who does not first possess a competent knowledge of Irish history. We commonly hear it said nowadays that Irishmen are too much given to brooding over the past. There may be some little truth in the remark: not very much, I think. The tendency amongst the better-educated classes of Irishmen is most certainly not in the direction of either knowing too much or thinking too much about their country's history. Irishmen who ought to know better not infrequently talk as though it were a thing to be desired that both by Englishmen and Irishmen the history of Ireland should be laid aside and forgotten. As if the case of Ireland formed any exception to the general rule that nations are such as their history has made them; and as if the one way to the solution of the Irish difficulty were not to be found in the study of Irish history. In studying the life of a man like John Mitchel, and in trying to enter into the sentiments and passions which animated his public acts, one feels with peculiar force the extreme shallowness of what I may term the anti-historical method of viewing the Irish problem. No one has the right to

pass judgment upon Mitchel's public words and acts unless and until he has acquired such a knowledge of Ireland's past as will enable him to sympathize in, or at least to understand, the fierce passion of which those words and acts were the outcome.

So much for the need of a knowledge of Irish history ; but of course I cannot be expected to meet that need here. A very brief statement of the leading events in Irish politics during the years immediately preceding Mitchel's entry on the scene is the most that I can find room for. Without some such statement my narrative would hardly be intelligible. If any reader desire to have fuller information regarding the period in question, he will find no difficulty in obtaining such from other sources.*

* See in particular Sir C. G. Duffy's "Young Ireland," and the opening chapters of Mitchel's "Last Conquest."

CHAPTER IV.

BANBRIDGE (*continued*)—SURVEY OF IRISH POLITICS—
MOVE TO DUBLIN.

1845.

IN the year 1840, just five years before Mitchel's appearance upon the stage of Irish politics, O'Connell had commenced the repeal agitation. I say commenced, where perhaps, strictly speaking, I ought to say recommenced. But although O'Connell had in fact started an agitation against the Union some ten years earlier, it is not the less true that the great movement—the movement which in Irish history is commonly known as the repeal agitation—was commenced in 1840. The circumstances of the times were in many respects unfavourable to such an enterprise; and it was not until nearly two years after its commencement that the movement attained to such proportions as to entitle it to be called national. For the first year after its foundation the Repeal Association was composed almost exclusively of Catholics; and even of the Catholic population it embraced only a very small fraction. Making every allowance for the difficulties which stood in O'Connell's way, one cannot but wonder at the almost entire lack of popular interest and enthusiasm which marked the earlier stages of the repeal movement. But the fact is that the Catholic population—that is, the great majority of the population—had not then had time to recover from the

effects of Catholic Emancipation. This may seem to many a curious phrase, but I believe it fairly states the truth. I remember that once in Dublin, I had a conversation with an old O'Connellite which let in much light on my mind touching the state of feeling among the Irish Catholics in the years succeeding the granting of emancipation. It was at the time when Mr. Parnell was just commencing his obstructive policy in Parliament, and when the Irish people were watching his proceedings with extreme interest. My friend was a Catholic of the old O'Connellite school, one of the class who have an instinctive abhorrence of "young men." "Sir," he said to me, "these young men are very rash and imprudent. If they could remember what I remember, they would think and act differently. Why, sir, I remember the time when we Catholics were almost afraid to walk erect in the streets. And, when Catholic Emancipation was carried, and Catholics were appointed to high offices of public trust, we thought that we had got all that we could reasonably claim, and more, a great deal, than we ever dared to hope for a few years previously." This, and much more to the same effect, was said in perfect good faith and sincerity, and was intended as an indignant protest against the extravagancè of present demands. A man born since the days of O'Connell and familiar with the present attitude of the Irish people needs some such experience as this to enable him to understand what was the feeling of many Irish Catholics half a century ago. Yet in truth their mental condition was only just such as one might expect to find in a people subjected to centuries of degrading persecution. The iron had entered into their souls; and they had reached that stage of mental slavishness at which men regard themselves as happy and favoured if only their masters will allow them to live and to enjoy the fruits of

their industry in peace. Even ten years after the granting of emancipation, a great many Irish Catholics were still under the impression that the giving a judgeship to a Catholic barrister was a matter of the first importance to the welfare of the nation.

But although O'Connell's progress with the body of the people was at first slow, it was not very long before he made some important recruits. I believe it was some time in 1841 that Thomas Davis joined the Repeal Association. O'Connell was probably but little conscious at the time of the importance of this accession. Davis brought with him a small number of recruits, principally young barristers and literary men. Some joined along with him, some later on, all influenced more or less by the action of their leader. For Thomas Davis was a born leader of men; though not a leader of the same kind as O'Connell. To rouse and guide the passion of multitudes by the tone of his voice and the glance of his eye—this wonderful gift belonged to O'Connell in a higher degree perhaps than to any other man whom history has known. In this faculty Davis was entirely deficient; but the class who came least under the influence of O'Connell were just the class who came most under the influence of Davis. The character and the work of Davis are already familiar to the Irish reading public through the writings of those who knew him best. To add anything of value to what has been so written is not in my power. And indeed in the case of Thomas Davis, panegyric is wholly superfluous. I have known and talked with many men who were intimate with Davis, and from all of them I have heard the same judgment—that he was the most pure-minded and unselfish in all his aims and motives, the noblest man they had ever known. The Young Irelanders unfortunately had their quarrels; but in one respect they were all agreed. They all loved and

were proud of their leader ; and so long as he was left amongst them, they all yielded to him a willing obedience. To quote the words of John Mitchel : “ It is very safe to say that to the personal influence of Davis, to the grandeur of his aims, to his noble tolerance, to his impassioned zeal, and the loving trust which all generous natures were constrained to place in him, the association was indebted, not for O’Brien only, but for Dillon, MacNevin, Meagher, O’Gorman, Martin, and Reilly ; and to the same influence *they* were indebted for their fate ; pining captivity, long exile, death in madhouses, or foreign graves. Yes, to them and hundreds more, he was indeed a fate ; and there is not one amongst them still alive but blesses the memory of the friend who first filled their souls with the passion of a great ambition and a lofty purpose.”

Besides those named in the foregoing extract, the Young Ireland party numbered amongst its leading members several others, notably Charles Gavan Duffy, John O’Hagan, John Pigot, Denis Florence MacCarthy, Clarence Mangan, and, later on, John Mitchel. Some time in the summer of 1842, Davis, Duffy, and Dillon consulted together, and decided to found a weekly paper, to be called the *Nation*. Mr. Duffy, an experienced journalist, was to be proprietor and editor. Davis and Dillon were to assist, and to endeavour to induce others to do the same. As a result of their consultation, there occurred in the month of October, 1842, an event of which it is perhaps not too much to say that it opened a new era in Irish history. On October 15, 1842, the first number of the *Nation* was issued. I have said that it is impossible for us to understand the history of the Repeal Agitation unless we can get an adequate conception of the state of feeling amongst Irish Catholics half a century ago. Such a conception is still more needed to enable us to appreciate the

work done by the *Nation*. The proprietor of the paper and several of its chief writers were Catholics; but the guiding spirit, the man to whose genius, enthusiasm, and indomitable industry the paper mainly owed its wonderful success was a Protestant. Davis's ancestors had belonged to the dominant caste. He had everything to lose and nothing to gain by taking the popular side. But he had a just and noble nature, and he had read the history of his country. That history had taught him that the race of men who inhabited Ireland centuries ago had been a proud, a passionate, and, in the best sense, a free people before English rule had come to debase and degrade them. And in his generous soul he conceived the idea that perhaps this ancient race might once again be raised to the level from which it had fallen. They might be made to feel that their history was a thing to be proud of, and not ashamed of; they might be brought to realize the fact that their ancestors had once been the superiors and the teachers of those to whom brute force had since given the mastery; nay, they might even be induced to believe that, given only self-reliance and self-respect, it was yet possible for them, in a great measure, to recover the position they had lost. This was the task which Davis set before himself, and to which he devoted his best energies. His success was marvellous, considering the difficulties in his way, and the briefness of the period during which he was actively at work. From the founding of the *Nation* to the death of Davis less than three years elapsed. Yet it has been said, and truly said, that during that period Davis, and those who worked under him, breathed a new soul into Ireland. The catastrophe of 1848, and the collapse which followed, prevented for a time the results of Davis's work from being as obvious as they otherwise would have been. But the new spirit breathed into the people, though

it seemed to have died, was, in truth, only sleeping. It was destined again to revive and to assert itself with vigour and effect in more favourable times.

O'Connell worked on steadily, in spite of every discouragement. Week after week he had his meeting at the Corn Exchange, and heaped up arguments against the Union. But it was not until the spring of 1843, some four months after the starting of the *Nation*, that the movement began to assume national proportions. Towards the end of February, 1843, occurred the corporation debate. The entire case against the Union was stated by O'Connell in a masterly speech—probably the ablest he ever delivered—and the effect of this debate upon the country was immediate and decisive. The people were thoroughly roused at last. The year 1843—the repeal year, O'Connell used to call it—was made noteworthy by a succession of monster meetings in favour of repeal. These meetings were certainly as decisive manifestations of public opinion as ever took place in any country, and in a self-governing country it would have been quite impossible for any government to have resisted such a manifestation of the popular will. But the English minister had set his back to the wall, and had declared that, even if all the members from Ireland were unanimous in demanding repeal, England could not and would not concede that demand. Still, although the English minister talked boldly, it is evident, from the tone of the English papers at the time, that Englishmen saw clearly enough that matters were becoming very serious. The assembling together of three hundred thousand men, under the eye of a leader whose word was law to them, was a phenomenon which even England, great as was her power, could not afford to regard with contempt. The multitudes who, at the bidding of their leader, assembled at Tara and Mullaghmast, were undisciplined and, for the

most part, unarmed. Yet the mere presence of such a number of men in one place, under the guidance of a leader in whom they had implicit trust, and whose commands they were ready to follow to the death, was a formidable fact.

The great question was—what would O'Connell do with this power? Monster meetings and the unanimous passing of resolutions were all very fine; but, assuming that the English Government declined to yield to the meetings and resolutions, what then? This was the question which on both sides men were beginning to ask, when the matter was brought to an issue by the proclamation of the monster meeting to be held at Clontarf. O'Connell's action in the matter has been fully discussed. To have resisted would certainly have involved a terrible responsibility, and, having regard to O'Connell's age and previous habits of life, one can hardly blame him for having declined to take such a risk. But whatever may be our judgment upon his conduct, the fact to be here noted is that he yielded; and from that day forward the governing classes in England and Ireland ceased to regard the agitation as dangerous. They had declined to yield to meetings where able-bodied men were counted by hundreds of thousands; it was not likely they would surrender to Conciliation Hall speeches and mottoes about committing crimes and giving strength to the enemy.

Close upon the prohibition of the Clontarf meeting came the trial of O'Connell and his principal adherents for conspiracy. The trial, the judgment, the imprisonment, the appeal to the House of Lords, the reversal of the judgment, and the release—these exciting events occupied the public mind during the year that succeeded the proclamation of the Clontarf meeting. When O'Connell was released from prison on September 13, 1844, his position

seemed stronger than ever. The enthusiasm and loyalty of the people were still the same; the repeal subscription was larger than ever, and O'Connell was more confident in the tone he adopted than he had ever been before. From the release of O'Connell to the death of Davis just one year elapsed. During this year the repeal movement was in reality losing rather than gaining strength.

Externally, as I have said, things looked well enough; but the movement did not rest upon any foundation of real force. From the time the repeal agitation became confined to Conciliation Hall, it ceased to be a reality. There is strong evidence to show that from the time of his imprisonment, O'Connell was never really in earnest in his demand for repeal. His laudations of the Whig lords who voted the reversal of the judgment, his proposition as to federalism, his bitter denunciations of Sir Robert Peel's Education Bill; indeed, the whole tone of his speeches at Conciliation Hall during this period, indicated that he was feeling his way towards a compromise with the Whigs. If he had ever believed in his power to make good his promises as to repealing the Union, he believed in it no longer. And, once convinced that victory was impossible, he may have sincerely believed that the wisest course was to negotiate a surrender upon the best terms he could obtain. Early in 1845 came Peel's proposals for the further endowment of Maynooth and the establishment of the Queen's Colleges. Then followed the controversy as to the "Godless Colleges." This gave to O'Connell and his followers at Conciliation Hall something to talk about, and enabled them to take off the public mind from the awkward subject of repeal. Mixed education and its dangers to Catholic faith and morals, the authenticity of certain miracles and relics, the wickedness of negro slavery—these and various other subjects were discussed at Con-

ciliation Hall during the summer of 1845. The discussions were interesting and important enough in themselves, but it was not very easy to see in what way they tended towards bringing about a repeal of the Legislative Union. To the men who were in earnest, all this was most painful and humiliating; especially so to Davis. He, and those whose activity he guided, continued to do good and useful work. In the columns of the *Nation* they tried each week to educate and inspire the people; and, with the like object, other kinds of literary work were undertaken. Amongst these was a "Library of Ireland," projected and edited, I believe, by Mr. Duffy. This library was to consist of small handy volumes dealing with subjects of Irish history, biography, or literature. For example, there was to be a volume of Ballad Poetry, a History of the Volunteers, a Life of Wolfe Tone, and so forth. Several of these volumes were completed and published during the year 1845, and had a very large circulation amongst Irish readers in all parts of the world. But while Davis and his party continued to do their part, they could not conceal from themselves that, so far as concerned Conciliation Hall and its proceedings, the repeal agitation was fast becoming a sham. And when autumn came, and O'Connell retired to his home in Kerry, things went from bad to worse. John O'Connell was left by his father to take charge of Conciliation Hall. This young gentleman seems to have possessed all the bad qualities, and not one of the good qualities, of his father. His conduct was so violent and overbearing, his appeals to bigotry and sectarianism were so constant, and his tone towards any expression of independent opinion was so studiously offensive, that Davis and his friends began to have serious thoughts of withdrawing from the association. The *Nation* party, apart from the association, might have continued to do most

useful work. But they were under no delusion as to their powers, and they knew very well that without the aid of O'Connell and his organization they could do practically nothing towards effecting a speedy repeal of the Union. Davis, at least, saw this clearly enough; and he saw also that the agency through which alone repeal could be obtained was daily becoming less and less likely to do the work expected of it. To a man so intensely and passionately in earnest as Davis, this conviction was torture; and the anxiety which he suffered at this time had probably much to say to the catastrophe which followed. On the morning of September 16, 1845, Thomas Davis died. He had been ill for some few days previously, but to most of his friends the news of his death came without any previous warning. It was a stunning blow. It is not easy for us now to realize all that was implied in the loss at such a time of such a man. Very few people in Ireland realized it then; for Davis was one of those rare men who work behind the scenes, and who trouble themselves but little as to who may get the credit, provided only the work be done. But the few who had been intimate with him, and had worked under his guidance, they were able to realize vividly enough the nature of the loss which Ireland had sustained. Speculations as to what might have been are held to be idle. But I have often found myself speculating as to what might have been the subsequent course of the repeal movement, and whether or not the disaster of 1848 would have happened, had Davis lived. There can, I think, be no doubt but that his influence would have proved strong enough to have prevented those dissensions amongst the Young Ireland party which wrought so much harm. A split between Conciliation Hall and the *Nation* party was, indeed, inevitable when once the association fell under the rule of John O'Connell. Davis would have been

the last man to have advised his friends to remain in the association when once it had become quite clear to him that, so far as its professed object was concerned, the association had become a sham. And even the *Nation* party, standing alone and outside of Conciliation Hall, if united and guided by such a leader as Davis, would have done much for Ireland. They could not have repealed the Union; they might not have done much to stay the famine. But they could, and probably would, have saved the country from the catastrophe of 1848 and the long sleep of despair which followed. United and guided by Davis, the Young Irelanders would hardly have, in 1848, "put it to the touch to win or lose it all;" certainly, they never would have done this in the way they did.

The events which have been briefly outlined in the foregoing pages were closely watched by John Mitchel from his home at Banbridge. How keen was his interest in these events appears by the extracts already given from his letters to Martin. John Mitchel first met Charles Gavan Duffy at Belfast some time in 1840 or 1841. So far as I can ascertain, it was about the end of 1842 that he first met Thomas Davis: this was in Dublin upon one of the occasions when Mitchel's professional business called him to that city. Like Duffy, Dillon, and many others, John Mitchel was fascinated by Davis. I have already quoted a passage from the "Last Conquest," in which he gives his estimate of the extent of Davis's power over those who came within the circle of his influence. From the time of their first acquaintance, Mitchel seldom failed to see Davis whenever he came to Dublin. The liking was mutual, and they became fast friends. Davis formed and expressed to several of his friends the highest opinion of Mitchel's intellectual gifts. What Mitchel felt for Davis is best summed up in his own words: Davis was to him "the

friend who first filled his soul with the passion of a great ambition and a lofty purpose."

In his "Last Conquest," Mitchel has told of one or two of his interviews with Davis while in Dublin. While O'Connell was in prison, during the summer of 1844, at a public meeting held in the County Down, an address of sympathy with O'Connell was adopted, and Mitchel was selected to present the same. He came up to Dublin, and carried his address to the place of imprisonment. The scene in the gardens of the prison is thus described by him :—

In an elegant tent, with a green flag flying over it, O'Connell, with his green Mullaghmast cap* on, received the deputations, and made them gracious answers, not without a seasoning of merry jest. Through the trees, and amongst parterres of flowers, one might see the "martyrs" and their friends sauntering about; the tall form of Mr. Steele, the "Head Pacificator," strode alone and apart, pretending to read Kane's "Industrial Resources of Ireland." John O'Connell, with a smile ready for all comers, but an air somewhat pre-occupied, as if intent on weighty business, remained generally near to his father. He was then about thirty-two years of age, small of stature, but rather corpulent, and extremely unlike in every respect to the "Liberator." He was then Member of Parliament for Kilkenny. Duffy might have been seen on a rustic bench, surrounded by certain young poets, his pale face illuminated with a glow that looked very like the light of enthusiasm, and almost of genius; and he seemed to be rather too nervously anxious that the "*Nation* party" should be forward and conspicuous at this crisis of the cause. Davis was still making the columns of the *Nation* flash with proud hope and defiance; but did not affect to conceal a certain despondency. "No," he said; "O'Connell will run no more risks. Even when this judgment shall be set aside, and he will come out in triumph,

* Refers to a cap in the form of the ancient "Milesian crown." It was presented to O'Connell, at the monster meeting at Mullaghmast, by a deputation headed by John Hogan, the famous Irish sculptor. The incident is fully described in Sir C. G. Duffy's "Young Ireland," chap. xi.

he will content himself with 'imposing demonstrations.' He will *not* call the Clontarf meeting again; he will *not* summon the Council of Three Hundred; and from the day of his release the cause will be going back and going down. What care the Government," he exclaimed with bitterness, "how many thousands of people may meet peacefully and legally, or in what trappings they dress themselves, or to what tunes they march, or what banners they may flaunt, while there are fifty thousand bayonets in all our garrisons, besides the Orange yeomanry?"

How entirely these gloomy forebodings of Davis were borne out by the result is well known. In the book from which the above passage is taken, Mitchel also gives us an account of his last interview with Davis. On May 30, 1845, there was a great demonstration in Dublin to celebrate the anniversary of the imprisonment. O'Connell held his levee at the Rotunda. There was any amount of speech-making and enthusiasm, and bands and banners. In a word, "it was a great day for Ireland." The interview between Davis and Mitchel took place the following morning.

The next morning I sat with Davis in his study in Baggot Street. The very Monday before there had been a painful and acrimonious discussion in Conciliation Hall about "godless colleges" and other trash. We were intent on some exquisite German engravings which he had just received. He was, or appeared to be, in the gayest humour. "Did you hear," he said, "Tom MacNevin's principle of action, which he lays down for the Mayo electors?"—(there had long been an anxious wish amongst decent people to get rid of Dillon Browne, member for Mayo, a great Repealer, but a bloated *bon vivant* and insolvent debtor)—"Tom says no man ought to be member for *May-owe* but the man who can't pay!" We walked out—to the library of the Royal Irish Academy—to the studio of Moore, the sculptor, who was engaged on a bust of our friend Hudson. All the while not a word of the demonstration of yesterday. At length I said, "Davis, yesterday was a great day for Ireland; the Pacificator

never was in greater force." He became serious instantly. "These demonstrations," he said, "are ruining us; they are *parading* the soul out of us. Why, the Mayor and Corporation of Kilkenny have gone home, satisfied that Kilkenny at least has done its *duty*; that if Ireland do not gain her independence this year, it is not Kilkenny's fault; for what could scarlet robes and gold chains do more?"

On returning to his house, he showed me a long row of small volumes—copies of "The Artillerist's Manual"—gave me one of them, and told me *that* was what we must all study now. I never saw him more.

Knowing Davis and Duffy, Mitchel naturally came to know several others of the *Nation* party. Once or twice during the visits to Dublin, he was a guest at the weekly suppers of the young men. In a letter to Martin, quoted above, he speaks of the possibility of one having too much of the society of "literary fellows." Yet, for all this, we may safely surmise that these visits to Dublin and the society he met there did not tend to reconcile him to his life as a country attorney. In the spring of 1843, shortly after the corporation debate, Mitchel had joined the Repeal Association. He took much interest in the success of the *Nation* from the time the paper was started; but until he became assistant-editor of the paper, his contributions were few and far between. In a note to his "Young Ireland," Mr. Duffy states that down to the autumn of 1845 Mitchel had contributed to the *Nation* one review of a pamphlet on the "Estates of the London Societies in Ulster," one letter, one leading article (published March 2, 1844), and half of another (published May 27, 1844). Of the article last referred to, the other half was written by Davis. In the end of 1844, or beginning of 1845, Mitchel undertook to write a volume for the Library of Ireland. This he did at the request of Davis. The subject he selected was the "Life of Hugh O'Neil," called "Aodh O'Neil," according to

the habit of retaining Irish forms of names then in fashion among the Young Irelanders. He continued at work on this book down to the time of Davis's death, giving to it such time as he could spare from his professional labours. Like most of the Young Ireland writers, he applied frequently to Davis for help and advice. To use his own words, "he had recourse to Davis for everything he wanted." A letter given in the "Last Conquest," and written by Davis some three months before his death, obviously has reference to some information which Mitchel wanted for the "Hugh O'Neil":—

MY DEAR MITCHEL,

I have written to Petrie for answers to your queries. Meantime, borrow (if from no nearer person, from Charles Duffy), the "Battle of Magh Rath"—*vulgo Moira*—and you will find a valuable essay on Irish flags, etc., in the appendix.

I entirely agree in your view of Lord Stanley's Bill, and had written to that effect for last *Nation*; but a thick-skulled printer left my article out. I wish your contributions were more frequent. . . .

Towards the end of the summer of 1845, Mr. Duffy, needing some rest from his work at the *Nation* office, arranged with Mitchel to go on a walking tour through the north of Ireland. Davis volunteered to take Duffy's place at the *Nation* while he was away.

Duffy was to bring with him John O'Hagan, and Mitchel undertook to bring John Martin. In pursuance of this undertaking, he wrote to Martin under date July 23, 1845:—

I have this morning received the letter I expected from Duffy, announcing that he and J. O'Hagan will leave Dublin upon Thursday, the last day of this month; that they will remain the first night in Dundalk, and come by first coach next day to Newry—that is, the 1st of August. And Duffy tells me that

MacCarthy thinks he can't come at all, and says he wants you to join us. Is there anything to prevent you? The harvest work, I suppose, will hardly begin till the 1st of September; and we would make August a jubilee month. I would have gone to Loughorne some day before this, and had laid out several evenings for it; but have been at the assizes and in Belfast, and when at home very busy, not to speak of Hugh O'Neil; so that the time never fitted me.

You might come over here for a night, when we could confer together about all these matters and many others.

My wife and two children have been ten days at Donaghadee, and two other children at Woodville, and I have been for that time living like a hermit when at home; but I have got Jenny and one of the children home to-day. We had a glorious day last Saturday week, exploring the Copeland Islands, etc.

Early in August the friends met at Rostrevor, Duffy and O'Hagan having come from Dublin, and Mitchel and Martin from their respective places of residence in the county Down. They spent a day at Kilbroney, near Rostrevor, the residence of Mr. Martin's brother; then to Loughorne, Mr. Martin's own residence, where they again halted. Thence they proceeded eastward until they again reached the sea at Newcastle, and they stayed to make the ascent of Slieve Donard. This done, they journeyed by easy stages to Downpatrick, Banbridge, Armagh, and Enniskillen. They were on their way from Enniskillen into Donegal, when Duffy received a letter from home which made it necessary for him to return at once. The three others were obliged to complete their tour without Duffy. At the request of his friends, Mitchel brought with him the manuscript of "Hugh O'Neil." In the evenings he would read it aloud and await criticisms. The book was enthusiastically received by the audience. There was only one criticism worthy of note. Mitchel's favourite author at this time was Carlyle, and his friends objected to

some of his sentences as being too unmistakably Carlylean in sound.

During the whole of this tour, the enjoyment of the young friends was seriously marred by the accounts which reached them from time to time of the proceedings in Conciliation Hall. John O'Connell was in full swing, and was doing everything in his power to turn the association into a purely Catholic concern. The four friends—two of them Catholics and two Protestants—were equally grieved and equally indignant at a course of proceeding which, they foresew, must ruin the national cause.

Within a month after the conclusion of this northern tour, the news reached Mitchel that Davis was dead. He at once went up to Dublin to attend the funeral.

The "Life of Hugh O'Neil" was published very shortly after Davis's death. It took the place in the series that was to have been taken by a life of Wolfe Tone which Davis had undertaken to write. This last was never finished. Until the publication of the "Life of Hugh O'Neil," Mitchel had produced no literary work of exceptional merit. Few, if any, of his friends suspected the literary power that was latent in him. Davis had indeed spoken of Mitchel in terms of warm praise to several of his friends at the *Nation* office. But this may have been, and probably was, after he had seen, in whole or in part, the manuscript of "Hugh O'Neil." Of the historical works in the series, this one of Mitchel's is very decidedly the best. It at once won for him a high reputation with the *Nation* party; for amongst the young men there were several quite competent to discern the literary power which the book proved its author to possess. The style of the "Hugh O'Neil" is very pleasing, but differs considerably from the style which Mitchel afterwards came to write. On the whole, it is a very admirable little piece of biography; and being a "first

attempt," it was naturally regarded as promising brilliantly for the future literary work of its author.

It was, I believe, almost immediately after the publication of the "Hugh O'Neil" that Mr. Duffy made to John Mitchel the proposal which had the effect of changing the whole course of his life. I shall hereafter take occasion to tell what I know regarding the terms of this proposal. For the present let it suffice to say that Mitchel was to become a regular contributor to, and to do certain editorial work in connection with the *Nation*. For this he was to receive a salary which he, at the time, regarded as liberal. Yet, reviewing the matter exclusively from the pecuniary point of view, the wisdom of the change was more than doubtful. Mitchel had been successful at his profession, and was building up a good practice. During all the time he had remained in partnership with Mr. Fraser of Newry. It was arranged that so soon as the country business was firmly established, Mitchel should remove to Newry to assist in conducting the business there. And indeed he was actually in search of suitable quarters in Newry when Mr. Duffy's offer reached him. Mrs. Mitchel was averse to the proposed change of profession. But it is more than likely that in this matter Mitchel's sense of public duty was strongly seconded by inclination. It has been noted above that while he worked at his profession and tried to succeed for the sake of his family, he all the time intensely disliked it. Indeed, it is hard to believe that John Mitchel would have passed through life as a practising attorney, even had the call to the *Nation* office never come to him. An intense and passionate belief in the justice of the cause championed by the *Nation*, and a growing aversion to the life he was then obliged to lead—these were the two motives which jointly determined Mitchel's answer. The answer, as might be anticipated, was in the affirmative.

He decided to accept Mr. Duffy's offer, and he immediately proceeded to wind up his professional business and to prepare for his removal to Dublin.

That his preparations were made with his usual promptness appears from one of his letters to Martin. It is dated October 14, 1845, and cannot have been written much more than a week after the decision as to Mr. Duffy's offer was arrived at :—

DEAR MARTIN,

I got the books, and I send you all (I think) which I have of yours.

You know I want to be in Dublin with all speed, and therefore intend going on Friday. Every minute of our time is already arranged for and engaged. On Wednesday night we are to sleep at Mr. Davis's; next night at Woodville; and next, I hope, in Dublin. Come you over surely; and if E—— would like to come to such a house of disorder, but I need not suppose it; for, indeed, even Jenny will be away all that day paying farewell visits. We hope to see her under more comfortable auspices.

Three of the children are disposed of in divers places until we shall be settled in Dublin.

I am sorry to hear of your asthma; but I hope you will be well enough to-morrow.

I am in a perfect sea of business and fuss, arranging accounts and papers, etc.; but, fortunately, have such health that I almost begin to forget that there is such a demon as asthma.

The next letter to Martin is dated eleven days later, and in the mean time the removal to Dublin had taken place. Mitchel first took a house at Heathfield, Upper Leeson Street. For a few weeks after their arrival in Dublin, while their own house was being made ready to receive them, they stayed with some friends at George's Place. From this address Mitchel writes to Martin on the 25th of October :—

MY DEAR MARTIN,

You see we are here yet, but expect to get to our own house about Thursday next or Friday. We are very much pleased with the house, and the *water* is delicious.

I am scarcely fairly into my work here yet, although there is a good deal of mine in this day's *Nation*; but very bad. I am quite dissatisfied with myself, and feel quite driven from my moorings. I think it is because my books are still in their packing-case. As I took them off their shelves, I felt my brain gradually becoming addled; and when they were all in the box, my head was in a bag.

I expect to be able to arrange my ideas, and begin methodically to work, as soon as I get quite fixed at Heathfield. John O'Hagan goes to London *for twelve months* on Wednesday or Thursday next, and John Pigot along with him. I am very sorry for this.

Yesterday's *Old Ireland* has, through ignorance, committed the blunder of giving a most glowing review of "Hugh O'Neil," which it praises in most exaggerated, though somewhat ungrammatical, language.

We dined the other day with the Simpsons, and anticipate much pleasant intercourse with them when we are such near neighbours. I am beginning to be impatient to see you here, having a thousand things to talk to you about.

Write to me, like a good fellow.

From this time forward John Mitchel's life was that of a public man. The history of his life during the next two years and a half forms a part of the history of Ireland.

CHAPTER V.

FROM MITCHEL'S COMING TO DUBLIN TO DEATH OF
O'CONNELL—WORK ON "NATION"—PUBLIC SPEAK-
ING—SECESSION OF YOUNG IRELAND FROM REPEAL
ASSOCIATION.

1845—1847.

THE leading events in the life of John Mitchel, from the time he became a prominent figure in Irish politics until the time of his transportation, are already tolerably familiar to the majority of his countrymen. This is by much the best known part of his life; and for that very reason it is the hardest to write about. The main energy and passion of his nature having thus been concentrated in his action as a public man, there is little to write about except his public acts, and these are, for the most part, already well known. Moreover, during a great part of this Dublin period, Mitchel occupied so prominent a position in Irish politics, that, in order to give a full account of his public life, it would be necessary to write something like a history of the party to which he belonged, and of the leading public events of the time. This I should not feel competent to do, even if it had not been already done by men who bore a leading part in the events they tell of. But it would not be possible for me to give even the briefest account of Mitchel's life as a public man without saying something of the events in which he bore a part, and of

the men with whom he associated. In doing this I could not well avoid consulting what has already been written about the period of Irish history in question. I desire therefore to acknowledge once for all that I have been materially assisted in this part of my task by Mitchel's own narrative, "The Last Conquest," by Sir C. G. Duffy's "Four Years of Irish History," by Luby's "Recollections of '48," and by Savage's "'98 and '48." But while I have consulted these books and been helped by them, my principal reliance has been upon the files of the *Nation*, the *United Irishman*, and the *Irish Felon*.

Mitchel's correspondence during this Dublin period does not afford much help to the writer of his life. It consists mainly of short hurried notes written to friends and political co-workers, containing brief suggestions as to work which needed to be done. There are a few long letters to Smith O'Brien and others, but these are entirely taken up with political matters. Upon the whole, the letters during this period give the idea of a man whose whole mind and energy were so entirely devoted to a particular cause, and to the work which that cause necessitated, that he had little time for writing at length upon ordinary subjects to correspondents. And this was indeed the case. During the two years and a half of his public life in Ireland, John Mitchel was *alive* in the fullest sense of the word. To borrow a phrase from his favourite poet, his life during this time was more "intense and rapid" than it had been before, and than it was ever destined to be again. And as I have referred to his favourite poet, I may also cite a verse of Mangan's which Mitchel was fond of repeating in after years—

"Am I living *now*, I was *alive*,
Twenty golden years ago."

In a letter written to Father Kenyon from Knoxville,

Tennessee, twelve years after the period we have now arrived at, Mitchel speaks of himself as a man "who has never been but once absorbed and engrossed and possessed by a great cause, whose whole life and energy and passion conveyed themselves once to one focus, and were then dissipated into the general atmosphere." There is no doubt some exaggeration in the form of expression here, but the idea intended to be conveyed is sufficiently obvious, and is in the main true. And it was the fact of having lived this intense life, even for so short a time, that made Mitchel in after years so fiercely intolerant of anything like the lotus-eating kind of life, more especially when forced upon him, as in Van Diemen's Land. He had known what it was to be "absorbed and engrossed and possessed" by a passionate conviction strong enough to rouse all his nobler faculties to a state of constant and intense action; and while under the influence of this conviction, he had been constantly in the society of men who shared more or less entirely his political belief, and who were very far above the average in intellectual powers. It would be hard to imagine a kind of life better calculated to ensure that a man would do the most and the best that it was in him to do. And I doubt if any man of the higher type, having once lived the life of passionate action, could afterwards be satisfied in living a life of mental stagnation.

I am not able to state the precise terms of the proposal made by Duffy to Mitchel. There was no formal written agreement. Some relations of Mitchel's urged upon him that, before giving up his profession, he ought to have his position in the *Nation* office clearly defined in writing. His answer was that between Mr. Duffy and himself no such formality was needed. When Duffy first broached the matter, he invited Mitchel to come and take Davis's

place upon the *Nation*; and this idea of taking Davis's place had a strong attraction for Mitchel.

Mr. Duffy's own account of the matter, in his "Four Years of Irish History," is: "I made him (Mitchel) a proposal which induced him to give up his professional business at Banbridge in order to reside in Dublin and become a regular contributor to the *Nation*." And in another part of the same book Mr. Duffy * calls Mitchel the "assistant-editor of the *Nation*." Speaking of the transaction now in question, Mitchel says, in his "Last Conquest:"—"On the death of Davis, your present correspondent had, at the invitation of Mr. Duffy, the proprietor and ostensible editor, undertaken the chief editorial conduct of the paper." And again, in his account of the dissensions in the Confederation, he speaks of himself as having "for two years written nearly all the political articles in the *Nation*." It is certain, however, that Mitchel was not at any time the ostensible editor of the paper. This is clear from the passage above quoted, and still more clear from certain passages in a speech of Mitchel's made in Conciliation Hall, in the early summer of 1846. On that occasion Mitchel said, "Now, sir, though I am not editor of the *Nation*, as some persons represent," etc. And again, "I should say this, I am not the editor of the *Nation*. My friend, Mr. Duffy, is editor and proprietor." Sometimes, when Mr. Duffy (whose hands were pretty full) was absent or occupied in some other way, the whole of the editorial work on the paper had to be done by Mitchel. For example, about a year after Mitchel's coming to Dublin, I find the following in one of his letters to John Martin:—

Near the whole of the last *Nation* was mine—the review of the "Four Masters," that of "Roche Fermoy," the leading article,

* I say, "Mr." Duffy, that being the title by which Sir C. G. Duffy was known during the period I am writing of.

the article on the *Warder*, and nearly all the answers. Duffy is organizing.

Whatever form of words Duffy may have used in his proposal to Mitchel, I do not think it at all likely that he intended, in any degree, to surrender control of his paper. He probably supposed that Mitchel would be content to write for the paper and to do all or portions of the editorial work under his (Duffy's) general supervision. As men go, it was not an unreasonable expectation; and with many men the arrangement would have worked well enough. But John Mitchel was not one of these men. When he entered into the arrangement, he probably never adverted to the possibility of serious differences arising between him and Mr. Duffy. He assumed that in writing for the *Nation* he would be free to write just what he believed to be true. Serious differences of opinion did, however, arise, and Mr. Duffy naturally objected to allow doctrine from which he dissented to be taught in the editorial columns of his paper. He adopted, I believe, in some instances, the practice of revising and altering articles written by Mitchel. With the knowledge which we now have of Mitchel's character, we can feel tolerably certain that if he had foreseen this result, he never would have entered into the arrangement.

For more than two years Charles Gavan Duffy and John Mitchel worked together on the *Nation*. They parted company at the end of 1847; but without having so far had anything amounting to a personal quarrel. Afterwards they did become bitter personal enemies. This was long subsequent to the period we have now reached, but I think it as well to mention the matter once for all here, and so to have done with it. It is not a very pleasant subject for Irishmen to dwell upon. Both of these men were very far above the average in intellectual gifts, both

were also far above average in the sincerity and earnest zeal with which they sought to serve their country. A quarrel between two such men is a thing to be deeply regretted, whichever may be chiefly in fault. I feel the more entirely discharged from any obligation to enter into the details of this quarrel, because each of the two men was eminently qualified to state his own case, and each has stated his own case in language which—whatever else may be said of it—is certainly entitled to be described as plain speaking. Years afterwards, Mitchel, in writing his account of the period we are now entering on, put the following note to some remarks about Mr. Duffy :—

It is right to apprise you here that this gentleman afterwards became a bitter personal enemy to me ; the only enemy I have worth mentioning. . . . If I seem to disparage him in the above description, or elsewhere, the reader will make such allowance for private dislike as he may conjecture to be due.

This is a fair warning, and, whether needed or not, is honourably given. Mr. Duffy has since written his account of the same period. I may have occasion to refer to this book in the course of my narrative ; and I would ask the reader, at the start, to take a warning, similar to that just quoted, as regards those portions of Mr. Duffy's narrative which relate to John Mitchel and his doings.

I have mentioned in the last chapter that, on coming to Dublin, Mitchel took the house No. 1, Heathfield, Upper Leeson Street. The family remained at their temporary residence in George's Place till the end of November or beginning of December. Before the Christmas of 1845, they were comfortably settled in the house at Heathfield. They continued to reside in this house until the early summer of 1847. They then went to spend the summer months at Malahide. On their return from Malahide,

Mitchel took a house on Ontario Terrace, and there he continued to live until his arrest in the spring of 1848.

Immediately upon his arrival in Dublin, Mitchel entered upon his work at the *Nation* office. The work of a newspaper office was new to him; but so far as the writing of leading articles was concerned, he soon developed a very exceptional capacity. As to that part of an editor's duty which consists in making his paper, as a whole, attractive and spicy reading for the average public—for this branch of editing Mitchel had no special gift, and he never, to the end of his life, attained to any high degree of skill in that department. Indeed, he troubled his head very little about the general reader. Upon the subjects in which he took an interest he wrote the very best that it was in him to write; and he very speedily formed a style of journalistic writing which, for grace and vigour combined, has rarely been equalled. But for those of his subscribers who took little interest in the subjects of his leading articles, the papers he conducted were dull reading enough. How promptly Mitchel got to work at the *Nation* office, and what sort of work he began with, may be gathered from the following letter to John Martin, written on November 7, 1845:—

I beg your pardon for not writing to you before this. I have hardly time to sleep at night, between *Nation* business, the remnants of attorney business, and new house business. Soon I hope to have my time better divided, and a little more of it to myself.

I wish very much you were up here; but I hear (through a letter from J. O'Hagan) that you have been ill. We will have a bed rigged up here in a day or two; and then, even if Simpson's house be full, you will have shelter not far from him.

You guessed wrong about the authorship of the articles. The "Agitator of Algeria" was not mine, and the "121 Distinguished Persons" *was*. In last *Nation* I wrote the article on "Foreign Relations," and the Orangemen. When shall I see you?

John O'Hagan and J. Pigot are both gone to London ; but the other allies are in town—Dillon, Barry, Doheny, MacNevin, etc. Dillon, poor fellow, goes to Madeira in about a week.

The statement at the end of the letter refers to the fact that John Dillon, one of the Young Irelanders whose acquaintance Mitchel had made, was obliged to spend the winter of 1845-46 in Madeira on account of a chest complaint. Dillon had been most devotedly attached to Davis ; and the death of Davis had probably told seriously upon his health, which was already delicate.

Mitchel's method of working at this period was pretty much as follows. He did not, as a rule, work late at nights. In later life he often would sit up writing until a late hour in the night or morning ; but he very seldom did this at the time I am now writing about. I have seen it stated that he composed slowly, and with much deliberation. This may have been the case at first, but it certainly did not long continue to be so. Shortly after he began to work at the *Nation* office, his manner of composing became formed, and did not afterwards vary much, although his style did change considerably. He would first think out what he had to say, sitting in a sort of brown study ; and while this preliminary thinking was being done, the habit, already referred to, of twirling one of the locks on his forehead round his finger would invariably assert itself. When he had finished his thinking, he would go to his desk, and begin to write. He wrote very rapidly, and without any apparent hesitation or effort. The process has been thus described for me by one who had constant opportunities of observing him : "He would write without a moment's hesitation for an hour or two at a time, with no need apparently to stop to consider as to what should come next or the best way of putting it. He seemed to have arranged it all, and to have nothing to do but to

write it out as quickly as possible." And another correspondent, who was also much with him at this time, describes his mode of writing as follows: "When he wrote, his whole existence seemed determined to the point of his pen, which flew over the paper, and for the time he saw nothing and heard nothing."

He generally had breakfast about nine o'clock, and then started for the *Nation* office, arriving there about ten. But to this practice there were occasional exceptions. If he had work on hand which could be done at home, he would now and then stay at home, and write during the forenoon. His regular hours at the office were from ten a.m. to five p.m., but he did not always remain at the office the whole of this time. There were generally various extra-official matters demanding his attention—meetings to be attended, and work done on committees, etc. Moreover, Mitchel's arrangement with Duffy did not by any means bind him to a constant attendance at the office. While he was there, as a rule, he worked, and worked with all his might. But when the work he had on hand was finished, he would often go out to some library to look at some favourite book or have a chat with a friend.

As a speaker, he commenced with failures; in this resembling several others who afterwards attained to remarkable success. He had, of course, had some little practice in speaking in the work of his profession before he came to Dublin. But squabbling at petty sessions and public speaking, in the ordinary sense, are two different things, and it was some time after he came to Dublin before he acquired any facility as a speaker. The following anecdote may serve to illustrate the degree of diffidence he suffered from at first. When Mitchel and his family moved to Dublin, they joined the Unitarian congregation, of which Dr. Drummond and Dr. Armstrong, old friends of his

father's, were the pastors. This church the Mitchel's attended regularly. Soon after they came to Dublin, an entertainment, called a "congregational soir e," was given. Whether the entertainment was given in honour of the Mitchels or not I do not know; but, at all events, they were there. After tea was over, speeches and motions were made. By direction of the entertainers, some one came to John Mitchel, and handed him a sentiment, upon which he was requested to make a speech. Mitchel was a good deal taken aback. When his turn came, he stood up, said he was requested to read the following sentiment, and then immediately sat down again. And so much was he put out by the incident, that almost immediately after he had acquitted himself in this way, he left with his wife. Again, the first time he was asked to speak upon an important public occasion was at a meeting of the '82 Club, shortly after he came to Dublin. His subject was the memory of Thomas Davis. He had prepared his speech carefully; but when the time came to deliver it, he broke down. On this occasion his failure may perhaps have been due as much to intensity of feeling as to diffidence.

Subsequently, Mitchel completely got over this diffidence, and attained to perfect facility as a speaker. He never was an orator, as the word is commonly understood; but he became a remarkably good and effective speaker. It was not his habit to write out his speeches, either in whole or in part. If the subject was an important one, he would carefully think over beforehand what he meant to say; but for the form of words he trusted to the inspiration of the occasion. His words were remarkably well chosen, and his enunciation clear and emphatic. He always succeeded in holding the attention of his audience, and that mainly because of the impression of intense earnestness which he produced. It was impossible to listen to him

without feeling that his words were the expression always of strong conviction, and often of fierce, though suppressed, passion. Further on, I shall have occasion to give one or two specimens of his style of speaking.

We have, in the last chapter, taken a general view of the state of public affairs in Ireland at the time of Davis's death. During the winter of 1845-46 matters did not certainly improve so far as the policy of Conciliation Hall was concerned. O'Connell could never forget that an eminent Whig lord had pronounced his trial to be "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare," and that it was by the votes of the Whig lords that the judgment against him had been reversed. Moreover, places were to be had from the Whigs, and not from the Tories. O'Connell was above desiring a place for himself; but he was very fond of getting places for his followers, and more especially he was fond of the position and influence which he held as dispenser of the Irish patronage. While still protesting in his public speeches that he was for "repeal and no compromise," it became evident enough to those who watched him closely that he was feeling his way towards a Whig alliance. Seeing this, Mr. Duffy and his new colleague became all the more anxious to strengthen the *Nation*. The *Nation* was a serious obstacle in the way of O'Connell's Whig proclivities. He felt this, and he chafed under it; and, a little later on, he determined to declare war on the *Nation*. There were several new recruits who came in about the same time as Mitchel; not, like him, as constant and regular workers on the staff of the paper, but as occasional contributors. Thomas Wallis, John Fisher Murray, Thomas Devin Reilly, and Thomas Darcy McGee were the principal of these. By these and others occasional help was given; but Duffy and Mitchel were anxious to still further strengthen the *Nation* and the *Nation* party.

Of the plans they discussed with this object the following letter from Mitchel to John Martin may serve to give an idea. The letter is dated November 28, 1845 :—

What led me to write to you last Monday was this. Duffy and I were enumerating the men on whose *work* we could calculate in various departments; and especially considering whom we should get to act as secretary of the '82 Club instead of MacNevin, who won't work. And Duffy took it strongly into his head that *you*, if you could be persuaded to come and live in Dublin, would be the man. Indeed, he seems to have made up his mind that you *will* come, now that Mrs. Simpson is here, and seeing you have better health here.

Now I, although I agree with him about all this theoretically, yet practically I see difficulties (and have told him so), arising from your monomaniac attachment to Loughorne, and your idea, which I know to be strong in you, that a person of repeal opinions, if he have any influence, will best exert it in the sphere around him. Well, I think you are mistaken to some extent. I think you would be of more use to the national cause here; and if you could be rescued from asthma and Loughorne, and were amongst us here, that—in short, I agree with Duffy.

The plan, so far as Martin was concerned, was not carried out. His “monomaniac attachment to Loughorne,” combined with his idea that he could do most good in the sphere around him, prevented him from coming to Dublin then. Afterwards, when Mitchel was removed, and when the danger was greatest, John Martin came to Dublin, and stepped into the gap.

About the same date as the letter last quoted, I find another dealing with the land question, and answering some objections of Martin's :—

Who denies that the landlords are as good as any other people? and who cares whether it be landlords or landlordism—the man or the system—that afflicts this country? Abstract expostulations against a “system” never effected either revolution or regeneration yet. What people ever broke the neck of a vicious

system, except by making those who profited by the system, who robbed under the system, suffer? Who ever heard of stringing up a system “à la lanterne,” of burning the châteaux of a system? But this, you think, is talking as if a bloody French revolution, not a peaceful regeneration of Ireland, were contemplated. Indeed, I have small faith in peaceful regeneration where there is such a diseased body politic. Instruct and convert landlords, and that otherwise than by terror and imminent peril—— Think over it again, and don't grow euphemistical.

The '82 Club, referred to in one of the foregoing letters, was founded in 1845 at the instance of Davis. It consisted at first mainly of the *Nation* party, and was intended to help the *Nation* in modifying so far as might be the excessively moral and constitutional character which the Repeal Association was assuming. The members of the club attended public meetings and festivals in a dark green uniform, adorned with gold lace; and the uniform cap resembled the forage-cap of an officer of hussars. O'Connell did not much like this semi-military organization; but he was not yet prepared to break with the young men. He accepted the presidency of the club himself; and endeavoured to give to it a strictly peaceful and constitutional character.

Mitchel was a member of the '82 Club. He also was and had been for some time a member of the Repeal Association. Whenever his aid on committees or otherwise was asked for or permitted by those who controlled the association, he was always ready to give it, down to the time of the Young Ireland secession. From that time forward neither he nor those with whom he acted had any faith in the association as a means of obtaining repeal.

Under date December 8, I find another letter from Mitchel to Martin, giving some account of the progress of affairs at the *Nation* office, and referring to a matter which led to noteworthy results. After mentioning that

Duffy had been away in London for a week or so, he proceeds:—

We have some new writers now in the *Nation*. What do you think of the series of papers on Maclise and Moore (or, rather, which purport to be approaching that subject)? I think them very good. They are by a Mr. Wallis. And what think you of “Our Country in Commission?”

That is by J. Fisher Murray. MacNevin wrote the article on the “Whig Manifesto.” The Dohenyism of Doheny is unmistakable; and I wrote the notice of Mr. Hallam’s letter, the Oregon article, and some short paragraphs. I also wrote that explanatory article about the railway sedition which appeared in the previous paper, and which had the good fortune to meet with your approbation.

Don’t discontinue your practice of criticising us, because I think it is very good for us to hear how things strike a person removed from the immediate turmoil of this agitated and agitating Dublin. I don’t promise to concur always in your criticism, but will always give it *due* weight.

The “explanatory article about the railway sedition” came to be written in this way. In the month of November, 1845, an article on Irish affairs of even more than average truculence appeared in the *London Standard*. Measures of extreme severity were threatened, with the view of stamping out the repeal agitation. It was then pointed out that, in case any resistance to such measures were attempted, the facilities afforded by the then recently constructed railways would enable the authorities to mass troops rapidly at any point where they might be needed. Upon these sentiments Mitchel commented in the *Nation* for November 22, 1845. This article attracted much notice, and was commonly known as “The Railway Article.” As it led to important results, I will here quote some leading passages from it:—

For actual measures of coercion, all Ireland laughs at that coward threat. The military uses (or abuses) of railways are

tolerably well understood ; but it might be useful to promulgate through the country, to be read by all Repeal Wardens in their parishes, a few short and easy rules, as to the mode of dealing with railways in case of any enemy daring to make a hostile use of them. The bold Hollanders once prevented their country from being overrun by French armies by laying it under water. They opened the embankments, and admitted the sea, and in one day those fertile plains, with all their waving corn, were a portion of the stormy German Ocean ; and railways, though inconceivably valuable to any people as highways of commerce, yet were better dispensed with for a time than allowed to become a means of transport for invading armies.

A hint on this subject may be thought enough ; but we see no objection to speaking plainly, and, therefore, we give a few practical views, which may be improved as engineers turn their attention to the subject.

First, then, every railway within five miles of Dublin could in one night be totally cut off from the interior country. To lift a mile of rail, to fill a perch or two of any cutting or tunnel, to break down a piece of an embankment, seem obvious and easy enough.

Second : The materials of railways, good hammered iron and wooden sleepers,—need we point out that such things may be of use in other *lines* than assisting locomotion.

Third : Troops upon their march by rail might be conveniently met with in divers places. Hofer, with his Tyroleans, could hardly desire a deadlier ambush than the brinks of a deep cutting upon a railway. Imagine a few hundred men lying in wait upon such a spot, with masses of rocks and trunks of trees ready to roll down ; and a train or two advancing with a regiment of infantry, and the engine panting near and nearer, till the polished studs of brass on its front are distinguishable, and its name may nearly be read ; “ Now, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost !—now—— ”

But 'tis a dream. No enemy will dare put us to realize these scenes. Yet, let all understand, what a railway may and what it may *not* do.

This was all highly dangerous doctrine, according to

O'Connell's then views. To the suggestion regarding the Repeal Wardens he took particular exception. A few days after the article appeared, he called at the *Nation* office. He threatened to bring the matter up in the association, unless the passage as to the Repeal Wardens were satisfactorily explained. Mitchel could not see that he had written anything which needed explanation, but he thought it best to defer to O'Connell's wish. Accordingly, in the next number of the *Nation*, Mitchel referred to O'Connell's remonstrance, and took occasion to state that the *Nation* had neither connection with nor control over the Repeal Wardens. This was the "explanatory article about the railway sedition" referred to in the letter to John Martin. A few weeks after these proceedings, a notice of prosecution for seditious libel was served on Mr. Duffy as proprietor of the *Nation*. The prosecution was to be grounded upon the article containing what Mitchel calls the "railway sedition." Mitchel, in his capacity of an attorney, undertook to conduct the defence. He retained Robert Holmes, then the father of the Irish bar. The trial, however, did not take place until some six months later.

During the winter of 1845-46, the matter which most occupied men's minds in Ireland was the approach of famine. The grave had hardly closed over Thomas Davis before the cry went up that the potato crop had failed. For the great majority of the Irish people a failure of the potato crop meant famine. Everybody knew this, the Government of England included. The crisis was one in which a government that had the interests of the people at heart would doubtless have acted with promptitude, and on a scale befitting so tremendous an emergency. And there can be little doubt but that Government could have acted with effect. It may seem strange to people not

acquainted with the history of Ireland that the failure of the potato crop should cause a terrible famine in a country which was all the while producing plenty of beef and mutton, and abundance of grain crops. But the explanation is simple, and was very clearly given in the *Nation* at the time by Mr. James Finton Lalor and others. The landlords had been able to make and to enforce a very convenient arrangement regarding the division of the produce, which arrangement was in substance this. The beef, the mutton, the pork, the grain crops—indeed, everything except the potatoes, had to be sold, and the proceeds paid over to the landlords for rent, the potatoes being left to the people for food. When, therefore, the potato crop failed, the issue was a very simple one indeed. Either some thousands of landlords had to go without their rents in whole or in part, or else some millions of tenants had to go without food. The reader will, therefore, understand why I assert that, if Ireland had been a self-governing country, the Irish famine would have been a very different affair from what it was. The people would hardly of their own free choice have consented to starve in order that the landlords might have their rents. It needed all the power of England to make them do this.

Of course, English statesmen protested that the famine was the result of a "visitation of Providence," for which the Government was in no way answerable. Yet it seems almost incredible that Sir Robert Peel can have entirely believed this. When a country is producing more than enough food to support its population, and yet the people are dying of hunger, there must be some one in fault besides Providence. In such a case, it would seem to be the duty of Government to take vigorous measures to secure that in some way or other the people should have enough of the food they produced to keep them alive, how-

ver outrageously the laws of political economy might be set at defiance. The first of Sir R. Peel's relief measures, and the one upon which he seemed chiefly to rely, was the repeal of the Corn Laws. This measure was loudly demanded by the great city populations of England, and as loudly resisted by the farming population. In first announcing his conversion to free trade in corn, Sir R. Peel laid much stress upon the condition of Ireland and upon the probable effect of his proposed measure in averting the famine. Now, without being disposed to judge Peel at all as severely as Mitchel does in his "Last Conquest," one may well wonder how so able a man as he was could really have believed that free trade in corn was likely to benefit Ireland in her then condition. The class that was most hostile to the proposed reform in England was precisely the class which constituted the great majority of the Irish population. To lower the price of farm products in order to benefit a nation of farmers—this was, in effect, what Sir Robert Peel proposed to do.

The repeal of the Corn Laws, although it was the measure upon which Peel seemed most to rely, was not the only remedy he had to propose. There were so-called relief measures by both of the English parties, for both were in office during the famine. I do not propose to tell again here the story of these attempts at relief. The story has been told by more than one writer. Mitchel, in his "Last Conquest," examines the relief measures in detail. The view which he there propounds and endeavours to prove is that the famine was regarded by the Government (Tory or Whig) as a providential instrument for the purpose of thinning off the surplus Irish population; and that there was no real desire in Government circles to check or substantially mitigate the mortality. Whether we take this view or not, we must at least admit that the measures

of Government were miserably inadequate to meet the crisis. Many generous people, both in England and America, gave abundantly from their private means. But private charity could do little towards coping with so tremendous a calamity. As against the Government, it must be remembered that while these paltry measures of relief were being taken, the whole power of the Executive was devoted to the task of forcing the starving people to sell what food they raised in order to pay their rents. In truth, there was but one remedy that might have saved the people—to stop the exaction of rents wherever there was danger of famine, and thus to allow the people to eat the food which they raised.

In December, 1845, Sir Robert Peel suddenly resigned office. This was not in consequence of any parliamentary defeat, but because, as was then understood, Peel was unable to carry his colleagues with him on the question of repealing the Corn Laws. For a time, it was thought that Lord John Russell would form a Government. O'Connell's conduct at this crisis justified the worst fears of the Young Irelanders. He made a long speech in Conciliation Hall. He commenced, as usual, by a vigorous pronouncement in favour of "repeal and no compromise;" and he then proceeded to show those of his audience who could read between the lines that a compromise with the Whigs was precisely what he was aiming at. "The new administration," he said, "will be wanting us, and they shall have us, if they do good work for the Irish people." He then went on to specify what he wanted them to do. The programme did not include repeal; yet O'Connell said that, if Lord John would only do these things, he would have "to transfer his green cap over to him."

The Young Ireland leaders knew well enough what all this meant. It meant that, if the Whigs came into power,

O'Connell was to have the dispensing of the Irish patronage; and that for this consideration he was willing to undertake to give no trouble about repeal.

The *Nation* commented on this speech in its next issue. The tone of the article was respectful to O'Connell, but firm in its resistance to the idea of a Whig alliance. For the time the danger passed away, as Lord John Russell failed to form a ministry, and Sir Robert Peel returned to office. But it was most probably on this occasion that O'Connell finally made up his mind to break with and crush the *Nation* party.

O'Connell's attitude in reference to the threatened prosecution for the railway article was the first overt act in his war against the *Nation*. He not only abstained himself from any expression of sympathy, but he took careful precautions to secure that no such expression should be made by any one else in the Repeal Association. Especially, he tried to prevent O'Brien from referring to the matter; but in this he was not successful. Both O'Brien and Mr. Henry Grattan referred to the *Nation* prosecution in the association, but they were silenced by the Head Pacificator and the other lieutenants of O'Connell.

From this and other proceedings of O'Connell's, it became plain to Mr. Duffy and his colleague that there was danger ahead. Mr. Duffy, in his "Four Years of Irish History," gives an account of a consultation which took place between him and Mitchel in the February of 1846, in which they discussed the prospects and probable results of a conflict with O'Connell. O'Connell's power in Ireland at that time was such that it seemed certain that he could crush the *Nation* without much effort, if he once determined to do so. Mitchel was of opinion that O'Connell had determined to ruin the *Nation*, and that he would probably succeed. They determined that there was nothing to be

done but to proceed on the same lines as before, and to await the result.

During the winter and spring of 1846, Mr. Duffy was, for the greater part of the time, in poor health, and, moreover, he had many matters to attend to besides the work at the *Nation* office. Mitchel was therefore kept very busy, writing most of the political articles, and doing most of the editorial work. Under date, March 15, 1846, I find the following letter to John Martin :—

You must excuse Duffy for not answering your note. He has been again unwell with his chest, and went a few days to the country. On Thursday last I had a letter from him from Kilkenny, in which he said he had shamefully neglected to reply to a letter of yours, and told me to apologize for him.

He then answers some criticisms Martin had made on the previous number of the *Nation*, and proceeds :—

Yet, after all, I am very sure the tone of the *Nation* about England never will altogether suit you. I think it is highly important to keep up an exasperation of feeling against the English Government, and, of course, against the English people, the two things being inseparable in the popular mind; and I don't think such a state of feeling will be any obstacle, but the reverse, to the raising of an independent and manly national spirit. Still, I admit the justice of a good deal of your sermon, and shall profit by it.

How did you like the long article about universities? It is by Wallis; and I think very excellent, though rather long and massive-looking for a newspaper. Duffy wrote the leader about the Poles, and I that about the Funds and the one entitled "Poland." Next week we are to have another part of the article about Mozart, which is by John Pigot. What do you think about the Polish insurrection? The success of it would be almost too good and grand a thing to be realized; and yet the defeat of it would be a miserable omen for the whole world.

Mr. Duffy's time during this period was further occupied with an attempt to contribute a volume to the Library of

Ireland. He tells us himself how on one occasion, during the spring or early summer of 1846, he was away in the Dublin mountains trying to write history. Suddenly, one day, Mitchel came out and exhorted Duffy to return to the *Nation* office. Danger was apprehended from Conciliation Hall.

The following is a *précis* of some of the principal articles written by Mitchel in the *Nation* during the winter of 1845-46, and early spring of 1846. It may serve to indicate the kind of subjects which (so far as concerned matters political) mainly occupied his thoughts during the first few months after his removal to Dublin :—

1845, October 25. Article on "The People's Food." Refers to the failure of the potato crop; solemnly warns the landlords against pursuing the policy of forcing the people to sell their other crops for rent, and therefore to starve.

November 1. Article on "Foreign Relations;" goes on the text that "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity." Points out the complications which threaten England, and hopes that, when the opportunity comes, Ireland will not be "like Andromeda, chained and wailing helplessly, waiting for some winged Perseus to deliver her."

November 1. Writes again on the "Potato Disease." Points out how powerful an agent hunger has been in certain revolutions; adds, "On this subject it will be well to think maturely and speak cautiously; but certainly, either for us or against us, the approaching season of suffering will be turned to political ends."

November 8. Article on "The Detectives." Says that people are beginning to fear that the business of Government and its police in Ireland is rather to destroy the people than to save them. Then proceeds :—

"The people are beginning to fear that the Irish Government is merely a machinery for their destruction; that, for all the usual functions of a government, this castle- nuisance is altogether powerless; that it is unable or unwilling to take a single step for the prevention of famine, for the encouragement of manufactures, or providing fields for industry, and is only active in promoting,

by high premiums and bounties, the horrible manufacture of crime!"

November 22. Article on "Threats of Coercion." Contains the passages as to railways already noticed.

November 22. Article on "The Potatoes." Again utters a note of warning to landlords. Cautions the people against depending on the Government. Points out that "those who are *de facto* our rulers value our opinion of our own affairs at no higher rate than the howling of the winter wind."

December 6. Article on "Oregon—Ireland:" has reference to the dispute then pending between England and America about Oregon. Concludes:—

"If there is to be a war between England and the United States, 'tis impossible for us to pretend sympathy with the former. We shall have allies, not enemies, on the banks of the Columbia; and distant and desolate as are those tracts beyond the Rocky Mountains, even there may arise the opportunity for demanding and regaining our place among the nations."

December 13. Article on "The President's Message." Again treats of the Oregon question. Points out the hopelessness of Ireland's trying to fight England while the latter is at peace. Says:—

"And here let us meet, once for all, that unmeaning taunt which we hear so often—that Ireland dares not strike openly and boldly for her liberty; but waits, like a coward, till her adversary is hard bestead by other enemies, and then ungenerously starts up to make her terms. They lie who say so. It were no bravery (but insanity) in a stripped, and pillaged, and wounded wayfarer to rush upon an armed robber, while the villain has his pistol presented to his victim's breast. If the highwayman fall in with the officers of justice, or have his hands full of some new piece of ruffianism, we see no cowardice in the robbed man mingling in the fray, with, 'Now, Sir Highwayman, disgorge thy plunder, or die!' So acted the volunteers of 1782, and they do not underlie the charge of cowardice or meanness. Taunts like these will hardly avail to make us fling ourselves, with naked hands, upon the points of their bayonets and the muzzles of their cannon."

December 20. Article on "The Protestant Interest." Takes advantage of the ministerial crisis to appeal to the Protestants to

join their countrymen. Alludes to the efforts of the Whig leaders to win support in Ireland by promises of boons and places. Concludes :—

“But, Protestants of Ireland! shall it, indeed, be so? Is it not time for us all to rise above such vile influences as these?”

“Does not our national interest, our national honour (for, after all, we *are* a nation), demand that we spurn the mean tricks of both these foreign factions; that we shuffle off the coil of filthy place-hunting politics, that has kept us so long grovelling in the dust? Are the rights of Ireland for ever to be neglected in this eternal pursuit of the vile ‘boons’ of England? Shall the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim for ever be preferred before the clusters of Manasseh?”

“Ah! if you would hearken to us—and a hope dawns upon us that you *will*—if the Protestant magnates of the land would even now place themselves at the head of our national confederacy, and, in this interregnum of foreign rule, would meet us as brethren, to take counsel *ne quid detrimenti respublica capiat*, this paltry ‘ministerial crisis’ were the birth-hour of a regenerated nation.”

1846, January 31. Article on the “New Tariff.” Pronounces the proposed repeal of the Corn Laws a good measure for England; but points out that “in the matter of protective duties upon provisions, like nearly every other matter, Ireland stands in a position entirely different from that of England.” Shows in what the difference consists, and predicts that the proposed repeal will prove ruinous to Ireland.

February 7. Article on “The Administration of Justice.” Comments on the trial of Brian Sury, then recently convicted for shooting a landlord. Points out the difference between England and Ireland in regard to the making and the administration of law. Says :—

“Often we think that, if we were English instead of Irish, we should be determined Conservatives—jealous of change in the time-honoured institutions of our ancestors; intolerant of democratic freedom of speech, that rudely questions and takes to task the high traditions and stately usages of the ancient monarchy of England. Be satisfied, ye fortunate dwellers in that favoured island! *Your* laws are made at home; no stranger—no slave of the stranger—sits upon *your* judgment seats. Lordly influence,

landed influence, trading influence, may be too potent, or not potent enough, in your legislation; but the influences are all English; they are all your *own*. Your laws are made at home, not imported; they are administered by men 'whose limbs were made in England,' who have grown up to love and honour their native land, and expect no premium upon its betrayal. Be content, then; thank Heaven that you are a nation, and not a province; fear God, and honour the king!"

February 14. Article on "Famine." Points out that famine has actually commenced, and warns the Government of what is coming. Shows the miserable way in which the matter was being trifled with, and exclaims: "Oh, Heavens! do these men know what potatoes are?—what famishing men are? Have they any conception even yet that there may soon be certain millions of human beings in Ireland having nothing to eat?"

February 28. Writes on the Coercion Bill then going through the House of Lords. Says this is "the only kind of legislation for Ireland that is sure to meet with no obstruction in that House." Adds: "However they may differ as to the propriety of feeding the Irish people, they agree most cordially in the policy of taxing, prosecuting, and hanging them."

March 7. Article on "English Rule." Written in Mitchel's best style. States with singular force the essence of the English feeling towards Ireland; then goes on to state the Irish feeling towards England and English rule:—

"The Irish people, always half-starved, are expecting absolute famine day by day; they know that they are doomed to months of a weed-diet next summer; that 'hungry ruin has them in the wind'—and they ascribe it, *unanimously*, not so much to the wrath of Heaven as to the greedy and cruel policy of England. Be it right or wrong, such is their feeling. They believe that the seasons as they roll are but ministers of English rapacity; that their starving children cannot sit down to their scanty meal but they see the harpy-claw of *England* in their dish. They behold their own wretched food melting in rottenness off the face of the earth; and they see heavy-laden ships, freighted with the yellow corn their own hands have sown and reaped, spreading all sail *for England*; they see it, and with every grain of that corn goes a heavy curse.

"Again, the people believe, no matter whether truly or falsely, that if they should escape the hunger and the fever, their lives are not safe from judges and juries. They do not look upon the law of the land as a terror to evil-doers and a praise to those who do well; they scowl on it as an engine of foreign rule, ill-omened harbinger of doom."

Of literary and semi-literary articles and reviews, Mitchel contributed quite a number to the *Nation* during the period I am now writing of. I can here only notice one or two of them.

The *Nation* of January 10, 1846, contains a review of Carlyle's "Cromwell." As to the English part of the book, Mitchel has little to offer in the way of adverse criticism. From the Irish part he dissents very decidedly. Having expressed his own view upon that part of the subject, he proceeds:—

Thus far we, being Irish and not English, have deemed it right to indicate our view of Cromwell's relation to Ireland. Yet we hardly blame our vehement hero-worshipping friend for misunderstanding our history. To an English mind this seems inevitable. Yet we do wish he had not written at all upon the Irish part of the business, but simply printed the letters, and let them speak for themselves. The English Cromwell he knows, and can interpret, with seeing eye and understanding heart; Cromwell in Ireland, and the matters he had to deal with here, are a mystery to the historian, as they were to the hero. Ireland was to Cromwell a blind promiscuous shambles and place of skulls; to his enthusiastic editor it is merely a blackness and a blot.

We have said all we had to say upon this extraordinary book. No book we remember to have read has pained us so much; for, indeed, Thomas Carlyle has long been our venerated and beloved preceptor—at whose feet we have long studied and learned there several things that our "guide, philosopher, and friend" never thought to teach us. Perhaps, the most remarkable thing about Carlyle's writings is their power of suggesting thoughts that the

writer never contemplated; fructifying after a sort he never expected; so that amongst his most ardent admirers and constant students there are, probably, few who agree in his peculiar views.

Carlyle read the review, and, despite the adverse criticism on the Irish part of the book, he liked it. Mr. Duffy, in his "Four Years of Irish History," quotes a letter from one of the Young Irelanders—then in London—in which occurs the following passage:—

They (Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle) were greatly pleased with Mitchel's review, which they took to be yours, and Lucas couldn't enlighten them. They both considered it honest and manly in the extreme, especially the way the *English* Cromwell was judged; not, as they might naturally have expected, by the light of what we consider him to have done in Ireland.

And Mitchel himself writes on the same subject to Martin towards the end of January, 1846:—

The pleasantest thing that has happened for a long time is that Carlyle wrote to Duffy conveying his strong approval of the review of his "Cromwell," which appeared two or three *Nations* ago. . . . He is not convinced that he took a wrong view of Cromwell's influence and conduct in Ireland, because, he says, a sincere man and hero—wherever he is or whatever he is doing—we may be sure is fulfilling the intentions and executing the judgments of God, etc.; and he apprehends further inquiry would show that Oliver did not while in Ireland murder and massacre more than the laws of war justified; and that he actually was in barbarous Ireland, a light shining in a dark place, and only destructive because the darkness comprehended it not, etc. You know what he would say. . . . Carlyle's letter is strange enough. He evidently thinks society in Ireland is in such a state that no man dares to see or to utter the truth unless O'Connell and the priests say *fat*. From O'Connell's critique in Conciliation Hall upon the "Rev. Dr. Carlisle and his book on that monster, Cromwell," he thought no man in Ireland dared to appeal; and he actually calls the *Nation's* review "heroic" in giving such an estimate of Cromwell and Carlyle as the first portion of it does.

Of course, all this is a false assumption. It is not fair that he should have set us down as such a nation of slaves. However, we will enlighten his weak mind.

Carlyle had not, at this time, met Mitchel. Not many months after this review was written, they did meet, as we shall see.

In the *Nation* for February 28, 1846, I find what I call a semi-literary paper by Mitchel. It is a review of a pamphlet by a man who was then the "rising hope" of the Conservatives in Ireland; but who afterwards (like another and a more famous "rising hope" in England) became a leader of power on the popular side. The pamphlet was entitled "Protection to Home Industry," and the name of the author was Isaac Butt. Take the following passage as a specimen of Mitchel's review:—

In short, Mr. Butt's argument is precisely that of Dean Swift in the "Drapier's Letters," and of Bishop Berkeley in "The Querist." He despises and tramples underfoot the modern doctrine of political economy, "the proposition so often and so confidently laid down, that it must always be the interest of a country to buy its goods at the cheapest market, and sell them at the dearest, without reference to the question whether either market be the foreign or the home."

This proposition is simply *not true*. The "interest" of those who have money to spend in outlandish luxuries is *not* the interest of the country; and the cheapening of British or foreign manufactures does not compensate for the removal of all the Christian food of the island to pay for them.

The following list gives the dates and headings of a few other literary essays contributed by Mitchel to the *Nation* during the first year of his connection with the paper:—

1845, November 29. "Curran's Speeches:" review of Davis's edition just published.

1845, December 13. "The Falcon Family; or, Young Ireland:" a very amusing review of a political novel so named.

1846, January 31. "The Age of Pitt and Fox:" review of a book so named.

1846, April 4. "The Poets and Dramatists of Ireland," by D. F. McCarthy: review of this book.

1846, May 30. "Industrial History of Free Nations," by Torrens M'Cullagh: review of this book.

1846, August 8. "Confederation of Kilkenny," by Rev. C. P. Meehan: review of this book.

When Parliament met in January, 1846, Sir Robert Peel had three principal measures to propose—the Repeal of the Corn Laws, two grants of £50,000 each for public works and drainage in Ireland, and a sweeping Coercion Bill. The first and second of these measures passed. The first tended to aggravate the misery in Ireland; the second did very little to alleviate it. When the time for discussing the Coercion Bill came on, O'Connell led his followers to London to resist it. O'Connell had, in the previous session of Parliament, announced his intention to refuse attending the Select Committees of the House. It seemed to O'Brien that the time had now come for giving effect to this declaration, in which he had concurred. He declined to sit on a railway committee when summoned to do so. The House voted him in contempt, and he was committed to the cellar.

O'Connell's position was embarrassing. He had himself suggested the line of action pursued by O'Brien; but for some reason or other, he was not now disposed to act upon his own suggestion. Had O'Brien's conduct been approved in the Repeal Association, such a course might seem to imply a censure upon O'Connell. Of course O'Connell felt pretty certain that the question would be raised in the association, and he sent over instructions to his lieutenants there. The question was raised, and that promptly by the Young Irelanders. The nature of O'Connell's instructions at once became apparent. The safety of the association

(a favourite phrase at the time) had to be carefully guarded. Eventually, the *Nation* party succeeded in getting passed a carefully worded resolution which avoided expressing any opinion on the legality of O'Brien's action. O'Brien was dissatisfied, as indeed he had good reason to be. In a letter to Mr. Duffy he expressed himself as "not so much wounded with the apparent disavowal of me which is manifest in the proceedings of Monday last, as grieved that the repeal movement should have sustained a shock in point of character from which it will not easily recover."

In the '82 Club the *Nation* party were able to have their own way. A meeting was summoned, and a resolution was carried by a majority of seven to one approving of O'Brien's conduct, and directing that an address of sympathy should be presented to him in the "cellar." Six members of the club were selected to present the address, of whom Mitchel was one. It was his first visit to London, and his last. It was characteristic of Mitchel that the only part of the House of Commons he ever visited was the "cellar." He had no wish to see the chamber in which his friend had been insulted, and from which he had been sent in custody to his present abode. The deputation waited on O'Connell, and asked him to accompany them in presenting the address. He excused himself on the ground of not having received sufficient notice. The deputation attended at the cellar at the time appointed. They rather startled the officials of the House by appearing in the green and gold uniform of the '82 Club. O'Brien was in excellent spirits. Since the meeting of the association there had been popular meetings at many of the principal towns in Ireland, at which O'Brien's conduct was emphatically approved, and more than one hundred and fifty petitions had been presented to the House praying for his immediate release. All this had helped O'Brien to get

over the annoyance he had felt when he heard of the proceedings in the Repeal Association. And now came the enthusiastic adherence of the Young Ireland party. Amongst that party were several men whom O'Brien both respected and admired, and whose good opinion he highly valued. He received the deputation very cordially. He gave them a full exposition of his views, and of the course he intended to pursue. Mitchel reported to Duffy that the deputation were much pleased with their reception, and that O'Brien now appeared to be satisfied with what had been done. Mitchel did not remain long in London; as soon as the immediate business of the deputation was got through with, he returned to his post at the *Nation* office. It was, as I have said, his first visit to London; and, under other circumstances, John Mitchel might have cared to stay and see the many objects of interest that are to be seen in London. But now his mind was entirely engrossed with the work he had in hand. London was to him simply the capital city of the nation which was oppressing his own country; which had insulted and was trying to degrade the man he had come over to honour.

But there was one sight in London which he did go to see. He visited Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle received him very kindly. They went out for a walk together. During the walk, Mitchel asked what was to be the subject of the next book. To which question Carlyle characteristically answered that it was with him and his books as with the ladies in the case of their babies, when he got one off his hands, it was always the last—till the next came.

Afterwards, in giving his impressions of this visit to the Carlyles, Mitchel said of Mrs. Carlyle that when her husband was not present, she was a most brilliant and delightful talker, but that when he was present, she talked but little.

Of this, his first visit to Carlyle, Mitchel wrote to Martin :—

I saw Thomas, and spent an evening at his house in Chelsea. He is very like what I expected, a raw-boned, ungainly, hard-favoured Dumfriesshire man, with a broad, Lowland accent, a stoop in his shoulders, and big brogues. Yet to me his talk seemed like the speech of Paul or Chrysostom, and his presence and environment royal and almost Godlike. His look is not by any means calm or philosophical. On the contrary, while he talks, he glares sometimes with a wild, restless, absolutely fierce expression—what they call in the north a *raised* look. He kept most of the talk to himself; and I scarcely agreed with him in any single thing he said the whole night, and told him my mind occasionally broadly enough. His views on Irish questions are strangely and wickedly unjust, and his notions of might and right generally are altogether atheistical. I told him I had met with a statement of his ethical creed expressed with more precision than he chooses to give it—by Spinoza—that every man has an absolute right to do everything he is able to do, if he has also a mind to do it; that a big fish, being able to swallow a shoal of herrings, and having also a relish for herrings, has an absolute right to eat them; and that a son who is young and strong and *able* to kill and eat his father, if he have also an appetite for him, has the *summum jus* complete to devour him. He refused all precise and logical expositions of his notions; said “men may chop logic to the end of the world,” but said that, on the whole, a man had better be “on God’s side, or otherwise God will make very short work with him,” and a great deal more to that effect.

I will tell you more of his deliverances another time. He talked a good deal about Cromwell and the Irish, and a good deal about Nicholas and the Poles. The Russians he esteems only second to the English, and the French he begins to despise mainly because they cannot conquer Algeria. Indeed, he laughs heartily at the French passion for foreign conquest and colonization—“because England keeps her carriage, let us set up a gig.”

The imprisonment of O’Brien took place at the end of April, and the deputation went over early in May, 1846.

The effect of all this was to more than ever embitter O'Connell against the *Nation* party. He felt that in so promptly and emphatically endorsing O'Brien for doing what he (O'Connell) had promised to do, but failed to do, they impliedly censured him. But for a short time further he nursed his wrath.

In the middle of June the prosecution of the *Nation* for Mitchel's railway article came on for trial. Mitchel acted as attorney for the defence, and old Robert Holmes, although still a stuff-gownsmen, was the leading counsel. The old man's speech was the event of the trial. By the Chief Justice who presided, and who was bitterly hostile to the sentiments expressed by Mr. Holmes, the speech was described as one which "had never been surpassed in a court of justice." As a vindication of the principle of nationality, I believe it is true to say that the speech never has been surpassed. There are sentences in that speech which epitomize, better than anything else I have ever read, the history of Ireland since her connection with England. For example, speaking of the principle of nationality, he says:—

But where this common and invigorating principle is wanting, where a people is subservient to the will, mocked by the pride, and ruled by the caprice, the passions, and the interest of another state, that people will inevitably betray the vileness of its condition. National independence does not necessarily lead to national virtue and happiness, but reason and experience alike demonstrate that public spirit and general happiness are looked for in vain under the withering influence of provincial subjection.

Considering the age of Mr. Holmes (over eighty) at the time he delivered this great speech, its force and fire are truly marvellous. John Mitchel had good reason to be proud of having written the article which, in the result, called forth so noble a vindication of the principles which

the *Nation* was founded to maintain. The effect of the speech was proportionate to its power. A conviction had been confidently predicted; but in the result, the jury disagreed. They were locked up twenty-four hours without food, and then discharged. It was understood that there were seven for conviction and five for acquittal.

Shortly after the conclusion of the *Nation* prosecution—on the 29th of June—Sir R. Peel resigned office. He was defeated on his Irish Coercion Bill. The Whigs, as is usual with them when out of office, were opposed to coercion for Ireland. They considered it a shocking thing that the Tories should be allowed to coerce; but, of course, with the Whigs, the case was different. Every one knew that *they* would never abuse the exceptional powers given to them, and so forth. We are pretty well accustomed to this kind of argument. It was not used for the first time by the Government of Lord John Russell, nor for the last. But the Whigs alone were not strong enough to upset the Peel Government. They met with unexpected allies. The country gentleman party in England were enraged at Peel for repealing the Corn Laws. They found a leader in Benjamin Disraeli, then first rising to a prominent position. Disraeli led his following into the same lobby with the Whigs, and the Peel Government was defeated. Sir Robert immediately resigned, and Lord John Russell was called on by the Queen to form a government.

The crisis had now come. In Ireland, the great question was—what would O'Connell do now? From various acts and words of his during the previous year, people had inferred that he was feeling his way for a Whig alliance. Now the Whigs had come back to power, and the question on every man's lips was—would O'Connell give them his support, and, if so, upon what terms? What O'Connell did is matter of history. He allied himself with the Whigs,

nominally in consideration of eleven measures of reform in Ireland which he said the Whig Government had promised to carry, but which no one for a moment believed they would carry. What he really got was the control of the Irish patronage, and so long as this was left in his hands, he was prepared to let the repeal agitation remain practically in abeyance. He continued, no doubt, from time to time to declare in Conciliation Hall that the only true remedy for the famine and the other miseries of Ireland was repeal of the Union. But from the time the Whigs came into office in the summer of 1846, down to the death of O'Connell, so far as the Repeal Association was concerned, nothing was done which in any way forwarded the repeal cause. From that time forward the English Government could afford to regard, and did regard the proceedings at Conciliation Hall with contemptuous indifference.

But there was one party in the association which—O'Connell knew well—could never be got to assent to his new departure. He knew very well that so long as the *Nation* party remained in the association, he could hardly hope to have a quiet time in carrying out his arrangement with his new allies. He determined, therefore, to take immediate steps to carry out an intention which he had probably formed some months previously—that is, to drive the Young Ireland party from the Repeal Association, and to destroy the political influence of the *Nation*.

It is, happily, unnecessary for me to tell again here a story so often told already—the story of the Moral Force Resolutions, and of the consequent secession of Young Ireland from the Repeal Association. To us, regarding this famous controversy now, after the lapse of forty years, it may well seem matter of wonder that such a body as the Repeal Association should have been rent in twain upon

an abstract controversy as to the circumstances needed to justify a recourse to physical force. At first sight it may seem even more extraordinary that a man of O'Connell's intellectual power should have formulated and asked rational men to assent to the absurd claptrap of the moral force resolutions. But we know that this curious proceeding is capable of explanation. It was not then known, as it afterwards came to be, that for more than a year before his death, O'Connell was suffering from brain disease. During the last two years of his life his vast influence with the Irish people depended in the main upon prestige. The people had been accustomed to put implicit faith in him, and they continued to do so, more by the force of habit than because they understood or assented to the policy he had come to pursue. In truth, there is hardly a character in history about whose true position our view will differ more widely according as we study the commencement or the close of his career. If we read the history of O'Connell's life down to the time he won Catholic Emancipation, and close the book there, we will regard him as, in every sense, one of the greatest popular tribunes that any people has yet produced ; a leader who wielded over his people an all but absolute power, and who deserved the devotion that he inspired. If we commence our study of his life with his release from prison in the month of September, 1845, and follow his course from that day until the day of his death in Genoa, we will find it hard to dispute the justice of that judgment of Mitchel's which pronounces O'Connell to have been "next to the British Government, the worst enemy that Ireland ever had, or rather the most fatal friend."

But we must always remember, that during these closing years, O'Connell was no longer the same O'Connell who won Catholic Emancipation. The disease from which he was suffering had weakened his once-powerful will. This

combined with his naturally strong affection for his son John, threw him completely under the influence of this favourite son. Of John O'Connell I need say nothing beyond this—that he had none of his father's greatness, and most of his father's faults. He acted much as men, intellectually small, continually do act when they attempt to play a great part. He was very fond of displaying his firmness and determination, but it was generally a determination to do mischief. In the course he adopted in order to rid himself of the *Nation* party, O'Connell acted on the suggestions of this, his favourite son.

These considerations will partially explain the moral force resolutions. But there is a further explanation. The resolution in condemnation of physical force was framed—most probably at the suggestion of John O'Connell—with an express purpose. O'Connell never expected that the Young Irelanders would subscribe to the doctrine contained in the resolution. There were a certain number of hacks and expectant place-men at Conciliation Hall who would have promptly and cheerfully affirmed that the moon was made of green cheese, if O'Connell had so directed them. But the leaders of the *Nation* party were men of a different stamp. O'Connell knew this very well; and when he framed his abstract and general condemnation of physical force as a means of redressing national wrongs, he fully expected that the men he was anxious to get rid of would indignantly refuse to accept the doctrine. At the first meeting the result did not exactly answer to his expectations. The Young Ireland leaders protested against the resolution, but they did not intimate any intention of quitting the association in case it was passed. It was necessary, therefore, to go further. At a subsequent meeting, Mr. John O'Connell put the matter with sufficient plainness. Any one who was not prepared to give an

unqualified assent to the peace resolutions could not remain a member of the association. It was a question between the founder and certain objectors. And Mr. John O'Connell intimated plainly that either the Young Irelanders should leave the association or his father would leave it. Upon this, O'Brien and the *Nation* party left the hall, and their names were subsequently erased from the books of the association.

It has been thought by many good Irishmen that the Young Irelanders made a grave mistake in quarrelling with O'Connell upon the issue raised by the moral force resolutions. Granting—it has been said—that the proposition condemning physical force was an absurdity, still it was a purely abstract proposition, which could have no practical bearing upon the policy of the association. No one in the association then advocated physical force as a means of repealing the Union. Would it not, then, have been wiser for the young men to have allowed this proposition to be affirmed in silence, rather than make it the cause of a quarrel with O'Connell? The proposition was really so preposterous that no one would suppose they seriously assented to it. Every one whose opinion was worth having would understand very well that their silence was due solely to a desire to avoid disunion.

Such arguments as these have some plausibility; but even in the brief account of the transaction given above, they are impliedly answered. The course pursued by O'Connell and his favourite son make it clear that, even if the Young Irelanders had allowed the peace resolutions to pass without protest of any kind, some other means of getting rid of them would have been resorted to. In truth the Young Irelanders did not quarrel with O'Connell. O'Connell deliberately picked a quarrel with them. It is impossible to read the debates in Conciliation Hall which

led to the secession—as reported in the newspapers of the day—without being struck by the moderation and self-control exhibited by the young men of the *Nation* party. They stated over and over again that they were quite prepared to accept the doctrine that moral force was the only agency available for Ireland under the circumstances. Indeed, Mitchel went so far as to say that “he should feel it his duty, if he knew any member who either in the hall or out of it, either by speaking or writing, attempted to incite the people to arms or violence as a method of obtaining their liberty, while that association existed, to report such member to the committee, and move his expulsion.” Many people may think that this was going too far in the direction of concession for the sake of union. But it may serve as a fair specimen of the spirit in which O’Connell’s attack was met.

Some reference to these transactions cannot well be dispensed with in a narrative of Mitchel’s life. He took a leading part in the discussions. He spoke both at the first debate upon the introduction of the moral force report, and subsequently at the discussion which ended with the secession. His speeches are, in my opinion, very decidedly the ablest made upon the Young Ireland side. And, in view of the course which John Mitchel’s sense of duty afterwards impelled him to take, it is very noteworthy that his speeches in the debates which preceded the secession are conspicuous for the calmness and moderation of their tone. The concluding sentences of his speech in the first debate summarize the whole dispute very clearly and very tersely. I do not know that I can better conclude the remarks I have thought it right to make on this famous controversy than by quoting these sentences of Mitchel’s speech as reported in the *Nation*:—

I was saying, when interrupted, that if the respected mover

of those resolutions, of whom I always wish to speak with that deep respect which I feel, should even wish to embody in them the doctrine that a man who is struck on the one cheek is bound immediately to turn the other also, I for one shall have no objection; I should say, let it pass, and suffer us to proceed with our business. There is, I hope, no member of this association who has entered it on so trivial grounds, and with so inadequate a notion of the duties he has undertaken, as to suffer resolutions of this theoretic kind to frighten or turn him away from a position in which he may contribute, however humbly, to serve and to free his native land. Once more, my Lord Mayor, I avow myself obedient to the laws and constitution of the Loyal National Repeal Association. I desire to continue working here by the peaceful means which we all recognize. I have no intention in the world of going to war myself, or of inciting anybody else to go to war. Those resolutions, in so far as they have anything to do with the practical operations of this society, I applaud and approve most heartily. In so far as they convey, or seem to convey, a general condemnation of other societies and other people, I altogether dissent from them.

The day after the secession, Mitchel wrote to Martin:—

I ordered a *Freeman* of to-day to be sent to you, containing the report of yesterday's adjourned meeting and of the final catastrophe. Public feeling, as far as we can judge, is almost entirely with us; and even in the hall, notwithstanding incredible exertions used to pack it, we had a very favourable hearing. Don't altogether trust the *Freeman* upon that point.

Well, we have determined—that is, S. O'Brien, Meagher, and I—not to resign, merely to absent ourselves, and let them either formally expel us, or else, which is not unlikely, repent, of their evil doings, turn from Whiggery, and go on straight for the future. . . . (Here follows a passage that is erased.) What I have erased is quite wrong. There is a very serious principle; in fact, the whole principle of the agitation, involved in the matter. It is just a question whether repeal will be left an "open question" to repealers; whether every assistance is to be given to support the ministry in Ireland, and whether Conciliation Hall is to be henceforth a place where barristers of six years' standing are to hang

themselves out for sale. But what I meant to say is that in the discussion of these matters (as you observe) country members are too little considered, are presumed to take their cue too much from the central fuglemen, and, in fact, do themselves too much consent to occupy that position. Now, I agree with you that, if the matter is to be retrieved at all, it will be by the interference of the country members; by their coming and insisting that the national cause shall not be sacrificed to personal squabbles; that if the O'Connells and their party really *mean* repeal, they ought not to be permitted to drive away, and seek occasions to drive away, men who mean the same thing. I understand D. O'Connell is likely to be here on Monday next, and much will depend on the view he takes of this business.

Have you seen Grey Porter's new pamphlet? He takes a review of the Repeal Association very fair and just in many respects, in others unfair. However, he gives credit for honesty, ability, etc., to "Young Ireland," and, indeed, they are the only persons he gives credit to. He says, if they would give up their chimera of "simple repeal," and adopt *his* chimera—a just and equal union or "partnership"—they would be very fine fellows.

On the whole, Martin, I am rather pleased that the long-brooding storm of wrath has burst at last, and especially as I feel sure that O'Connell and his friends are, by the proceedings of the last two days, placed in the wrong completely. I think, after the open, unreserved accusations, confessions, and recriminations, there is a *better* chance of matters going on harmoniously and *vigorously* for the future. If the agitation is vitally unsound and factitious, the sooner it is blown to the devil the better. At any rate, I will have for some time to come much more leisure to read, to walk, and to *live* generally. I think I shall go to Belfast for a week or so after about a fortnight. Shall I see you here before this?

And again, a few weeks later, to the same correspondent:—

. . . Your farming notes are very good indeed. If you want to do us good service, send us more; and if you can manage to make them available for the propagandism of good doctrine as

well as rotation crops, it will be right well—national agriculture, in short. Indeed, I think you can easily do this.

I think this Conciliation Hall affair has become a most transparent humbug. There is no possibility of co-operation with *them* any more. Whiggery and place-hunting are their whole business ; and the higher destinies, even the lower interests and most immediate wants of the country, are utterly neglected there. Still, as you will observe by this week's *Nation*, we continue to treat them with forbearance ; but hereafter the less allusion to them the better. No good can come of them.

Smith O'Brien has made a fine manly speech at Cahermoyle.

The secession took place on July 28, 1846. The immediate result, so far as Conciliation Hall was concerned, seemed to justify John O'Connell's confidence. The number who followed the seceders in the first instance was very small. Great exertions were made by the repeal wardens through the country, and the result of these exertions was speedily manifest. The repeal rent for the two weeks after the secession was some three or four times as large as it had averaged for some time before. Many were the jokes made at the expense of the Young Irelanders at Conciliation Hall. O'Connell never referred to them otherwise than in terms of contempt. But the reaction soon came ; and when once it set in, it progressed with remarkable rapidity. Mitchel, in his "Last Conquest," states that when the secession took place, "there was an end of the Repeal Association, save as a machinery for securing offices for O'Connell's dependents." The statement is substantially true ; although, for some little time after the secession, the association, to superficial observers, seemed as powerful and vigorous as before.

Being now discharged from attendance at the meetings and committees of the Repeal Association, Mitchel was more free to work at the *Nation* office. For the time being, indeed, work on the *Nation* was about the only way

open to him of serving the cause he had most at heart. The great body of the people were still devoted to O'Connell. Even in Dublin, where they were best known, the *Nation* party would probably have failed to get together a public meeting of respectable numbers, had they made the attempt shortly after the secession. Later on, they did succeed in convening a very imposing meeting; but this was after the outrageous conduct of John O'Connell had started the reaction. For the present the platform was not open to them, and they worked in the only way they could work with effect. Notwithstanding that he generally had plenty of work on hand, and work of a very engrossing kind, Mitchel, during these Dublin years, found time for much pleasant social intercourse. The style of living at his house was simple and frugal. Carlyle, in writing of his Irish tour, speaks of Mitchel's "frugally elegant small house and table" as having pleased him much; and the phrase is a fair example of Carlyle's peculiar power of word-painting. Simplicity and frugality, combined with neatness and elegance, were the leading features of Mitchel's home. They were strictly careful to live within their means; but their means enabled them, with economy, to entertain a good deal in a quiet way. At the time Mitchel came to Dublin, the Young Irelanders had established the custom of meeting together once a week at a species of supper at the house of some member of the party. The duty of entertaining was discharged by various members of the party in turn. Mitchel was a regular attendant at these suppers, and his house was one of the regular places of meeting. Besides this, he often gave small dinner or supper parties, the guests being mainly, though not exclusively, members of the Young Ireland party. At first Mrs. Mitchel alone had to do all the duties of hostess. But she soon received welcome

help. John Mitchel's sister Henrietta (afterwards Mrs. John Martin) came to stay with them during the winter of 1845-46; and in the following summer of 1846, two other sisters, Margaret and Mary, also came. Many were the consultations held amongst these ladies as to ways and means; and they displayed quite a high order of skill in the admirable art of making a very little expenditure go a very long way. And assuredly the guests at these little entertainments enjoyed themselves most thoroughly—such enjoyment as one rarely finds at the fashionable entertainments of society. A friend, who was constantly at Mitchel's house during this period, has given me the following description of the society there: "Meagher, O'Gorman, Reilly, J. O'Hagan, McCarthy, Williams, P. J. Smyth, Barry, and Duffy came often, and sometimes Kenyon, or Carleton, or S. Ferguson; and certainly a pleasanter set of fellows were never seen together. To us younger ones, it seemed impossible that men so brilliant and genial could be wrong or fail. Sometimes they would meet there in the evening to deliberate upon something, settle the terms of some manifesto, or the like; but there was always a difficulty in keeping them to business, especially if the ladies were present, so much did wit and fun tend to break out, disturbing the gravity of council. John Mitchel could enter into the fun as well as any of them; but there was a fund of seriousness in his character, and he never suffered himself to be drawn from the matter in hand. Most of the men named continued to be his friends during life, and, however they might differ with him, ceased not to hold him in affection and respect."

Mr. Duffy was a widower at the time of Mitchel's coming to Dublin. He was very often at Mitchel's house until the time of his second marriage; afterwards, I believe, not so often. During the winter succeeding Mitchel's

coming to Dublin, John Dillon was away at Madeira ; but after his return, he, too, was a welcome guest at Mitchel's house.* There was also John E. Pigot. He was not so often at Mitchel's as some of the others ; but he was one of those whose friendship Mitchel valued most highly. Pigot had made great sacrifices in joining the Young Irelanders, since the Young Ireland politics were very distasteful to his father, who occupied a leading position at the Irish bar. John Pigot himself could undoubtedly have achieved brilliant success at the Irish bar, had he but consented to renounce, or even to cease to profess, the political faith he had shared with Davis. But this he never would do ; rather than do it, he was willing to be called a failure by men who were in every way his inferiors. He lived, however, to give ample proof that his comparative failure at the Irish bar was certainly not due to any want of the highest order of ability. To the end of his life he was a loyal friend and admirer of John Mitchel ; and no man was more capable than Mitchel of appreciating the noble sincerity and unswerving devotion to principle which were the leading features of Pigot's character.

Among Mitchel's friends of Young Ireland politics was also Clarence Mangan. Poor Mangan was a devoted friend and admirer of Mitchel ; but such was his shyness and reserve that Mitchel never could induce him to visit at his house. Of Mangan I need say nothing more. To Irish men and women, all the world over, he is known by his poetry ; and so much of his life as need or can be known has been told by Mitchel himself in one of the most perfect pieces of writing which even he has ever produced.

John Martin was often in town during this time. He generally stayed at the house of his sister, Mrs. Simpson,

* Years afterwards, in America, Mitchel and Dillon came to be more intimate friends than they had been in Ireland.

but much of his time was spent at Mitchel's, where he knew he was always sure to be welcome. He and Mitchel would sit together talking and reading late into the night, and they were always happy in each other's society. Smith O'Brien also came sometimes; but, though always welcome, he was hardly as intimate as the others I have named.

Though Mitchel's friends at this period were mostly Young Irelanders, he had several very valued friends who did not belong to that party. Mr. Thomas O'Hagan (afterwards Lord O'Hagan) was then a rising barrister, living in Dublin. He and his wife were on intimate terms with the Mitchels. Mr. and Mrs. Mitchel spent many pleasant evenings at Mr. O'Hagan's house; and after Mitchel's trial and transportation, Mr. Thomas O'Hagan, as we shall see, showed a marked kindness to Mrs. Mitchel and her children. There was also a Mr. Hudson—not so much a politician as a man of letters—who lived in Fitzwilliam Square, and gave occasional dinners to friends of like tastes with his own. Mr. Hudson, amongst his other accomplishments, was a musician. He collected or composed airs for several of the *Nation* songs. He and Mitchel did not agree in all their political views; but they liked one another nevertheless, and Mitchel was a frequent and welcome guest at Hudson's house.

Those I have named were among the chief friends whom Mitchel knew intimately, and who used to frequent his house during this Dublin period. There were also "of honourable women not a few." But, accepting the sentiment of Pericles—that it is best for a woman "not to be talked about for good or evil among men"—I abstain from mentioning the names of these latter.

Besides regular and habitual friends, there were also occasional visitors of distinction. In the early summer of

1846, Mr. Lucas of the London *Tablet* visited Ireland. John Mitchel gave a breakfast in his honour, to which several of the leading Young Irelanders were invited—among them C. G. Duffy and John E. Pigot. A few days afterwards, Lucas visited Mitchel, and had some hours' conversation with him. The subject of their conversation on this occasion was religion. Mr. Lucas was a very earnest Catholic, and he was not unnaturally anxious to bring round to his way of thinking a man so rarely gifted as Mitchel. He saw clearly enough that Mitchel was quite free from any suspicion of the narrow and ignorant bigotry so often found amongst Northern Protestants. He probably hoped, in the strength of his own faith, that a mind so unprejudiced would be easily convinced; but in this he was mistaken.

Amongst casual visitors, by much the most distinguished was Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle came to Ireland for a few days in the autumn of 1846. John Mitchel invited him to dinner, and he at once accepted. Several of the leading Young Irelanders were asked to meet him at dinner, and some others, for whom there was not room at dinner, came in during the evening. All enjoyed themselves—both Carlyle and the young men. Carlyle, as usual, monopolized the conversation. He sat with his feet hooked round the legs of his chair, and held forth as if delivering a lecture. On Irish politics, he regarded Oliver Cromwell as a much safer guide than the Young Irelanders. He tried to bring his hearers round to his view, but without much success.

In his "Life of Carlyle," Mr. Froude has given us several extracts from Carlyle's journal regarding John Mitchel, with some added comments of Mr. Froude's own. Of the dinner at Mitchel's house, Carlyle writes: "Dined at Mitchel's with a select party, and ate there the last truly good potato I have met with in the world. Mitchel's

wife, especially his mother (Presbyterian parson's widow of the best Scotch type), his frugally elegant small house and table, pleased me much, as did the man himself—a fine, elastic-spirited young fellow, whom I grieved to see rushing on destruction palpable by attack of windmills, but on whom all my persuasions were thrown away. Both Duffy and him I have always regarded as specimens of the best kind of Irish youth seduced, like thousands of them, in their early day, into courses that were at once mad and ridiculous, and which nearly ruined the life of both, by the big Beggarman who had £15,000 a year, and, *pro pudor*, the favour of English ministers instead of the pillory from them, for professing blarney with such and still worse results.” And later on, Carlyle wrote of Mitchel:—“Poor Mitchel, I told him he would most likely be hanged, but I told him, too, that they could not hang the immortal part of him.” And again:—“Irish Mitchel, poor fellow! is now in Bermuda as a felon; letter from him, letter to him, letter to and from Lord Clarendon, was really sorry for poor Mitchel, but what help?”*

The letter to Mitchel, referred to in the passage last

* Regarding these personages and regarding the young Irishmen, Mr. Froude makes (amongst others), the following observations: “Mitchel has lately died in America. The ‘immortal part of him’ still works in the Phoenix Park, and in dynamite conspiracies. What will come of it has yet to be seen.” And again: “Those ardent young men with whom he (Carlyle) dined at Dundrum were working as felons in the docks at Bermuda.” Now, regarding the statements of fact contained in these passages, it may be noted: (1) Mitchel did not die in America, but in Ireland; (2) None of the “ardent young men” except Mitchel, ever were at Bermuda at all; and (3) Mitchel, while at Bermuda, did not work either in the docks or anywhere else. Mr. Froude might perhaps say that he would scorn to be accurate in matters so unimportant—base is the historian who does not sometimes lie. Some people, on the other hand, might hold that Mr. Froude would do well either to tell the truth about such matters or to let them alone. As to the observation about Mitchel’s “immortal part” I do not deem it necessary to say anything beyond calling the reader’s attention to the striking contrast between the truth and kindly sympathy of Carlyle’s observation to Mitchel, and the falsehood and brutality of Mr. Froude’s comment thereon.

quoted, must, I think, have been one which Mitchel received while in prison, and almost immediately after his conviction. He had several letters from Carlyle, but this one he specially prized. I remember having a conversation with Mitchel some short time before his death, in which he talked a good deal about Carlyle. He told me about this letter, and I think he said it was handed to him just as he was being removed from the dock after the exciting scene at the close of his trial. He then thrust it into his pocket, and did not read it for some considerable time afterwards. When he did read it, he was not in humour for writing letters, and in any case, he would not have cared to write to Carlyle a letter which would have had to pass under the inspection of his gaolers. Years afterwards, during one of his visits to Paris, he again came across Carlyle's letter. He read it again, and at once took up his pen and wrote an answer. Carlyle was then busily engaged in defending Governor Eyre of Jamaica. A few days after Mitchel sent his letter he received a copy of a London paper (I think it was the *Times*), directed by Carlyle, and having marked a letter, in which he vigorously defended the action of the Jamaica governor. This may have been intended as a reminder to Mitchel of how widely they had come to differ on some points; though, no doubt, Carlyle was aware at this time that Mitchel was a strong advocate of slavery.

It would seem that Carlyle always retained a kindly feeling for Mitchel. Years after they had seen one another for the last time, when Carlyle was in poor health and declining to see strangers, he on several occasions admitted American visitors, on whose cards it was written that they were friends of John Mitchel.

Of Carlyle's visit to Dublin, Mitchel wrote to Martin:—

Miraculous to tell, *Sartor Resartus* has been in Dublin, has been here, and for two evenings we have heard his prophesyings

(by "we" I mean Young Ireland generally), to our infinite contentment. If I had known it in time to allow me to write for you, I would have done so ; for a sight of him for once in a man's life is worth a considerable journey. It was on Sunday we found him out. He then talked of going home by Monday evening's boat ; but here he is yet, and is going to Wicklow to-morrow, coming back in time to sail in the evening. He attended Conciliation Hall with us, and says he has at length seen the utmost limit of human platitude. We have had some angry altercations with him. I will tell you more about it the next time I see you.

Several anecdotes have been told me by persons who knew Mitchel intimately during this Dublin period, illustrative of leading peculiarities in his character. Upon this subject something has been said in a former chapter. I there referred to the habit of absent-mindedness which was one of Mitchel's characteristics. The habit was very marked during the Dublin period, and that for an obvious reason. His mind was there more entirely engrossed with the work he had on hand than at any other period of his life. Several anecdotes have been told in illustration of this absent-mindedness, and of how it led him into certain awkward mistakes and acts of forgetfulness. On one occasion he started to walk home from the *Nation* office with a friend, whom I shall call X——. Up to a certain point their ways lay together. As they walked along they talked about some matter of public interest, and Mitchel's attention became completely absorbed. Now, before they left the office, it had been expressly arranged between them that X—— was to dine with Mitchel, and X—— was all the while under the impression that he was on his way to Mitchel's house. When they came to the point at which the roads to their several homes diverged, Mitchel, greatly to X——'s surprise, said, "There's your road, X——," shook hands, and parted. On another occasion, this same X—— was at an evening party at Mitchel's house. X——

was somewhat dyspeptic and particular about what he ate. He had declined several kinds of refreshment which Mitchel offered him, but at last he consented to take a custard. Mitchel hastened to bring the custard, and found just one left. He took it, and was on his way back to X—— when, as luck would have it, he stopped for a moment to talk to a lady. The talk, whatever it was about, engrossed his attention for a minute or two, and during this brief period he ate up the custard himself before the eyes of the unfortunate X——.

One more anecdote may suffice to illustrate this trait in Mitchel's character. One afternoon he brought two or three friends home to dinner unexpectedly. It so happened that on this evening the ladies of the house (John Mitchel's wife and sisters) had nothing for dinner but cold meat. They immediately set to work, however, and in a surprisingly short time produced a very fine beefsteak pie. The ladies were not to be present at the dinner, and Mrs. Mitchel gave her husband strict injunctions to be sure to see that the beefsteak pie was done justice to. Her indignation was therefore natural when she saw the pie come out untasted. It had been set before one of the guests, and the cold meat before the host. The conversation was interesting, and Mitchel helped his guests to what was before him without ever so much as thinking of the pie. The guest before whom it was placed had not thought it right to cut into the pie without being invited by the host, though, as he afterwards told Mrs. Mitchel, he had several times felt strongly tempted to do so.

The reader must not infer from these anecdotes that Mitchel was wanting in consideration for others, or was what is commonly known as a bear. The very contrary was the fact. No man could be met with who more jealously observed the rights of others in opinion, in con-

versation, in everything ; while to women, old people, and children, he was always most gentle and regardful of their feelings. Such little acts of forgetfulness as above described used to annoy him considerably when he first became conscious of them ; but after a while he would join in the laugh at his own expense.

Like most men, John Mitchel hated bores ; and solemn humbugs of any kind or class he could not abide. His natural courtesy of disposition would sometimes induce him to submit, with exemplary patience, to be talked at by a bore, provided always there was nothing of cant or humbug in the sentiments expressed. But there was a certain class of persons who recognized him on the instant as their enemy. He was never known to be rough or harsh to any one who was weak or helpless ; but of overbearing or of solemnly pretentious persons he was intolerant to the verge of ferocity ; and all such hated him. When he came to be widely known as a journalist, he was, of course, a mark for crotchet-mongers and all manner of long-winded individuals. Many, probably most, of these had in them something of the charlatan. Mitchel would often resort to rapid methods of getting rid of such. Once, in the *United Irishman* office, when he was writing an article—probably at the last available moment—a grave-looking gentleman was ushered in. The visitor began to unfold some scheme for promoting the “spread of education,” opening at the same time a black bag, from which he produced pamphlets, circulars, etc. John Mitchel eyed his visitor keenly for a second or two, and then said, “But, sir, I am opposed to education.” No doubt he enjoyed the sight of the disconcerted gentleman hastily bundling up his documents ; yet he would hardly have dismissed him in this way if he had not seen in him something of the quack.

The following points—illustrative of character, of

mental peculiarities, of friendships—I select from reminiscences supplied to me by Mitchel's brother William, who was constantly with him during the Dublin time.

“His love of wild nature was intense and deep, but he was not given to speaking of it; nor would he endure much talk about ‘scenery’ and the like.

“He loved a generous horse or noble dog, as amply appears in the ‘Jail Journal.’

“He had that invaluable faculty of sleeping whenever there was time for sleep. And, talking of sleep, in some sleeping faces I have caught, or fancied that I have caught, *the* expression of the man—the ground-bass, as it were, of his character. John Mitchel's was one of these. No one, with eyes in his head, could look at him asleep and fear that when awake he would tell any lies. There was also I know not what look of endeavour; you would say he slept strenuously.

“I never heard John Mitchel speak of Thomas Davis except in terms of the highest esteem and admiration.

“Of O'Brien I may say the same. There was, at first, a wide-enough gulf between them, the southern aristocrat and the middle-class Ulsterman. Nature had conspired with circumstance to widen the gulf; yet in the end they came to recognize one another. O'Brien's formal parliamentary manner and demeanour, under all circumstances, tickled John Mitchel's sense of humour immensely. I remember his telling us how, during their visit to Belfast in 1847, no entreaties of local advisers could deter O'Brien from visiting a notoriously hostile quarter. No, he *would* see ‘that portion of his fellow-countrymen who resided in Hercules Street;’ and how, when there, he addressed a howling, cleaver-armed, and truly dangerous mob, precisely in tone and manner as he would ‘Mr. Speaker!’ Such traits amused John Mitchel keenly, but they never blinded

him to the essential nobility of O'Brien's character. Mitchel, on the other hand, by his daring, unconventional speech, often offended O'Brien's sense of propriety; but in spite of all superficial differences the relation between them became more and more cordial up to the time of O'Brien's death.

"No account of John Mitchel's life would be complete without a notice of his life-long friendship with John Martin of Loughorne, who subsequently became his brother-in-law.* They were close friends at school. Both were lovers of books from the first. Both suffered from asthma most of their lives. When Mitchel joined the Repeal Association he was quickly followed by his friend. When his newspaper was suppressed and himself transported, Martin at once left his home in the North and, stepping into the vacant place, established *The Irish Felon*. He too, was suppressed and transported, and not long after the two friends met in Van Diemen's Land, where they lived some years together. In later life, both were elected to represent Irish counties. Martin sat for Meath for some years, but my brother held to his opinion that it was better not to attorn to English authority, and would not have taken his seat for Tipperary even if the House of Commons had not excluded him by resolution. The remarkable parallelism in their lives continued to the end. When my brother died rather unexpectedly at Newry, John Martin hurried over from England to the funeral, and arrived the evening before, looking worn and ill. During the address at the grave I felt him lean on me more and more heavily. Before it was over, he had to be conveyed back to the house, and within a week he, too, was dead.

"It would, I believe, be a complete mistake to regard

* I have already noticed this friendship, but think it as well to give the above reminiscence just as supplied to me.

John Mitchel as specially a democrat. Freedom he valued, individual liberty, equality before the law; but he was no doctrinaire, and cared little as to forms of government. Whether he regarded democracy as a good thing in itself, or only as a *pis aller*, I cannot say.

“His natural activity sometimes degenerated in after-life into an incapacity for rest that drove him from place to place, and made him rush forward—as in that slavery and secession business—where others were more called upon to act than he. He had the directness that embroiled Yorick with half the world. ‘If a man did a dirty action, without more ado the man was a dirty fellow.’ But this was born with him, and could hardly be called a fault.”

I make no apology for giving these reminiscences at length. They will help the reader to form a vivid idea of the man as he lived.

On August 16, 1846, an important event occurred in Mitchel's domestic life. His fifth child and second daughter was born. The child was christened Mary, but was always known by the pet name of Minnie. She afterwards—some little while after the close of the American Civil War—married a gentleman who had been a colonel in the Confederate service. She is the only one of John Mitchel's daughters still living at the time I write.

Mitchel was a very affectionate father. Any time he could spare from his work he liked best to spend in his children's society. Whenever he did any of his writing at home instead of at the *Nation* office, he generally had two or three of his children playing in the room. He seemed to be able to write at least as well with this accompaniment as when alone. If, in the course of the play, anything happened to trouble little Henrietta (the only girl until the birth of Minnie just mentioned), she would at once run to her father. Mitchel would immediately stop writing, and

not resume his work until his little girl was quite happy again. This child was peculiarly fond of her father. She would watch for his coming home in the evenings, and seem quite happy so long as he was there.

During all this summer of 1846 the people were dying by thousands of famine and famine typhus. The Government of Lord Russell proposed some relief measures, even more wretchedly inadequate than those of Peel. O'Connell had never taught the people to expect relief or to rely upon relief from the Tories ; but he did lead them to place reliance upon the promises of the Whigs. Lord Russell's chief measure of relief was the Labour Rate Act. I need not give the details of this measure. It was based upon the principle that the Irish ought to relieve their own famine.* In so far as the Union benefited England, it was most strictly acted on, and Ireland was treated as an integral part of the United Kingdom. But when it came to relieving Irish famine, that was another thing. It was the distress of Ireland that was to be relieved, and surely the Irish ought to do that themselves.

In his "Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)," John Mitchel has given us a full exposition of his view regarding the relief policy of the British Government during the period of the Irish famine. The view there expounded was arrived at gradually and after a long and close scrutiny of the policy referred to. The development of Mitchel's opinions upon this question can be traced in his writings for the *Nation*. On August 22, 1846, he criticises Lord Russell's Labour Rate Bill. He refers to the original enactment of the Poor Law in Ireland, and points out how debasing has been the effect of that law. "From the

* Undoubtedly the Irish both could and would have relieved their own famine if they had been left free to do so ; but not upon the lines of the Labour Rate Act.

infliction of that poor law," he says, "every true Irishman has long prayed to be delivered." He then proceeds:—

Four or five years pass over : we are still, for our sins, subject to foreign rule ; as a natural consequence, poverty has been making fearful way upon us since, and, at last, famine stares us in the face more grim and ghastly than ever ; "hungry ruin has us in the wind ;" and not thousands now, but myriads and millions of men, are stretching out their hands for food. Again ministerial ingenuity is taxed for a remedy—and, behold ! *more* Poor Law, *more* Poor Rate, *more* Commissioners (this time under the title of additional Public Works Commissioners). It never occurs to English legislators—and it never *will* occur to them—that the sources of this flood of destitution might be stopped ; that if Ireland had the control of her own resources, the making of her own laws, the enjoyment of the fruits of her own industry—in short, if Ireland, like any other country on earth, belonged to the people who inhabit it, there would be no need of public relief and public alms.

Lord John Russell knows right well that he dares not go down to the English House of Commons and propose *that*, the only effective remedy, or anything analogous to that.

In the *Nation* for the following week, August 29, he writes again on the subject of the demoralization produced by the relief measures. If it be said that these very relief measures were passed in response to the appeals of the party with which Mitchel acted, the answer is obvious. The national party certainly demanded that the famine should be relieved ; but they wanted it relieved according to Irish ideas. Useful public works and legislation that would strike at the root of the evil—this was what they asked for. What they got is thus described by Mitchel :—

We speak not here of the miserable accounts we receive of the demoralizing effects of these public works ; how the labourers, having the example before their eyes of a great public fraud, themselves defraud their fraudulent employers ; how they quit

agricultural pursuits, where they earn a fair day's wages for a fair day's labour, and crowd into the public works, where they pretend to be cutting down hills and filling up hollows, and, with tongue in cheek, receive half wages for doing nothing. To take so much labour (which is Ireland's wealth) and *waste* it, is precisely as if the value of it, the produce that might have been created by it, were buried in the sea; but to take the honest labourers and cottiers themselves, and make swindling, sturdy beggars of them by the thousand and the myriad—no wonder that Mr. Monsell, and many another thinking man, is looking on “with horror and dismay.”

A few months later, alluding to a plan that had been proposed by a member of Parliament for shipping the Irish out of the country instead of feeding them in the country, Mitchel writes:—

Consider what these proposals amount to. It is merely this: Ireland produces abundance of corn and cattle; Ireland has five million acres of waste lands, which ask but labour to pour forth still greater abundance. Now, when you have shipped off the food already created, then send away the hands which are ready and willing to create more. Let them work by all means, but not *here*. In Australia or Terra Incognita they may find land that will yield them subsistence.

In any community of rational beings, having a government, such projects as these would be simply impossible. But here it seems to be tacitly assumed on all hands that howsoever the Irish are to be supported, it must not be on Irish food; and among all the “suggestions” that teem throughout the press, we have not seen *one* for shutting our ports against export.

The reader will understand that in what I deem it right to say regarding efforts to relieve the Irish famine, I speak exclusively of Government measures. The sums given in the way of private charity were very large in England as elsewhere. Amongst the Irish landlords, too, although as a body they acted selfishly, there were many who did their duty. Some did even more than duty strictly called for,

and, to the very utmost limit of their means, struggled to save the people. But private charity could at best have effected little, and its efforts were in many cases frustrated by the operations of Government.

Dr. Whateley's summary of the Labour Rate Act was the best ever given. It was, he said, nothing more than granting a hungry dog leave to eat his own tail. It is worthy of note that the only really large and statesman-like measure of Irish relief proposed during these famine years was that of Lord George Bentinck, the leader of that section of the Tory party which had seceded from Peel on the corn law question. O'Connell, who was absent from Parliament, wrote a letter in favour of this project ; but his followers in Parliament were too deeply committed to his policy of supporting the Whigs. A number of them, sufficient to turn the scale, voted with the Government, and against Lord George Bentinck. Thus the only measure proposed by any of the party leaders in Parliament, which might have sensibly relieved the famine, was defeated by the votes of Irish members returned as repealers.

In a letter of Mitchel's, written to O'Brien during the summer of 1846, I find reference to a report on the Lahore war which Mitchel had prepared and submitted to a committee of the Repeal Association previous to the secession. The report had been suppressed ; and Mitchel writes his views on the matter to O'Brien. He says that the papers laid before Parliament on this subject demonstrate to his mind "a settled design on the part of the Anglo-Indian Government to invade and subdue the Punjaub under pretence of their interference being required in the internal arrangements of that country." He then proceeds to comment upon the scheme and conduct of the war, and expresses a strong view to the effect that "the association which purports to represent public opinion in Ireland

ought both to have an opinion and to express it upon every important question of imperial policy."

A few months later, on the 11th of November, I find that Mitchel wrote to O'Brien regarding a project which the latter had suggested in a letter to the *Nation*. The young men of the *Nation* party were excluded from the platform and from the committees of the Repeal Association. They had not, so far, deemed it advisable to found a rival association or to summon public meetings of those who shared their views. O'Brien suggested that they should devote their spare time to preparing papers on the public wants and interests of the country. These papers, he thought, might be published in the *Nation* in a special department created for the purpose. Mitchel entered warmly into the project, and wrote his views at some length to O'Brien. There was some difference of opinion as to the name to be given to the proposed department. In Mitchel's letter the subject is referred to as the "Phalanx project," that being the name at first selected. "Phalanx," however, was objected to by some; and after several changes the new department was finally named "The Irish Party." O'Connell ridiculed the project in Conciliation Hall, and reminded his hearers that "the infidel philosophers" who heralded the way for the revolution in France, began by writing essays. To make this argument have any application to the case under consideration, it must be taken as implying that essay-writing in general is a wicked and dangerous practice. Notwithstanding O'Connell's fears, the project was carried out. There were papers by O'Brien, McCarthy, Dillon, Doheny, Martin, and others.

When John Mitchel wrote the letter to O'Brien above referred to, in reference to the Phalanx project, he was just recovering from a very severe illness, and still, I believe, unable to leave his bed. About the end of October, 1846,

he was attacked by inflammation of the lungs. For several days he was in considerable danger, and Dr. Stokes was in constant attendance. He recovered from this attack, but was in delicate health for a considerable time afterwards.

In the month of November, 1846, the young men resolved to try the experiment of a public meeting for the first time since the secession. They summoned a meeting of the Dublin citizens in the Rotunda for the 2nd of December. The striking success of this meeting showed how strong was the reaction caused by the arbitrary proceedings of John O'Connell. Mitchel was not able to attend, being still suffering from the effects of his illness. But he was well enough to take a keen interest in the proceedings, as is evidenced by his letters.

It is said that the success of the Rotunda meeting produced a powerful effect upon O'Connell. He saw clearly enough that it had become necessary for him either to call back the *Nation* party or to crush them. It was believed by many at the time that O'Connell, if left to himself, would have preferred a reconciliation. And there is much in what we know of O'Connell's career, more particularly in his earlier years, that makes this probable. There can be no doubt that he deeply loved his people, and desired to serve them. And it is hard to believe that he really thought it for the good of Ireland that men like O'Brien and the Young Ireland leaders should be driven out of Irish politics because they declined to give an unqualified assent to an abstract proposition which condemned physical force. But once more the evil influence of John O'Connell carried the day. O'Connell indeed proposed a conference between himself and O'Brien and some others, but the Young Ireland leaders were warned that the real object of the proposal was not to restore them to the association, but to put them decisively in the wrong before the country.

And there was much in O'Connell's conduct during the negotiation that went to justify the warning. The result was, the conference with O'Brien did not take place, and all hope of reconciliation was for the present at an end.

At the close of the year 1846, when it was definitely ascertained that the reconciliation was not to be, Mitchel writes to Martin his view of the situation. The letter is dated December 23, 1846:—

Most fervently I hope we have done with Dan for ever. I would have written to you yesterday, and sent you the *Freeman* with Monday's proceedings, which I had in my pocket for the purpose, but we had a long meeting in the *Nation* office—made long by the intolerable braying of that confirmed jackass, Mr. Shea Lawlor—and post-hour went by before we had done.

I hope we are going to be a little more outspoken and less politic at last. Yesterday we appointed a sub-committee to draw up a short address, setting the present position of the reconciliation business clearly before the country, and showing clearly that we have no alternative but to stand as we are, apart from the association, inasmuch as the conditions we required were absolutely the minimum of the reforms needed; and having been distinctly refused by Dan yesterday, leaves us no other course than to accept his statement that the whole negotiation is at an end, and tell plainly the reason why. I am on the sub-committee, and will use my best exertions to have plain speaking adopted. We also appointed a committee to begin correspondence and other arrangements forthwith for the great aggregate meeting in January, when S. O'Brien is to be here, and at which meeting we have determined to look only *forward*, to ignore the Repeal Association, the "reconciliation," and physical force altogether, and really try to get a substantial repeal party established. The meeting will be about the 7th of January, and we contemplate a dinner of the Irish party a few days after. I am afraid from what you tell me of your proceedings with labourers that you are going to ruin yourself. However, I will not torment you about this matter. Only remember that by trying to do more than there are means to do, a man may *suddenly* deprive himself of the power to do any-

thing at all. This is a horrible subject, this famine, and the matters pertaining to it. Did you read the terrible accounts from Skibbereen? . . .

A week later he writes to O'Brien on the same subject. In the mean time the address referred to in the above letter had been prepared :—

I enclose you a corrected proof of our address. It will appear in the *Nation* of Saturday, and is intended as a final answer to all that has been, or shall be, said at Conciliation Hall about the dissension, the secession, etc., in short, to sweep away all rubbish behind us, and leave us free to look forward for the future. I am heartily glad, as I think most of us are, that the "reconciliation" is all over. I never for one moment believed the proposal to be *bonâ fide*, nor conceived it possible (even if it were *bonâ fide*) to make a sound, safe, working association out of the present one. There are certainly other surer and wider spheres of activity preparing for us, and better elements gathering around us. Of course you have not failed to see Mr. Ralph Osborne's and Mr. Chetwynd's letters to the *Mail*, and other such indications of the fomenting of Conservative opinion. I mean, in next Saturday's *Nation*, to write about some of them in such a way as to alarm landed proprietors as little as possible. In fact, I think the noblest task that ever fell to the lot of an aristocracy since Runnymede is open to these same Irish landed proprietors at the present moment. Pray Heaven, they may recognize their mission.

Are we not to have another of your letters for this week. I am preparing an analysis of the series, and intend it as an article in the *Nation* of Saturday week—trying to present in one view the immense field of exertion covered by your suggestions, and to show that if Irish members would prepare themselves to deal with even the half of it next session, Irish business would necessarily occupy the entire time of the Legislature, and be in arrear after all.

The "series" referred to in this letter was the "Irish Party" series of papers and essays in the *Nation*. I wish to call the reader's particular attention to what Mitchel

says in this letter about the landed proprietors. Strange as the statement may seem to many, it is impossible to be familiar with Mitchel's modes of thought without seeing that his instincts were Conservative. In view of what he afterwards came to think and to write about the Irish landlords, it is instructive to note how long he clung to the hope that the landed gentry of Ireland might yet—and before it was too late—be brought to see the error of their ways and to take their stand on the national side as the natural leaders of the people.

We are now entering upon the year 1847. It may be well to pause and take a brief survey of the state of affairs. The famine had commenced early in 1846, and now at the end of that year there was no prospect of its ending. On the contrary, the prospect was gloomy in the extreme. The potato crop of 1846 had failed even more signally than that of 1845. It was obvious to every one that the famine of 1847 would be at least as bad as, and probably worse, than that of 1846. To have saved all the people might have been impossible; to have saved a large proportion of them would have needed measures of a radical and sweeping kind; measures which would have set completely at defiance the laws of the then accepted political economy, but which under the circumstances it was not only the right, but the imperative duty of the Government to take. It was obvious, however, that the British Government was fully determined to take no such measures as the crisis demanded. And, worst of all, the Government which had deliberately resolved to allow the people to die of hunger, had the support, or, at least, the friendly toleration of the tribune whose word was law to the great majority of the Irish nation. Then, in the matter of repealing the Union, not one step forward had been made for two years; any movement there had been was decidedly backwards. It

had become sufficiently clear to every man in Ireland who was at once capable and honest, that the legislative union had very little to fear from the proceedings at Conciliation Hall. Upon the whole, the outlook for Ireland at the opening of the year 1847 was gloomy in the extreme.

In such a state of things, what course was open to earnest men who looked forward to an Irish parliament as the only salvation for their country? Such men were Mr. O'Brien and the Young Irelanders. They held many consultations as to their course of action. Under the circumstances, and treated as they had been by the Irish leader, they would have been fully justified in retiring from the struggle and devoting their abilities to self-advancement. But this they were not disposed to do; and, being resolved to continue the struggle, the great question was how to take a step forward. To found a rival repeal association seemed an all but hopeless proceeding, having regard to the position which O'Connell then occupied with the people of Ireland. But it was necessary to move forward; and it was hard to see how the *Nation* party could act with effect without some kind of organization.

With a full consciousness of the difficulties in their path the young men determined to found a new association. They called it the "Irish Confederation."

The first meeting of the confederation took place on January 13, 1847. The new association was by no means confined to the Young Irelanders. It comprised men from all parts of the country, many of them men of position and influence, who sympathized with the motives of the seceders. Within a few months of its foundation, the confederation numbered ten thousand members. But the great body of the people still remained under the influence of O'Connell. Amongst the peasantry, few could have told what the Irish Confederation was, or who were its founders.

As far as regarded the end to be aimed at, the confederation was in agreement with the Repeal Association. They differed somewhat as to the means. The leaders of the confederation did not favour a resort to physical force under the then circumstances of Ireland ; but they did not deem it necessary "for the safety of the association," to pass a resolution condemning physical force in the abstract as a means of redressing the wrongs of a people. Nor were they of opinion that the best way of demonstrating the beauty and power of moral force was to secure as many Government places as possible for members of the Irish Confederation. They believed that the methods of the Repeal Association in its earlier and better days were sufficient if honestly and energetically worked out. Honesty, energy, sincerity—these were certainly *not* the distinguishing qualities of the old association in its then condition, and these were just the qualities which the founders of the confederation most earnestly desired to have as the basis of their movement.

An opportunity for the active assertion of their principles soon presented itself. An arrangement was entered into between the Government and Sir Valentine Blake, the repeal member for Galway, under which the latter vacated his seat for Galway to make room for the new Solicitor-General, James Henry Monahan. Mr. Monahan, no doubt, counted on an easy election ; but in this he was over-sanguine. Whether O'Connell would have started a candidate against Monahan had there been no confederation, may well be doubted. The confederates opened the ball by starting a candidate of their own. O'Connell then recommended a repealer—Mr. Anthony O'Flaherty—as a candidate, provided he would keep clear of the Young Irelanders. The confederates had nothing to urge against Mr. O'Flaherty ; and, as nothing was further from their pur-

poses than factious opposition to O'Connell, they resolved to withdraw their own candidate and support O'Connell's. They sent a deputation to Galway. Mitchel had now so far recovered from his recent severe illness as to be able to go upon this deputation. The deputation remained in Galway about a fortnight. Several curious and amusing incidents occurred during this election which Mitchel was fond of recounting in after years. And there were other scenes, too, not by any means amusing. I have referred, in the course of this narrative, to Mitchel's own account of the period we are now considering—"The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)." I have not often quoted from this book, presuming it will be in the hands of most of my readers. But I am tempted here to give some extracts from Mitchel's account of this journey to Galway. I know of no passage that can bring home to those who have never seen such sights a more vivid image of what the Irish famine was than the following. It is Mitchel's account of what the deputation saw on their way to Galway:—

In the depth of winter we travelled to Galway, through the very centre of that fertile island, and saw sights that will never wholly leave the eyes that beheld them: cowering wretches, almost naked in the savage weather, prowling in turnip-fields, and endeavouring to grub up roots which had been left, but running to hide as the mail-coach rolled by; very large fields, where small farms had been "consolidated," showing dark bars of fresh mould running through them, where the ditches had been levelled; groups and families, sitting or wandering on the high-road, with failing steps and dim, patient eyes, gazing hopelessly into infinite darkness; before them, around them, above them, nothing but darkness and despair: parties of tall, brawny men, once the flower of Meath and Galway, stalking by with a fierce but vacant scowl; as if they knew that all this ought not to be, but knew not whom to blame, saw none whom they could rend in their wrath; for Lord John Russell sat safe in Chesham Place; and Trevelyan, the

grand commissioner and *factotum* of the pauper-system, wove his webs of red tape around them from afar. So cunningly does civilization work! Around those farmhouses which were still inhabited were to be seen hardly any stacks of grain; it was all gone; the poor-rate collector, the rent agent, the county-cess collector, had carried it off: and sometimes, I could see, in front of the cottages, little children leaning against a fence when the sun shone out—for they could not stand—their limbs fleshless, their bodies half-naked, their faces bloated yet wrinkled, and of a pale, greenish hue—children who would never, it was too plain, grow up to be men and women. I saw Trevelyan's claw in the vitals of those children; his red tape would draw them to death; in his Government laboratory he had prepared for them the typhus poison.

Of the scenes at the election itself the following may serve as a specimen:—

I took charge of one of the polling booths as O'Flaherty's agent. A gang of peasants came up, led or driven by the bailiffs. One man, when the oath was administered to him, that he had not been bribed, showed pitiable agitation. He spoke only Gaelic, and the oath was repeated, sentence by sentence, by an interpreter. He affected to be deaf, to be stupid, and made continual mistakes. Ten times at least the interpreter began the oath, and as often failed to have it correctly repeated after him. The unfortunate creature looked round wildly, as if he meditated breaking away; but the thought, perhaps, of famishing little ones at home still restrained him. Large drops broke out on his forehead; and it was not stupidity that was in his eye, but mortal horror. Mr. Monahan himself happened to be in that booth at the time, and he stood close by his solicitor, still urging him to attempt once more to get the oath out of the voter. Murmurs began to arise, and at last I said to Mr. Monahan: "You cannot, and you dare not, take that man's vote. You know, or your solicitor knows, that the man was bribed. I warn you to give up this vote and turn the man out." In reply, he shrugged his shoulders, and went out himself. The vote was rejected; and, with a savage whisper, the bailiff who had marshalled him to the poll turned the poor fellow away. I have no doubt that man is long since dead, he and all his children.

Elections in those days lasted four or five days even in boroughs like Galway. The country voters from the rural districts of the borough were brought in squads under charge of bailiffs to be polled for Monahan. These proceedings were very trying to the patience of the younger partisans of O'Flaherty. Some of them advocated a peculiar application of the moral-force policy. One young man, who had served for two years in America in the Florida war, was particularly vigorous in his methods. Forty-six voters, tenants of a Mr. Blake, were brought in strongly guarded. The young American ex-officer came to O'Flaherty's head-quarters highly excited.

"They are stowed away in a barn at the rear of Kilroy's Hotel. We can rescue them to-night." "What is your plan?" "Why, you know fifty dragoons are quartered in Kilroy's back buildings, and they will have a sentry on guard all night." "Well?" "Well, we can have the Moycullen men in before midnight; break in the front gate, overpower the sentry, set fire to the house and all the buildings, and in the confusion, while the dragoons are trying to save their horses, we can get possession of the voters and bring them away."

On consultation the proposal was considered too *seminole*, and was not adopted.

In the result the Solicitor-General was elected, but only by a majority of four in a poll of a thousand votes. It was generally believed at the time that the victory was won by wholesale bribery. Nor was it considered wholly without significance that, shortly after the election, places were secured for two near relatives of Mr. John O'Connell's, as well as for one of the gentlemen who acted on the deputation sent by Conciliation Hall to oppose the Solicitor-General.

I have referred above to the opinions held by Mitchel upon the land question at this period. An event occurred

about the time the confederation was founded which tended to keep alive Mitchel's hope that the Irish landlords might yet be induced to choose the better course. A conference of landed proprietors was held in Dublin to consider the state of the country. It was a fairly representative assembly, comprising some six hundred of the landed gentry, amongst whom were about a score of peers and some thirty members of Parliament. The young men of the *Nation* party based high hopes on this meeting. In the *Nation* itself both Duffy and Mitchel took good care to let the landlords see that if they would only—even in this eleventh hour—take their stand with the people, there was one party at least on the national side that would be only too glad to welcome them as leaders. The proceedings of the conference were not very decisive. They passed a series of resolutions and recommendations to Government. Some of these were obviously in the interests of the landlords themselves; but that did not prevent them from being also in the interests of the tenants. On the whole, the resolutions passed were such as would certainly have done good if acted on by the Government. But the great questions still remained open. What steps would the landlords take to force their recommendations upon the consideration of the Government, and if the Government refused to act as recommended, what would the landlords do then? One main result of the conference was to leave Mitchel, and men like him, under the impression that the landlords were wavering and might still be won. In this state of mind he remained for some months longer.

About this same time—the opening of the year 1847—another influence was first brought to bear upon Mitchel, which, in the result, accelerated, if it did not materially modify, the development of his views upon the Irish land question. I allude to the influence of James Finton Lalor.

Mr. Lalor's first appearance in Irish politics was upon the occasion of the foundation of the confederation. Having seen in the *Nation* that it was proposed to found a new association, he addressed a letter to Mr. Duffy, in which he earnestly urged that the basis of the new association should be made wide enough to include men of his way of thinking. What his way of thinking was he then proceeded to develop. Mr. Duffy, in his "Four Years of Irish History," has given a very full exposition of Lalor's views. Lalor's own exposition of his views will be found in the letters which, upon Mr. Duffy's invitation, he addressed to the *Nation*, and which were published in that journal during the early months of 1847. These letters are very remarkable productions; they combine in a singular degree passionate enthusiasm and clear logic, while every now and then we come upon one of those deeper truths of politics which appear obvious enough when clearly stated, but which it needs a man of genius to discover. I cannot here find space to give even a summary of Mr. Lalor's doctrines. The leading idea in his political creed is stated by him at the close of a letter published first in the *Nation* and afterwards in the *Irish Felon*. He urges—and with much force and power of rhetoric—the truth that at the time of his writing there was a better chance for England to effect a final conquest and settlement of Ireland than there had ever been before; and further, that England saw her chance, and would avail herself of it unless prevented. He then proceeds:—

To prevent this result, and at the same time to achieve independence—the only form in which repeal can ever be carried—there is, I am convinced, but one way alone;—and that is to link repeal to some other question, like a railway carriage to the engine—some question possessing the intrinsic strength which repeal wants; and strong enough to carry both itself and repeal together—if any such question can be found.

And such a question there is in the land. One ready prepared—ages have been preparing it. An engine ready-made—one, too, that will generate its own steam without cost or care,—a self-acting engine, if once the fire be kindled ; and the fuel to kindle—the spark for the kindling, are everywhere. Repeal had always to be *dragged*. This I speak of will *carry itself*—as the cannon-ball carries itself down the hill.

It has been charged against Mitchel that he appropriated Lalor's ideas, and afterwards propounded them as his own without acknowledging the authorship. I have examined carefully all the evidence bearing upon this question which I could find, and I have reached the conclusion that the charge just referred to is entirely without foundation. A man is not bound to enter into a history of the genesis of his opinions upon every occasion upon which he may deem it necessary to give public utterance to those opinions. A. holds certain views, for which he is indebted in whole or in part to the teaching of B. He makes due acknowledgment to B. of his indebtedness in such form as to put it in B.'s power to demonstrate to the public the extent of the indebtedness, in case at any time he may care to do so. Having done this, A. is, in my opinion, entirely justified in publicly stating his opinions as his own, without stopping to distinguish between the part that he owes to the teaching of B. and the part he owes to his own original thought. Now, so far as Lalor was concerned, Mitchel did all this and more. As soon as he had mastered and thought over Lalor's teaching, he wrote a letter to Lalor stating that he accepted that teaching, and that he meant to take action accordingly so soon as occasion should serve. This letter presumably remained in Lalor's possession. Further, Mitchel wrote to O'Brien, Martin, and others, calling attention to Lalor's doctrines, and showing by implication, if not by express statement, how far those doctrines had

influenced his own views. I might say more upon this point, but believe I have said enough to entirely negative the suggestion of any unfair or dishonourable appropriation by Mitchel of Lalor's ideas. There was absolutely nothing unfair or dishonourable about Mitchel's conduct in the matter, unless it be dishonourable for one man to learn something from the teaching of another, and to admit that he has done so.

I have said that Lalor's views exercised considerable influence on the development of certain portions of Mitchel's political creed. It is not to be inferred from this that Mitchel's political creed at the opening of 1848 was a mere reproduction of Lalor's doctrines. This was far from being the case. Mitchel's creed in Irish politics, as ultimately developed, was in the main the outcome of his own thought. The influence which Lalor did exert was more in the way of stimulating and guiding the course of Mitchel's thought than of imposing upon his mind a teaching from outside. However vivid the impression made at first, in the result he adopted very few of Lalor's theories exactly as he found them. Several of them he made his own, but they generally underwent a change, more or less great, in the process of assimilation.

In February, 1847, when the famine was at its worst, O'Connell left Ireland, and went to London, intending to attend Parliament if his health allowed. He never returned to Ireland alive. When Parliament met, it at once became necessary for the Government to say what they meant to do for Ireland. To every one in Ireland who really held the belief that the Whigs were more likely to relieve the Irish famine than the Tories, the proceedings at the opening of the session of 1847 must have been a cruel disappointment. The terrible agony of the Irish people was coldly referred to as "the increased mortality in that part

of the United Kingdom." And when the Government had stated the measures they proposed to take, it was sufficiently obvious that, for anything they were likely to do, the "mortality" might go on increasing indefinitely. It was a terrible moment for O'Connell. As I have said, he certainly loved his people; and now it was made plain to him that his people were to be left to perish by the Government which he, more than any other living man, had taught them to trust. He must have suffered much at that time in mind as well as in body. He did not feel able to attend to his duties in Parliament; probably he felt that he could do little good there. The London doctors recommended change of air and scene. The sequel need not be told here. Every Irishman knows that O'Connell died at Genoa on May 15, 1847.

It forms no part of my task here to pass judgment on O'Connell. The course of my narrative has made it necessary for me to give some slight account of his public acts during the few last years of his life. As already noted, it is precisely from these latter years that we get the worst impression of O'Connell's character and work. In saying what I have deemed it necessary to say of his public acts during this time, I have not hesitated to express or imply the feeling with which I regard those acts. The majority of his countrymen now seem disposed to judge him rather by the earlier and greater part of his career; to remember only the greatness of his services, and to forget or to ignore the mischief that resulted from his later teaching. In this they are perhaps right. Ireland has not produced so many great men that she can afford to erase from the roll of her illustrious dead the name of Daniel O'Connell.

NOTE TO CHAPTER V.

There is one matter to which I ought perhaps to refer in connection with the *United Irishman*. A great many things were written in the paper which were very shocking to the class of men who are always boasting of being "moderate." One thing in particular gave great offence, not only in England, but to many worthy persons in Ireland also. It was suggested in the *United Irishman* that vitriol might be used with effect in street-fighting; that it might be thrown from the houses upon the soldiers. The suggestion was, in fact, not Mitchel's, but Reilly's. Whether Mitchel saw the article before it appeared, and whether he approved of the sentiment, I cannot say. It may have been on this, or on some other later writings of Mitchel's own, that Mr. Froude founded the statement quoted above as to Mitchel's spirit living on in the Phoenix Park and in dynamite conspiracies, unless, indeed, as is more likely, he hazarded the statement without any show of foundation. It is impossible to be familiar with Mitchel's political writings without knowing that he was absolutely opposed to the idea of waging war by assassination or dynamite.

So far as concerns the destruction of soldiers engaged in actual war, there does not seem to be any very well-marked distinction in principle between burning them with vitriol and mangling them with lead or iron.

The real distinction is between combatants and non-combatants; between killing or hurting persons who themselves come out to kill and hurt, and are prepared to take the consequences; and killing or hurting persons who are engaged in peaceful pursuits; who are unsuspecting of attack and unprepared for defence. This essential distinction Mitchel never lost sight of.

As regards Mr. Froude's slanders, it may be as well to further note this. Some years before Mitchel's death, Mr. Froude had gone to America and had tried, in a series of lectures, to excite a prejudice against the Irish. Mitchel had then answered Mr. Froude in a very effective manner, and had let in considerable light upon Mr. Froude's method of telling history. Possibly these facts may have been remembered by Mr. Froude when he went out of his way to slander Mitchel in his "Life of Carlyle."

CHAPTER VI.

DUBLIN (*continued*)—IRISH COUNCIL—DIFFERENCES AT
 “ NATION ” OFFICE—CONFEDERATION DEBATE—
 MITCHEL’S POLITICAL CREED—“ UNITED IRISHMAN ”
 —TRIAL AND SENTENCE.

1847, 1848.

THE departure of O’Connell from the scene did not seem to produce any decisive change in the state of affairs in Ireland. Conciliation Hall went on much the same as before. It had been existing for some years past upon the prestige of a great name, and it continued to so exist for some little time longer. In Parliament the so-called repeal members became more and more obviously a mere tail of the Whig party, intent only on securing places for themselves and their friends. Smith O’Brien, being a strictly sincere and honourable man, found it necessary to separate himself more and more emphatically from the men he once called his colleagues. The more obvious it became that O’Brien meant what he said and could not be silenced by places, the louder became the outcry against him in the London press. In a letter to O’Brien, written about a month after the meeting of Parliament, I find a clear statement of the impression produced upon Mitchel’s mind by the proceedings of the parliamentary party. The letter is dated March 19, 1847 :—

By your letter to O. Gorman, I perceive the London papers burke your speeches. I should have expected as much. And it is an additional confirmation of my opinion, formed long ago, that Parliament is not the place where Irish rights can be maintained or the power of Ireland can become at all formidable or respected. Never, since Henry II., was Ireland so contemptible in the eyes of Englishmen, and I suppose of all other men, as she has been since this session began. . . . Speaking of a parliamentary party, I quite agree with you in your estimate of the difficulty, or rather impossibility of creating a genuine Repeal, that is, Young Ireland Party, in Parliament at all. We have neither the men, the money, nor the franchises. And, besides, by the time the elections arrive, I do believe all Irishmen will be so busy preserving their lives, and keeping themselves out of the workhouses, that there will be small interest about electing members to sit in so palpably useless and delusive an assembly. In three months' time I think it will be manifest to everybody that the material existence of the Irish people is the thing now at stake—and the mere raising of our political position will be able to excite no great enthusiasm, unless it be made irresistibly obvious that the one object includes the other.

I have already called the reader's attention to the process of development and change which in this year of 1847 took place in Mitchel's views upon the Irish land question and the policy to be pursued towards the Irish landlords. In the above letter we find the germ of the opinions which he ultimately came to hold upon another important subject—the utility of parliamentary action as a means of redressing Irish wrongs.

In Mitchel's next letter to O'Brien, dated Dublin, April 24, 1847, he returns to the land question, and gives us some indication of the direction in which his mind is tending :—

There is a very prevalent feeling among the landlord class (and you must be aware of it) that the people of Ireland ought not to be fed (now potatoes are abolished) upon the grain produce of this country ; that there are too many of them to be supported

in that way, even should Ireland produce enough for the purpose ; and that it is desirable to get rid of at least a couple of millions of them, even at a heavy expense to the remainder. Now, if the island do, as I think it plainly does, and easily, yield food enough for all its inhabitants, then I think they ought to be taught, as a fundamental postulate, that they have an absolute right to be sufficiently maintained out of that produce *first*. That is, of course, not that any individual has a right to take another's property, but that the whole community has, and ought to exercise, that clear right, no matter what legal, social, or physical obstacles may now be in the way. All claims of property, all money payments, all arrangements of every kind must be made upon that basis. I wish you would read carefully the paper signed by J. F. Lalor, in to-day's *Nation*. I do believe the landed proprietors, if they would, even now, or any considerable number of them, take to heart that proposal, could make fair and honourable terms for themselves, and become the most popular and powerful aristocracy on earth. . . . I make very light of the argument for the colonization project—"we only propose to help them to do what they are all most anxious to do." The landlords have no right to support a system like ours—which grinds out the substance of the people, and frightens them out of their wits—and then say, "Let us make a bridge of gold for this flying enemy." Instead of taking advantage of the panic which is driving the people away, it is everybody's duty to counteract that panic, and to show the poor people that it is not fate and doom they are flying from, but a mere spectral simulacrum of the scarecrow sort.

On reading over what I have written, I find I have expressed myself with more revolutionary vehemence than I really feel—*as yet*. I do think it is still in the power of the aristocracy to save this nation and themselves at the same time. And I wish and pray earnestly that they may find it in their heart to do so."

"With more revolutionary vehemence than he really felt—*as yet*." There is something prophetic in the implication conveyed by the last two words. Certainly not with more revolutionary vehemence than he came to feel afterwards, as we shall see.

The parliamentary session dragged on, and nothing was done to carry into effect the recommendations of the conference of landowners. The action of the landlords themselves gave ground for the suspicion that they were not particularly anxious to have their resolutions acted on. They did not show a disposition to harass in any way the Government which ignored them.

In a letter to Martin, written in the spring of 1847, I find the first reference to a man who afterwards became (with one exception) Mitchel's dearest friend :—

You would have greatly liked Father Kenyon ; and I was very sorry you were not in town. He promises to spend a week in Dublin in the course of the summer, when you must be advertised of it, and come up to meet him. Do you know that you have very little idea of the man from his writings? He is a calm, gentle, good-natured, and jovial fellow—is occasionally wild and childish in his glee, sings a great deal, badly, indeed, but heartily, and with right goodwill. And then, in serious conversation, I think him the very wisest man I ever met. He and Mr. Haughton met several times, argued philanthropy together, and parted with increased respect for one another. In short, as at present advised, I reckon Kenyon the finest fellow, laic or cleric, that I ever knew.

A general election was now close at hand. Mitchel, who had not yet come to entirely despair of effecting any good by parliamentary means, wrote in the *Nation*, impressing on the constituencies the necessity of returning staunch repealers. Another attempt was made to effect a reconciliation between the Repeal Association and the Confederation. Many of the best of the confederates shrank from the notion of returning to Conciliation Hall with a feeling akin to loathing. But they could not conceal from themselves the fact that the masses were still swayed by the memory of O'Connell, and therefore by the association

which he had founded. Without the masses the confederates could hope to effect little. Delegates were appointed by the council of the confederation to meet in conference delegates from Conciliation Hall, and John Mitchel was one of the former. But, again the attempt came to nothing. John O'Connell was in full authority at Conciliation Hall, and apparently he was steadfast in his resolution that there should be no reconciliation.

This was in May, 1847, shortly before the news came of O'Connell's death. The feelings caused by that event and the preparations for the funeral occupied the public mind for a time. But even so great an event as the death of O'Connell could not long turn away public attention from the terrible fact that the people were perishing by thousands of hunger and fever.

Shortly after O'Connell's death, the Irish Executive—a sort of committee of public safety—met in Dublin. The attendance of landlords at this meeting fell far short of what had been expected; but the commercial and professional classes were largely represented. The idea was that, since it was plain the English Government would make no effectual effort to save the people, the classes in Ireland who were the natural leaders ought to take the matter in hand, and see what they could do to save their country. Mitchel took a very keen interest in this project. The time was near at hand when he was finally to abandon hope of any good work being done by the “men of property,” and to turn his attention to that “very respectable class—the men of no property.” But the time was not yet quite come. Mitchel still clung to the hope that a combination of classes in Ireland for the common good might prove possible. His patience was not yet wholly exhausted.

The first meeting of the Irish Council was held towards the end of May. The news of O'Connell's death had just

arrived, and in consequence of this the council adjourned. They met again early in June. There was a good deal of debating about the state of the country, which, indeed, did not so much stand in need of debating as of prompt and vigorous action. Committees and sub-committees were appointed, and upon these John Mitchel and the other leaders of Young Ireland did their full share of work. On the question of tenant-right, some very moderate and conservative recommendations were made. But the main question of course was the famine question. Was this Council of Emergency prepared to recommend measures for keeping the approaching harvest in the country, and allowing the people to consume so much of what they raised as might be needed to save them from starving? On this—the great question—the council proceeded very cautiously. A sub-committee was appointed to report on the food resources for the coming year. Mitchel was chairman of this sub-committee, and as such he sent out circulars to the Poor Law Boards through the country asking them for returns as to the food supplies in their respective unions. Having directed these circulars to be sent out, the council were of opinion that they could take no further steps in the matter until the answers came in. It was now midsummer. There was to be a general election in the autumn. The council did not deem it advisable to distract the attention of the country from the preparations for the election. They therefore adjourned without having done, or even recommended, anything very decisive.

Early in this summer of 1847 John Mitchel gave up his house at Heathfield, Upper Leeson Street, and went to live for the summer at Malahide, north of Dublin. Mitchel's mother, as well as two of his sisters and his brother, had moved to Dublin towards the end of 1846. For some time

past they had all been living together at Mitchel's house at Heathfield; and they all remained together during the summer at Malahide. They took a house near the sea, and were known there as "the large family." John Mitchel himself had still to attend to his duties at the *Nation* office, as well as his work on the Irish Council and other matters. This necessitated constant journeys to Dublin. Indeed, judging from his correspondence, he seems to have been quite overwhelmed with work during most of this summer. The move to the sea was intended to be a sort of vacation. It was hardly a vacation in the strict sense for Mitchel. But he was able to spare some little time to his family. And when his work was laid aside for the time being, and he was free to enjoy himself with his children, both he and they were thoroughly happy. Every now and then, some friends from Dublin would come out to spend the day. This was especially the case on Sundays. Smith O'Brien spent one Sunday with the Mitchels while they were at Malahide. On another evening, Father Kenyon, and Richard O'Gorman walked in about bedtime, having rowed from Howth. Father Kenyon had already become one of Mitchel's most valued friends. He resembled Dr. Johnson in liking "to have his talk out," and in hating to be stopped by people being so unreasonable as to want to go to bed. On the occasion in question, Father Kenyon and Mitchel got into conversation upon some subject which interested both of them. It was past bedtime, and Kenyon and O'Gorman had no way of getting back except by returning the way they came—by boat to Howth. O'Gorman rose to go, but Father Kenyon resolutely refused to stir. He had come to have a talk with Mitchel, and a talk with Mitchel he meant to have. O'Gorman had to return alone—or rather with no company but the boatman.

In speaking of the lifelong friendship of John Mitchel

and John Martin, I said that, outside of his own family, Mitchel loved no man as well as John Martin. Next to John Martin, and but little behind him, Mitchel's dearest friend in middle and later life was Father John Kenyon, of Templeberry. Another prominent leader of Young Ireland who frequently came out to spend the day with Mitchel at Malahide, during this summer of 1847, was Thomas Francis Meagher, with his friend P. J. Smyth.

But, whatever time he may have spared to his family and his friends, his letters show that during this summer his mind was constantly occupied with public affairs. Early in June, I find a letter to Martin, written from Malahide, in which Mitchel refers to his work on the sub-committee of the Irish Council. I have already mentioned that Mitchel was directed to send out queries to the various Unions regarding the supplies of food in their respective districts. In the letter just referred to, Mitchel—after alluding to the recent death of John Martin's mother—proceeds as follows:—

You have not, of course, been attending to public affairs of late, and were unable, as I feared, to give me any help in the matter of the food queries. I now send you a copy of the one I prepared myself, and which I am sure is defective. Indeed, it is very hard to find anybody who *knows* anything, or can attend to anything. And I did not see even Carroll, though I called twice. I mean, however, to try to see him on Tuesday, and interest him in the affair, and get him to print the circular in his *Gazette*, and urge upon country gentlemen the importance of attending to it.

I am dispatching it in the mean time to all the chairmen and vice-chairmen of the boards. Colonel Close is your chairman, and I don't know whether he will attend to it or not. At all events, I suppose we may be sure of answers from some one electoral division in your union. The division you live in, I fear is not an *average* one, but much above an average; however, don't

stay for that—let us have the census of yours at any rate ; and I hope you will urge on the guardians that some of them ought to undertake to answer for another division.

To report progress still further, I may tell you that I wrote to Messrs. Grogan and Gregory to move in the House of Commons for returns, showing the exports from and imports to Ireland, of eatable commodities from the 1st of September last till now. He has moved, and we shall get some information from that quarter. Well, then, upon Tuesday next I mean to try and get the sub-committee to put themselves in communication with the harbour authorities of the several Irish ports, in order to get the same information from them. I have no confidence at all in Government returns, especially in a matter like this. And at all events, the report of the port officers will check the others.

Then, in the sub-committee on landlord and tenant questions, we meet every fortnight ; and upon Friday next, those of us who have any definite views on the subject, are to lay them, in writing, upon the table. And then we are to discuss their several merits till we arrive at some kind of agreement. In the mean time, I have written both to Mr. Trenwith, of the Cork League, and to Mr. McKnight, secretary of the Derry one, requesting them each to let me have a short statement of what would satisfy the tenants. I have no doubt they will do this—and then it will be the fault (and misfortune) of the Irish Council themselves if they cannot promulgate some really satisfactory, generous, and just scheme of settlement, to be either the material of a legislative enactment, or else the basis of a national movement.

In another letter, also to Martin, written some few days either before or after the one just given, Mitchel prefaces his budget of political news with a few words about Malahide. I am not sure as to the correct order of the letters, because one of them is not dated. This omission of the date occurs in a good many of Mitchel's letters during 1847. In such cases, I am obliged to guess at the date as well as I can from the matters alluded to in the letter. The letter, from which the following extract is taken, is dated early in June, 1847 :—

This is glorious weather. You talk of Loughorne, I wish you saw Malahide. It is really one of the most luxuriant districts of Ireland I ever saw—this Fingal. No hungry “Italian” grass or other forced grass, but great fields of rich natural pasture, yellow with buttercups. Then the crops (wheat principally) look most luxuriant. You must come and see this place, and us in it. When will you be able to come up?

We had a very stupid, but I think very promising meeting of the “Irish Council” last Tuesday. You will see the report. We have had a private meeting since, which was far more practical and satisfactory, and have appointed Sam Ferguson, and S. O’Brien, two good men, to draw up a report on the means of “ameliorating” the labouring classes. Depend upon it, this will be a good document, and we shall have a public meeting again in about ten days. I expect a great deal from this society, notwithstanding Mr. Lalor’s and Mr. Cassins’ evil bodings. At least, it will soon be turned to the right purpose, or else broken up altogether. I have already given notice of two motions for the public meeting, which will help to test it.

The Irish Council referred to in these letters, and in which Mitchel took so keen an interest, came as we have seen, to very little. The attention of the country during the summer of 1847 was taken up mainly with three subjects—the famine, the general election, and the funeral of O’Connell.

In one of Mitchel’s letters to Martin during this summer, I find a somewhat curious reference to a man who afterwards became a noted figure in Irish public life:—

I forgot to mention to you in my other letter that I have written to a Mr. John Rea, of Belfast, a Protestant, a new recruit to the confederation, and a fine, intelligent, enthusiastic young fellow, who has at his own expense got several of our documents and proceedings published at Belfast.

The general election took place at the end of July and beginning of August. The funeral of O’Connell was held back by John O’Connell and his friends until the elections

had actually commenced. The object of this strategy was then believed to be, and most probably was, to prejudice the country against the Young Ireland party. And if that was John O'Connell's object, it must be admitted that he was at first successful. The cry was raised that the Young Irelanders had murdered the Liberator. Now that O'Connell was dead, his faults were forgotten, and people only remembered his services. Indeed, the great body of the people had not yet come to perceive that he had any faults at all. For some time after O'Connell's death, the efforts of the Young Liberator were mainly directed to the task of turning his father's memory to account in crushing the only men in Irish public life who were at once capable and sincere in their advocacy of the national side. In this task his efforts were for a time crowned with considerable success.

The result of the general election was very disheartening to the confederates. Not one member of the confederation was elected, unless, indeed, we are to except Mr. O'Brien. He was again sent to Parliament, either at the general election or shortly afterwards; but, then, he had been a member before. A certain number of nominal repealers were elected, but they were all henchmen of the Young Liberator. No sensible person any longer supposed that these men really believed in their power to win repeal, or that they would make any serious effort in that direction. Then there was quite a number of avowed supporters of the Government elected by so-called repeal constituencies, and with the sanction of the Repeal Association. These men did not consider it necessary to disavow their intention of taking the first good places offered them; and, accordingly, all of them who could get places, retired from Parliament to a higher sphere of usefulness on the earliest opportunity.

While the elections were yet hardly over, I find a letter from Mitchel to Martin, giving his view of the result, and plans for the future. The letter is written from Malahide, and is dated August 8, 1847:—

I have scarce anything to tell you that you may not learn from the *Nation* of yesterday. The elections on the whole have been a very unsatisfactory business, but not more so than I expected. I wish this country were disfranchised.

However, the confederation means to concentrate itself and all its energies at home. And in about three weeks we are to have a public meeting, in preparation for which we have a very admirable report on confederate clubs, drawn up by Duffy. Some beginnings are made throughout the country in organizing sub-clubs, and I have no doubt, when this cursed election turmoil is over, that we shall get large accessions of force.

We want to open our next public meeting with as large a number of *new members*, especially Protestants, as possible. . . . Think about this—and see if you have no acquaintances that would be willing to enlist.

I was sorry Ross was beaten at Mallow; but he made a gallant fight, and a right good speech. On the whole, we are all, in great measure, out of Parliament. And I can't say that I am sorry. It will *force* us into the policy that I have often urged, to neglect Parliament and its proceedings, and work at home.

As one of our engines for that work, we are going to make some efforts to improve the *Nation*. We have been, I may say, without a sub-editor for some time, and the paper has been turned out in a shamefully, slovenly, and imperfect state. I have got my brother William to undertake the sub-editing, which I am convinced he is competent to do. He is full of zeal, and accustomed to work, so that I think you will find within three weeks a material improvement in the selection and arrangement of the paper. It will be a great convenience to me, and, besides, I know the circulation has been much impeded for want of due care in that department.

In the mean time I want you to do me a favour. It is to resume occasionally your agricultural papers, which, let me tell you, you do better than anything else. You might make them

embrace other things collaterally, as well as mere farming operations; such as the state, and prospects and destination of the harvest, and comments thereupon, information about the state of labourers, working of the relief system, and the like. I don't know how you can serve the cause better than this way, if you persist in living at Loughorne. Now, do this, like a good fellow. I am going to endeavour, also, to get better market notes, to have parliamentary intelligence, better condensed, and otherwise make the *Nation* more readable. I want you to write to me and give me hints on these points. In fact, now that O'Brien is out of Parliament, and the parliamentary affair has got into such bad hands, I look to the *Nation* as our most powerful organ, and in order to get our doctrines an audience, we must increase its circulation.

We are all very well here, and I have been bathing most luxuriously. I wish you were here for a few days. Will you come up to our next meeting if I give you due notice?

The brother referred to in this letter was John Mitchel's only brother, William H. Mitchel. Mrs. Mitchel (John's mother) was at first very averse to the idea of allowing both her sons to be dragged into the stormy and dangerous sea of Irish politics. She at first refused to sanction the project of William being made sub-editor of the *Nation*. But William (who was thirteen years younger than John) was enthusiastic, and eager to join in his brother's work. He succeeded in getting his mother's consent, and the arrangement was carried out.

Shortly after the elections, the Irish Council again assembled. If they were indisposed to do anything decisive before the elections, they were still less disposed now. Lord Cloncurry had the courage to propose that some decisive measures should be taken for keeping the harvest in the country. But the council were not by any means up to this mark. Even a much milder measure recommended in a report by Mitchel was rejected. The

council again adjourned without having done anything worth mentioning.

There was some feeble attempt made by the council to deal with the question of Irish manufactures, which gave Mitchel an opportunity of expressing to Martin his views on the free-trade question :—

The sub-committee on manufactures is receiving answers to its queries, which you read in the newspapers, and I suppose will have some report by October. I am not on that sub-committee, and, indeed, I don't set much store by it, because the only great impulse that I think our manufacture movement is likely to get is when Ireland ceases to pay in food for English manufactures, and, of course, ceases to get any, and we must make clothes for ourselves, or go naked.

This last meeting of the council was but slenderly attended by the landlord class. The failure of the landlord class to attend, and the ultimate failure of the council to do anything effectual, seems to have produced a powerful effect upon the mind of Mitchel. The nature of this effect, and the direction in which Mitchel's mind was now tending, may be gathered from the following letter to Mr. Smith O'Brien, written on September 8, 1847 :—

Mr. Lalor, of whom I told you before, is prosecuting an agitation amongst the farmers in Tipperary, which I believe he means to extend into King's County, Queen's County, and Kilkenny. He does not now go for the whole of his system; but contemplates violent pressure on the landlords of those districts to coerce them into a fair settlement of the tenure question; the coercion to take the form of non-payment to such landlords as hold out. The confederation, of course, is not mixed up with this; but several members of it (of whom I am one) have encouraged Lalor to go on, feeling that it is necessary for the tenants to apply a violent pressure from without, or else that neither individual landlords, nor the Irish Council, will do anything very effectual. . . . At the same time I must say I look to all this merely as a stimulus or spur to the Irish Council, and to the landlords

generally. And there is no doubt, if they will be led or driven to frame and propose a fair, or a tolerably fair, scheme of tenant-right, they will take the people out of the hands of Lalor, and of all revolutionists. But the time has nearly come when affairs must take a decisive turn, either in the one way or the other. I sincerely hope it will be in the moderate direction.

The reader will perceive, from the latter portion of this letter, that Mitchel still clung to the hope that the landlords might yet be induced to do their duty by the people. But the time had come with him when "the wish was father to the thought;" and the concluding sentences show that he had at least reached the conclusion that the patience of the people ought not to last and would not last much longer. In other words, his views upon this question were tending to that decisive determination to which, within the next few months, they attained.

The prospect was now sufficiently gloomy for men who thought as the Young Irelanders did. Nothing was to be hoped for from Conciliation Hall and Old Ireland. It was becoming daily more evident that nothing was to be expected from the landlord class. Mitchel and those who acted with him became more and more eager to win over the Protestant farmers of Ulster. And there were not wanting signs that the Ulster Protestants were wavering. One thing alone stood in their way, and kept them aloof from the national party—their dread of Catholic ascendancy. And it may be at once admitted that there was much in the acts and speeches of the Conciliation Hall leaders during this time that—to put it mildly—was certainly not calculated to win over the northern Protestants. During the autumn of 1847, John Mitchel was mainly instrumental in promoting a plan for holding a confederate meeting in Belfast. It was thought that, if such a meeting could be made a success, it might be possible to satisfy the Ulster

men that repeal of the Union and popish ascendancy did not necessarily go together. It was considered a very dangerous experiment by some of the confederate leaders ; but it was determined to make the attempt. Mitchel hoped for much from this meeting, and took a leading part in arranging the preliminaries. But, as was to be expected, he met with many difficulties. Amongst other things, the over-zeal of his new recruit, John Rea, came near to overturning the whole project. Some time in October, Mitchel writes to John Martin :—

The Drennan club have absolutely expelled Mr. McLoughlin for attending Ross's dinner, and Rea has given notice of motion to expel Mr. E. Daly (one of the earliest Belfast leaders, and a very sensible and worthy man), for general ill behaviour, and "not understanding his principles." This is totally intolerable. I have been deputed to attend the meeting of the club to-morrow night ; but am quite unable to stir, partly with asthma, and partly on account of business to-morrow. McGee, I suppose, will go down by the trader so as to be in Belfast at half-past five. *Could you meet him there?* I fear he will be hasty, and that Rea will not be so manageable to him as to you or me. In short, there is imminent risk of the cause in the North being seriously damaged by this fellow's rashness and violence, and nothing annoys me more than that I cannot go and try conclusions with him.

On last Monday the secretary read a letter from me on the subject, in which I requested them at least to defer all further extreme proceedings until the deputation should go down. Rea said that I was his particular friend, and would be sure to take his view of the case when I knew all the circumstances. And, in short, they persisted that same night in "accepting Mr. McLoughlin's resignation." It seems he said he would have nothing more to do with them. And since then, Dr. McBirney and others of their committee have resigned.

I think, if some effectual interference be not made to-morrow night, the club is broken up, and our Belfast meeting at the devil.

Try to go if you can by the trader, or even by the mail, and stand by McGee. He is to be at Davis's, Corn Market.

Ultimately these difficulties were overcome, and the meeting was held on the 13th of November. O'Brien went down, accompanied by a deputation from the confederation, of which Mitchel was one. There was a very large attendance of Protestants, and the meeting would probably have been a striking success, had it not been for the conduct of the Old Ireland faction. A disturbance was organized by men who affected to regard the Young Irelanders as the "murderers of the Liberator." The disturbance was ultimately quelled, and when Mitchel spoke, he was well received. But the Old Irelanders gained their point so far as to prevent the meeting having the effect which, if harmonious, it would have had. It was the old story, people said; if the Catholics could not agree amongst themselves, why should the northern Protestants be expected to take part in their squabbles?

Mr. Duffy, in his "Four Years of Irish History," states that the authorities at Conciliation Hall actually had a vote of thanks passed to "the men of the North" for vindicating the principles of the association. The "men of the North," of course, meant the men who did their best to break up the Belfast meeting. Comment on this is superfluous. The "principles of the association," as then interpreted by Mr. John O'Connell, would seem to have been best vindicated by attempts to thwart the Young Irelanders in everything they attempted, and to perpetuate religious bigotry and sectarian strife in Ireland.

Once more, then, the Young Irelanders found themselves foiled. Where were they to turn to next? The masses of the Catholic population were still under the spell of the O'Connell legend, and in so far as they were not actively hostile to Young Ireland, were indifferent. The landlords held aloof, and were probably much more afraid of the agitation which they believed to be in earnest

than of the agitation which they knew to be a sham. In common with a well-known dignitary of the Established Church, they

“Wished the *Nation* would let the agitation
Die a humbug, as it first began.”

The attempt to gain over the Protestants of the North had not succeeded. Men began to ask what the Young Irelanders had to work on. What means had they at their disposal at all adequate—or, rather, not ridiculously inadequate—to the attainment of the ends they put before themselves? The Young Ireland leaders had felt the force of these criticisms, even before the holding of the Belfast meeting. Mr. Duffy, in particular, urged upon the others the duty of sternly examining and clearly stating, both for themselves and others, the means which they relied on for the attainment of their ends. O'Brien was asked to draw up a report on the policy of the confederation, and this he consented to do. His report, however, did not satisfy either Duffy or Mitchel. In a letter to O'Brien, dated September 30, 1847, Mitchel criticises the report. He states the object the report was intended to serve, and gives his own ideas of how it ought to be done:—

Duffy says what he had in his mind when he promised — a report on this subject was that we should have some rational answer to give to practical, but timid people, who ask how we mean to repeal the Union. Now, I think, if such an answer be attempted at all, it must develop, not one sole plan followed out to the end, but three or four of the possible and probable series of events which may evidently lead to the result. It must show (for one may) how a parliamentary campaign, conducted honestly and boldly, might bring the state of public business in Parliament to such a position that repeal would be the only solution; for another way, how systematic passive opposition to, and contempt of, *law* might be carried out through a thousand details so as to virtually supersede English dominion here, and to

make the mere repealing statute an immaterial formality (this, I may observe, is *my way*) ; and for a third way, how, in the event of an European war, a strong national party in Ireland could grasp the occasion to do the work instantly, with, perhaps, half a dozen other contingencies, and their possible use. It should also show how, and to what extent, all these methods of operation might be combined. .

This letter is especially interesting for the light it throws upon the then state of Mitchel's opinions. To a certain extent, though not, I think, to the extent that some have represented, his views on the question of national policy were undergoing a change at this time. Within the next few months his creed, so far as Irish politics were concerned, reached its full development.

As regards the report on policy—Mr. O'Brien's attempt not having given satisfaction, the task of preparing the report was imposed upon Mr. Duffy. Some months later, as the result of his efforts, Mr. Duffy laid before the confederation a very remarkable and very able document. The discussions to which this document gave rise led to important results, as we shall see further on.

In the autumn of 1847, and while the matters I have been telling of were in progress, Mitchel left Malahide, and moved back to Dublin. His mother and sisters, who had lived with him at Malahide, now returned to Newry, and continued to live there until the time of Mitchel's arrest.

Mitchel took the house, No. 8, Ontario Terrace, Rathmines. In this house he continued to reside with his wife and family until he was removed from it by the officers of the law.

In the late autumn of 1847, certain events occurred which accelerated and powerfully influenced the development of Mitchel's political creed ; indeed I might say, which finally determined the form of that creed. The Irish

landlords, after coquetting for a time with the repealers, finally threw off the mask and called on the Government for a strong coercion bill. In the Queen's Speech, delivered on November 23, 1847, a coercion bill was announced. A week later the details of the proposed bill were stated to the House by Sir George Grey. There is a remarkable sameness about Irish coercion bills; and this one very much resembled those which preceded it and those which came after. Its leading provisions were briefly stated by Mitchel in a speech made at the confederation on the 1st of December:—

In the first place, the Lord Lieutenant is to have power to proclaim any district he thinks fit—or the whole two and thirty counties if he think it necessary—to throw into the proclaimed districts any number of police he pleases, and levy rates on the people instantly for payment of all expenses. Then he may order all persons to bring their arms, even those arms that are now more than ever necessary for their defence, to the nearest police station. And the police are to be empowered to go into any man's house in search of arms, and if any are found, the owner of the house will be in a misdemeanour, and liable to two years' imprisonment and hard labour. Next, all persons between the ages of sixteen and sixty are to turn out, when called on, to hunt down persons "suspected of crime"—that is to say, any person at all whom the police may suspect; and in case of non-compliance, two years' imprisonment and hard labour. You see, therefore, that in its main features this bill is just like the sixteen or seventeen other bills; and it is important to remark that it is brought in with the hearty approbation of all the great parties in England.

The bill was "most favourably received" by the landlord party. Of course there were the usual terrible descriptions of the state of Ireland. No doubt there was a great deal of agrarian crime in Ireland; it would have been strange under the circumstances if there had not been crime. But, when the prevalence of this sort of crime is

relied on by Irish landlords as a sufficient ground for savage coercion bills, the answer is sufficiently obvious. That answer is given by Mitchel in the speech just quoted from :—

Let me be understood, sir, I denounce this bill because it never can answer its end ; because it will aggravate all the evils and exasperate all the fierce passions of the several classes against one another ; because the peasantry who already feel that the world is not their friend nor the world's law, will believe this measure to be a conspiracy against them between hostile landlords and a hostile government ; and, lastly, because this foreign government which itself produced the misery, the despair, the disorganization, has no right to coerce this island.

Years afterwards, Mitchel wrote the history of this time in his "Last Conquest." He describes the passing of this Coercion Bill, and the effect thereby produced on himself and others. He then proceeds to give some details of the fearful ravages of the famine and the fever during this year of 1847, and he cites certain Government returns to show that during these years of famine Ireland was producing more than enough food to feed abundantly all the population of the island. Then he adds :—

A kind of sacred wrath took possession of a few Irishmen at this period. They could endure the horrible scene no longer, and resolved to cross the path of the British car of conquest, though it should crush them to atoms.

I believe that in this last-quoted passage, when carefully considered, there is to be found the key to much in the history of the following year that is otherwise hard to understand.

The modification that Mitchel's views were undergoing towards the close of 1847 was soon made manifest in his writings for the *Nation*. Indeed, it would have been quite impossible for a man of John Mitchel's turn of mind to

write upon public questions in the *Nation* and not to let the public know what he really believed. But the proprietor of the *Nation* was also a man of strength of character and of decided opinions. As the year 1847 drew to a close, the divergence in opinion between Mr. Duffy and Mr. Mitchel became more marked, and the consequent difficulty of their continuing to work together on the *Nation* became greater.

The following extracts from a letter to Martin will throw some light on the state of affairs:—

Things are tending here, I fear, to an open rupture in the confederation. I have taken neither act nor part in the affair since you left; but I see plainly that it will come to this. Duffy spent three hours here the day before yesterday, and he is really more hopelessly politic than ever. Reilly, you must know, had proposed his resolutions in the council the day before (the resolutions you saw). There were only four present beside McGee. The resolutions were rejected, and when Reilly said he intended to speak at the meeting, Duffy informed him that if he spoke such sentiments as were in those resolutions, he would appeal to the chairman to stop him; and McGee added that if anything seditious were said at the meeting, he would get up and resign his secretaryship on the instant.

Now, there was not, in fact, one word of sedition in Reilly's resolutions. Well, when Duffy came to see me the next day, I remonstrated with him strongly about this threat of his, and told him plainly that if he persisted in that line of policy, he would break up the confederation. And especially I showed him that there was nothing seditious in Reilly's resolutions. He said it did not matter. They were "impolitic," and the council rejected them, so that no member had a right to express similar sentiments in a speech. And, further, that, although he had determined for that time to let Reilly say what he liked without interruption from him, yet he would without delay bring the whole subject before the council, with a view of getting them to vest an authority *somewhere* to stop any speaker who in any public meeting should say anything which would be in the opinion of that authority

either "seditious" or "impolitic." In other words, to appoint a Head Pacificator.

I shall presently have occasion to state in some detail the main articles of Mitchel's political creed as it stood at the close of 1847, and to indicate the extent to which this creed implied a modification of his former views. For the present it is sufficient to note that several of the measures which Mitchel now advocated most strenuously were regarded by Duffy as positively mischievous. To give one example. Mitchel had come to hold views regarding the Poor Law and the collection of poor rate which he afterwards expressed thus :—

I desired also to show them that the new Poor Law, enacted under pretence of relieving the destitute, was really intended, and is calculated to increase and deepen the pauperism of the country ; to break down the farmers as well as the landlords by degrees, and uproot them gradually from the soil, so as to make the lands of Ireland pass (unencumbered by excessive population) into the hands of English capitalists, and under the more absolute sway of English government. In short, I wished to make them recognize in the Poor Law what it really is—an elaborate machinery for making final conquest of Ireland by "law." I therefore urged, from the first, that this law ought to be resisted and defeated ; that guardians ought not to act under it, but in defiance of it ; that ratepayers ought to offer steady and deliberate passive resistance to it ; and that every district ought to organize some voluntary mode of relieving its own poor ;—and for this purpose, as well as to stop the fatal traffic with England, that the people should determine to suffer no grain or cattle to leave the country.

From these views Duffy entirely dissented. Mitchel, who was wholly incapable of advocating views which were not his own, insisted on writing as he felt. Duffy, on the other hand, objected, and very naturally objected, to allowing the editorial columns of his paper to be used for the

teaching of doctrine which he regarded as mischievous. The position, therefore, became an impossible one.

Subsequently, on the suggestion of Duffy, Mitchel wrote to the *Nation* a letter explaining the causes of his retirement. His account of the differences I have just been referring to is as follows :—

For some months past I have found myself precluded from speaking to the public through the *Nation*, with that full freedom and boldness which I had formerly used, by objections and remonstrances from you, to the effect, that what I wrote was “seditious” or “impolitic.” This kind of restriction, slight and casual at first, became gradually more constant and annoying ; and that, while the times demanded, in my opinion, more and more unmitigated plain speaking, as to the actual relation of Ireland towards the English Government, and the real designs of that Government against the properties and lives of Irishmen.

He then proceeds to state his views upon the leading subjects of difference, and continues :—

These are my doctrines ; and these were what I wished to enforce in the *Nation*. I knew that it would be “illegal” to do so ; I knew that it would subject you, as proprietor of that paper, to prosecutions for “sedition,” etc. ; I knew, besides, that your own views did not at all agree with mine ; and I could not assuredly expect you to incur legal risks for the sake of promulgating another man’s opinions. Therefore, when I found, which I did during the progress of the Coercion Bill, that no one journal could possibly represent two sets of opinions so very incompatible as yours and mine ; and when you informed me that the columns of the *Nation* should no longer be open even to such a modified and subdued exposition of my doctrines as they had heretofore been, I at once removed all difficulty by ending the connection which had subsisted between us more than two years.

This “ending of the connection” took place early in the month of December, 1847.

From what I have said on the subject the reader will see that Mitchel's departure from the *Nation* office was the necessary result of his opinions and his character. Compromise under such circumstances was impossible, and the only right course was the course which Mitchel took—to end at once a situation which had become intolerable.

As usual, he wrote Martin a full account of his parting from the *Nation*. I extract the following:—

You see what our *Nation* business has come to. I will explain the documents you see in to-day's *Nation*. I have been doing and saying nothing about the matter for five weeks at all. But there have been a thousand rumours flying about;—as that the *Nation* wished to retreat and get safer and more legal, etc.; that Reilly and I, declining to be parties to the transaction, had retired from it; that Duffy and I had differed very materially, and that he had been suppressing and cushioning my opinions—which I would not stand; that the *Nation* had abandoned the cause of the people, and so forth;—*true* rumours, in fact. But C. G. D—became very uneasy, especially as the anniversary meeting approached. He wished to get rid of the odium and unpopularity that he plainly saw gathering, and so he spoke to me early in the week, saying he wished to put a statement in to-day's *Nation*, giving a true account of our differences, if I had no objection. I said I had not, provided he did not attempt to describe my opinions. He said he would do so only very generally, and would submit the article to me, when I could suggest any alteration I pleased, or add a note in my own name.

Late on Thursday evening he sent me, in proof, the article which has appeared to-day, signed by him; but I send you the original proof, to show you what else it contained.

When I had read it, I sent it back to him with the enclosed note, No. 1.

Early Friday morning I got a note from him, saying that he certainly did wish me to make such a statement as I proposed; and I instantly sat down, and, in a very hurried manner, as he requested me to let him have it immediately after breakfast. I wrote it, as you will observe, under some irritation. . . . The

foolish light in which he represents me—relying as one means of saving Ireland on a run on the savings banks, and again breaking out into a sudden fit of impatience against the Government, and again making my experiment of the Irish Council my *experimentum crucis* of landlordism—this angered me much, and, in fact, has materially altered my opinion of the man. The fine words about heroism and all that I do not care a damn for, and he ought to have known that.

There was at this time no personal quarrel between Duffy and Mitchel. They parted good friends, and they remained so for some time afterwards.

For some short time after the severance of his connection with the *Nation*, Mitchel was undecided as to his future course. His mother thought it a good opportunity for his withdrawing altogether from politics and returning to his profession. She must have written to urge this view; for in a letter from Mitchel to his mother, dated December 12, 1847, I find the following:—

I have no intention of settling down to my profession in Newry. I think of starting a new and most furious newspaper, either in Dublin, Cork, or Belfast. John Martin advises Belfast very strongly. I am more in favour of Cork. In Dublin I would not think of a weekly paper, because it would come into competition with the *Nation*. There are some of our friends very anxious to get up a daily one, and put it under my management; but that would be a tremendous undertaking, which I am quite afraid of. It may be a week or so before I make up my mind. William is still working away in his situation; but, whatever I decide upon, he says he means to help me, to do the same business, in short, in the new paper, that he does now in the *Nation*. Indeed, there is no fear of his not being able to get that kind of employment so long as he chooses to attend to it.

Jenny and the children are all well. I may write to you again soon, when I am nearer to some decision.

And again, a few days later, and to the same correspondent:—

As to the profession, etc., I have no notion of it whatever. And I don't understand how the conductors of a newspaper must be subject to many masters. I mean to be subject to none. Except the public who read the paper. And I am sure they are as easy masters as clients any day.

My jaw is getting better—but slowly. I expect, however, to be able probably to go out by Monday next. I will then not be long in settling upon my future proceedings. Possibly my first land fall may be the Cove of Cork, where I hear there is capital air for children and for delicate lungs. I don't think of sending any of the children away. It would be only additional trouble again; but I am sure you would take at least as good care of them as they would get at home. With love to the girls, and wishing you all a merry Christmas.

It may seem strange that within two months from the time these letters were written, Mitchel did the very thing which he here expresses himself as having no thought of doing, *i.e.* started a weekly paper in Dublin. I do not find in his correspondence any explanation of this change of attitude; but it is not difficult to see how it may have been brought about. It is impossible to doubt that Mitchel was perfectly sincere when he wrote to his mother that "in Dublin he would not think of a weekly paper, because it would come into competition with the *Nation*." And his letters to Martin show that he remained of the same mind down to the close of the year 1847. But early in 1848, and before the *United Irishman* was established, occurred the discussions in the confederation on Duffy's report and on O'Brien's resolutions. These discussions resulted in the adoption of certain resolutions which were in effect and were intended to be a vote of censure on Mitchel's policy. He was informed that the confederate organization could not be used by him in any way to forward the policy he believed in. He was not to advocate his policy in the *Nation*, and he was not to advocate it in the confederation.

This may have been perfectly fair and right, so far as concerned the action of the proprietor of the *Nation* and the confederate leaders ; but it may also, not unnaturally, have had the effect of convincing Mitchel that it was now not only his right but his duty to advocate his own views of policy by whatever means seemed most likely to prove effective. Presumably, he concluded that the most effective means at his disposal was to start a weekly paper of his own in Dublin.

I have already alluded to Mr. Duffy's report on policy. This report came up for discussion before the council of the confederation about the middle of January. It was a statement of the line of policy by which, in Mr. Duffy's opinion, repeal might be won. I need not here give an analysis of this remarkable document ; it will be found at length in the *Nation* of the period, and a summary of its main recommendations is given by Mr. Duffy himself in his "Four Years of Irish History." His description of what could be done and ought to be done by a band of resolute and capable Irish members in Parliament is certainly striking, in view of subsequent events. The report was discussed from day to day at the council. As clause after clause came up for consideration, Mitchel proposed amendments. These amendments were all rejected by sweeping majorities. Finally, on January 31, 1848, when the report came up for final reading, Mr. Duffy withdrew it in order to allow Mr. O'Brien to propose certain resolutions on policy of which he had given notice. Mr. O'Brien's resolutions were suggested by the letter of Mitchel's to the *Nation*, above referred to, in which he explained his views of policy and stated his reasons for retiring from the *Nation*. Mitchel did not at all conceal his intention of using his position as a member of the council of the confederation to forward his peculiar views,

which, indeed, he believed he was perfectly entitled to do. To prevent this, O'Brien framed his resolutions. There were ten of them in all, but the one with which we are most concerned was as follows: "That this confederation was established to obtain an Irish Parliament by the combination of classes and by the force of opinion, exercised in constitutional operations, and that no means of a contrary character can be recommended or promoted through its organization, while its fundamental rules remain unaltered." This was, of course, something very different from the moral force resolutions of Conciliation Hall. Still it was clearly sufficient to rule out Mitchel and his policy. Mitchel moved an amendment to the effect that the confederation did not feel called upon to promote or condemn doctrines promulgated by its members in letters or speeches, because one of the fundamental rules specified that no member should be bound by any proceeding of that character to which he had not given his special assent.

The three days' debate followed. In the result, Mitchel's amendment was rejected by a vote of 317 to 188.

We have now reached a point at which it seems to me expedient that I should give some more detailed account than I have hitherto given of the leading heads of Mitchel's political creed at the opening of the eventful year of 1848. His policy has been repeatedly and severely criticised. Before we can decide to what extent Mitchel's views were fairly open to the objections urged against them, it is very necessary that we should have a clear idea of what his views were. And this is all the more needful because, as it seems to me, several of the most hostile criticisms that Mitchel's views have evoked are based upon a misapprehension of what he really meant to teach.

It is a common practice nowadays to consider the Irish question as coming mainly under two heads—the

land question and the national question. The division is not a perfect one ; but for our present purposes we may adopt it.

On the land question Mitchel's creed at the opening of 1848 was simple enough. He had always held that it was desirable to make the Irish movement a national movement in the fullest sense ; and with this object he wished, if possible, to secure the co-operation of the landed gentry. This could only be hoped for upon the basis of some settlement of the tenure question which might be acceptable alike to landlords and occupiers. Up to late in 1847, he continued to believe in the possibility of some such settlement and some such union. He was Conservative by instinct ; and he clung to the hope that some settlement might be devised upon the basis of which the landlords might consent to join the national movement.

It has been urged against Mitchel that upon the landlord question, as well as upon the question of general policy, his views underwent a complete change at the close of 1847 ; that from that time forwards, he fiercely denounced the very views which, a few months previously, he had strongly advocated. To this charge of change of opinion I attach very little importance. That a man should modify his opinions with experience is no reproach, but quite the contrary. The sort of man whose favourite boast is, "I think now exactly as I did twenty years ago," very seldom exercises much influence on the course of history. If, therefore, it were true that Mitchel entirely changed his beliefs as regarded the policy to be observed towards the landed gentry, I should not consider the charge a very damaging one. But, as a matter of fact, the assertion as to Mitchel having changed his view is true only in a limited sense. In order to see exactly how this matter stands, it will be necessary for us to ascertain what

were the views which John Mitchel held and expressed upon the Irish land question during the first year or so of his connection with the *Nation*. The reading of Mitchel's articles upon the land question in the *Nation* has been to me very interesting reading. It shows how remarkably Irish history repeats itself, and it shows how clearly Mitchel foresaw the ruin which the Irish landlords were bringing upon themselves. The crash did not come, perhaps, as soon as he expected ; but it came at last.

It is hardly necessary to say that the quotations which follow form a very small fraction of the writings just referred to. They are selected with the object of enabling the reader to form an accurate idea of the drift of the whole.

On October 25, 1845, immediately after he came to the *Nation* office, Mitchel wrote :—

One word to the landlords. Do they, or can they, expect that during the ensuing season their tenants, who find it hard in ordinary years to pay their rent *and live*, will be able to meet them at the gale days as usual? Can they hope, if the ordinary driving and grinding system be pursued in this cruel year, that agrarian outrage, even of a more combined and extensive character than we have yet seen, will not stalk, in blood and terror, over the land, leading to a general disorganization of society and reign of terror which it is fearful to think of. Once for all, let some effective and simultaneous step be taken by the land proprietors of this island, such as may convince the terrified people that they are not watched over by enemies, and *set* by beasts of prey—or, Irish landlordism has reached its latter days, and will shortly be with the feudal system and other *effete* institutions, in its grave.

In the *Nation* for November 15, 1845, he writes, in answer to the argument that the “repeal rent” (not the landlord rent) ought to be stopped if there were really a danger of famine. The following passage, with its quotation from the landlord organ, is very instructive as bearing out the

assertion that there was abundance of food raised in the country during the famine times :—

We have studied carefully the indications of public opinion upon this subject, with reference to the present period of threatened scarcity, and it is instructive to consider the language upon this matter of the *Dublin Evening Mail*, which, we apprehend, speaks the voice of landlordism in Ireland. In the *Mail* of the 3rd of November, in speaking of the dreadful murder of Mr. Clarke, the writer

“Inclines to believe that this agrarian outrage had its origin in a design to intimidate landlords from demanding rents *at a season when corn of all kinds is superabundant and the partial failure of the potato crop gives a pretence for not selling it.* And if we recollect,” continues the *Mail*, “that the potato crop this year far exceeded an average one, and that corn of all kinds is superabundant, it will be seen that the apprehensions of a famine *in that quarter* are unfounded, and are merely *made the pretence for withholding the payment of rent.*”

As against the landlords, it seems, there is to be no famine even thought of; for corn is superabundant, and might be sold, but for this false pretence, to pay the rent as usual.

We have now the best of reasons for knowing that the apprehension of famine was *not* unfounded, inasmuch as we know that the famine came. It would seem that even the *Mail* was puzzled to understand how there could be a famine in a country which all the time raised abundance of food. But the Irish landlords, backed by the power of the British Government, very soon proved to the world that such a thing was possible.

Early in 1846, Mitchel writes :—

To one or other of these issues we are coming. A revolution in the whole system of holding land—either a rapid or a gradual one, either legislative or insurrectionary, either peaceful or bloody—is assuredly at hand; and it behoves all men, and specially those men who have a potential voice in public affairs, and who

have the most at stake, to consider well which of these ways they will choose. It is needless to talk of the "difficulty" of this land question—were it ten times as difficult it absolutely must be met, must be grappled with, must be dealt with decisively by law, and that soon, or the *other* alternative comes in.

Let it not be said this is a threat. It is simply a statement of the task that lies before us to be done, or, at our peril, to be left undone. Surely there is no rational being in all Ireland who is not convinced in his heart that the relation of landlord and tenant cannot, and will not, stand long in its present state. Even the repeal of the Union and extinction of the absentee-drain, though it would mitigate the disease, could only remove further off the inevitable day when some decided step must be taken to *cure* it.

Well, then, it is full time that those who desire political and social changes to be brought about peacefully, should take counsel together, and devise some plan which may be both practicable and just to all parties.

He then proceeds to consider three plans which had been proposed for settling the question, and which all aimed at turning the tenants into proprietors. He concludes :—

Now, we say that in one or other of these three ways, or by some combination of them, or in some other way, provision must speedily be made for *revolutionizing* the whole social condition of this island, and gradually abolishing the "relation of landlord and tenant ;" or, that the matter will otherwise find its level, perhaps by very rugged and stormy ways. There is absolutely no third alternative : and for ourselves we much prefer the peaceful and legislative method. We are Conservatives in this matter—Conservatives of social order, of law and justice, of "life and property." The present system does not *work* : it has disorganized society, and created an abhorrence of law and a sympathy with crime : it is productive of starvation, misery, revenge, extermination, exile, murder, disease, and death. Shall society be *re*-organized upon some better system, while it is yet time ; or must it go to utter wreck, and be born again out of the womb of chaos ?

Writing on June 27, 1846, he states the heads of a plan

which, he says, had been suggested to him by a gentleman from the North :—

A simple recognition of the tenant's right to the value of all permanent improvements, whether past or future, as a *first charge*, making that charge transferable, like a mortgage or annuity, by purchase; and giving the tenant power to plead it in any court of law where an ejectment could be brought against him; this is the whole machinery required. Of course, the Assistant-Barrister of any county ought to have power on the trial of a civil bill ejectment to entertain this as a defence, to empanel a jury to inquire into the nature and value of the improvements, and give the landlord a decree without costs, subject to the amount of the charge as ascertained by that jury. And the principle on which such a jury should always be directed to conduct their inquiries is to ascertain not what the improvements may have cost the tenant who made them, but what they are worth, at his departure, to the landlord or incoming tenant.

This plan has the advantage of simplicity, and of not deterring plain countrymen from making improvements, by throwing before them an almost insurmountable barrier of forms and printed papers, and fees to legal practitioners and public officers; and it would also embrace and protect not merely future investments of industry, but all the property already created by the tenant-farmers of Ireland and their fathers, and now lying exposed to wholesale depredation and plunder.

Here we have the principle of what is now known as "Healy's Clause." But the plan is only recommended as being a step in the direction of making the tenant the proprietor, which is still the ultimate object with Mitchel. The article concludes :—

How to change the present renters, or more properly borrowers of land, into proprietors in some shape or other, and with least injury to the "landlord" class—this is absolutely *the* problem to be solved by those who will undertake to deal in any adequate manner with the social condition of Ireland. Let this same "landlord" class think of it as they may, this thing must be done. Shall it be done gradually, quietly, legislatively, or *otherwise* ?

We give publicity to the suggestion stated above, not as the sole method, or even the best method of solving that problem, but as *one* method. We have before propounded others, and will from time to time do so again.

The truth is, that from the very commencement of his public life Mitchel's doctrine upon the land question and the relation of the gentry to the national movement was substantially this: "We would much rather have a peaceable settlement of the question, and have the gentry with us, if possible. We will make every reasonable effort to win them to our side. But, if they are resolved to have their pound of flesh at any cost, and to make no concession to the people; if they persist in taking their stand with England and against their own people, then we must only see what we can do without them and against them." An addition was no doubt made to this creed at the close of 1847, but not an addition that was, strictly speaking, inconsistent with the doctrine previously held. The addition was simply—the experiment has now been tried long enough, and the result is decisive. Mitchel's position on this question is fully and explicitly stated by himself in his speech in the confederation debate on February 2, 1848:—

Now, for my part, I only said that recent circumstances had made me despair of such combination, how much soever I might desire it. I only said that, in my opinion, the landlords of Ireland had taken their side with the English, and against their own countrymen, and that it was useless to keep courting and wooing armed and sanguinary enemies. That was all. I did desire, sir, I do desire,—I would this night give my right hand to bring about a combination of the various orders of Irishmen against English dominion. I do believe such a union would be the salvation of all those classes, of social order, and of many thousands of human lives. But, I tell you, I despair of such combination. And what think you? I ask my brother confederates do they, in their souls and consciences, believe that the landlords of Ireland will help

them to set this island free. Of course, I mean the landlords as a class. There are noble exceptions—two of them here to-night—but so few, that they amply prove the rule. I say, do you believe it? Have we all been dreaning these last few months? Is it a fact, or not, that the Irish gentry have called in the aid of foreigners to help them to clear their own people from the face of the earth, to help them to crush and trample down, in blood and horror, the rightful claim of the tenant classes to a bare subsistence on the land they till? Is it a fact that they invented a sham council, called the “Irish Council,” and talked what they called nationality there for a few meetings, until they got what they wanted, a bill to disarm and transport the Irish—and where is their nationality now? My friends, I was weak enough to put some trust in that sham nationality, and I laboured for a time anxiously on the committees of the Irish Council, trying in good faith to extract what good I thought was in it. And I will say now that, democrat as I am, by nature, habits, education, and position, I would have followed the aristocracy of Ireland in the march to freedom with zeal and loyalty, if they had only led. But they cheated me—they cheated you—and they are now laughing at us all.

He then proceeds to show, by quoting from utterances of the other confederate leaders, that they also had recognized the fact that the patience of the people must have and ought to have a limit:—

In short, it seems to have been always understood that our experiment upon the aristocracy was but an experiment, and must have an end some time or other. The difference is only as to time. We were not to go on for ever inviting the lamb to lie down with the wolf, and the kid to play upon the cockatrice’s den. We must absolutely draw the line somewhere—and for me, I draw it at the Coercion Act.

From the time he drew the line in the manner indicated in this passage, Mitchel looked forward to a social revolution in Ireland as a necessary evil. He ceased to appeal to the upper classes, and made his appeal exclusively to

the mass of the people—both Catholic and Protestant. His final creed on this question of union of classes is well epitomized in the saying of Wolf Tone's which he selected as a motto for the *United Irishman*. "If the men of property will not support us, they must fall; we can support ourselves by the aid of that numerous and respectable class of the community—the men of no property." On the other and wider question of national policy and of the means by which the Irish masses might hope to successfully assert their national right, the views of Mitchel are not so easily stated. I have been anxious to be both clear and accurate in any statements I may make on this subject, and with that object I have carefully gone through all utterances of Mitchel's that I could find, from the close of 1847 to the time of his arrest—and that whether contained in speeches, newspaper writings, or letters, as well as his subsequent account of these transactions in the "Last Conquest." I shall now proceed to summarize the impressions derived from such examination.

And first, as regards the question of an immediate insurrection. A great deal of very severe criticism of Mitchel's plans has been based upon the assumption that he advocated an immediate insurrection of peasants. I cannot find any justification for such assumption. Isolated passages might be cited from Mitchel's writings or speeches which seem like incitements to immediate insurrection. But even in such cases the context usually makes clear the meaning. And, further, as against such passages, we have the fact that, during the very period we are now speaking of, Mitchel frequently, and in the most emphatic language, disavowed the intention of inciting the peasantry to a rising. To take an example out of many. During the three days' debate on O'Brien's resolutions, Mr. Doheny spoke in support of O'Brien. Amongst other things he

spoke of Mitchel's policy as being "to stimulate an immediate insurrection." Mitchel, in replying to this, said (I quote from the *Nation* of February 5, 1848):—

Mr. Doheny has been arguing with great success against somebody or other who recommends an immediate insurrection in Ireland. He has not been dealing with my letter at all, for I say distinctly in that letter that I do not recommend an immediate insurrection. And Mr. Doheny has shown most graphically how the people would be butchered if they rose in armed resistance to the poor rates; but the only resistance to rates I spoke of was passive resistance. Passive resistance was the word.

But, it may be urged, if Mitchel did not mean insurrection, what then did he mean? Why did he so earnestly call on the people to arm themselves, and why was he so vigorous in denouncing moral force? I answer, he meant several things, but principally the following:—

1. He meant and preached passive resistance to English law. He held that in Ireland, where the great mass of the population were notoriously hostile to the law and the law-makers, it was possible by a system of passive resistance to bring English law into contempt, and indeed, for all practical purposes, to abolish English law. With this object he exhorted the people to resist the payment of rent, to resist the payment of poor rates, and to resist in every possible way short of absolute insurrection the effort to carry off the food they raised and sell it for payment of rent. He seems to have understood very well the uses and power of the weapon which has since come to be known as "boycotting." He tells us:—

Therefore, I had come to the conclusion that the whole system ought to be met with resistance at every point; and the means for this would be extremely simple; namely, a combination amongst the people to obstruct and render impossible the transport and shipment of Irish provisions; to refuse all aid in its removal; to

destroy the highways, to prevent every one, by intimidation, from daring to bid for grain or cattle if brought to auction under distress (a method of obstruction which had put an end to tithes before)—in short, to offer a passive resistance universally, but occasionally, when opportunity served, to try the steel.

So, too, when in the *United Irishman* he announced his determination to force upon the Government the alternative of either leaving him free to write about them as he might see fit, or of deliberately and openly packing a jury to convict him—this was another part of the same plan; the object always being to discredit English law and to bring the administration of that law into contempt. He seems to have concluded that self-government for Ireland would come of necessity if once it could only be made clear to Englishmen that the practice of governing Ireland by English-made law was, if not impossible, at least so very difficult and costly as to make it more than doubtful if the game was worth the candle.

2. He exhorted the people to arm themselves, because he believed that the only form of Irish opinion that was likely to carry any weight with English statesmen was armed opinion. The sort of opinion which manifests itself exclusively in talk, and which gives its opponents plainly to understand that it will not in the last resort do anything worse than attend meetings and pass resolutions—this sort of opinion Mitchel thought had had a fair trial. It had been tried by O'Connell in the repeal agitation under circumstances more favourable to its success than were ever likely to occur again in that generation, and its failure had been complete and decisive. As to parliamentary action, no one knew better than Mitchel what a capable, sincere, and united body of Irishmen might do in the British Parliament. The reader cannot have read even such extracts as I have given from his correspondence

without seeing this very clearly. If, in the end, he came to denounce parliamentary proceedings as useless, and worse than useless, it was not because he questioned the abstract proposition that a great deal of good might be done by an independent Irish party, but because he had reached the conclusion that, in the actual circumstances they had to deal with, the creation of an independent Irish party in Parliament was a thing wholly beyond their power. As usual, I find his position upon this point summarized by himself in a manner at once clear and precise :—

For my part, I admit that I am weary of constitutional agitation, and will never lift a finger to help it more. I believe we have not the materials for it, and that the show of constitutional power we possess was exactly devised by our enemies to delude us into an endless and driftless agitation. We have miserable franchises, and every day makes them worse. We have a government that first makes us poor, and then tempts our poverty with bribes and promises. We have few men of public virtue and national spirit, and in a sinking and debased province we cannot hope to rear such men more abundantly. Then, if we had them, where should we get constituencies to elect them, or so much as know them when they see them?

But though opinion of the strictly legal and peaceful kind might be a humbug, and though effective parliamentary action might be impossible, it did not follow that something might not be effected by armed opinion. Immediate war was not necessary—was not, indeed, advisable. But the knowledge that the people were armed, and that, in case of any serious complication in Europe, they might have the will and the power to make their opinion felt in an unpleasant way—this knowledge might have a very decided effect in inducing the English Government to consider favourably the Irish demands. The sort of opinion that John Mitchel believed might tell with the English Government has been described by himself :—

Well, and must the force of opinion always be legal?—always be peaceful? Does opinion then mean law? Does opinion cease to be opinion the moment it steps out of the trenches of the constitution? Why, sir, I hold that there is no opinion in Ireland worth a farthing which is not illegal. I hold that armed opinion is a thousand times stronger than unarmed—and further, that in a national struggle that opinion is the most potent whose sword is sharpest, and whose aim is surest. We are told it was opinion and sympathy, and other metaphysical entities that rescued Italy, and scared Austria back from Ferrara without a blow. Yes, but it was opinion with the helmet of a national guard on his head, and a long sword by his side; it was opinion, standing, match in hand, at the breech of a gun charged to the muzzle. Now, I say all this, not to vindicate myself, for I have nowhere recommended the Irish nation to attain legislative independence by force of arms in their present broken and divided condition (as Mr. O'Brien's resolution imputes to me), not to vindicate myself, but to vindicate the original free constitution of our confederacy.

3. Mitchel was entirely opposed to anything in the way of secret conspiracy or secret organization. He did not believe that it was possible to carry on successfully a secret conspiracy in Ireland as then situated. The English Government would be sure to know what was going on in any event, and it was much better they should get their knowledge from the open and fearless avowals of the conspirators themselves than from paid spies and informers. Add to this that Mitchel had an instinctive dislike of secret conspiracy, and had, moreover, certain theories on the subject of revolution which he had in part learned from Carlyle. It seemed to him that all the great revolutions in the world's history—from the expulsion of the Pisistratids at Athens and the Tarquins at Rome, down to the French Revolution itself—had been the result rather of sudden and spontaneous upheavals of popular passion than of any pre-arranged revolutionary programme. It is probably true that the revolutions just named, and several others

that might be mentioned, did transact themselves to a considerable degree in accordance with the Carlylean theory. But then, it is one thing for a people to change their own form of government, another thing for one nation to shake off the grip of a dominant and a stronger nation which holds it in subjection. It is true, as I have said, that Mitchel did not counsel an immediate insurrection while England's hands were free ; but he certainly did, by every means in his power, try to turn the attention of the people from moral force to physical force, to bring them into such a fighting temper as might ensure that they would be ready to avail themselves of the opportunity whenever the opportunity came. He told them to arm themselves as rapidly and as secretly as they could, to get drilled where possible, to join the confederate clubs. It is probable that, excluding secret organization, these heads of advice included all the revolutionary preparation which he regarded as useful or feasible under the circumstances. To get the people to arm and drill and join the clubs, to work them up to the fighting temper, and to organize a system of passive resistance to English law at all points where English law was most vulnerable, to do these things, and for the rest to let matters take their course, and the revolution come in its own good time. This seems to me to be a fair summary of Mitchel's advice. But it must be admitted that John Mitchel often indulged in a certain exaggerative style of writing, especially in matters where his feelings were deeply involved. He subsequently, as we shall see, himself referred to this habit of exaggeration in thought and expression, and referred to it as a serious fault. I believe it was this mental peculiarity which, more than anything else, caused John Mitchel to be regarded by a large class of Irishmen as a wildly impractical politician. It would certainly be easy to select isolated passages from the *United Irishman* upon

the question of organization and preparation which could not be defended from a practical point of view. But I have aimed rather to give a summary of his teaching on these points, taken as a whole, than to fix the limits of the most extreme doctrines which can be laid to his charge on the evidence of isolated passages in his writings.

On the question of secret conspiracy, Mitchel has the following observations in the oft-quoted "Letter to Lord Clarendon," which appeared in the first number of the *United Irishman* :—

And we differ from the illustrious conspirators of Ninety-Eight, not in principle—no, not an iota—but, as I shall presently show you, materially as to the mode of action. Theirs was a secret conspiracy—ours is a public one. *They* had not learned the charm of open, honest, outspoken resistance to oppression : and through their secret organization you wrought their ruin ;—*we* defy you, and all the informers and detectives that British corruption ever bred. No espionage can tell you more than we will proclaim once a week on the house-tops. If you desire to have a Castle detective employed about the *United Irishman* office in Trinity Street I shall make no objection, provided the man be sober and honest. If Sir George Grey or Sir William Somerville would like to read our correspondence, we make him welcome for the present—only let the letters be forwarded without losing a post. So that you see we get rid of the whole crew of informers at once.

4. Upon the question of the extent to which Mitchel desired to bring about a contest in open field between the Irish masses and the English soldiers, I have said nearly all there is to be said. He certainly looked forward to open war as the end to which his policy must ultimately lead. But he had no wish to precipitate a general collision ; on the contrary, he wished to wait for a favourable opportunity. Meantime, he saw clearly enough that his policy of passive resistance to so-called law could not be effectually

carried out without occasional collisions between the people and the police or soldiers. He wished that, so far as might be, any fighting that had to be done should be rather street-fighting in cities than fighting in the open fields. In the former kind of warfare the superior arms and superior discipline of the soldiers would not tell with nearly such effect as in the latter. And good opportunities for such collisions would occur whenever the Government seized upon any one of the popular leaders and went through the farce of trying him with a packed jury. These trials, as they were called, generally took place in large cities where there were masses of men and streets to barricade. Whether the Government did or did not succeed in securing a conviction, the effect upon the people's temper would be very similar. They would be likely to be in a fighting mood. In Mitchel's view occasional and isolated collisions of this kind were rather to be encouraged than avoided; they would tend to keep the popular feeling at the right point, and to accustom the people to stand fire.

Having now got a sufficiently clear idea of what Mitchel's policy was, we are in a position to say in how far it was fairly open to the criticisms that have been made upon it. At the start I may say that I am not prepared to maintain that John Mitchel was a practical politician. To say of a man that he was not a practical politician, may be regarded as praise by some, by others as blame; but, be this as it may, truth compels me to say of John Mitchel that he had little gift for practical politics. A very intimate friend of his, who was constantly with him, and who worked under him during this '48 time, has written for me the following. I accept the passage as a fair statement of Mitchel's capacity for practical politics, and, as such, I reproduce it here:—

“John Mitchel was, as John Dillon once told him, no

politician ; and I think it was a misfortune for him that he was drawn into politics and away from literature. He could sow the seed, but could not wait for it to grow ; could rouse men to action, and point out the direction they should take, but to guide their actual steps was not given him. We used to laugh at the advice given him in that '48 time by a well-meaning friend—that he should 'allow his opinions to take root before he disseminated them.' But what the friend meant was true, and needed saying. He either did not know, or could not sufficiently bear in mind what the mass of men are, and was subject to a perpetually recurrent surprise at finding that they were not of his temper,—recurrent despair of all parties, including his own, which in turn quickly gave way before the strong necessity of action."

"He did not know or could not bear in mind what the mass of men are"—this is a perfectly just criticism ; and this criticism will help us to understand in what respect chiefly his policy was impractical. It was not that the course he recommended was in the abstract impossible ; but it was impossible with the instruments he had to work upon. Such a system of passive resistance to law as he recommended, if pursued with courage and perseverance by a united people, would doubtless prove a very formidable weapon, a weapon which even the power of England might find it difficult to deal with. But the Irish people were very far from being up to the requisite mark for such a policy ; and there was no reasonable hope that within the time that would be allowed to him, Mitchel could bring them up to the requisite mark. Famine had killed out what spirit the people had shown during the best days of the repeal agitation. The landlords on the one side were calling for coercion and disarmament ; Conciliation Hall on the other side was preaching patience and perseverance

in starvation. The masses of the people were utterly cowed, demoralized, and prostrate to the earth. Mitchel himself saw this clearly enough ; and at times he wrote or spoke as though he doubted the possibility of effecting much good in the near future, either by his own or any other policy. Witness the following passage from a speech of his delivered in December, 1847 :—

It is a very serious and solemn subject this new English attack upon the liberties and lives of Irishmen ; it is not to be approached without grave and anxious deliberation ; it is not to be met by mere rant and vague declamation against foreign government and Saxon oppression—there has been quite enough of that—especially as we have no available mode of making a combined resistance. This nation, sir, it is not to be concealed, is lying in a most helpless and degraded condition ; we have neither moral force nor physical force wherewith to right our wrongs. Our moral force has turned out a humbug—our physical force is nothing but our naked hands. We can do little but remonstrate, and strive to keep alive what manly public opinion remains amongst us, which is our only weapon. Of the efficacy of this mode of resistance I wish I could speak hopefully ; I wish I could see the way to the freedom and salvation of this country through any of the agencies now at work ; I wish I could say that this Irish Confederation will surely regenerate the land and restore its nationhood and freedom. We have not—it is folly to pretend we have—such strength, such universal national support, as would entitle us to make this boast.

But at other times, especially later on, he spoke more hopefully. On the whole, I think, it must be allowed that Mitchel propounded his policy, not merely as a desperate alternative to starvation, but as a policy which, in the actual circumstances of the case, had a fair chance of succeeding. Viewing all the circumstances, after the lapse of many years, I cannot admit that the policy advocated by Mitchel had even a fair chance of success.

But it is one thing to say of a policy that it had not a reasonable chance of succeeding; another thing to say that, considered in relation to other plans to which it was opposed, the policy was conspicuously and wildly impracticable. This last has in effect been said of Mitchel's doctrines, and, I think, unjustly. In judging of this matter we must always remember that men of exceptionally cool and clear heads were led on, in the excitement of this '48 time, to attempts which they themselves afterwards came to look upon as entirely hopeless. We must remember that from the time of the French Revolution on to the final catastrophe in Ireland, all the Young Irelanders were advocates of physical force. It is difficult, or rather it is impossible for us now to realize the state of mind of young and active-spirited men at that time. These young men had awakened from the trance symbolized by the "single drop of blood theory," and, rejoiced to find that they did not "abhor the sword," they forgot that they possessed none. Besides, the terrible scenes of 1846-1847 had filled those whom they did not paralyze with a desperate vehemence. The country seemed to be sinking into an abyss, and projects were entertained which would not have been listened to in ordinary times. At the very time when men's feelings were most strained, the smouldering embers of revolution burst into a blaze in the Two Sicilies, and almost immediately after, as though a train had been laid from capital to capital, the revolutionary flame flashed up at Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Milan, Buda-Pesth. For a time men thought themselves translated from the Europe of the Holy Alliance to a Europe according to the principles of '89. At such a time it was not to be wondered at that men should lose their heads. The most cool-headed and sagacious of the Young Ireland leaders were hurried along with the general tide into a policy of physical force, the

hopelessness of which they would in ordinary times have been the first to point out.

Now, considered in relation to any other physical force policy propounded or attempted by the Young Irelanders, Mitchel's policy was in my opinion the most practical, or, rather, the least obviously impractical. I cannot take space here to argue this question out. I give my view for what it may be worth. If any reader should desire to form a judgment for himself, he can find ample material to go upon in the files of the *Nation* and the *United Irishman*.

If it be allowed that physical force could effect nothing against England, and that, as things then were, parliamentary agitation was equally hopeless, must we therefore conclude that the Young Irelanders were powerless for good ; that they did nothing and could do nothing towards saving their country? By no means. In the way of sowing seed that was sure to bear fruit in time ; in the way of preparing for and insuring a better state of things in the coming generation, the Young Irelanders did much, and they might have done more. But to stay the famine, or to repeal the Union in their own generation, was not within their power. "We can do little but remonstrate, and strive to keep alive what manly public opinion remains amongst us, which is our only weapon." When Mitchel spoke these words, he spoke the conviction of his sober judgment, and he spoke the truth. Two months later, he told his countrymen that "there was no help in franchises, in votings, in spoutings, in shoutings, and toasts drunk with enthusiasm—nor in anything in this world save the *extensor* and *contractor* muscles of their right arms, in these and in the goodness of God alone." In the latter part of this sentence we have the utterance of a man who passionately refuses to accept the conclusions of sober judgment. He would not and he could not believe that for such a horrible state

of things as then existed in Ireland there was absolutely no remedy. He seized upon the only policy that seemed to afford the faintest hope of any escape in the near future ; and his will to believe, begotten of desperate need, was strong enough to silence, or all but to silence, the doubts suggested by his judgment. If the doubts returned at times, he had his answer ready ; and indeed the following passage, taken from the *United Irishman*, and addressed to the small farmers of Ireland, may be accepted as the last word which Mitchel there had to utter upon this question of the practicability of his policy :—

But I am told it is vain to speak thus to *you* ; that the “ peace-policy ” of O’Connell is dearer to you than life and honour—that many of your clergy, too, exhort you rather to die than violate what the English call “ law,”—and that you are resolved to take their bidding. Then *dic*—die in your patience and perseverance ; but be well assured of this—that the priest who bids you perish patiently amidst your own golden harvests, preaches the gospel of England, insults manhood and common sense, bears false witness against religion, and blasphemes the providence of God.

Twenty years afterwards—looking back upon the course pursued by his friends and himself in 1848, he wrote :—

True, it was an act of desperation : but remember that in those very same days the people were actually perishing at any rate, dying by thirty thousand per month ; and by a death far more hideous than ever was dealt by grape, or shell, or sabre. “ Oppression maketh the wise man mad ; ” and the oppression at that moment was so bitter and relentless that no calmness remained for calculating chances.

I have now said all that I deem it necessary to say upon this subject—the subject of John Mitchel’s Irish policy and its practicability or rationality. I have dwelt upon it at considerable length, and I have done so deliberately. Into the advocacy of this doctrine the whole

force of Mitchel's intellect and the whole energy of his passion were thrown more completely than was the case with any other doctrine he ever preached. Upon the judgment we may form regarding the rationality (as distinguished from the mere practicability) of this scheme of policy must depend in a great degree our answer to the question—was John Mitchel a mere visionary, as some have contended, or was he, as others have held, a man of true genius?

Before leaving this subject, it may be right to call attention to the fact that in the three days' debate the balance of opinion amongst the recognized leaders of Young Ireland was in favour of O'Brien and against Mitchel. Duffy, Dillon, Meagher, and O'Gorman successively rose and spoke in support of O'Brien. Mitchel had on his side, Martin, who occupied the chair during the debate, Father Kenyon, John Fisher Murray, and Devin Reilly.

On February 12, 1848, a week after the close of the three days' debate, the first number of the *United Irishman* appeared. This paper was owned exclusively by Mitchel, and the greater part of the editorial work was done by him. For contributors he had, as he tells us, "not only Reilly, but Father Kenyon—a good Tipperary priest, and one of the most accomplished scholars in Ireland—John Martin, a Protestant and a landlord, and James Clarence Mangan—Catholics, Protestants, and Pagans, but all resolute revolutionists."

Mitchel's opinions, especially since the confederation debate, had become pretty generally known. Their boldness and originality captivated many, and aroused everywhere interest and curiosity. When it became known that he was about to start a paper in which he would be free to say exactly what he believed, the public curiosity became all the greater. There was quite a rush upon the

office to secure copies of the paper, and on the day of publication copies were sold as high as two shillings each. The day after the appearance of the paper, Mitchel wrote to Martin :—

I hope you got your copies of the *United Irishman*. There was horrible confusion yesterday, and I am sure there are numberless mistakes.

In some of the copies there is a paragraph from some Glasgow meeting, interpolated into the middle of your letter. We had some defective arrangements in the printing department; but nothing that can't be cured next week. The paper, too, had to be turned out without markets, without miscellaneous news, without a score of things it ought to have,—but next week—next week!

Indeed, it is next to a miracle that we got it turned out at all. We had to stop the press for six or seven hours yesterday, and so could not supply the newsmen, who literally sacked the office, and broke the door. The price on the street rose during the day to a shilling, and when the second batch was poured in about four o'clock, the crush in Trinity Street, at the office door, and inside, was so terrific that one poor newswoman was carried off insensible. If we could have fully supplied the demand, we might have got off fifteen thousand copies. As it was, we could only get from the press five thousand, which were carried off instanter, and we expect the rush to be as strong as ever on Monday morning.

On the whole, we will *float*, unless we have a very bad bottom. There is tide-way enough. And unless, also, the Chief Justice pour a broadside into us too soon.

Your letter is very good; Kenyon's beautiful. We did not get your agricultural paper.

The extraordinary success of the paper and the eagerness with which it was bought attracted attention in Parliament. Lord Stanley (afterwards Earl of Derby) referred to the matter in the House of Lords. He read extracts from the first number of the *United Irishman*, and proceeded to comment thereon: "With the people of

Ireland, my lords, this language will tell, and I say it is not safe to disregard it. These men are honest; they are not the kind of men who make their patriotism the means of barter for place or pension. They are not to be bought off by the Government of the day for a colonial place, or by a snug situation in the customs or excise. No; they honestly repudiate this course; they are rebels at heart; and they are rebels avowed, who are in earnest in what they say and propose to do. My lords, this is not a fit subject, at all events, for contempt."

John Mitchel received abundance of advice—from relatives, from friends, and from admirers—as to the course he ought to pursue in the conduct of his paper. To all this advice he paid very little attention. He had a very clear idea himself of the lines upon which he meant to go, and the advice, however well meant, was for the most part, thrown away on him. About the middle of February, he writes to his sister Mary:—

I have only time to say that I take all your advice in amazingly good part; but if you saw the quires and reams of advice and caution that I get every morning, you would spare me your share. It is all to the same purpose, except as to the saving of money. In fact, if O'Connell was the best-abused man in Ireland, I am the best-advised man.

Well, I am glad you all like the paper, but I assure you the next will be far better.

This book is intended to be a life of John Mitchel—not a selection from his miscellaneous writings and speeches. I have, therefore, as a general rule, avoided the giving of long extracts from his published writings or speeches, except such extracts as are in their nature biographical. If, to some extent, I depart from this rule in the case of the *United Irishman*, it is because I consider that case exceptional. He wrote in the *United Irishman* as he never

afterwards wrote in any one of the other papers he edited. I have remarked upon the extent to which the energy of his mind and heart were thrown into the advocacy of his Irish policy in 1848. Most of the writings I had then before my mind are to be found in the *United Irishman*. Without some knowledge of Mitchel's writings in this paper it is not possible to realize the strength of the conviction, and the intensity of the passion which prompted his action at this important crisis of his life.

The first number of the *United Irishman* contained the famous "Letter to Lord Clarendon." In this letter Mitchel told the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in language, the meaning of which it was not possible to mistake, the objects with which the *United Irishman* was started, and the doctrines it would preach. I have already had occasion to quote from this letter. After expressing the views quoted above upon the subject of secret conspiracy, the letter proceeds :—

Now as to our positive action. Your lordship, I believe, has read the prospectus of our journal—in fact, I know you have. Well, we count upon a great circulation for this weekly sheet of ours amongst the industrious classes both in town and country all Ireland over; and we do really intend to preach and enforce the various principles there set down, to follow the same to *all* their consequences, and to point out in plain language the directest means of putting them into practice. Just take our third axiom, *that the life of a peasant is as sacred as the life of a nobleman*—why, it seems a truism, and yet it is denied and set at nought by all your "laws," as you call them. But consider what follows from this truth: consider all its practical bearings, and how, if once apprehended and laid to heart by the people, it is likely to be realized; think of the collateral questions involved—"if there be a *surplus*, who are the surplus?"—"the hard-working or the idle?"—"surplus once ascertained, how to be got rid of?" and the like; and then imagine how these questions are likely to find solution amongst "an excitable peasantry." Yet they are fair

and legitimate questions, nay, pressing, life-or-death questions ; and we mean in the columns of this *United Irishman* to argue, discuss, illustrate, and, if possible, determine them.

We will do the like by the other maxims in our prospectus :—

That legal and constitutional agitation in Ireland is a delusion.

That 'every man (except a born slave, who aspires only to beget slaves and to die a slave), ought to have ARMS and to practise the use of them.

That no good thing can come from the English Parliament.

I shall not insult your lordship's excellent understanding by pointing out to *you* all the manifest consequences that follow from these plain truths. But the people are not so acute—they need to have every one of these matters elucidated for them one by one, and set in all possible points of view ; for indeed they are a simple and credulous people, and have had much base teaching. They have been taught, for instance, that "patience and perseverance" in rags and starvation is a virtue—that to eat the food they sow and reap is a crime, and that "the man who commits a crime [this sort of crime] gives strength to the enemy." They were not taught by these bad teachers to avoid real crimes, lying, boasting, cringing, rearing up their children as beggars, taking their children's bread and giving it unto dogs. None of all this have they learned yet ; but, please God, they shall.

It is against the "law," it seems, to preach all this ; and your lordship and the "law-officers," I have heard say, will overwhelm me with an indictment—and, indeed, I am told the worthy Chief Justice, at Clonmel lately (where he was "striking terror" into Tipperary), on seeing the programme of this paper, did roll his eyes like a carnivorous ogre, and then and there christened it the *Queen's Bench Gazette* ; never doubting that he would make a meal of it one day in his den at Inn's Quay.

Yes, of course you will prosecute before long ; in self-defence, I hope, you must ;—and then I have only one request to make,—that you will bid the sheriff to bid Mr. Ponder (that, I think, is the gentleman's name) *not* to pack the jury. A high-minded English nobleman, a conciliatory and ameliorative nobleman, so gracious at Lord Mayor's feasts, so condescending at ancient concerts, so blandly benignant at *réunions* of literary persons,—surely such a nobleman as this will not play with loaded dice, or

with marked cards, to juggle away an accused man's liberty or life. No, I feel that I have only to mention the circumstance in order to make you hasten to arrange this point with the worthy sheriff.

But, lest there should be any mistake, I will tell you what I shall do—there shall be no secrets from you. I intend, then, to pay special regard to the jury lists, to excite public attention continually to the jury arrangements of this city; and, above all, to publish a series of interesting lectures on “the office and duty of jurors,” more especially in cases of sedition, where the “law” is at one side, and the liberty of their country at the other.

I need say no more. You must now perceive that this same anticipated prosecution is one of the chief weapons wherewith we mean to storm and sack the enchanted castle. For be it known to you, that in such a case you shall either publicly, boldly, notoriously, *pack a jury*, or else see the accused rebel walk a free man out of the Court of Queen's Bench—which will be a victory only less than the rout of your lordship's redcoats in the open field. And think you that in case of such a victory, I will not repeat the blow? and again repeat it,—until all the world shall see that England's law does not govern this nation?

But you *will* pack? You will bravely defy threats and bullying, and insolent public opinion, and *do your duty*? You will have up the *United Irishman* before twelve of your lordship's *lion-and-unicorn* tradesmen who are privileged to supply some minor matters for the viceregal establishment? Will you do this, and carry your conviction with a high hand? I think you will, nay, I think you must, if you and your nation mean to go on making even a *show* of governing here. Well, then, I will have other men ready to take up my testimony—ready and willing, oh, Porsena Clarendon! to thrust their hands into the blazing fire *until it be extinguished*. But you will ask for additional “powers?” You will resort to courts-martial, and triangles, and free quarters? Well, *that*, at last, will be the end of “constitutional agitation,” and Irishmen will then find themselves front to front with their enemies, and feel that there is no help in franchises, in votings, in spoutings, in shoutings, and toasts drunk with enthusiasm—nor in any thing in this world save the *extensor* and *contractor* muscles of their right arms, in these and in the goodness

of God above. To that issue the "condition of Ireland question" must be brought.

In the first number of the *United Irishman* I find also a notice of certain political pamphlets on Ireland (including one by Jonathan Pim, on the "Condition and Prospects of Ireland"). In this notice a striking contrast is drawn between Irish life as seen in the precincts of Dublin Castle and Irish life as seen amongst the peasantry. Firstly, we have Dublin "society life":—

This city is now full of mirth and state dancing, for the viceroy is in his festive season. In the light of that mock throne on the hill over the Liffey there, vibrate now all the dizened atomies of "happy Ireland." Glittering captains, silvered lieutenants, epauletted puppyism in every grade and phase and fashion; wigged debasement fresh from a public hanging, and gowned simony, flock around delighted at the "flourishing condition of the state." "Lords" and "gentlemen," who for some months have seen and aided the glories of the viceregal rule, come from the North and South, from far Mayo and central Meath, to lay their mite of admiration at his feet. Fat dames smirk in his drawing-rooms; and young girls in gay attire tell of the obeisant gratitude of their sires. No whisper of death, no shadow of desolation, breaks over that crowd. Without, peaceful files of soldiery, and sleek comfortable police preserve points of etiquette in the too-enthusiastic streets. Surely that is the metropolis of a happy, well-governed, plenteous, peaceful land. Surely no government can be politer, more agreeable, nay fascinating, than that.

Then he proceeds to point out a difference between the policy of the governing classes in the opening of 1848 and in the previous famine years. In doing this, he is led to give a picture of the state of the country as he had seen it in 1847. In this contrast the extent of Mitchel's power over the English language is manifested, and the effect is striking—I might say terrible:—

Last year, we recollect it well, a calm, still horror was over the

land. Go where you would, in the heart of the town or in the suburb, on the mountain side or the level plain, there was the stillness and heavy pall-like feel of the chamber of death. You stood in the presence of a dread, silent, vast dissolution. An unseen ruin was creeping round you. You saw no war of classes, no open Janissary war of foreigners, no human agency of destruction. You could weep, but the rising curse died unspoken within your heart, like a profanity. Human passion there was none, but inhuman and unearthly quiet. Children met you, toiling heavily on stone-heaps, but their burning eyes were senseless, and their faces cramped and weasened like stunted old men. Gangs worked, but without a murmur, or a whistle, or a laugh, ghostly, like voiceless shadows to the eye. Even womanhood had ceased to be womanly. The birds of the air carolled no more, and the crow and the raven dropped dead upon the wing. The very dogs, hairless, with the head down, and the vertebræ of the back protruding like a saw of bone, glared on you from the ditch-side with a wolfish avid eye, and then slunk away scowling and cowardly. Nay, the sky of heaven, the blue mountains, the still lake, stretching far away westward, looked not as their wont. Between them and you rose up a steaming agony, a film of suffering, impervious and dim. It seemed as if the *anima mundi*, the soul of the land was faint and dying, and that the faintness and the death had crept into all things of earth and heaven. You stood there, too, silenced, in the presence of the unseen and the terrible.

Quite a number of the best editorials in the *United Irishman* were written in the form of letters. Thus there were several letters to Lord Clarendon; there were two letters to the small farmers of Ireland; four letters to the Protestant farmers and labourers of the North; one to Lord John Russell, etc. These letters were in Mitchel's very best style of journalistic writing. They showed that, in the two years during which Mitchel had pursued the profession of a journalist, he had become a complete master of the English language. His style of writing combined in a rare degree the attributes of grace, of terse-

ness, and of vigour. I believe it would be possible to select from the columns of the *United Irishman* quite a number of specimens of political writing which are fully equal to anything in Swift.

It is worthy of note that at the very time when, as a political writer, Mitchel was doing his best work, as a man of letters he was doing little or nothing. There is hardly any literary work of Mitchel's in the *United Irishman*. And this is easily explained. Mitchel's productiveness in the field of letters was in inverse proportion to the interest he felt in politics. During the *Nation* period he found time for some literary work; during the brief career of the *United Irishman* he found time for none; all three of the papers which, at different times, he edited in America contain a great deal of literary work—most of it of a high degree of excellence.

I am not able to say with precision what was the circulation of the *United Irishman*. But I believe it started with what was then regarded as a very large circulation for a weekly paper, and that the circulation went on increasing down to the time of Mitchel's arrest. Mitchel himself states, in the "Last Conquest," that at the time of his arrest the *United Irishman* was by far the most widely circulated paper in Ireland. I presume the statement is not made without good grounds.

Before the fourth number of the *United Irishman* appeared, the news came of the French Revolution of February, 1848. I have already said something as to the effect which this event produced. Those of the confederate leaders who, three weeks before, had opposed a policy of physical force as inopportune were now the first to proclaim that the time for action had come. It was not that they admitted that they had been wrong in the position they had previously taken up; but they considered the

French Revolution—an event which no one could have foreseen—entirely changed the situation. From that time forward until the final catastrophe, all the confederate leaders were for a policy which may fairly be described as a policy of physical force.

There was some difference of opinion as to the form of the policy and the time for action ; but if the *Nation* represented the sentiments of the majority, that sentiment was that the example set by the French was a good example, which ought to be followed at the earliest opportunity.

When the three days' debate resulted in his policy being voted down, Mitchel did not sever his connection with the confederation. He ceased to attend the meetings, or to take any active part in the proceedings ; but he did not cease to be a member. Shortly after the close of the debate, he wrote a letter to the council, in which he stated the course he had resolved to pursue, and his reasons therefor. Having expressed himself confident that public opinion would soon compel the confederates to undo what they had done, he proceeded to say :—

Relying upon this confident expectation, upon the thorough honesty and worth of most of my late political associates, and, more than all, upon the manly spirit of independence and fair play, which gave life to our confederacy at first, and is the life and soul of it still, I am unwilling to renounce connection for ever with the only genuine national organization in the country. Paralyzed as the Irish Confederation is at present, mesmerized by landlord influence, and bewildered by constitutional law, it is still the only body in Ireland that is making, or thinks it is making, any single honest effort to rid the island of English dominion.

I, therefore, only withdraw from active interference in the proceedings of the confederation ; and so soon as it shall be once more open to all repealers of the Union (be they physical-force revolutionists, aristocrats, democrats, Chartists, Orangemen, Whigs, or Thugs), I will be found in your ranks again.

The immediate effect of the French Revolution was to throw the confederation open once more to Mitchel and those who thought with him ; that is to say, to allow of his taking an active part in the proceedings, with liberty to preach his own ideas as to the true and only way of repealing the Union. Mitchel attended the first meeting of the confederation that was held after the news of the French Revolution. The scene which took place upon his entry was striking. It has been described to me by one who was present on the occasion. My informant assures me that at no one of the many public meetings at which he has been present did he ever hear such enthusiastic and prolonged cheering as greeted Mitchel upon his reappearance at the confederation.

Reilly and the others who had followed Mitchel in his retirement, followed him also in his return. There were no recriminations or taunts over what had passed. The leaders on both sides were too much in earnest—felt too deeply the gravity of the crisis—for work of that sort. Mitchel, with the sanction of the committee, brought up a resolution directing the clubs to arm themselves and to elect officers. The resolution was passed by acclamation.

Shortly after the close of the three days' debate, a vacancy occurred in the representation of Waterford. In pursuance of the parliamentary policy which had just been sanctioned by the majority, it was resolved that Thomas Francis Meagher should stand for Waterford. Meagher accordingly issued his address, and went down to the scene of action. His opponents were Patrick Costello, an old placeman started by Conciliation Hall, and Sir Henry Barron, a local Whig, who ran on his own account.

Mitchel, in the *United Irishman*, opposed Meagher's candidature. The better the candidate, the more disastrous, in his view, would be the effect of his return.

“What glorious genius,” he wrote, “what indomitable courage and passionate devotion to a sacred cause can do we might expect to see done by Mr. Meagher. Yet we pray for his defeat. If Mr. Meagher were in Parliament, men’s eyes would be attracted thither once more. Some hope of justice might again arise in this too easily deluded people.” The opportunity was certainly a good one for testing the possibilities of a parliamentary policy. Waterford was Meagher’s native city. He was himself one of the best known and most popular of the confederates. The people of Waterford were entirely and enthusiastically with him. The confederation strained every nerve, and sent down their best men to help Meagher in his canvas. The result was not very encouraging to those who advocated parliamentary methods. Sir Henry Barron was elected; Costello came a few votes behind Barron; and Meagher was a long way behind both of them.

The Waterford election had an effect similar in kind to that of the French Revolution, though, of course, much less in degree. Mitchel’s position both with the country and with the confederation was still further strengthened.

Shortly after the election, Meagher admitted that in this matter Mitchel had been right, and he had been wrong. He addressed a letter from Waterford to the council of the confederation, of which letter he sent a copy to Mitchel for publication in the *United Irishman*. I extract the following passage:—“More than this—the present crisis, as it is called, dictates something beyond the adjustment of our differences. It dictates bold steps, and the boldest that can be taken. As to the old routine of petitions, reports, getting men into Parliament, and all that sort of work—I am heartily sick of it since my defeat. The contest, in which I was recently engaged, has clearly proved to me that the will of the people has no effect

whilst we appeal to the weapons of the franchise. Besides, I think it would be a crime in me to waste, any further, in obscure election squabbles, that fine enthusiasm by which I was sustained, and which, surging and swaying round me to the last moment—strong and passionate even when the cloud had lowered upon it—convinced me that it was an element destined to give life to a nobler struggle, upon a wider field.” And after his return to Dublin, he spoke at public meetings to a like effect.

I have referred above to the “Letters to the Small Farmers of Ireland,” which appeared as editorials in the *United Irishman*. The second of these appeared in the number for March 4, 1848. If I were called on to select some one article as a specimen of Mitchel’s political writing during this period, I think I should select this letter. It covers nearly three columns of close print, and I can only give some short quotations. At one part, Mitchel explains very clearly to the people how it comes to pass that, although they raise abundance of other crops, yet the failure of the potato crop means for them starvation. He instances the case of a man named Boland, who had, a short time previously, been found with his two little girls—all dead of cold and hunger.

Boland held a farm of over twenty acres of Colonel Windham, upon which he raised crops. How, then, did he and his two daughters come to die of hunger? Mitchel explains the matter thus:—

Now, what became of poor Boland’s twenty acres of crop? Part of it went to Gibraltar, to victual the garrison; part to South Africa, to provision the robber-army; part went to Spain, to pay for the landlord’s wine; part to London, to pay the interest of his honour’s mortgage to the Jews. The English ate some of it—the Chinese had their share; the Jews and the Gentiles divided it amongst them, and there was *none* for Boland.

The plain remedy for all this—the only way you can save

yourselves alive—is to reverse the order of payment, to take and keep, out of the crops you raise, your own subsistence, and that of your families and labourers, *first*; to part with none until you are sure of your own living,—to combine with your neighbours that they may do the like, and back you in your determination—and to *resist*, in whatever way may be needful, all claims whatever, legal or illegal, till your own claims are satisfied. If it needs *all* your crop to keep you alive, you will be justified in refusing and resisting payment of any rent, tribute, rates, or taxes whatsoever.

He next proceeds to enlarge upon and expound the proposition stated at the close of the above extract. Then he adds:—

Ejection in Ireland, at present—ejection for any cause—*means murder*. The ejecting landlord or agent is a Thug—the sheriff and the bailiffs are accomplices—the assistant-barrister is an accessory before the fact. But you have no “law” to punish *this* kind of agrarian outrage. The “laws,” as we saw, are all on the other side: therefore you must protect your lives against these attacks as best you can, and issue your own special commission to punish them.

In one word, *whatever* is needful to be done in order to enable you to consume, in security, as much of your own produce as will keep soul and body together, that you must *do*. And you *may* be able to do it without open resistance to the “law.” You do not forget the anti-tithe movement; you know how to look on with arms folded, while the law takes its course. Let the “law” execute itself in every point, and develop all its resources: let it lift and carry the whole harvest of Ireland: let the law find cartage: let the law find storage: let the law find purchasers who will dare to buy the people’s food;—and then, if the roads should by any chance happen to have been dug up, the low grounds flooded, the keystones plucked out of bridges,—or other means taken to stop the traffic called “commerce,” which carries off your food every year to be eaten in England,—why, let the *law* mend the roads, rebuild the bridges, drain the lands, and restore the communications. Let the “law” vindicate its own supremacy.

The concluding sentences of this letter furnish a good

specimen of a style of writing which John Mitchel occasionally made use of. His style was in a great degree original ; yet it is not difficult to detect in it the influence of certain favourite authors. Of such influences there are three which I fancy I can detect in a pre-eminent degree. These are (1) Swift, (2) Carlyle, and (3) the Bible. The following extract is the conclusion of the letter from which I have been quoting. The reader will easily detect in some of its sentences the influence of the Bible. Mitchel has just been referring, in a passage which I have already extracted, to the argument that the Irish people are too prostrate to listen to such preachings as his. He proceeds :—

I will not believe that Irishmen are so degraded and utterly lost as this. The earth is awakening from sleep : a flash of electric fire is passing through the dumb millions. Democracy is girding himself once more like a strong man to run a race ; and slumbering nations are arising in their might, and “shaking their invincible locks.” Oh ! my countrymen, look up, look up ! Arise from the death-dust where you have long been lying, and let this light visit your eyes also, and touch your souls. Let your ears drink in the blessed words, “*Liberty ! Fraternity ! Equality !*” which are soon to ring from pole to pole. Clear steel will, ere long, dawn upon you in your desolate darkness ; and the rolling thunder of the people’s cannon will drive before it many a heavy cloud that has long hidden from you the face of heaven.

Pray for that day : and preserve life and health, that you may worthily meet it. Above all, let the man amongst you who has no gun, *sell his garment and buy one.*

The confederates summoned a great public meeting in Dublin for the 15th of March. The meeting was held in the Music Hall, Abbey Street, and was very largely attended. O’Brien proposed that an address of congratulation be presented to the French Republic. I have said that from the time of the French Revolution the confederate leaders,

who had previously opposed Mitchel's views most strongly, became advocates of physical force. In his speech at the meeting of the 15th of March, O'Brien explained his position in straightforward and manly terms. He referred to his former position as stated in the three days' debate, and proceeded: "But the state of affairs was totally different now, and he had no hesitation in declaring that he thought the minds of intelligent young men should be turned to the consideration of such questions as: how strong places can be captured, and weak ones defended; how supplies of food and ammunition can be cut off from an enemy; and how they can be secured to a friendly force. The time has also come when every lover of his country should come forward openly, and proclaim his willingness to be enrolled as a member of a national guard."

And Meagher, who seconded O'Brien's motion, exhorted his countrymen in these words: "When the world is in arms—when the silence which for two and thirty years has reigned upon the plain of Waterloo at last is broken—then be prepared to grasp your freedom with an armed hand, and hold it with the same. . . . If the Union will be maintained in spite of the will of the Irish people, if the Government of Ireland insists upon being a Government of dragoons and bombardiers, of detectives and light infantry, then up with the barricades, and invoke the God of battles!"

The address to the French people was voted by acclamation.

O'Brien, Meagher, and a Dublin tradesman named Hollywood were appointed to carry the address to Paris. Two days after the confederate meeting came St. Patrick's Day. The citizens of Dublin had resolved to imitate the example of the confederates, and to hold a meeting and vote an address of their own. The Government feared, or pretended to fear, an outbreak on that day. The troops

were kept under arms, and a very imposing display of military force was made. The citizens' meeting was adjourned to Monday, the 19th of March, when it was held. It was again a very large and enthusiastic meeting, and another address to the French Government was adopted. Dillon and O'Gorman were selected as the bearers of this latter address.

As John Mitchel was not on either of these deputations, it hardly enters into the history of his life to tell how they fared. It may suffice to say that the reception of the deputation by Lamartine was a disappointment to them. They did not come to ask for armed help, as Lamartine afterwards falsely asserted. But they did expect some strong expression of sympathy and approval from the young republic, and this they failed to elicit from Lamartine. Other leaders of the revolution—especially Ledru Rollin—were less cautious. They expressed their sympathy frankly and openly, and indeed said all that could reasonably be expected of them.

The British Government and its representatives in Ireland watched all these proceedings very closely. The plans of the confederates were perfectly well known to the Government; and indeed the authorities hardly needed their numerous and efficient army of spies to keep them informed regarding plans which were proclaimed openly. The favourite plan of the confederates now was to make all possible preparation—both at home and abroad—during the coming summer, and when the autumn came to fight for the harvest. But, as Mitchel himself very truly remarks, the foe they had to deal with was no weak fool. Lord Clarendon saw clearly enough the advantages which the confederates hoped to gain by deferring the struggle until the harvest. There would then be at once something to fight *for* and something to fight *on*. Lord Clarendon,

therefore, determined in some way or other to precipitate the issue. His first attack was made just before O'Brien's departure for Paris. It must have transpired that the Government were meditating a blow of some kind, since I find the following letters were written by Mitchel to Martin in the early part of March :—

I believe there is no doubt that I will be arrested next week, and it *may* be for treason, which would not admit of bail, so I would be shut up from the management of the paper until after my trial.

I don't know what to do about the future conduct of the paper, if this should happen, *unless you come up*. Indeed, I think we are fast coming to a crisis here, at any rate, and unless it is very inconvenient to you, I think you might come for a while.

So far as pecuniary matters are concerned, we could, I think, manage to keep up the paper ; but I have a great dread of leaving its *management* entirely to Reilly and William, in case of my being shut up.

And again, three days later :—

Of course my letter of Friday was only to prepare you for what may probably happen. I am not sure of being prosecuted, and, indeed, there seems some reason to think that the Government means to give up the attempt at governing *by law*, and to use the sword alone. Did you read the article from the *Morning Chronicle* ? Last Friday a number of military officers were sworn in as magistrates for the city of Dublin, in order to enable them, without any intervention of the civil authority, to require any assembly to disperse, and, if not obeyed, to fire upon them. Everything looks like a deliberate design to provoke a riot here on St. Patrick's Day (which they can easily do by employing some persons to begin it), and then to butcher the people without remorse. Of course we must try to keep matters quiet *for that day*.

John O'Connell is doing his very utmost to prevent any union of repealers, which, he knows, would be the end of him.

I will let you know the first moment anything important occurs.

The first move of the Government, when it came, proved to be a much less formidable proceeding than the confederate leaders had anticipated. On the 20th of March, the day after the citizens' meeting, O'Brien, Meagher, and Mitchel were called on to give bail to stand their trials for sedition. The charge—as against O'Brien and Meagher—was grounded upon certain passages in their speeches at the meeting which voted the address to the French people. If the reader will refer to the passages from these speeches quoted above, he will find them, I think, sufficiently seditious. Mitchel's indictment, or rather indictments—for there were two of them—rested on certain articles in the *United Irishman*, which were certainly about as seditious as it was possible for language to be.

A trial for sedition was not a very serious business, and the prosecuted confederates took the announcement very coolly. Bail was at once given. O'Brien and Meagher started for Paris to present the address; Mitchel remained at home, and devoted his efforts to improving upon the sedition he had already written in the *United Irishman*.

On his way home from Paris, O'Brien appeared in Parliament. The House was engaged in discussing the Treason-Felony Bill. This was a measure introduced by the Whig Government of Lord Russell, with the object of bringing the struggle in Ireland to an immediate issue. The bill proposed to make certain offences of a strictly political kind felonies, and punishable as felonies. That is to say, the bill purported to make the offence of inciting the Irish people to assert their national right by arms, if possible, a crime of the same class as burglary and manslaughter. The idea at bottom of this legislation was profound and original. Treason was not looked upon as a disgraceful crime. There was a certain element of romance connected with this crime; its historical associations were

not altogether discreditable, and the Irish were a romantic and imaginative people. In order to wean the Irish people from their perverse disposition to admire traitors, it was only necessary to change the name of the crime! It was only necessary for the English Parliament to declare that offences such as were committed by O'Brien and Mitchel were felonies, and, behold! the Irish people would at once see the error of their ways, and recognize the fact that the men they had most admired were in very truth not heroes but scoundrels. It is impossible to read the debates upon this Treason-Felony Bill without laughing. As usual, when this class of legislation was proposed for Ireland, both of the great parties in Parliament were in entire agreement. Sir Robert Peel declared that what Ireland needed was to have her national aspirations made not only a crime but an ignominious crime. Had these English legislators, even in a very limited degree, understood what they were talking about, they would have known that to make Irish nationality "an ignominious crime" in the eyes of the Irish people was a task entirely beyond their power. To punish *was* in their power; and they would have done better to have contented themselves with declaring the penalty without troubling their heads so much about the definition. The result was such as any one, having the least knowledge of the Irish character, might have foreseen. A conviction for felony (of the political kind) is regarded in Ireland as a certificate of good character; and from John Mitchel to Michael Davitt, those of her sons whom Ireland has most delighted to honour have been precisely the ones whom England has stamped with the brand of "ignominious crime."

The House of Commons, as I have said, was discussing this Treason-Felony Bill when O'Brien walked in. The House was aware of what the nature of his mission to Paris

had been, and was in no mood to give him a very friendly reception :—

O'Brien rose to address the House, and never, since first Parliament met in Westminster, was heard such a chorus of frantic and obscene outcries. Honourable members crowed like cocks, lowed like cows, and brayed like jackasses, according to the custom of the Honourable House ; but O'Brien, quite unmoved, persisted until he obtained a hearing ; and I wish that my limits permitted me to present the whole of that manly and noble speech, in which he took care to reiterate all his "treasons," and "seditions."

But, of course, O'Brien's speech, however manly and noble it might be, did not in the least impede the passage of the Treason-Felony Act. The bill passed both Houses in a few days and by immense majorities, and the royal assent was given without undue delay. O'Brien returned to Dublin and did not again trouble the House of Commons.

In the number of the *United Irishman* for the Saturday following the scene in the House of Commons just described, Mitchel addressed a letter to Lord John Russell upon the subject of the proposed Treason-Felony Bill. He contrasted very effectively Lord Russell's professions in England with his practice in Ireland. In justification of his own course, he was at pains to explain some of the reasons which had induced him to take up an attitude of such desperate hostility to the "law" as it existed in Ireland. For example :—

Twelve months ago, on the Easter Monday of last year, Dublin saw one of the most ignominious Easter festivals—one of the ghastliest galas ever exhibited under the sun—the solemn inauguration, namely, of the Irish nation in its new career of national pauperism. There, in the esplanade before the "Royal Barracks," was erected the national model soup-kitchen, gaily bedizened, laurelled, and bannered, and fair to see ; and in and out, and all around, sauntered parties of our supercilious second-hand "better classes" of the castle-offices, fed on superior rations at the people's

expense, and be vies of fair dames, and military officers, braided with public braid, and padded with public padding; and there, too, were the pale and piteous ranks of model-paupers, broken tradesmen, ruined farmers, destitute sempstresses, ranged at a respectful distance till the genteel persons had duly inspected the arrangements—and then marched by policemen to the place allotted them, where they were to feed on the meagre diet with *chained spoons*—to show the “gentry” how pauper spirit can be broken, and pauper appetite can gulp down its bitter bread and its bitterer shame and wrath together;—and all this time the genteel persons chatted and simpered as pleasantly as if the clothes they wore, and the carriages they drove in, were their own—as if “Royal Barracks,” castle, and soup-kitchen, were to last for ever.

We three criminals, my lord, who are to appear to-day in the Court of Queen’s Bench, were spectators of that soup-kitchen scene; and I believe we all left it with one thought—that this day we had surely touched the lowest point—that Ireland and the Irish *could* sink no further; and that she must not see such another Easter Monday, though we should die for it.

My lord, I came to the conclusion on that day that the Queen’s “Crown and Government” were in danger—nay, that they ought to be in danger;—and I resolved that no effort of mine should be wanting to make the danger increase and become *critical*. As I looked on the hideous scene, I asked myself whether there were, indeed, “law” or “Government” in the land—or if so, whether they were not worse than *no* law and *no* government. What had law done for these poor wretches and their five million fellow-paupers throughout Ireland? It was the “law” that carried off all the crops they raised, and shipped them to England; it was “law” that took the labour of their hands, and gave them half food for it while they were able to work; and cast them off to perish, like supernumerary kittens. “Law” told them they must not wear the cloth they wove, nor eat the corn they raised, nor dwell in the houses they builded; and if they dared do any of these things, or remonstrate against the hard usage, “law” scourged and bullied them, imprisoned, gagged, and coerced them; to bring them to a more submissive mind. And what was more shameful and fatal still, this devoted people

were in the hands of "leaders," who told them that all this "law"—this London Parliament Law—was the law of God—that if they violated it by eating the food they made, or wearing the cloth they wove, they committed a crime, and gave strength to the enemy—nay, those "leaders" never failed to thank God in public, with sanctimonious voice and head uncovered, that their fellow-countrymen *were* dying in patience and perseverance amidst their own bounteous harvests: Parliament Law was acknowledged as the supreme Ruler and Judge, and its decrees submitted to as the inscrutable dispensation of a Parliament Providence.

Such degradation was unexampled in the world. To think that Ireland was my country became intolerable to me; I felt that I had no right to breathe the free air or to walk in the sun; I was ashamed to look my own children in the face, until I should do something towards the overthrow of this dynasty of the devil. And I resolved that Parliament Law must be openly defied and trampled on: and that I—if no other, even I—would show my countrymen how to do it.

The letter concluded with some satirical remarks regarding the indignation with which Lord Russell had in some of his published works—notably in his "Life of Lord William Russell"—spoken of the practice of jury-packing.

O'Brien, having made up his mind that there was no more use for him in Parliament, looked around for some other opportunity of useful work. It seemed clear that matters were tending to an issue which would have to be decided by some form of physical force. O'Brien determined to go on a tour of inspection through Munster, with the object of testing the extent to which the people there were prepared for action. It was suggested in the council of the confederation that a deputation should go on this mission, consisting of the three confederates who were to be prosecuted—O'Brien, Mitchel, and Meagher. But O'Brien objected to having Mitchel associated with him on the deputation; he did not wish people to suppose that he concurred in Mitchel's doctrines. It was accordingly

arranged, with Mitchel's full assent, that O'Brien and Meagher should go alone. They were to visit Limerick first, and the national party there prepared to give a *soirée* in their honour. Mitchel received a special invitation from the Limerick committee to attend this *soirée*. He did not understand that he was precluded in honour from accepting a particular invitation such as this by his consent to not accompany O'Brien on his southern tour. He accepted the invitation, and went to Limerick. As O'Brien was, at first, much offended by this incident, it may be as well to give Mitchel's own account of it. I take the following from the *United Irishman* for the 6th of May :—

The truth is, that before any of us went to Limerick at all, and before the objectionable paragraph about O'Connell was printed in the *United Irishman*, Mr. O'Brien intimated to me his aversion to any public association with me, and his strong wish that I should not accompany him and Mr. Meagher in the proposed tour to the South, in which they contemplated the holding of meetings at New Ross, Waterford, Cork, and Limerick. I at once yielded to his wish, and undertook to use the leisure which must intervene before the trial in visiting some towns in Ulster in company with my friend, Mr. Martin. Mr. Martin, however, being confined to his house by an accident, and not being able to make any preliminary arrangements, I accepted an invitation to some meetings in England, and actually went to England, but was suddenly recalled by the Attorney-General, who required my presence in Dublin. I then went to Limerick on the special invitation of the committee of Limerick repealers.

The occurrences which took place at Limerick are not pleasant for an Irishman to recall. Mitchel himself, to some extent, and still more other writers in the *United Irishman*, for whose writings he was held responsible, had given bitter offence to Old Ireland by writing somewhat more plainly about O'Connell's later work and its results than was usual in those times. Certain leading O'Connellites

in Limerick organized a mob of the lowest classes, and an attack was made upon the room in which the banquet was given. The attack was directed mainly against Mitchel, but O'Brien also came in for his share of violence and insult. He was deeply hurt. For a time he talked of retiring from Irish politics. But his friends in the Confederation succeeded in dissuading him from that course. He was determined, however, to decisively clear himself from all suspicion of concurring in the doctrines advocated by Mitchel. He still spoke of retiring from the confederation; but he made it clear that he proposed to take this step because Mitchel was a leading member of that body. On learning this, Mitchel at once decided on his course:—

On Monday last, finding that Mr. O'Brien had actually written a letter, conveying his own resignation, on the express ground that he felt himself compromised by the sentiments put forward at various times by leading members of the council; and being informed that my own withdrawal would have the effect of inducing him to recall that letter, I at once decided on doing so, and informed both him and the council of my determination. As to the Limerick riot, of which I deeply regret to have been the occasion, it never occurred to me that I should leave my post on that account.

The Limerick *soirée* took place on the 29th of April, and the letter from which the last quotation is taken was written on the 3rd of May. Mitchel then ceased to be a member of the Irish Confederation, and Reilly retired with him. The part of Mitchel's doctrine to which O'Brien most strongly objected was that which regarded the landed gentry. O'Brien had not yet abandoned all hope of winning over his own class to the national side. The whole bent of his nature was opposed to the idea of a social revolution.

The trials of O'Brien and Meagher for sedition took

place about the middle of May. The juries were struck after a fashion then common in Ireland, and not by any means unknown even now; but the packing was not carefully done:—

O'Brien and Meagher were first tried; and as their "sedition" had been so open and avowed—and as the Whig Government was extremely reluctant to pack juries *if they could help it*—the Crown officers left on each of the two juries *one* repealer. It was enough. A true repealer knew that no Irishman *could* commit any offence against a foreign queen; and in each case the one repealer stood out, refused to convict, though he should be starved to death; and the traversers, amidst cheering multitudes, were escorted triumphantly from the Four Courts to the confederate committee rooms, where they addressed the people, and promised to repeat and improve upon all their seditions. The excitement of the country was intense. The defeat of the "Government" was celebrated all over the country by bonfires and illuminations, and the clubs became more diligent in arming themselves.

Mitchel's trials were to follow. He had put in a plea in abatement, which had had the effect of somewhat delaying his trials. The Government felt they could not afford to fail again; and especially they could not afford to fail as against the man who had so often defied them, and predicted that they would fail, unless they packed their jury very carefully indeed. Mitchel and his counsel scrutinized very closely the process of striking the juries which were to try him. When the juries were struck, it was plain they could not be relied on to convict. They were even more favourable than the juries which had refused to convict in the cases of O'Brien and Meagher. This was awkward for the Government. But Lord Clarendon was now thoroughly aroused, and indeed alarmed. He resolved to bring matters to an issue. On the 13th of May, the day after the juries were struck, the prosecutions for sedition were dropped.

On the evening of that day, May 13, 1848, Mitchel returned home from the *United Irishman* office to his house on Ontario Terrace, about five o'clock in the evening. With him came Devin Reilly, then a regular contributor to the *United Irishman*, and William Mitchel, John's brother, who from the time the paper was started had acted as sub-editor. The party—consisting of the three gentlemen and Mrs. Mitchel—had just sat down to dinner, when a knock came to the door. A few minutes later two gentlemen were ushered into the room, whom Mitchel at once divined to be officers of the detective class. They intimated very politely that they had no wish to disturb Mr. Mitchel at dinner. "Very well, then," said Mr. Mitchel, "if you are in no hurry, sit down, and we will finish our dinner." When the dinner was finished, Mitchel rose, and, without further preparation, told the officers he was ready. They drove off hurriedly. Mitchel was brought first to the head police-office, where Mr. Porter was still sitting, seemingly by previous arrangement with the Crown authorities. He was there detained a few minutes, and informed of the nature of the charge against him. Thence he was taken to Newgate Gaol.

On the same day that Mitchel was arrested—the 13th of May—appeared the *United Irishman* containing the third of his "Letters to the Protestant Farmers, Labourers, and Artisans of the North of Ireland." This series had been commenced in the *United Irishman* of the 22nd of April, and had since been continued from week to week. It was the second of these letters, published in the *United Irishman* of the 29th of April, which contained most of the matter upon which the charge of treason-felony was based. The main object of this series of letters was to win the classes to whom it was addressed round to the national side. In the first and second of the letters he earnestly

and eagerly impresses upon his "kinsmen of the North" the truth that the real danger they had to fear was not the Pope and the "scarlet woman," but the persistent efforts that were being made to rob them of their tenant-right. To get hold of and to own the land they lived on was a much more important business for them than to resist the "mystery of iniquity" and popish ascendancy :—

Ah ! but you say, what has all this to do with *repeal*? Repeal is a papist movement ; and papists want *ascendency* ; and if we had not Protestant England to back us, the numbers of Catholics in Ireland would so preponderate, that they could carry anything they like against us. Now, I do assure you, my friends, that, except yourselves, there is nobody in all Ireland dreaming of religious distinctions in politics ; and such nonsense is kept alive only by our worshipful grand masters, with their prate about Jezebel and the man of sin. If you look all over the continent of Europe, you will perceive that the fullest and freest toleration, or rather the most unreserved religious equality, has been everywhere established ; and that Catholic countries have taken the lead in this—especially those Catholic countries which have got their revolutions *over*. In France and Belgium, complete religious equality has long been acknowledged ; in Italy, the moment they saw Austria's back turned, complete religious equality was at once proclaimed ; whenever any of the German states becomes its own master, religious equality is the first thing the people insist upon. In truth, religious penalties and disqualifications are now nowhere to be found, save as the worn-out tools and engines of some old tyranny or other. The *people* have no interest in them at all, see no meaning in them, and desire, above all things, to have done with them for ever. It may be laid down, as a rule, admitting of no exception, that in these latter ages, wherever the sovereignty of the people is established, there religious ascendancy can stand no longer.

But the reason why your grand masters and grand chaplains endeavour to represent the national movement in Ireland as a movement for religious ascendancy is tolerably plain ; it is merely to disguise from you the true meaning and drift of it. "Repeal,"

they tell you, involves a religious war, and penal laws against Protestants, and seizure of forfeited estates. But I tell you that no repealer in Ireland cares a rush whether you admit seven sacraments or only two; no sane repealer ever thinks of the forfeited estates, or would dare to propose, in an assembly of three, that title to landed property should be disturbed on such pretext.

He next goes on to show how strong are the motives of the northern landlords to raise a false issue and to conceal from their tenants the true issue. Then he proceeds:—

No wonder, therefore, that they try to conceal from you the true nature of the Irish movement; no wonder the grand masters, and their agents, bailiffs, and bog-bailiffs, exhort you to resist “popery,” and withstand the woman who sitteth upon seven hills. They would fain draw away your eyes in any direction, to Rome, to Jericho, to Timbuctoo, but, at all events, away from your own fields and haggards.

In the third letter—published on the day of his arrest—he has some advice to offer on the subject of policy. After deriding agitation and urging the necessity of arming, he continues:—

But why do I reason thus with you—with you, the Irish of Ulster, who never have denied the noble creed and sacraments of manhood? *You* have not been schooled for forty years in the fatal cant of moral force—you have not been utterly debauched and emasculated by the clap-trap platitudes of public meetings, and the empty glare of “imposing demonstrations.” You have not yet learned the litany of slaves, and the whine of beaten hounds, and the way to die a coward’s death. No, let once the great idea of your country’s destiny seize on *you*, my kinsmen, and the way will be plain before you as a pike-staff twelve feet long.

Yet there is one lesson you must learn—fraternal respect for your countrymen of the South, and that sympathy with them, and faith in them, without which there can be no vital nationality in Ireland. You little know the history and sore trials and humilia-

tions of this ancient Irish race ; ground and trampled first for long ages into the very earth, and then taught—expressly *taught*—in solemn harangues, and even in sermons, that it was their duty to die, and see their children die before their faces, rather than resist their tyrants as men ought. *You* can hardly believe that creatures with the gait and aspect of men could have been brought to this. And you cannot wonder that they should have been slow, slow in struggling upward out of such darkness and desolation. But I tell you the light has at length come to them ; the flowery spring of this year is the dawning of their day ; and before the cornfields of Ireland are white for the reaper, our eyes shall see the sun flashing gloriously, if the Heavens be kind to us, on a hundred thousand pikes.

I will speak plainly. There is now growing on the soil of Ireland a wealth of grain, and roots, and cattle, far more than enough to sustain in life and in comfort all the inhabitants of the island. *That wealth must not leave us another year*—not until every grain of it is fought for in every stage, from the tying of the sheaf to the loading of the ship.

In the *United Irishman* for the 20th of May—one week after Mitchel's arrest—appeared the fourth and last of the letters to the Protestants of the North. It was dated from Newgate, and was the last piece of writing that John Mitchel did for the *United Irishman*. In this last letter he describes the motives by which he was led on to establish the *United Irishman*. He summarizes in language of great force his view of the working of British rule in Ireland. That this system must be put an end to, he had long seen clearly enough ; but not until recently had he seen the right way to go about the work :—

There was, of course, but one way to do this needful business, and it was obvious enough, too ; but for a long time I could not see it. Knowing that British dominion was the power which maintained the imposture here, I long thought that if only all “ranks and classes,” as the phrase runs, could be banded together for the repeal of the Union, the wrong and injustice would dis-

appear; "Irish noblemen and gentlemen"—the thick-headed individuals before mentioned—would straightway treat their tenants like Christian men, and not like wild beasts; and the tillers of the soil would suddenly acquire a perpetuity in their lands, and sitting, every man of them, under his own vine and fig tree, would consume the fruits of the earth in peace, with none to make them afraid. It was an agreeable delusion, and the fabulous glories of "Eighty-Two" shed a glow over it for awhile. But it was a dream; "Irish noblemen and gentlemen" no longer acknowledge Ireland for their country—they are "Britons;" their education, their feelings, and, what is more important to them, their *interests*, are all British. British "laws" eject and distrain for them; British troops preserve "life and property," and chase their surplus tenants. For them judges charge; for them hangmen strangle. Without British government they are nothing; and they have instinct enough (albeit thick-headed) to perceive that Irish landlordism has grown so rotten and hideous a thing that only its strict alliance, offensive and defensive, with British oligarchy, saves it from going down to sudden perdition. So soon as this became clear to my mind, I, for one, desisted from the vain attempt at seducing the English landlord garrison in Ireland to fraternize with Irishmen, and turned upon the garrison itself. I determined to try how many men in Ireland would help me to lay the axe to the root of this rotten and hideous Irish landlordism; that we might see *how much would come down* along with it.

There is good reason to believe that these exhortations to his kinsmen of the North were beginning to tell, and that the Government knew it, and therefore determined to put a stop to that at any cost.

The next number of the *United Irishman*—that for May 27, 1848—was the last issue of the paper. It contained no writing by Mitchel; the leading articles were written by Martin and Reilly.

Thus closed the short but brilliant career of the *United Irishman*. It existed for just three months and a half. Regard being had to the briefness of its existence, and to

the population and poverty of the country in which it was published, the career of the *United Irishman* was a very striking proof of the commanding position to which Mitchel had attained in Irish politics. From its very start, its circulation, for an Irish weekly journal, was unprecedented: and while it continued to be published it exercised a far greater influence over the minds of the Irish masses than any other journal then published in the country.

Events were now hurrying on to the final issue. The struggle was bound to be decided one way or the other within the next few weeks. The reader may perhaps smile at this use of the word "struggle." He may think that it was very much the same kind of struggle as takes place between a cat and a mouse. But nothing is more certain than that the Government did not so regard the matter then. There is ample proof to show that during the two months which preceded Mitchel's trial, Lord Clarendon was seriously alarmed. On the 5th of April, some five weeks before Mitchel's arrest, Sir Charles Napier wrote to Lord Auckland, then First Lord of the Admiralty: "I have had a conference this morning with Lord Clarendon, and by what he says, and what I hear from other quarters, I think things are in a very ticklish position." Afterwards, it suited the humour of Englishmen to laugh at this '48 business as a very small affair; but at the time the tendency of the Government was rather to exaggerate than to make little of the danger. The startling success of the popular uprisings in the various capitals of Europe had filled men's minds with somewhat vague ideas as to the ease with which popular revolutions could be transacted. The long peace which had succeeded Waterloo had had the effect of causing the element of military force to be altogether undervalued. Dickens and the humourists in *Punch* could then laugh at the "British soldier" in a way that no one

would think of doing now. Hence men's ideas as to the chances of a conflict between soldiers on the one side and peasants or civilians on the other, were by no means so definite and precise as they are to-day. Moreover, the fears of Lord Clarendon, although greater probably than the occasion justified, were by no means groundless. An examination, made after Mitchel's arrest, revealed the fact that in Dublin city and county there were thirty confederate clubs, numbering from two hundred to five hundred members each. In the lesser towns and in the country, the number of clubs was comparatively few. But clubs were being formed all over the country; and it was an open secret that, somehow or other, the clubs were getting armed. Had the Government failed in their attempt to convict and carry off Mitchel, the effect upon the popular feeling would have been enormous. Clubs would have started up all over the country. Even despite of the Government's success in carrying off Mitchel, the club organization spread rapidly. By the beginning of July the clubs had reached the number of one hundred and fifty, representing some fifty thousand men. I do not mean to contend that the ultimate issue of the struggle would at any time have been in doubt. But, if Mitchel's jury had been a little less carefully packed than it was, if the jury had divided, and Mitchel had been able to carry on the *United Irishman* for a few months longer, I have very little doubt but that he would have succeeded in bringing things to such a pass that the supremacy of English law could not have been asserted and maintained in Ireland without a serious struggle. Whether this would have been a desirable result or not, I must leave it to the reader to decide for himself.

Lord Clarendon, at all events, thought the crisis a serious one, and strained every nerve to meet it. He made

elaborate preparations to meet and to crush an outbreak in case an outbreak should take place. But, at the same time, he hastened to take the means that seemed to him most likely to prevent any serious outbreak. The principal of these means was the removal of the man whom Lord Clarendon unquestionably regarded as the most dangerous man he had to deal with. As the law then stood, it was not possible to carry off Mitchel from the scene without going through the form of a trial and obtaining the verdict of a jury. For the present, therefore, the problem narrowed itself down to this—how to secure a jury that might be relied on to find Mitchel guilty.

Now, Lord John Russell himself, and several members of his Government, had been even more than usually eloquent in their denunciations of jury-packing when jury-packing was practised by the Tories. The position was, therefore, an awkward one. Just before the trial commenced, Lord Russell stated in the House of Commons that he had written to his noble friend that “he trusted there would not arise any charge of unfairness as to the composition of the juries; as, for his own part, he would rather see those parties acquitted than that there should be any such unfairness.” But the “noble friend” did not by any means acquiesce in this view. Nothing could be more entirely opposed than the professions of Lord Russell and the action of Lord Clarendon and his underlings. And, no doubt, Lord Clarendon succeeded in convincing *his* “noble friend” that the present was no time for trifling; that virtuous professions on the subject of jury-packing were well enough in their proper place and for their proper object, but that, just then, the question was not how to damage the Tories, but how to convict John Mitchel.

Jury-packing is a practice only too familiar to the administration of the law in Ireland. We have all heard

the arguments by which the practice is defended. The object, we are told, is to secure a jury which will find a verdict according to the law and the evidence; or, more tersely, a jury which will find a verdict according to their oaths. If the masses of the people cannot be relied on to find according to their oaths, why, you must only select your jury from the class, however small, which can be so relied on. Mitchel's case was very well adapted to test this principle, and to bring out clearly the real issue. There is not the smallest question but that, according to the new English law, and according to the definitions to be found in English statutes, John Mitchel was a felon, and was guilty of the offences laid to his charge. On the other hand, with the great majority of his countrymen—including in that majority some of the best men in Ireland—John Mitchel was the very opposite of a felon. He was a man who had devoted his life and the best energies of his mind to the task of saving his country; who had faced a fate worse than death rather than sit with folded arms while his country was perishing; and whose only fault, if he had a fault, was, that he had loved Ireland "not wisely, but too well." In this state of things, what was the duty of an Irish nationalist on Mitchel's jury? The Attorney-General would tell him that he was sworn to find according to law, and could not therefore acquit without perjury. In a certain sense the statement is true; but this is a sort of perjury which English juries have committed before now with the enthusiastic approbation of their countrymen. To perjure one's self in this way is to be *splendide mendax*. If Washington had been taken by the British and tried before a jury of Americans, what would have been the duty, in such a case, of the jury who had been sworn to find a verdict "according to law?" A question, I should think, which few men would find it hard to answer.

When, therefore, such arguments as above cited are urged, the answer is ready. If a system of law, depending for its sanction upon superior force and not upon consent, has become so entirely and so justly hateful to the people that juries fairly selected cannot be relied on to vindicate the law, there are no other ways of vindicating such law without having recourse to the method of fraudulently selected juries. The whole case for trial by jury fails. The thing has become a humbug, and had much better be done away with. If a law really rests for its ultimate sanction upon foreign bayonets, it is much better that this should appear openly and honestly. The attempt to keep up a show of constitutional government can only end in causing institutions, wholesome when rightly used, to be regarded by the people with distrust and hostility.

Even the annals of Irish state trials can hardly furnish another case in which the jury-packing was as gross, audacious, and cynically avowed as it was in Mitchel's case. The story of how Mitchel's jury was obtained has been told more than once. The following account is taken from a speech delivered by Mr. John Martin in the House of Commons, many years after the events now being narrated. I quote from the report in Hansard:—

“At the period in question (1848) the Dublin Jurors' Book contained the names of 4570 persons, of whom 2935 were Catholics, and 1635 Protestants. The jury panel contained 150 names of persons summoned by the sheriff to serve on the commission, but after the arrest of Mitchel, and during the progress of the same commission, the panel was changed. The names of the Catholics were taken out of the list, and for them were substituted the names of Protestants believed to be hostile to the prisoner. At the trial it was admitted by the sub-sheriff that about 100 of the names on the revised panel were supplied by

Mr. Wheeler, clerk in the sheriff's office, and a notorious Orange partisan. Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Monahan, clerk in the Attorney-General's office, were subpoenaed by the prisoner to give evidence which might have compelled the court to pronounce that the panel had been constructed contrary to law ; but both Wheeler and Monahan failed to appear, and the court refused an application to postpone the trial until they could be produced. The panel of 150 was constructed so as to contain 122 Protestants and 28 Catholics. On the full jurors' list the Catholics were in a proportion of almost two to one ; in the panel selected for the trial of Mitchel they were in a proportion of less than one to four. The panel, moreover, was so constructed, that in the first 80 names there were only those of eight Catholics ; and in the first 28 there was only the name of one Catholic—a gentleman who was well known never to attend when summoned as a juror. The remaining 20 Catholics were distributed among the last 70 names on the panel, and it was of course to be expected that the jury would be struck before the first 80 names had been called. It was clear, therefore, that there were ten chances to one against a single Catholic being sworn on the jury, or even being called."

But despite of this skilful manipulation, some Catholics were called. Lord Clarendon had a special animosity against Mitchel, and had not scrupled to have recourse to some very dirty means in order to blacken Mitchel's character. Amongst other means, he hired a man of the name of James Birch, who edited a vile paper in Dublin, to slander in every possible way Mitchel and other leading confederates. All the facts regarding this matter only came out afterwards when Birch took an action against the Chief Secretary for arrears of pay ; but it was pretty generally known at the time of Mitchel's trial that Birch

was in the pay of the Castle, and that he was slandering for hire. This was somewhat too much for the more decent and honourable of the Protestant jurors summoned to convict Mitchel. They did not like the job, and many of them stayed away. Hence it came to pass that, despite the careful preparation of the panel, as many as nineteen Catholics were called. They were each and every one challenged by the Crown and ordered to stand aside. The Government was determined there should be no mistake about this business. Such flagrant jury-packing was unpleasant, but a conviction must be had at any cost.

The jury having been packed in this elaborate way, Mitchel was brought up for trial on May 25, 1848. The trial was held in the court at Green Street. The prison of Newgate—since done away with—was near to the Court house. An underground passage led from the prison to the court, and along this passage Mitchel was conducted, and placed in the dock between two common malefactors. He has given us some account of his feelings on the occasion :—

The imagination of every reader must help me out here. Let any high-spirited Irishman try to conceive himself in my place on that day ; confronting that coarse mimicry of law and justice ; on the brink of a fate worse than a thousand deaths ; stationed in a dock between two thieves, for having dared to aspire to the privilege of freedom and manhood for myself and for my children ; with all the horrible sufferings and high aspirations of my country crowding on memory and imagination, and the moan of our perishing nation seeming to penetrate even there, and to load the air I breathed ; beholding the cause of our ancient nationhood brought to be decided, not, as I had hoped, by the proud array of our people in the field, but by the ignominious parchments of a dastard lawyer and the packed jury of a perjured sheriff. Scorn almost overcame indignation, as I saw the exquisitely elaborated preparations of the enemy ; and I felt that I would respect Lord

Clarendon far more if he had hired one of his detectives to stab me in the dark. That would have been a crime ; but surely not so vile and hideous a crime as this prostitution of the courts and the name and forms of justice.

The trial proceeded. Various speeches and writings of Mitchel's were given in evidence. There was, as I have said, no real question but that, according to British law, Mitchel was guilty of the offences laid to his charge. "The facts charged were easily proved ; they were patent, notorious, often repeated, and ostentatiously deliberate ; in-somuch that jurymen who felt themselves to be subjects of the Queen could not do otherwise than convict. On the other hand, any Irish nationalist must acquit. Never before or since have the Government of the foreign enemy and the Irish people met on so plain an issue." The character of the case and the character of the jury being such as they have been described, the issue could not be in doubt. If the eloquence of an advocate could have won over such a jury, they would have been won over by the speech of Mr. Holmes. It was the same Mr. Holmes who had been counsel for Mr. Duffy two years before in the prosecution for the railway article. The old veteran was now eighty-two years of age. He was leading counsel for Mitchel, and in this character he addressed to the jury a speech which was little, if at all, inferior to the speech he had made in the *Nation* prosecution two years before. He took high ground. He knew it was useless to deny, even had he been disposed to do so, that Mitchel had incited the people to resist the law. He boldly took up the position that, in a country governed as Ireland was, it was the right of every man to resist and to incite others to resist. This he undertook to prove by quoting from Blackstone and other authorities. The speech was, of course, thrown away upon those to whom it was addressed, but it was a mar-

vellous effort for so old a man. Mitchel had written the article which had formed the subject of Holmes's speech on the former trial. He had, therefore, the satisfaction of thinking that he had been the means of calling forth the two noblest displays of forensic eloquence which had been heard in an Irish court of justice for many a year.

The trial did not last long ; and the jury did not need to be locked up in order to induce an agreement. A verdict of guilty was handed in by the foreman on the evening of the second day. Sentence was deferred until the morning of the following day.

On Saturday, the 27th of May, Mitchel was brought up to receive his sentence. The sentence was pronounced by Baron Lefroy—it was fourteen years' transportation.

The closing scene of Mitchel's trial has been so often described that it is impossible for me to add anything new to what has already been written upon that subject. Yet a life of Mitchel would hardly be complete without some description of the last and greatest scene in the story of Mitchel's career as a leader of Young Ireland. The description given by Savage is the one selected by Mitchel himself, and is probably the best. When sentence was pronounced, Mitchel "concentrated all the disdain and defiance that had been gathering in his heart for two days" in the following sentences :—

"The law has now done its part, and the Queen of England, her crown and government in Ireland, are now secure, pursuant to Act of Parliament. I have done my part also. Three months ago I promised Lord Clarendon and his Government, who hold this country for the English, that I would provoke him into his courts of justice, as places of this kind are called, and that I would force him, publicly and notoriously, to pack a jury against me to convict me, or else that I would walk a free man out of this court, and provoke him to a contest in another field. My lords,

I knew I was setting my life on that cast ; but I knew that, in either event, victory should be with me ; and it is with me. Neither the jury, nor the judges, nor any other man in this court presumes to imagine that it is a criminal who stands in this dock. (Murmurs of applause, which the police endeavoured to repress.) I have shown what the law is made of in Ireland. I have shown that her Majesty's Government sustains itself in Ireland by packed juries—by partisan judges—by perjured sheriffs——”

After an interruption from Baron Lefroy—who “could not sit there,” to suffer the prisoner at that bar to utter very nearly a repetition of the offence for which he had been sentenced—Mitchel proceeded—

“What I have now to add is simply this : I have acted all through this business, from the first, under a strong sense of duty. I do not repent anything I have done ; and I believe that the course which I have opened is only commenced. The Roman, who saw his hand burning to ashes before the tyrant, promised that three hundred should follow out his enterprise. Can I not promise for one, for two, for three ?”

Indicating, as he spoke, Reilly, Martin, and Meagher, “Promise for me”—“and me”—“and me, Mitchel,” rose around him in commingled tones of earnest solemnity, passionate defiance, and fearless devotion, from his friends and followers ; and, embracing the exciting scene in a glance, he cried with proud eagerness—

“For one, for two, for three ? Ay, for hundreds !”

A scene of intense excitement followed, in the midst of which the judges fled from the bench, the prisoner was hustled off, waving his hand to his friends ; two of whom, Meagher and Doheney, were arrested for giving vent to the feeling impossible to suppress at such a moment.

As soon as Mitchel was removed, the noble old veteran who had pleaded for him so eloquently rose to say a word or two to the court. In the course of his remarks in passing sentence, Baron Lefroy had referred to certain portions of Mr. Holmes's speech as being nearly as objectionable as the language used by the prisoner himself. Mr.

Holmes thought it right to let the court see how little he cared for threats of this kind. He said :—

“ My lords, I think I had a perfect right to use the language I did yesterday. I wish now to state that what I said yesterday, as an advocate, I adopt to-day as my own opinion. I here avow all I have said ; and, perhaps, under the late Act of Parliament, her Majesty’s Attorney-General, if I have violated the law, may think it his duty to proceed against me in that way. I now say, with deliberation, that the sentiments I expressed with regard to England, and her treatment of this country, are my sentiments ; and I here avow them openly. The Attorney-General is present—I retract nothing. These are my well-judged sentiments—these are my opinions as to the relative position of England and Ireland, and if I have, as you seem to insinuate, violated the law by stating these opinions. I now deliberately do so again. Let her Majesty’s Attorney-General do his duty to his Government : I have done *mine* to my country.”

Upon this and the speech of Mr. Holmes which had preceded, Mitchel remarks that if anything had been wanted to justify him in his own eyes for all that he had done and meditated, the earnest and impassioned advocacy of the brave old republican of ’98 would have contented him well. And so well it might. Mr. Holmes spoke as he felt ; and such advocacy from such a man was certainly a thing to be proud of.

On the day on which sentence was passed upon Mitchel—but whether before or after the scene in court I do not know—he wrote from Newgate a brief note to his brother William. The letter is dated Newgate, May 27, 1848, and is written in a clear and firm hand :—

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

Perhaps I may not see you again. If not, you must get the accounts wound up as quickly as you can, and pay off MacDonnell, etc. . . . John Martin will, I believe, try to purchase

the materials and set up a new paper. Farewell, my dear William, and I hope you will run a quieter and luckier career than your friend and brother,

JOHN MITCHEL.

William tried to see his brother after sentence. He obtained an order for admission, and called at Newgate at three o'clock in the afternoon. He was told that no one could be allowed to see John Mitchel then, but that he might see his brother if he would come the following morning. Before the following morning came, John Mitchel was on board the *Shearwater*.

Mr. Mitchel's wife and his two eldest sons were allowed to see him during the brief interval that elapsed between his sentence and his carrying off. They hardly hoped to meet again. Such partings are sacred, and are not to be described by biographers.

The question of attempting to rescue Mitchel had come up for discussion in the council of the confederation immediately after the arrest. Reilly and a few others thought a rescue ought to be attempted, whether it succeeded or not. But most of the confederate leaders were of opinion that, in face of the elaborate military preparations of the Government, success in rescuing Mitchel was not to be hoped for. To make the attempt, and lead the people to be slaughtered without a hope of success, seemed criminal. Meagher was at first of the same opinion as Reilly; but when he found that the most trusted leaders of the confederates were against a rescue, and when he heard their reasons, he gave up the project. He afterwards stated his reasons for this change of opinion. He became convinced, he said, that the views he had at first entertained were sentiments which, if acted upon, would associate his name with the ruin of the cause. On the day before Mitchel's trial, a deputation from the council of the confederation

waited upon him in prison. They asked him to issue an address to the clubs under his own hand, giving it as his desire that there should be no attempt at a rescue. He refused absolutely, and, as he afterwards thought, perhaps too bitterly. He regarded his own case as he would undoubtedly have regarded the case of any other leading confederate. He thought there ought to be resistance, even though resistance might fail to effect its immediate object. The Government ought to know that they would not be allowed to perpetrate outrages of this kind with absolute impunity. During the days of Mitchel's trial and the days immediately preceding, the most popular of the confederate leaders were busy in restraining the clubs. Meagher, who was one of the most active in this work, afterwards bore witness to the fact that the task was no easy one. The feeling at the clubs about Mitchel's case was intense. The great majority were fiercely determined that the Government should not carry off John Mitchel from his country without having to fight for it. It needed the utmost efforts of the leaders to restrain their followers.

The Government had a war steamer waiting in the river on the day of Mitchel's sentence. The steamer was moored at a point where the docks were cut off from communication with the main part of the city by the river on one side and by a canal, with drawbridges, on the other. In other respects, too, elaborate precautions against a rescue were taken, and an imposing display of military force was made in the Phoenix Park.

The carrying off took place within a few hours of the sentence. I take the following account from the *Nation* of the 3rd of June :—

Precisely as the prison clock struck four, the convict-van drew up at the front entrance to Newgate, and was immediately surrounded by two squadrons of dragoons, under the command of

Colonel Maunsell and Colonel Gordon. In a few minutes an official, bearing the warrant for Mr. Mitchel's removal, entered the prison, and delivered the same to the high sheriff. The mounted police and dragoons, with drawn sabres, formed four deep round the van. The doorway having been opened, Inspector Selwood gave the word at the prison gate—"All is ready." One of the turnkeys then came forth with a bundle of clothes, which were understood to be the convict dress, and threw it into the van. Precisely at eight minutes past four the gates were opened, and Mr. Mitchel came forth with a firm step and unmoved demeanour. He wore a brown frock coat, light waistcoat, and dark trousers, and had a light leather cap upon his head; the hair was closely cut. His hand and right leg were heavily manacled, and fastened to each other by a ponderous iron chain. He cast one quiet, dignified glance about, and recognizing a friend, who called out "Farewell, Mitchel," bowed to him. He was assisted to the van, accompanied by four or five inspectors of police. The door was immediately banged to, and the *cortège* moved forward at a double quick trot up Bolton Street, and thence to the North Wall, where the *Shearwater* steamer was lying in readiness. From the steamer the launch and jolly boat put off, the former manned by thirty seamen armed with sabres and pistols, and having stowed in the stern-sheets a number of muskets. On the approach of the boats the prisoner was conducted to the smaller one, into which he stepped lightly, though encumbered with his fetters. The boats rowed quickly back to the steamer, and Mr. Mitchel was conducted to the side-ladder; his chains tripped him up as he reached the deck, and he fell forward; he, however, soon recovered his feet, and stood for a few moments, and looked back towards the land he was leaving, perhaps never to see again.

Here, then, ended John Mitchel's career as a leader of Young Ireland; and here began his new life—that of a British felon.

CHAPTER VII.

BERMUDA—PERNAMBUCO—CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

1848, 1849.

I TAKE the following from some notes and reminiscences supplied to me by a near relative of John Mitchel's:—

“I think when he came to Dublin from the North he was at his best. Any change the ‘most sweet voices’ produced in him—it was not much, and was superficial only—was to deteriorate. His nature was too deep and earnest for vanity; but the adulation, the notoriety, and worse, perhaps, than either, the habit of strong excitement, did produce an effect upon him, and, so far as it went, it was bad. He was more hopeful and tolerant in the early time. Compare, for instance, the preface to the ‘Life of Hugh O’Neil’ with his later writings. One sees the same thing in his earnest attempt to win over the Irish gentry on the occasion of the meeting of the ‘Irish Council.’ He had strong hopes from this body, I remember, and thought very highly of some of its members. Hopes, too, he had of the Orangemen. He had lived among them, and knew their good points. But these hopes, and all similar ones, were disappointed one after the other. His efforts at conciliation were met by contumely, and soon a special law was passed with the applause of all the well-to-do to brand him as a felon.”

From the day of his transportation to the day of his

death, Mitchel's creed regarding the relations of Ireland and England, and the true and only remedy for Irish misery, underwent but little change. In his subsequent writings on Irish politics, there is a certain tone of fierceness and bitterness. He tells us in one of his private letters that when a subject had taken complete possession of his mind, he was conscious of a tendency to think and write about that subject in an exaggerative manner. This tendency shows itself now and then in his later writings on Irish politics. But neither the bitterness nor the exaggeration arose from any brooding over his own wrongs. They were caused by a different feeling—a feeling of shame and bitter humiliation at the spectacle presented by his country in the years succeeding his transportation.

I have in the last chapter, tried to explain Mitchel's doctrine on the head of policy. But the policy which he advocated was only his way of carrying into effect the beliefs which he had come to hold on a wider question. In the preface to his "Apology for the British Government in Ireland," I find the following passage :—

If my "Apology," then, shall help to convince my countrymen, and the world, that the English are not more sanguinary and atrocious than any other people would be in like case, and under like exigencies ; that the disarmament, degradation, extermination and periodical destruction of the Irish people, are measures of policy dictated, not by pure malignity, but by the imperious requirements of the system of empire administered in London ; that they must go on, precisely as at present, while the British empire goes on ; and that there is no remedy for them under heaven save the dismemberment of that empire ;—then the object of my writing shall have been attained.

This very well expresses the essence of Mitchel's creed regarding the relations of Ireland to the British empire. The subjection of Ireland, and the government of Ireland

on the lines on which she had been governed ever since her conquest—these things he believed to be essential to the existence of the British imperial system. And, therefore, not as an individual who had been bitterly wronged, but as an Irishman who desired to raise his country from her degraded state, he hated the British empire, and longed to see it broken to pieces. To suppose that the English Parliament and the English governing classes would ever be persuaded by any sense of justice, or by the arguments of eloquent Irish M.P.'s, to do what it was not for their interest to do, he regarded as absurd. In this respect they did no worse than other nations would do ; only they were more hypocritical and canting than others. They talked very loud about liberty and justice, when they saw in other countries the weak oppressed by the strong ; but when it came to their own turn and suited their own purpose to oppress and hold down a weaker nation, they showed that, in that line of business, they were in no way behind their neighbours.

It may be as well to note here that hatred of British imperialism, and therefore of British government, does not necessarily imply hatred of the English people ; nor do I find anything in John Mitchel's writings which leads me to think that a race-hatred between the Saxon and the Celt was a favourite idea with him. In his " Jail Journal " he is careful to point out the difference between the English people and what Cobbett calls " the Thing ; " and he claims that in hating, and to the utmost of his power waging war upon " the Thing," he shows himself to be " not an enemy, but a friend of England." Among Englishmen themselves there are many who would admit that the rule of England has been a curse to those weaker nations whom she has conquered ; but Mitchel would go further than this, and would say that British imperialism has been a curse to

England herself. Suppose the question put, Were not the English people, as a whole, happier and better off under Elizabeth than under Victoria? With such evidence as we have before us, we should probably answer the question in the affirmative. Naturally, the next question will be, Whence the difference? May not one cause be found in the change from merry England, the home of the English people, to wealthy England, the centre of the British empire, accompanied, as that change naturally has been, by an increased predominance of the commercial and manufacturing spirit? John Mitchel would, I presume, answer this last question also in the affirmative.

When John Mitchel was carried off from Newgate and placed on board the *Shearwater* for transportation, he wanted some few months of being thirty-three years old. For so young a man, he had seen a good many phases of life; love and marriage and the consequent cares of a family, professional life, public life—all these he had known. And now we enter on a new phase. He is now to have some experience of convict life; a novel and interesting experience for a man of his kind.

In taking up the life of John Mitchel at the time of his transportation, and carrying it on through the following years, I am met with a fact which has to be taken into account. From the day of his removal from Dublin in May, 1848, down to the day of his landing in New York in November, 1853, John Mitchel kept a journal. This "Jail Journal" has since been published, and is probably the best known and most popular of his works. The existence of this journal is in some respects a help, in some respects a difficulty to me. If it be assumed that I am bound to give some account of the period covered by the "Jail Journal," no doubt the possession of such a narrative is a great help. But ought I to give any account of this

period? Why tell once again what Mitchel has already told us himself, and told in his happiest vein? There can be no doubt but that the right way to read Mitchel's life would be to take up the "Jail Journal" at the point we have now reached and treat it as being, in fact, *the* life for the ensuing five and a half years. But have I a right to assume that every one who may read this book will have, or will supply himself with, a copy of the "Jail Journal?" Is it not my part to make this life complete in itself, leaving it to the reader's choice to say whether he will or will not supplement it with Mitchel's own narrative at the proper period? It so seems to me; and therefore I have decided to give here a narrative of the period which the "Jail Journal" covers. In writing of this period, however, I shall have to borrow freely from the "Journal." Once more, therefore, and for the last time, I notify the reader that his wisest course will be to read the "Journal" itself, and not to rely on my abbreviated version of the same.*

"May 27, 1848.—On this day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, I, John Mitchel, was kidnapped, and carried off from Dublin in chains, as a convicted felon."

This is the opening sentence in the "Jail Journal." When Mitchel was put on board the *Shearwater*, the officer who had taken him on board at once brought him to the cabin, had his fetters taken off, ordered sherry and water, and began to talk. Of their conversation Mitchel has given us the following account:—

He told me I was to be brought to Spike Island, a convict prison in Cork harbour, in the first place; that he himself, however, was only going as far as Kingstown, where his own ship lay;

* I may also mention here that the "Jail Journal" was afterwards continued and brought down to the year 1866; but as this continuation was published only in the *Irish Citizen*, and never in book form, the above remarks do not apply with so much force to the period which it covers.

that he was Captain Hall, of the *Dragon* steam frigate, and that he dared to say I had heard of the unfortunate *Nemesis*. "Then," quoth I, "you are the Captain Hall who was in China lately and wrote a book." He said he was, and seemed quite pleased. If he had a copy of his work there, he said he should be most happy to present it to me. Then he appeared apprehensive that I might confound him with Captain Basil Hall. So he told me that he was not Basil Hall, who, in fact, was dead; but that, though not actually Basil Hall, he had sailed with Basil Hall as a youngster, on board the *Lyra*. "I presume," he said, "you have read his 'Voyage to the Loo Choo Islands.'" I said I had, and also another book of his which I liked far better—his account of the Chilian and Peruvian revolutions, and of that splendid fellow, San Martin. Captain Hall laughed. "Your mind," said he, "has been running upon revolutions." "Yes, very much, almost exclusively." "Ah! sir," quoth he, "dangerous things, these revolutions." Whereto I replied, "You may say that."

At Kingstown, Captain Hall left the *Shearwater*, having been careful to first inform Mr. Mitchel that he had an appointment to dine with the Lord Lieutenant. The *Shearwater* speeds on her way, past Kingstown and Dalkey, and across the entrance to Killiney Bay; and John Mitchel stands at the shoreward gunwale and watches the land as long as the light allows. "I may never more, oh, Ireland, my mother and queen! see vale or hill or murmuring stream of thine!" So he writes in the "Journal," showing the old yearning for the Irish mountains and streams which had possessed him from boyhood. As he contemplates Dublin Bay, with its pleasant villas—"villas of genteel dastards" he calls them—thoughts fierce and bitter crowd in upon his mind. At last the light fails, and he can see the Irish coast no longer.

It darkened over the sea, and the stars came out; and the dark hills of Wicklow had shrouded themselves in the night fog before I moved from the shoreward gunwale of the quarter-deck.

My two guardians, the police constables in plain clothes, who had never left my side, now told me it was growing late, and that tea was ready below. Went down, accordingly, and had an "aesthetic tea" with two detectives. Asked my two friends if they knew my destination. They knew nothing, they said, but thought it probable I would not be removed from Spike Island—supposed that Government would just keep me there "till matters were a little quieted down," and then let me go. Well, I think differently, my plain-coated, plain-witted friends. On Ireland, or anywhere near it, assuredly I will not be allowed to live. But where, then? The Carthaginians have convict colonies everywhere—at Gibraltar; at Bermuda, in the Atlantic; at Norfolk Island, in the Pacific; besides Van Diemen's Land, and the various settlements in New South Wales—for on British felony the sun never sets. To any one of these I may find myself steering within the twenty-four hours. But be my prison where it will, I suppose there is a heaven above that place.

On the following day (Sunday) the *Shearwater* reached her destination, and came to anchor opposite Cove, and within five hundred yards of Spike Island. A boat was instantly lowered and manned. Mitchel was taken ashore in custody of his two friends, the constables in plain clothes; the commander and first lieutenant of the *Shearwater* sitting in the stern of the boat. At the landing-place they were met by a grave-looking gentleman, who said, "Mr. Mitchel, I presume?" They were conducted to the prison, over a drawbridge, past several sentries, through several gratings, and at last into a small court. At one side of the court a door opened into a large vaulted room, furnished with a bed, table, chair, and basin-stand, and this, Mitchel was told, was to be his cell. A turnkey, in blue uniform, kept sauntering up and down the court, and sometimes lounged into the room. On being asked what he wanted, he answered that he was ordered not to leave till lock-up hour. At last, the lock-up hour came, the door of the cell was shut, and the prisoner was left alone.

And now, as this is to be a faithful record of whatsoever befalls me, I do confess, and will write down the confession, that I flung myself on the bed, and broke into a raging passion of tears—tears bitter and salt; tears of wrath, pity, regret, remorse, but not of base lamentation for my own fate. The thoughts and feelings that have so shaken me for this once, language was never made to describe; but if any austere censor could find it in his heart to vilipend my manhood therefor, I would advise him to wait until he finds himself in a somewhat similar position. Believe me, oh, Stoic! if your soul were in my soul's stead, I also could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.

It is over, and finally over. In half an hour I rose, bathed my head in water, and walked a while up and down my room. I know that all weakness is past, and that I am ready for my fourteen years' ordeal, and for whatsoever the same may bring me—toil, sickness, ignominy, death. Fate, thou art defied.

His stay at Spike Island lasted only four days. During this time, he received a visit from Edward Walsh, a well-known writer of poetry for the *Nation*. Walsh was deeply moved at seeing Mitchel in his then condition:—

Tears stood in his eyes, as he told me he had contrived to get an opportunity of seeing and shaking hands with me before I should leave Ireland. I asked him what he was doing at Spike Island, and he told me he had accepted the office of teacher to a school they keep here for small convicts—a very wretched office indeed, and to a shy, sensitive creature like Walsh, it must be daily torture. He stooped down and kissed my hands. “Ah!” he said, “you are now the man in all Ireland most *to be envied*.” I answered that I thought there might be room for difference of opinion about that; and then, after another kind word or two, being warned by my turnkey, I bade him farewell and retreated into my own den.

Shortly after this visit he was informed by an official called the inspector, that it had been decided by the Government to remove him to Bermuda. The *Scourge*, a large war steamer, had been sent to take him off. On

the morning of June 1, 1848, he took his last look of Irish land; not last in the strict sense, however, since he saw Ireland once more shortly before his death. The first lieutenant of the *Scourge*, in full costume, with cocked hat and sword, came for him with a boat full of marines. In a few minutes he was on board the *Scourge*, where the captain received him very politely.

He lifted his cap, and asked me to go below and he would show me my quarters. The principal cabin is very handsome, divided into two rooms, of which the one farthest aft is to be occupied by me as a sleeping cabin. It has couches, chairs, and a table, and is lighted by all the stern windows. During the day both rooms are to be open to me; and the captain said that, as he is obliged to consider me a prisoner, there will be a marine always stationed on sentry at the foot of the companion ladder, and that whenever I desire to go upon deck, which I may do when I please, I am to inform the sentry, who will summon a sergeant; that for the rest, he hoped his hours would suit me, when breakfast, dinner, and so forth, will be served in the chief cabin.

The voyage to Bermuda seems to have lasted nineteen days—a long time for such a voyage, even as steamers were in 1848. They had rough weather during the first few days, and the ship pitched and rolled heavily. Yet the steward persisted in calling it "only half a gale of wind." Mitchel cursed its halfness, and wished for a thoroughgoing storm. The officers were very polite, and lent him books. Captain Wingrove, too, kept a good table, and had excellent wine. After dinner, they generally had some talk in the cabin. On one occasion the captain touched on a dangerous subject:—

Said he understood there was a practice in Ireland, in the law courts there, called *packing juries*, and asked what it meant. I explained it to him; but it is clear that he hardly believes me. Indeed, he listens to everything I say with a kind of quiet smile,

and sometimes looks doubtfully at me, as if he thought me slightly insane, and expected me to break out in some strange manner.

His reading during the voyage was somewhat miscellaneous. He had, of course, no books of his own, and was entirely dependent on the courtesy of the officers. As an example of the kind of books he read and of the thoughts which they suggested, take the following :—

Reading, for want of something better, Macaulay's "Essays." He is a born Edinburgh reviewer, this Macaulay, and indeed a type-reviewer—an authentic specimen page of nineteenth century "literature." He has the right omniscient tone, and air, and the true knack of administering reverential flattery to British civilization, British prowess, honour, enlightenment, and all that—especially to the great nineteenth century and its astounding civilization—that is, to his readers. It is altogether a new thing in the history of mankind, this triumphant glorification of a current century upon being the century it is ; no former age, before Christ or after, ever took any pride in itself and sneered at the wisdom of its ancestors ; and the new phenomenon indicates, I believe, not higher wisdom, but deeper stupidity. The nineteenth century is come, but not gone ; and what, now, if it should be, hereafter, memorable among centuries for something quite other than its wondrous enlightenment ?

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The very capital generated and circulated, and utilized on so grand a scale by civilized men nowadays, seems to modern Britons a power mighty enough to wield worlds ; and its *numen* is worshipped by them accordingly, with filthy rites. The God of mere nature will, they assure themselves, think twice before he disturbs and quarrels with such a power as this ; for indeed it is faithfully believed in the city, by the moneyed circles there, that God the Father has money invested in the three-per-cents, which makes him careful not to disturb the peace of the world, or suffer the blessed march of "civilization" to be stopped.

During the latter part of the voyage the sea was calm and the weather very hot. About ten o'clock on the morning

of the 20th of July they came in sight of Bermuda. They coasted along two of the largest islands. From the description of Bermuda which I find in the "Journal," he seems to have been out of humour with the country at first sight, but to have liked it better on a nearer view :—

The whole surface of all the islands is made up of hundreds of low hillocks, many of them covered with a pitiful scraggy brush of cedars; and cedars are their only tree. The land not under wood is of a brownish green colour, and of a most naked and arid, hungry and thirsty visage. No wonder; for not one single stream, not one spring, rill, or well, gushes, trickles, or bubbles in all the three hundred isles, with their three thousand hills. The hills are too low, and the land too narrow, and all the rock is a porous calcareous concretion, which drinks up all the rain that falls on it, and would drink ten times as much, and be thirsty afterwards.

* * * * *

But, after all, these are fertile and fine islands; they bring forth and nourish thousands of creatures to all appearance human; have two towns even—cities of articulate-speaking men, one of them being the seat of government and "legislature;" have a dockyard, two barracks, two newspapers, absolute "organs of opinion" (with editors, I suppose, puffs, and other appurtenances); what is better, have abundance of fruit, vegetables, and fish; and I can see some cows, and plenty of goats, pigs, poultry.

They cast anchor in front of the Government Island, where the dockyard was established. This island is at the extreme north-west of the group. It bore a name which to Mitchel was more or less familiar—it was called Ireland.

Close in to the island he sees a sight of a not very cheering character.

Three great clumsy hulks, roofed over, and peopled by men in white linen blouses and straw hats, and on the back of every man's blouse certain characters and figures, and the Queen's broad arrow. They seemed to be drilled and marched like troops.

Now, am I to be enlisted in these rueful squadrons, and marked for the Queen's own these fourteen years to come? I trust not. But if it be so, be it so.

On the following day a packet arrived, bringing newspapers from England, and Mitchel was allowed to look at the *Morning Post*. A leading article in that journal—devoted to proving that “the convict Mitchel” was not only a convict, but a scoundrel—does not seem to have much disturbed the said convict's equanimity. There were other matters in the paper which interested him a good deal more than this. It contained the news of the establishment of the *Irish Felon* by Martin and Reilly, to take the place of the *United Irishman*. This was just what Mitchel wanted, and he takes occasion to repeat some of his favourite doctrines on Irish politics. He knew very well, however, what this action by his friends must lead to:—

I know very well that this whole idea and scheme of mine wears a wonderfully feeble and silly aspect in the eyes of statesmanlike revolutionists; they can see nothing more in it than a number of gentlemen agreeing to dash out their own brains, one after another, against a granite fortress, with the notion that they are laying desperate siege to it. These statesmanlike politicians say to us, that we should wait till we are stronger, that we should conspire and organize *in secret*, keeping under the shelter of the law for the present, that when plainly advising men to arm is made a “transportable offence,” we should no longer plainly advise, but exhort and influence them privately, until, etc. “*Wait till your principles take root before you disseminate them,*” said a prudent adviser to me. But he who talks thus knows nothing of Ireland. In Ireland there can be no secrecy, so thick is it planted with Castle spies; in Ireland you can never organize to any useful purpose, so long as they are so miserably cowed by “law,” and see nobody willing to deny and defy this law; in Ireland no private influence can make men procure arms, because they have been taught for forty years to account arms not honourable and needful, but criminal and illegal.

The only medicine he knew of was to "try the virtue of plain, outspoken, desperate truth for once." He believed in working the people up to the temper at which they would take the business of arming into their own hands. One after another, he would have his friends and comrades step into the breach, until the work was done. But I have already stated Mitchel's views of policy as I understand them. In the passage just quoted, and in what follows it, the reader has Mitchel's answer to some of the objections urged against him.

In the afternoon of this same day, Mitchel was transferred from the *Scourge* to the *Dromedary*, one of the hulks he had noticed on first coming in. Before the removal was effected, an incident occurred which is thus told in the "Journal":—

Several of the officers, whose names I will not write here (but shall not forget), judging correctly that wherever I should be stowed away I should want *books*, and knowing that I had no opportunity of providing such things before my kidnapping, begged I would allow them to give me a few volumes out of their store. This was genuine kindness of heart; and as I have no quarrel with these gentlemen personally, I took from four of them one book from each. I have never found it easy, on a sudden, to haughtily repel any attention offered out of pure goodwill: it is not *in me*. Yet I believe that, if time for consideration had been given me, I would have refused the courtesy of these decent fellows.

Immediately on his arrival on the *Dromedary*, what little money he had left was taken from him, and "placed to his credit." His first quarters on the *Dromedary* were not cheerful. They consisted of "a sort of cavern, just a little higher and a little wider than a dog-kennel." This apartment was lighted only by two very small and dim bulls'-eyes which were set into the deck above. The whole place was hardly six feet square, and there was barely

room to swing a hammock diagonally across it. In this apartment he was locked up at night, with a small piece of candle to shed light on the scene. The candle was a questionable advantage, for by its light he was able to discern a great many big brown cockroaches, running with incredible speed over the walls and floor. All this was decidedly unpleasant ; but it only lasted some three or four days. On the fourth day he was moved into a new cabin or cell, which was a great improvement on the first. It was clean, had some articles of furniture, and, above all, had a port-hole which let in plenty of light and air. On Sunday they had service on deck, which Mitchel attended, having a curiosity to see what kind of a chaplain they had.

After service the chaplain came to me. He politely offered to lend me books, and even to procure me books from others. I rather like the man. He did not cant, as so many of those persons do, but seemed really desirous of serving me, so far as the rules would allow him. He is a Scotchman.

The new cabin arrangement also came to an end in a few days. One morning Mitchel was informed, much to his surprise, that he was to be removed to the hospital ship. This step was taken by reason of a report, made by the surgeon of the *Scourge*, who, like most of the officers of that vessel, seems to have taken a liking to Mitchel. The hospital ship, the *Tenedos*, was a decided improvement on the *Dromedary*. She was moored about a quarter of a mile from land, in a beautiful bay formed by well-wooded islands. The cabin assigned to Mitchel on the *Tenedos* was a neat room with two windows. But the best thing about the *Tenedos* was its commander, who seems to have had a really kind heart :—

The commander of this ship is Dr. Hall, a kindly old gentleman, who has been a good deal in Ireland, and knows several

persons that I also know. He seems to imagine that I am very "unhappy," and am always making vigorous efforts to conceal the circumstance. He never was more mistaken in his life. However, he is well disposed to make me as happy as he can. If an Englishman wishes to be kind to any individual, his first thought is to feed him well. The foundation of all British happiness is victuals; therefore the steward has had special orders about my table. In truth, I do begin to set more store by that matter of dining than I ever thought I should.

* * * * *

Sometimes I put myself to the question about it. How can I eat thus heartily of British convict rations? sleep thus calmly on a felon's iron bed? receive in gracious wise the courtesies of Carthaginian gaolers, looking my black destiny so placidly in the face? By Heaven! it cannot be but I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall to make oppression bitter. Go to, I will lash myself into suitable rage. But it will not do. The next time old Dr. Hall comes in, with his grey hairs and good old weather-beaten countenance, and begins to talk, my armour of sullen pride will fall to pieces; the human heart that, I suppose, is in me will know its brother, and I will find myself quietly conversing with that old man, as friend with friend.

During the brief period of his sojourn on the *Tenedos*, a rather amusing incident occurred. The story is told in the "Journal" under a later date, during the voyage from Bermuda to the Cape of Good Hope. It is there given in the course of some speculations regarding the British convict system, and as illustrating the proposition that "one main feature in convict life is a deep and heartfelt respect for atrocious villainy—respect the more profound as the villainy is more outrageous." I give the anecdote here in order of time as it happened:—

On my arrival there, I had hardly been left alone in my cabin before a convict softly entered. He was servant to the assistant-surgeon, and came with a pine-apple which his master had sent me. The man was about fifty years of age, but very stout and

active-looking, and highly consequential in his manner, as it soon turned out he had a good right to be. "I trust, sir," said he, "you will find everything as you wish here. If I can do anything for you, I'm sure I shall be happy. I'm Garrett." "Well, Garrett?" quoth I. "Garrett, sir, *Garrett*. You must know all about me; it was in all the papers; Garrett, you know." "Never heard of you before, Garrett." "Oh dear! yes, sir, you must be quite well aware of it—the great railway affair, you remember." "No, I do not." "Oh! then I am Mr. Garrett, who was *connected with the* ——— railway." (I forget the name of the railway.) "It was a matter of £40,000 I realized. Forty thousand pounds, sir. Left it behind me, sir, with Mrs. Garrett. She is living in England in very handsome style. I have been here now two years, and like it very well. Devilish fine brown girls here, sir. I am very highly thought of—created a great sensation when I came. In fact, until *you* came I was reckoned the first man in the colony. Forty thousand pounds, sir—not a farthing less. But now *you* have cut me out." I rose and bowed to this sublime rascal. The overwhelming idea, that I should supersede a swindler of forty thousand pounds power, was too much for me.

The sojourn on the *Tenedos* lasted only ten days. One Sunday evening, as Mitchel was sitting at an open window, reading Livy and drinking grog, beginning, indeed, to feel at home in the *Tenedos*, Dr. Hall entered the cabin in a violent hurry, accompanied by a negro boatman. There was an order for instant removal back to the *Dromedary*. The cause of this sudden reversal of the previous order soon transpired. It appears that the Irish in New York, when they heard of Mitchel's transportation to Bermuda, had made demonstrations. There was even some talk of equipping a vessel to rescue him. This alarmed the authorities somewhat, and they thought it safest to bring back their prisoner under the guns of Ireland Island. Accordingly, on the 16th of July, we find Mitchel back again in his cell on the *Dromedary*, "making himself at home so far as circumstances would admit." Various

martial preparations were made in anticipation of the threatened rescue. Portholes were cut in the steamer near to Mitchel's window ; and various other precautions were taken. I hardly need to state here that the threatened attempt at a rescue never took place, and that the martial preparations were labour thrown away.

Upon the *Dromedary* hulk Mitchel continued to reside for the next nine months ; that is, until within some few days of his final departure from Bermuda. It was a solitary and monotonous existence. He was not put to hard labour like the other convicts. But the entire want of congenial society and of work for mind or body was, for a temperament such as his, peculiarly hard to bear. He wrote much in his "Journal," read all sorts of books, and, when he was tired of reading or writing, walked up and down on the planks of the quarter-deck—the "last planks of the Constitution," he nicknamed them. At times the thought of the fourteen years of hulk life which seemed destined for him appalled him. "What mortal," he asked, "could keep despair and the devil at bay so long?" Shortly after his removal back to the *Dromedary*, he debated with himself the question of suicide. From the reasons which he states for and against self-destruction, it is sufficiently evident that he did not regard the act at all in the light in which it is almost universally regarded by coroners' juries nowadays. He did not believe that the mere fact of a man's taking away his own life proves him to be in a "state of temporary insanity." But for various reasons which he sets down in the "Journal," he decided against suicide. The discussion, which covers some five pages of the "Journal" concludes in this way :—

Yet this simple key, one may affirm, does not open the whole mystery ; nor any key yet forged. I will only suggest, that there may be other considerations worthy a man's thought (before he

blows his brains out) besides his bare *duties*, debts to society, or engagements with other men, women, and children. Finding yourself here, a living man, may it not be *worth your while* (for remember it may be the only opportunity you will have for many an æon) to stay and see what this life is, and what it is good for—to try what capacities of action and passion may be in this manhood wherewith you are thus mysteriously invested—how far it can look before and after—whether there be not matters worth seeing, doing, knowing, suffering even—consider, consider, whether there may not be—I say not debts and duties—but privileges and high prerogatives vested in the very life and soul you are about to scatter to the elements, which will enable and entitle you, even you, by faithful manly action, to lift up that despised human nature of yours, not only out of the slough of despond, where it now lies weltering, but above the empyrean and the stars. . . . Therefore, on the whole, I say as convict Socrates said, *ανδριστευον*, as we are men, let us *be men*; as the Christian apostle said, “Quit you like men.” What is needful to be endured, endure it; what your hand findeth to do, do it—love, hate, work, and play, not envying, not oppressing nor brooking oppression, above all, not lying, to yourself or others, and you will see good days before you die and after.

His reading was of the most miscellaneous description, including, in fact, all such books as he could get hold of. On the 2nd of September we learn that he is reading, with many wry faces, certain volumes of “those vile compilations called ‘Family Libraries,’ and ‘Cabinet Libraries,’ and ‘Miscellanies,’ and the like dry skeletons of dead knowledge.” This class of food does not seem to have agreed with his mental digestion:—

Vast oceans of trash! I have always accounted myself *eupeptic* in the matter of books; thought that I could devour much deleterious stuff without evil effect—*omnia sana sanis*—otherwise I should presently suffer from a horrible constipation of garbage. And one has need of a stomach like the organs of those ducks of Pontus (unto which, as Aulus Gellius saith, poisons are rather wholesome than hurtful), who adventures to gorge the current

“literature” they compound for the unfortunate “masses” in this great age. But what will not a prisoner have recourse to for passing the time !

Not that I mean to submit to this long. Only for the present I am advisedly letting my intellect lie idle, basking in the sun, dozing in the shade, grazing upon every green thing. But I never dream of *killing time* for fourteen years—if it come to that, time will kill me—fourteen years would be too many for me. An occasional half-hour, to be sure, you may kill if you take him unaware, but to slaughter time by whole lustra and decades is given to no mortal.

A few days later we find him

reading Homer, and basking in the sun upon the *sea* side of the breakwater. Weather delicious. Have also been swallowing autobiographies—Gifford’s, Thomas Elwood’s, Captain Crichton’s autobiography by Dean Swift. Crichton was an old cavalry officer, an Irishman, who served in Scotland under the blood-hound Dalzell against the Covenanters ; and, as he could not tell his story decently himself, the dean, while he was staying at Markethill, took down the facts from the old man and set them forth in his own words, but using the first person—Crichton *loquente*. The product is highly amusing.

A book which seems to have much enraged and amused him by turns was Lieutenant Burnes’s (afterwards Sir Alexander Burnes) “Journey through Bokhara and Voyage up the Indus.” He devotes some eight pages to a review of this book. It is in his happiest style, and is a very forcible and amusing piece of writing. The gailant officer was sent in by his Government with instructions to do the work of a spy, while making the warmest professions of friendship to the various rulers whom he visited. He seems to have understood his instructions and to have done his work remarkably well ; but he was, of course, terribly shocked at even the least suspicion of double-dealing or treachery on the part of the natives. He had

no difficulty in convincing himself that the natives were everywhere dissatisfied with their rulers, and anxious for the British to come in, and he so reported to his employers.

In perusing, or, at least, in turning over the leaves of certain magazines or periodicals lent him by the chaplain, Mitchel has the following thoughts on the uses of books:—

And how happens it that I can sit for hours turning over (with many a pooh! and psha!) leaf after leaf of this same stratified *débris*? If I despise it so sovereignly, cannot I shut it up and lay it on the shelf? Nobody has set me a task in it. Yet to me, intently revolving this matter, it is apparent that the value of any book is not in the mere thoughts it presents to you, expressed in black on white, but rather in those it suggests, occasions, begets in you, far outside the intentions and conceptions of the writer, and even outside the subject of his writing. If some dull rogue writes you an essay on what he does not understand, you are not bound to follow his chain of reasoning (as perhaps he calls it), the first link of his chain may fit itself to other links of your own forging, and so you may have whole trains, whole worlds of thought, which need not run upon the dull rogue's line, nor stop at his terminus. One must not disdain to draw matter of reverie from "even a sot, a pot, a truckle for a pulley, an oil bottle, or a cane chair." But what talk I of essays and writings? Some poor wood-cut turning up suddenly in this paltry magazine, by the fancied likeness of one feature in it—a church, a tower, a tree, a human eye or lip—to somewhat you have seen far away and long ago, may carry you, as on a sunbeam, into distant valleys of vision, and bless your eyes with gleams of a wonderful light, whose fountain who shall tell? Yes, and place by your side companions old and dear, whose discourse you hear and answer, and whose fare—so real is the presence—you would hold it but just to pay to any ferryman on the crossing of a river—a piece of honest dealing inculcated by Umland—

“Boatman, take this coin, I pray thee;
Thrice thy fare I cheerfully pay thee—
For though thou seest them not, there stand
Anear me, Two from the Phantom Land.”

Yet, with every disposition to take some good from the kind of books that were supplied or lent to him for reading, he was not always able to do so. At least, he shows at times an extreme weariness and disgust of all magazines, books of travel, and guides to knowledge. Under date of February 8, 1849, I find the following entry:—

Tired to death of reading books—at least all books of an instructive sort—and have now been devouring (for about the fifth time) “Ivanhoe” and the “Heart of Midlothian.” My blessing on the memory of Walter Scott! Surely all prisoners and captives, sick persons, and they who are heavy of cheer, ought to pray for his soul. One is almost reconciled to “popular literature,” because it has made the Waverley Novels common as the liberal air. A famine of books, I begin to find, is very emaciating; and I know not well how I am to ensure a due supply.

The thoughts and disquisitions in the “Jail Journal” are most commonly suggested by the reading of books or of papers with news from home; but not always so. Thus, one of the best pieces of writing in the book is the imaginary dialogue between the Ego and the Doppelganger, which is told under date of January 16, 1849. The Doppelganger begins by asking the Ego to explain why it is that he is so enthusiastic for the French Republic, although for republicanism in the abstract he professes to care not a rush. This explanation the Ego proceeds to give at some length. The dialogue then passes on from one subject to another, until it comes to deal with the question—so often debated—whether or not the total cessation of war is a thing to be desired. Arising out of this another question is also touched upon, which, as here treated, has a peculiar interest. It has been said more than once of Mitchel’s career as a public man that his genius was essentially destructive. He could, it has been said, attack an existing institution or

a proposed plan of action with a force of destructive criticism such as few other men had at command ; but when it came to substituting another institution for the one which he proposed to destroy or another plan for the one which he condemned, then his power failed him. He had no substitute to offer for that which he sought to destroy. Such, I say, has been a favourite criticism on Mitchel's public life. In the dialogue I have just been referring to, this very objection to Mitchel's doctrines is urged by the Doppelganger ; and the Ego, in answer, proceeds to show that the criticism, even if true, would be hardly so fatal as commonly supposed. To any one who cannot find time to read the whole " Journal," this dialogue, covering some thirteen pages of the book, may be recommended as a good specimen of Mitchel's style of thinking and writing. I can only find room for one passage. The Doppelganger has been objecting to Mitchel's line of thought as being too ghastly, too bloodthirsty, and, above all, too destructive. He cannot admit that the man " chooses the better part who enlists under the banner of Ahriman, who loves to destroy, and who builds, creates, nothing." Thereupon the Ego :—

Hearken once more, oh, Double-goer ! Consider how this habitable earth, with all its rock-built mountains and flowery plains, is for ever growing and perishing in eternal birth and death ; consider how the winds, and lightnings, and storms of rain and hail, and flooded rivers, and lashing seas are for ever cutting, mining, gnawing away, confringing, colliding, and comminuting the hills and the shores, yea, and the sites of high-domed cities, until every mountain shall be brought low, and every capital city shall lie deep " at the bottom of the monstrous world," where Helice and Buris, Sodom and Gomorrah, lie now. This, I suppose, you call destruction ; but consider further how the nether fires are daily and nightly forging, in the great central furnaces, new granite mountains, even out of that old worn rubbish ; and

new plains are spreading themselves forth in the deep sea, bearing harvests now only of tangled *algæ*, but destined to wave with yellow corn ; and currents of brine are hollowing out foul sunless troughs, choked with obscene slime, but one day to be fair river-valleys blushing with purple clusters. Now, in all this wondrous procedure, can you dare to pronounce that the winds and the lightnings which tear down, degrade, destroy, execute a more ignoble office than the volcanoes and subterranean deeps that upheave, renew, recreate? Are the nether fires holier than the upper fires? The waters that are above the firmament, do they hold of Ahriman, and the waters that are below the firmament, of Ormuzd? Do you take up a reproach against the lightnings for that they only shatter and shiver, but never construct? Or have you a quarrel with the winds because they fight against the churches, and build them not? In all nature, spiritual and physical, do you not see that some powers and agents have it for their function to abolish and demolish and derange—other some to construct and set in order? But is not the destruction, then, as natural, as needful, as the construction? Rather tell me, I pray you, which is construction—which destruction? This destruction *is* creation ; death is birth, and

“ The quick spring like weeds out of the dead.”

Go to ; the revolutionary leveller is your only architect. Therefore take courage, all you that Jacobins be, and stand upon your rights, and do your appointed work with all your strength, let the canting, fed classes rave and shriek as they will. Where you see a respectable, fair-spoken lie sitting in high places, feeding itself fat on human sacrifices, down with it, strip it naked, and pitch it to the devil ; wherever you see a greedy tyranny (constitutional or other) grinding the faces of the poor, join battle with it on the spot—conspire, confederate, and combine against it—resting never till the huge mischief come down, though the whole “ structure of society ” come down along with it. Never you mind funds and stocks ; if the price of the things called *consols* depend on lies and fraud, down with them too. Take no heed of “ social disorganization ; ” you cannot bring back chaos, never fear ; no disorganization in the world can be so complete but there will be a germ of new order in it. Sansculottism, when she

hath conceived, will bring forth venerable institutions. Never spare; work joyfully according to your nature and function; and when your work is effectually done, and it is time for the counter-operations to begin, why, then you can fall a-constructing, if you have a gift that way—if not, let others do *their* work; and take you your rest, having discharged your duty. Courage, Jacobins! for ye too are ministers of Heaven.

Mitchel was supposed not to see any papers. But even the officials in the *Dromedary* hulk seem to have taken kindly to him, and now and then a London paper was smuggled in to him. The stirring events in Ireland during the summer of 1848 of course interested him much, and his "Journal" abounds in comment upon the various items of news as they reached him. He was naturally much moved by the news that his oldest and most intimate friend had been tried and convicted. The news of John Martin's conviction and sentence reached him on September 30, 1848, under which date he writes as follows:—

But what comes next? John Martin found guilty of felony (by a well-packed jury of Castle-Protestants), *and sentenced to ten years' transportation!* I am very glad of this, because Martin is simply the best, worthiest, and most thoroughly high-minded man I ever knew; and because he has a large circle of acquaintances, who are all aware of his worth. One could not wish British law in Ireland a more damaging, damning sort of "vindication" than thus to be compelled to send such men, by such methods, to its hulks. Go on, brave law! There is nothing like vigour.

John Martin a convict! John Martin in the hulks! Dragged away from the green shades and fertile pleasant places of Loughorne, and made one of a felons' ship's crew at Bermuda or Gibraltar! But the end is *not yet*.

* * * * *

And so we are a pair of transported felons. Be it so. Better a transported felon than a quiet slave, or a complaisant accomplice in murder. Mine ancient comrade, my friend, my brother in this pious felony—whithersoever thou art now faring in the fetters of

our pirate foe, I hail thee from far, across the Atlantic flood, and bid thee be of good cheer. The end is not yet.

The monotony of the life at the hulks was relieved occasionally by episodes more or less interesting and instructive. For example take the following :—

“Blast his bloody eyes! What is he but a convict, like the rest of us—a damnation bloody convict?” *Meaning me.* I heard this exclamation to-day through the wooden walls of my cell, when the gangs were in at dinner hour; for they sometimes grow loud and energetic in their discourse, and then I cannot but hear some of their words. A bloody convict like the rest! The man is right; and I am well pleased to hear the observation, and to see the black scowls that some of the prisoners give me when any accident brings them to meet me on the pier. By “act of parliament,” and by the verdict of a “jury,” I am a felon, as they are, and know no title I have to walk about “like a gentleman” that is idle, while they work hard. Right, my felon friend! I like to know that such a feeling is astir; and truly it could hardly fail; these men—who have to take off their hats when they speak to the pettiest guard of the ship, and who dare not set foot on the quarter-deck, even if they have an errand there, without uncovering and making low obeisance—see me marching up and down the same quarter-deck, with my hat on, and those very guards and officers, now and then, when they meet me in a quiet place, touching their caps to *me*. The prisoners see all this, and, of course, they look black and curse.

On another occasion—some time in November, 1848—three prisoners escaped from the *Coromandel* hulk, which lay close by the *Dromedary*. After a hot pursuit of three days, they were captured and brought back. It was determined by the authorities to make an example. The men were sentenced to be flogged in all the three hulks, one after another, receiving twenty lashes in each. Here is Mitchel’s entry made on the day of the flogging :—

The laceration is finished. The gangs are sent out to their work, after being mustered to witness the example; the troops

who were drawn up on the pier have marched home to their barracks ; quartermasters and guards have washed the blood gouts from their arms and faces, and arranged their dress again ; the three torn carcasses have been carried down half-dead to the several hospital rooms. Though shut up in my cell all the time, I heard the horrid screams of one man plainly. After being lashed in the *Medway*, they had all been carried to this ship, with blankets thrown over their bloody backs ; and the first of them, after receiving a dozen blows with miserable shrieks, grew weak and swooned ; the scourging stopped for about ten minutes while the surgeon used means to revive him—and then he had the remainder of his allowance. He was then carried groaning out of this ship into the *Coromandel*, instantly stripped again, and cross-scarified with other twenty lashes. The other two men took their punishment throughout in silence ; but I heard one of them shout once fiercely to the quartermaster, “Don’t cut below the mark, damn you !” I have been walking up and down my cell gnawing my tongue.

Not that I think it is wrong to flog convicted felons when needful for preservation of discipline. But think of soldiers and sailors being liable to be beaten like hounds ! Are high spirit and manly self-respect allowable feelings in soldiers and sailors ? And can high spirit survive the canine punishment of scourging ? In the Carthaginian service, indeed, those sentiments are *not* allowable ; private soldiers and sailors and non-commissioned officers are not to consider themselves men, but machines.

But when even felons are getting mangled, I had rather, as a matter of personal taste, be out of hearing.

The reference to flogging in the army may remind the reader of certain proceedings in the House of Commons in recent years, in which the Irish members took a prominent part. Mitchel might, perhaps, have questioned whether it was any part of the duty of Irish members of Parliament to devote their energies to the promotion of “high spirit and manly self-respect” in the British army ; but as regards the objectionable and degrading nature of the punishment itself, he makes his view sufficiently clear.

Incidents such as this, occurring every now and then, brought home to his mind with painful intensity the realities of his position ; but there were times, nevertheless, when his thoughts wandered far away from Bermuda and the *Dromedary* hulk. On September 13, 1848, he makes this entry :—

But often while I sit by the sea, facing that north-eastern *airt*, my eyes and ears and heart are all far, far. This thirteenth of September is a calm, clear, autumnal day in Ireland, and in green glens there, and on many a mountain side, beech leaves begin to redden, and the heather-bell has grown brown and sere ; the corn-fields are nearly all stripped bare by this time ; the flush of summer grows pale ; the notes of the singing-birds have lost that joyous thrilling *abandon* inspired by June days, when every little singer in his drunken rapture will gush forth his very soul in melody, but he will utter the unutterable joy. And the rivers, as they go brawling over their pebbly beds, some crystal bright, some tinted with sparkling brown from the high moors—"the hue of the Cairngorm pebble"—all have got their autumnal voice and chide the echoes with a hoarser murmur, complaining (he that hath ears to hear let him hear) how that summer is dying and the time of the singing of birds is over and gone. On such an autumn day to the inner ear is ever audible a kind of low and pensive, but not doleful *sighing*, the first whispered *susurrus* of those moaning, wailing October winds, wherewith winter preludes the pealing anthem of his storms. Well known to me, by day and by night, are the voices of Ireland's winds and waters, the faces of her ancient mountains. I see it, I hear it all—for by the wondrous power of imagination, informed by strong love, I do indeed live more truly in Ireland than on these unblest rocks.

But what avails it ? Do not my eyes strain over the sea in vain ? My soul yearn in vain ? Has not the Queen of England banished me from the land where my mother bore me, where my father's bones are laid ?—

Besides the writing done in his "Journal," he wrote letters every now and then to relatives and friends in Ireland. Both letters coming to him and letters written

by him were, of course, subject to inspection. Reference to political matters was forbidden. The earliest in date of the Bermuda letters which have come to my hands is dated August 4, 1848. It is to his mother. He acknowledges receipt of likenesses of his mother, his wife, and some others, which, he says, will be a great comfort to him. The letter is mainly taken up with inquiries as to his wife and children, and his brother William. He had just learned that William had gone to America; but the letter communicating this information said nothing as to the object of this step on William's part, save that he had gone to look about him. This evidently puzzled John a good deal, and he anxiously inquires what his brother can hope to accomplish by "looking about him" in a strange country.

The fact was, I believe, that William had gone to see whether anything could be done in the way of enabling John to escape; and this sort of "looking about him" did not admit of being explicitly described in letters which were to be read by the authorities.

Some few months later he learned that his mother, sisters, and wife also entertained the idea of emigrating to America. Writing to his sister Matilda under date October 4, 1848, he refers with uneasiness to this matter, and then proceeds:—

Do you know that I have grown very anxious since I came here, a thing I never felt much of before. While I was at home I was very reckless, and had a buoyant self-confidence that no matter what difficulties might arise, I would overcome them, and, on the whole, get along well enough. But now, when I can do absolutely nothing, when I can neither serve my family nor hurt them, I am full of nervous anxiety until I hear everything that befalls them; and spend hours in imagining a thousand evils that may happen them, and wondering what on earth is to become of them. In one word, I fret a good deal.

Here follow some minute directions on family matters, and a description of Bermuda similar to that already quoted from the "Journal." The letter then goes on :—

I cannot boast so much of my health as I have hitherto done. I have had some asthma, which I ascribe to the equinox weather : it has been very stormy, variable, and damp for the last month, so that the epithet of Shakespeare, "the still-vex'd Bermoothes," begins to be intelligible to me. You know that Ariel was once obliged to come to these islands by night "to fetch dew" to Prospero, and be back in the Mediterranean before morning.

Of his letters to his wife during this time, nearly all were lost when Mrs. Mitchel ran the blockade during the American war. Among the few that have been preserved, I find one from Bermuda dated the day after the one just quoted. He is still under the impression that his wife was to go to America :—

DEAREST JENNY,

I write by this post both to Ireland and to New York, as you bid me, directing my Irish letter to Matilda. Have you arrived? Are you in good health? How are the little ones, and how many of them are with you? Of course you will write to me *fully* by the very first mail after you arrive, telling me all about your voyage and your present prospects. I suppose my mother's people and you will all settle together somewhere, and I will be very uneasy till I know in what state you mean to live and how. I suppose William would probably be inclined to go to some of the western states, and this might not be the worst plan. I wish the two eldest boys were a few years older that they might be of some use to you. Women are very helpless in a new country. If poor William undertakes to take charge of you all he will have a heavy charge.

Remember, I must hear everything very particularly, and at immense length. It is strange William has never written to me to let me know what he has been about there so long. Perhaps he was at a loss to know what he might write and what not. But any one may write to me freely provided the letter has no reference to public affairs.

The exodus of the family to America did not come off just then. When Mitchel next writes to his mother, November 4, 1848, he is evidently aware that the plan has been postponed :—

First of all I must congratulate you on having taken a little time to think on your American scheme. I do assure you a family of women would make very helpless emigrants. America is a place for those who have energy and industry to go to for the purpose of making money, but not for women with a fixed or nearly fixed income to spend it. It is when engaged in active trade or business that money produces higher interest than in Ireland, and not otherwise.

Then follow long and minute directions regarding his mother's business affairs. His professional training enabled him to deal with such matters ; and he deals with them in a way which shows that even in the hulks at Bermuda he had not ceased to feel an eager interest in everything which affected his mother's welfare.

We next find him, on January 5, 1849, writing to his brother William. If he had not yet found out the object of William's visit to America, he had at least found out his address there :—

. . . For me, I get on very well here, were it not for the asthma, which has been more severe upon me this winter than it ever was before. It seems the climate of Bermuda, on account of its dampness and variableness, is reckoned peculiarly bad for asthmatic people, and I have been so much weakened and distressed by it, that the medical officer here tells me plainly I cannot hope to live long in close confinement in such a climate. . . . You make unlimited offers of sundry things. What puts it into your head that I could want a watch? Watches are for those to whom time is precious, who have business in hand, and need to take care that the hours do not slip away from them. The more time slips away from me, the better. If procrastination be the thief of time, I wish it were here to steal some time from me ;

but, then, I have had nothing to procrastinate. Even if I wanted to know how time goes, the dockyard clock is straight opposite my window ; and, besides, every half-hour the bells of all the ships toll like church steeples both night and day. You see, therefore, that a watch would be a superfluous luxury to me. One thing, however, I will trouble you to do for me. I have got leave to order some literary magazine. I wish, therefore, that you would ascertain who reprints the *Dublin University Magazine* in New York, and make arrangements for its being sent to me monthly by the Bermuda trader *Falcon*.

In February there is another letter to his mother, dealing mostly with business matters. It seems that by this time his two unmarried sisters had finally determined to join their brother William in Wisconsin. To this he refers :—

If the two girls have sailed, you will have a letter from them by the time you write to me again, and you will, of course, let me know all about them. It is astonishing to see us all scattering ourselves over the face of the earth in this manner. But possibly we may all meet yet. I don't think I have anything more to say ; but, above all things, my dear mother, I beg and pray you not to let anything I say annoy or irritate you. I cannot afford not to be in charity with you.

The only other one of the Bermuda letters from which I shall make any extracts is written to his sister Matilda about a month before his departure from Bermuda. This letter is a very interesting one, and there is more about himself in it than I find in most of his letters at this period. I extract some passages :—

. . . By the 20th of this month, or at furthest the 20th of April, I hope to know, one way or the other certainly, how I am to be disposed of. In the mean time I have laid the strictest injunctions upon Jenny not to stir from home until I write expressly for her *from the Cape*, or wherever else I may be brought to. The Cape Colony, you know, is a very fine and extensive country, with a glorious *dry* climate, not like this, with its eternal wet sea winds,

that in the brightest, hottest weather, with not a cloud in the sky, and the sun glowing like a furnace, yet make one's clothes feel damp to the hand, and make sugar or salt dissolve. Indeed, I believe this to be the very worst atmosphere in the whole world for asthma, except, perhaps, the Orinoco swamps or New Orleans. The Cape, I think, is of all the British colonies, save Canada, the one I would prefer emigrating to voluntarily, as there is great variety both of climate and population, and a large field for exertion of every kind. But you know I would not live in any British colony one moment longer than I am compelled to do so, and I am above all things anxious for Jenny and the little ones not to encounter such a voyage until we know explicitly whether I must stay there or not. I will clearly *know* whether all that can be spared them before I let them stir. As to me, I am sure to find friends at the Cape (if that is to be my destination). I do not mean anybody I knew before; for if there be people there on whose good offices I might calculate, on the ground of former acquaintance or otherwise, I certainly will not, in my present circumstances, go near them. If any such choose to seek me out and offer me any service, I will accept such as I honourably may, but this I do not expect or want. If my health stand by me I have no fears for anything. Through the whole winter I have been very much tormented by asthma, but I think it is somewhat more tolerable now, whether from the opening of spring or the near prospect of leaving this dismal den. I have found a good deal of relief in smoking, and fear I am like to become a confirmed smoker of tobacco. Every evening for about an hour I obfuscate and obumbrate my faculties with my pipe, which not only often gains me a night's sleep, but also helps me to dream (before I sleep) pleasant dreams of the past, and even weave bright visions of the future. Do you know, my dear Matilda—you may wonder at my saying such a thing—I sometimes thank God that I was sent here and put under lock and key for a time. It is good for me to be here (provided I am not kept too long). It is good for a man to be *compelled* to retire for a time within himself, and to “ponder the path of life—at least, one who was rushing headlong as I was, ever looking forward and rushing headlong, without time, literally, to bless myself. It soon makes a man bethink himself what an earth-worm he is, and how absolutely

dependent he is, not only as to his destinies, but as to his very thoughts and resolves, upon a higher power. Heaven bless us, what tremendous fellows we are in the heat and crush of active life, and the pride of "self-reliance (which is, however, a good thing as far as it will reach); and how much less important we find ourselves behind a good thick iron grating, after months have gone by, and the sun appears to rise and set much as usual, and this big oblate spheroid of a globe to be doing its distance, describing equal spaces in equal times, with amazing punctuality. As for personal suffering, after all it is a small matter. Perhaps no human being ever prized his freedom more than I did, and I will not say but that captivity is a bitter draught, and sickness and pain, and sleepless nights in captivity are worse still; but all these things are nothing, and less than nothing to a man unless they *conquer* him—and they shall not conquer me. I often say to myself, many a better man has been starved to death. And we are not in this world for the purpose of getting ourselves made "happy," but for the purpose of doing and suffering what it is our duty to do and suffer. Judging and feeling thus, I have much to live for, many duties undone and responsibilities left undischarged. . . . There is nothing we are so liable to error in judgment about as the enjoyments and sufferings of others, and I know there must be many who pity *me* as one of the unhappiest of mortals—many gentlemen of Ireland now abed, and who flatter themselves they are highly respectable members of society—with whom I would not exchange my lot, iron bars, asthma, and all. But what am I preaching about? . . .

I have been reading since I came here a good deal about America, and certainly it is not the country I would myself choose to live in if I were free to choose—I mean the well-settled parts of it, for nature is the same in all woods and wilds. The chief national characteristic seems to me an unnatural and morbid activity. It is possible to go ahead too fast (the man with the wooden leg which he could not unscrew found it so). For one who likes to loiter by the way ever so little, and not rush through life at such a killing pace, the arena is dangerous. You may get run over and never rise; and for a fellow who is scant of breath, as I am, that would never do at all. The social steam engine is kept at too high a pressure; my boiler would burst. Besides, the

religion of America—for with all their boasts about religious freedom, there is but one sect—their ardent and devout worship of the great god Dollar is too exclusive and intolerant, even, if possible, more ferociously bigoted than the British devotion to *their* god, the one true and eternal Pound Sterling, though, indeed, in America they do not yet offer human sacrifices; but they are coming to that, and their vindictive abhorrence against any heretic or blasphemer who would defile their holy places (as I should be sure to do) is even more formidable than on the east side of the Atlantic. If I ever settle in America, and if other circumstances leave me quite free to choose my “location,” it will be somewhere westward of Lake Superior. Have you ever met with Washington Irving’s last book, about the bee and buffalo prairies beyond Mississippi? It is one of the pleasantest of books. You have been reading Lamartine’s “Girondists.” Don’t put implicit confidence in that sweet and tender man’s views of men and things. He calls himself a “poet,” and feels bound to look at everything through a poetic medium. So his Barnaves and Vergniauds are more imaginary than real. A far more accurate estimate of that clique of gentlemen and ladies is to be found in Carlyle’s great book. If you like the gentle Alphonse’s way of writing (which I confess I don’t) you should read his famous “Pilgrimage to the East.” Mixed with wonderful silliness and conceit quite incredible, and misstatements of numbers, distances, etc., quite absurd, it is a book that has much curious and noble (though all too elaborately poetic) sentiment. His conversations with Lady Hester Stanhope are, to say the least, singular, considering all that has befallen him since. And one thing very apparent in the book is the high and disinterested spirit in which French travellers and statesmen regard the East and the progress of European influences there, compared with certain others. Lamartine, for instance, when he speaks of extending civilization amongst Asiatics, really means ideas, not any kind of textile fabric. He travels to speculate on the best way to inform, elevate, and humanize men, not on the best way to ease them of their spare cash. He appears, not quite perhaps in the character of an apostle, but, at any rate, in a far higher character than that of a commercial traveller from a house in the soft goods line going for “money and orders.” If you would like to meet with a signal

example of this latter kind of traveller, get hold of Lieutenant Burnes's travels in Bokhara and Cabool, and his voyage up the Indus.

As already mentioned, this book of Lieutenant Burnes's is criticised at length in the "Journal."

Life in the hulks would seem to encourage correspondence. Having little else to do, Mitchel wrote more letters and longer letters during this time than at any other period of his life. The reader will have noticed that in these letters there is frequent reference to attacks of asthma. For some three months after he reached Bermuda he was quite free from asthma, and he began to hope that the change of climate had finally cured him. But the damp autumn weather of Bermuda brought back the complaint upon him. The first reference to it in the "Journal" is dated September 26, 1848, and from this on to the time of his leaving Bermuda he had constant attacks more severe in character than he had ever experienced before. On the 18th of October, he speaks of having had "three weeks of sickness, sleepless nights, and dismal days." And on the 1st of December I find this entry :—

The weather has grown cold and gloomy. A Bermudian winter, though not absolutely so cold by the thermometer, is far more trying than good honest frost and snow in Ireland. The winds are very damp, dank, and raw, piercing through joints and marrow. And to tell the plain truth, I am very ill, and do not sleep o' nights. For nearly two months I have had very constant and severe asthma, especially by night ; and have been fully thrice in every week, one week with another, obliged to sit on a chair all night through—and that in the dark and the cold. I am grown ghastly thin, and my voice weak. I am like a sparrow alone upon the house-tops. Courage !

Again, two days later :—

Another red morning has dawned, and finds me sitting, bent down on my chair, with weary limbs and dizzy brain, worn out

with another night's long agony. It is the twelfth night since my head has pressed my pillow. Almighty God! is the angel sleep to visit me never more? All night in darkness I have wrestled with a strong fiend in this cell—other wrestling than Jacob's at Penuel—and now at sunrise, when I can breathe somewhat more freely, the sense of deadly weariness comes upon me heavily. My feet are cold as marble; my body and head swathed in sweat. I look at my image in the glass, and verily believe my mother would hardly know me. My eyes have the wild fearful stare that one may imagine in the eyes of a hard-hunted hare, couched and gasping in her form; a cold dew stands in beads upon my forehead; my cheeks are shrunk and livid; my fingers have become like bird's claws, "and on mine eyelids is the shadow of death."

Dr. Hall, the medical superintendent, came to see him every now and then. The doctor took a gloomy view of the case. He told Mitchel that the climate of Bermuda was notoriously bad for asthma, that a few months more of such a climate would probably kill him. The doctor wished Mitchel to write a letter to the governor, stating the condition he was in, and referring to the doctor for a report. This course, Dr. Hall believed, would probably lead to Mitchel's being removed to some other penal colony, where the climate was better. Mitchel declined to write any such letter. Dr. Hall tried in vain to persuade him. Mitchel resolutely declared that he "would not eat dirt":—

The doctor was now going to leave me, but came back from the door, up to where I sat, and laid his hand upon my shoulder. I saw that tears stood in the good old man's eyes. "And are you going," he said, "to let yourself be closed up here till you perish a convict, when by so slight an effort you could—as I am sure you could—procure not only your removal but probably your release? You are still young; you have a right to look forward to a long life yet with your family in freedom and honour. *Write* to the governor in some form—a simple letter will do; and I know he wishes to exert himself in this matter if it be brought

before him so as to justify his interference. Take your pen now and write."

"I will write something," I said, "but not now. I will think of it, and try to make it possible for the governor and you to procure my removal, seeing my actual manuscript is essential to that end."

The writing of this letter was evidently a highly distasteful task to him. A page of the "Journal" is devoted to the debate as to whether such a letter might be written without any sacrifice of honour or principle. It was put off for a day with the exclamation, "Ah, if the life or death of this poor carcass only were at stake." But there were others who had claims upon him. Finally the letter was written. On the 6th of December, the "Journal" says:—

I have written. The letter is superscribed "To his Excellency the Governor of Bermuda." It merely contains a statement about my health, with reference to the medical superintendent, and suggests that "as I am not sentenced to death," it might be well to get some change made in my position, either by removal to a more healthy climate or otherwise, "so that I may be enabled physically to endure the term of transportation to which I am sentenced."

Of course, before the governor could take action upon this letter, he had to communicate with the authorities at home; and of course the authorities at home had to take time to consider the matter. More than five months passed after the sending of the letter before Mitchel was removed from Bermuda. During this time he had several severe attacks, but not worse than those of the two months previous to his writing. Still, his strength was wearing out, and it was, as he says himself, a sort of living against time. The medical reports upon which the Government finally determined to act must have been pretty strong, since the Home Secretary, in answer to a question in the House of

Commons, just after Mitchel's removal had been decided on, referred to the event of his surviving till he reached the Cape as "a contingency which, judging by the most recent reports of his health, appeared to be very doubtful."

One more extract I will make from the Bermuda period of the "Journal" before passing on. The entry is dated December, 1848:—

I have been wasting my time sadly for three months—doing, learning, thinking, stark nothing. There is surely no necessity on me to live this worthless life, even in a hulk. By idleness I am helping the sickness that saps my strength. The chafing spirit devours the flesh; the blade rusts and consumes its scabbard. This very possibility of getting shortly removed hence has restrained me from writing to Ireland for the books I want; and books and writing are the only occupation I can think of in my solitude. In truth, I did deem myself stronger than I find myself to be—stronger in body and mind; thought I could live wisely, calmly, and be sufficient unto myself in my own strength of quiet endurance, into whatsoever profoundest depths of penal horror the enemy might plunge me. To do and to be all this, I apprehend, needs more training than I have yet undergone. To attain the maximum strength, whether of mind or body, you require exercise, *ασκησις*, education of every muscle and limb, of every faculty and sense. Sometimes I strive to guess what Goethe, that great artist in living well, would recommend, by way of *institutio vitæ* to a man in a hulk, ridden by the asthma fiend.

* * * * *

Goethe, I think, never tried the galleys. One could wish he had; that so hulked men might have the spiritual use and meaning of the hulking world developed in transcendental wise, to help their solitary researches in all their convict generations.

On February 12, 1849, Mitchel was informed that the governor had received instructions to send him to the Cape of Good Hope. The ship which was to bring him there—the *Neptune* of seven hundred tons—sailed from England with a number of convicts on board on the 15th of

February. She did not arrive at Bermuda till the 5th of April. On the 12th of April, Mitchel was brought once more to the hospital ship. The *Neptune* was then fixed to sail in a week ; and Dr. Hall explained that the move to the hospital ship was made in consequence of his having certified that Mitchel was too ill to be put on board ship, and that there was danger of his not surviving the voyage. The kind-hearted old doctor wished him to have a few days of hospital treatment to fit him for so long a voyage, "Lest," as he put it, "they should find it necessary to lower you from the yard-arm between this and the Cape."

On April 22, 1849, the *Neptune* put to sea. The ship was not a large one, and had on board some four hundred persons, of whom about three-fourths were convicts. Mitchel's treatment on this ship was very different from that which he had received on the voyage to Bermuda. Here is his description of his quarters :—

I find myself provided with a very filthy little cabin here, having a window that looks forward over the quarter-deck. On the quarter-deck the soldiers, not on duty, saunter about, smoking and chatting. Beyond the gangway forward, the prisoners, in their Bermuda uniforms, are swarming over deck, fore-castle, and bulwarks, but are not allowed to come aft. Above is the poop-deck, where I am privileged to walk, long, broad, and clean, affording ample scope for exercise. On this poop also saunter and smoke two officers of the military guard.

But it was not only in the matter of quarters that the *Neptune* contrasted unfavourably with the *Scourge*. The reader will remember that while on the *Scourge* Mitchel took his meals with the officers, and associated with them on terms of equality. It seems that British public opinion was much outraged by this. The British public not un-naturally thought that it was labour thrown away to pack a jury in order to have Mitchel declared a felon, if he was

immediately afterwards to be treated as a gentleman and equal by the officers of their navy. Questions were asked about the matter in Parliament, and for some time the "Convict Mitchel" figured frequently in the debates. The usual routine of official lying was gone through by ministers, and at last outraged public opinion was soothed. But it would not do to repeat the same mistake, and to have to invent another series of lying excuses. Therefore the authorities on the *Neptune* were strictly instructed not to treat Mitchel as a gentleman, and not to allow him to associate with the officers. Dr. Dees, the "surgeon-superintendent," as he was called, commanded the ship. He was evidently puzzled as to how he might best communicate his instructions to Mitchel. A characteristic and amusing conversation between the doctor and Mitchel is recorded in the "Journal" as having occurred the day after the ship sailed. I give the opening part of it:—

"I regret," added the doctor, "that you must live quite solitary here, and have no access to the cuddy, nor intercourse with the officers of the guard; not that I myself would have the least objection, nor, I presume, the officers either; but in fact—the fact is——"

"The fact is," supplied I, "that you and they would be dragged before Parliament, like Captain Wingrove, or perhaps tried by court-martial." "Exactly so; that is just the whole case." "Well, then, sir," I said, "make your mind very easy about all that. Ever since I have become a prisoner, and cannot choose my company, I prefer my own society to any other. The worthy gentlemen in Parliament are much mistaken if they imagine the society of any state cabin in her Majesty's navy would be an honour or a comfort to me; and as for the military officers you mention, if they do not obtrude themselves on me, be assured I shall not obtrude myself on them."

And so on for a couple of pages of talk, in the course of which Mitchel expresses pretty strong views regarding

certain practices of British officialism, and in particular regarding the privilege which allows "a superior officer in the British service to invent and publish any story he pleases to screen himself and Government at the expense of a subordinate." At length the doctor began to show signs of uneasiness at the tone of Mitchel's remarks; and Mitchel, perceiving this, changed the subject. Of Dr. Dees he observes: "He is a mild, well-bred, and amiable man, and I believe I shall like him for a gaoler."

For nearly three months after they lost sight of Bermuda they saw no land; and when at last they did see land once more, it was not Africa, but South America. Either the ship or the navigation must have been in fault, for the weather seems to have been favourable enough. During this time Mitchel's health was much better than it had been at Bermuda. He suffered little from asthma. As to occupation, he does not seem to have had much to do or to have suffered much from the want of it. He "walked or lounged on the poop lazily and with right vacant mind by night and day." Here is his description of the society on board:—

Not being a "member of society," and not having the *entrée* of the cuddy, I keep my own hours, dress as I like, and hold no communication save with the doctor and with a species of parson or "instructor," such as they always send in convict ships. The skipper is an old, red-whiskered Scotchman, and the cuddy circle is composed of the said skipper, the doctor, two tarry individuals called mates, the first and the second mate, two officers of the 91st Regiment, and the parson or instructor. The skipper and the two mates, tarry but worthy persons, occasionally enter into conversation with me when I am in the humour to allow them; but the caution of the two gallant officers in that respect amuses me. These gentlemen seem resolved that *they* shall not be tried by court-martial for undue attention to me, and so they give me a wide berth on the poop, walking always on the side opposite to

me. At first they seemed to labour under the apprehension that I would try to force myself on their society, and looked sidelong at me as a modest maid might look at some horrid man that she thinks is meditating her ravishment. They need not be at all afraid—I will not violate their British honour.

About the middle of July, when they had been nearly three months at sea, things began to look a little serious. They had crossed the line three times, passed three times slowly and tediously through that belt of ocean called the “region of calms.” The store of provisions, and especially the water, began to run low, and the captain decided to make for Pernambuco to lay in fresh stores. The state of affairs at this time, and the way it affected Mitchel, may be best gathered from the following extracts :—

The crew and prisoners are on half rations and half allowance of water. The water has grown very bad, black, hot, and populous with living creatures. Sickness has begun to prevail both among prisoners and soldiers; and we have already pitched overboard seven corpses to the sharks. Many are frightfully ill in scurvy; fever is strongly apprehended; and as this delay has occurred in the hottest region of the globe (we are eight weeks on the very line, or within three degrees of it), the only matter of surprise is, that so few have died yet.

* * * * *

For me, I positively enjoy everything—heat and coolness, wet and dry, whole rations, half rations, and quarter rations; and after basking in the sun like a tortoise all day, I smoke and drink considerably at night. Not that the sun—if one is to speak by the card—really shines much in these equinoctial regions, but the warm air is quite luxurious enough to bask in. . . . If provisions and water should altogether run out, and the ship still far at sea, or becalmed off an unknown coast, with four hundred men on board, and three hundred of them desperate reprobates, discipline would soon vanish, and the question would be, which of the well-fed cabin-people should be first, which last devoured. The parson is rather fat, and some days ago he imparted his anxieties to me

with white lips. "We shall have mutiny here," said he. "We shall have murder, and cannibalism, and everything horrible." I told him cannibalism was beginning to be rather common—that in Ireland people had been eating each other for some time, though lean—and I eyed his well-filled waistcoat. He shuddered visibly; said he trusted it would all end well.

At last, on the 18th of July, they sighted land, the coast of South America and the city of Pernambuco. As usual, we have in the "Journal" a description of both coast and city:—

A far-stretching, low-lying coast, within two miles ahead, thickly mantled with majestic woods down to the water's edge—tall cocoa-nut palms standing ranked on the very sea sands—a stately, white-walled, high-towered city, extending full two miles along the shore, built down to high-water mark, and seeming hardly able to make good its footing on the edge of that unconquerable forest. On both sides of it, the vigorous vegetable life seems to mingle with houses and convents, and push itself into the streets; and as the land gently rises beyond, I can see it deeply covered for leagues, even to the tops of distant hills, with the umbrage of untamed woods. But a hundred and twenty thousand human beings lead their lives in this city between forest and ocean; there are many great churches and monasteries of imposing Lusitanian architecture—great stores and quays, and in the harbour ships of all nations.

Stores of oranges, vegetables, and fresh bread were brought on board the day after they came to anchor. Several of those who had charge of the boats and merchandise were slaves. His remarks on the occasion give some indication of those pro-slavery views of his which afterwards gave so much offence to many of his friends:—

I surveyed them long and earnestly, for before this day I never saw a slave in his slavery—I mean a merchantable slave, a slave of real money value, whom a prudent man will, in the way of business, pay for and feed afterwards. The poor slaves I have been accustomed to see are not only of no value, but their owners

will go to heavy expense to get rid of them—not imported slaves, but surplus slaves for export—slaves with a glorious constitution, slaves with a *Palladium*—a Habeas Corpus to be suspended, and a trial by jury whereby they may have the comfort of being rooted out of house and home, transported and hanged at the pleasure of the “upper classes.” These slaves in Brazil are fat and merry, obviously not overworked nor underfed, and it is a pleasure to see the lazy rogues lolling in their boats, sucking a piece of green sugar-cane, and grinning and jabbering together, not knowing that there is such an atrocity as a *Palladium* in the whole world.

Yet in what he has to say about these slaves, there are some sentiments which go to show that his views on the subject of slavery were then far from being so definite and determined as they afterwards came to be.

They remained nearly a month lying off Pernambuco. The British tars were much disgusted at the easy-going way in which the inhabitants proceeded with the work of victualling the ship. They “damned the lazy foreign lubbers” most vigorously, but to no effect. The worthy subjects of the emperor insisted on taking their time, and would not allow themselves to be hurried by any one. The *Neptune* lay in an open roadstead some two miles from land; and when the sea was at all rough, the Pernambuco boatmen declined to venture out. Then a fine calm day would come. The skipper would be on the look-out for the provision boats, when, to his infinite disgust, it would be announced that this was some saint’s day, and no one would work. The saints had to be duly honoured, even though the convicts should starve. During all this time, however, they had an abundant supply of yams, oranges, and all kinds of fruit. On the whole, Mitchel seems to have enjoyed himself. He never put his foot on land, but was kept confined to the ship. He soon discovered, however, that even in Pernambuco, he had friends and admirers. In particular, a merchant of the name of Dowsley, who said

he was an Irishman, was very attentive. He sent hampers of fruit, and called to see Mitchel. The conversation which ensued is amusing :—

Asked him a great deal about Brazil. He says it is a noble country to live in, “and a genuine land of liberty, too,” he added. Told him I was not quite prepared to hear that. “But you mean,” quoth I, “that the laws are made by Brazilians, not by strangers, and are fairly administered, and *for* Brazil, not for any foreign nation. If you mean that, it is liberty indeed.” He did not exactly mean that, though that was all true—he meant that they had regular representative government and elections, “and all that.” Asked him how the elections were carried on—if there was much excitement and party feeling—also what the party feeling was all about, and what parties they were at all. “Party feeling!” said he. “Excitement! Oh, there is nothing of all that; the whole business is managed by the police.” “By the police? Is there not voting then? Are there not rival candidates?” “No, no; the police provide the candidate, and as to voting or venturing to propose rival candidates, bless your soul! the *police* would allow nothing of that sort; they would soon clear out the place and shut it up.” “The key,” quoth I, “belongs, I suppose, to the emperor. But I understand you now; and if the laws be indeed, as you say, just, and fairly administered, why Brazil *is* a genuine land of liberty, only the police elections might perhaps be dispensed with.”

The process of provisioning at last came to an end, and on the 12th of August the *Neptune* again put to sea. “The long-stretching coast of South America, with its beautiful white-walled city and endless wilderness of primeval forests” faded gradually out of sight; and once again there was nothing to be seen but the blue sky and dark sea. Five weeks more of weary navigation before they reached the Cape. The life was the same in all respects as it had been before, and so far as regards external events, there is little to tell. Any variety there was in Mitchel’s existence on this weary ship came from within and not from without.

The "Journal" gives us occasional glimpses into the state of his thoughts. Thus, take the following entry, made shortly after they left Pernambuco:—

There is somewhat dreamlike indeed in this life I am leading. My utter loneliness in this populous ship amidst the strange grandeur of the ocean, and for so many days; . . . and then this wondrous rising, like an exhalation from the sea, of gorgeous forests and cities, and again their wondrous setting. All this makes me feel like a man before whose entranced vision some phantasmagory is flitting by. They are ghosts, these sailors and soldiers, doing their ghostly business before me on the great deep for a season; and in the morning the cock will crow for me in some distant land, and I shall awake, and the whole rout of Atlantic spirits shall vanish speedily, shrieking on the blast. Whereupon enter other ghosts.

For a month or so after they left Pernambuco, they steered a southward course, and by the 11th of September they had arrived several degrees south of the Cape latitude. Winter being not yet quite over in the southern hemisphere, the weather was very cold, and Mitchel had several sharp attacks of his old enemy. Some three or four great albatrosses usually followed or flew around the ship. When the asthma was upon Mitchel, the contrast between his own condition and the seemingly limitless locomotive powers of the albatrosses would sometimes strike him in a ludicrous light. "Heaven knows," he writes, "how deeply I envy these albatrosses their sublime faculty of locomotion and the preternatural lungs the devils have. Is there in all the world an asthmatic albatross? I think not."

Amongst other subjects which occupied his thoughts during this voyage was the British convict system. It is here that the story is told regarding Garrett which I have given as it happened in order of time.

Three or four pages of the "Journal" are devoted to a criticism of the British convict and transportation system,

which he considers must have been "contrived by the devil with the assistance of some friends." Then follow a couple of pages in which the leading idea of the British military system—that which views a common soldier as a mere machine—is severely handled. The whole discussion winds up in this way:—

I have now sufficiently vilipended two branches of the united service, the convict and the military. The naval must be kept for another occasion. May God look down upon us all, soldiers and convicts, officers and turnkeys, and especially the unhappy statesmen who are expected to order all these matters aright (without an idea of order in their heads, or a ray of truth in their souls), and more especially me, lonely seafaring patriot and martyr, who am thus austerely animadverting upon mankind, as we tear through the heavy seas under close-reefed topsails about four hundred leagues from land. It is deep in the night. The wind roars wildly, and the waning moon shines in upon me with pale face through the shrouds. So I go upon deck to see the grim white moonshine on the tossing manes of ten thousand breaking billows. A yellow summer moon streaming soft through the whispering tops of bowery trees upon velvet-swarded glades is *one* thing, and this grim white moon careering through torn and rifted clouds, on a stormy night at sea, is quite another thing, though Euler's calculations, I believe, are said to be applicable to both. After all, the winter moon of these southern oceans is no other than the very harvest moon of Ireland, shining calmly into the room where my children are sleeping this blessed night. For we are not far from the meridian of Newry, though six thousand miles to the south; and I know that this white disk struggling here through antarctic storm-clouds is the very globe of silver that hangs to-night between the branches of the laurels in Dromalane.

Amongst the convicts on board there were some two hundred Irish. Most of these were not criminals in the ordinary and proper sense of the word, but poor wretches whom starvation and despair had goaded to some act which the law designated a crime. They belonged to that class

who, as the officer told Mitchel at Bermuda, were innocent and inoffensive when they first came out, but who, under the able tuition of London burglars, "soon became as finished ruffians as the rest." The thought of this sometimes goaded Mitchel almost to madness. There were amongst these Irish convicts many

boys from twelve to seventeen years of age, and some of them very handsome boys, with fine open countenances, and a laugh so clear and ringing, whom it is a real pain to look upon. They hardly know what troops of fell foes, with quivers full of arrows, are hunting for their young souls and bodies; *they* hardly know, and—so much the more pity for them—hardly feel it; but in poor frail huts on many an Irish hillside, their fathers and mothers dwell with poverty, and labour, and sorrow, and mourn for their lost children with a mourning that will know no comfort till they are gathered to their people in the chapel-yard. For indeed these convict boys were not born of the rock or the oak-tree—human mothers bore them, sang them asleep in lowly cradles, wept and prayed for them. But Ireland was under the amelioration of British statesmen in those days, getting her resources developed by them; and so the sons of those woeful Irish mothers were rocked and suckled for the British hulks, to be ameliorated amongst London burglars, and reformed by the swell-mob, that they might help to carry British civilization to distant continents and isles.

Thoughts like these often come upon me when I hear at night, rising from the ship's fore-castle, some Irish air that carries me back to old days when I heard the same to the humming accompaniment of the spinning-wheel; and then I curse, oh! how fervently, the British empire.

On the 18th of September they got their first sight of the coast of Africa. The "Cape of Storms" belied its reputation; for, after sailing along for a fortnight under a strong gale which never failed, just as they got in sight of the Cape, they were completely becalmed. Some slight description of the appearance of the shore we find in the "Journal":—

About noon, the mountains were all clear; and there, sure enough, is the unmistakable platform of Table Mountain predominating over them all. Where we lie here we see no land but the rugged peninsula which divides Table Bay from False Bay, the outer coast of which seems to extend about thirty miles. The northern part of this peninsula is a magnificent mass of mountains; and straight opposite to where we are now drifting, the mass is cloven through by a narrow inlet called Hout's Bay, where the cliffs seem to rise sheer out of deep water at an angle that would make the footing of a goat unsure. Yet in that very inlet, as I hear, round the skirts of those grim rocks, are some of the best vineyards in the colony. I thirst for the juice of these African grapes, and refuse my accustomed brandy to-day, out of disgust.

On the 19th of September they cast anchor in Simon's Bay, Cape of Good Hope. They speedily learned that the inhabitants of Cape Colony had prepared for them a reception somewhat different from that which the ship authorities looked for. The last entry of the voyage from Bermuda to the Cape I find to be this:—

Hurrah! hurrah! Africa has brought forth a new thing—a right noble birth this time—and from the bottom of my heart I wish her joy.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE—VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

1849—1852.

THE "new thing" referred to in the extract at the close of the last chapter was simply this. The colonists had made up their minds not to allow this cargo of convicts to land on their shores, and, if necessary, to resist by force. It seems that this was the first cargo of convicts attempted to be landed at the Cape.

A promise had been made by ministers at home two years prior to this, that no attempt would be made to land convicts in any colony not before a penal one, without its own consent. On this promise the colonists relied, and this promise they were determined should, so far as they were concerned, be kept. As soon as they heard the *Neptune* was coming to the Cape, they formed an anti-convict association, "which soon included practically the whole population." The pledge taken by the members bound them "neither to employ any convict, give a convict a place to lay his head, or deal with, countenance, or speak to any traitor who might so comfort or abet a convict." That this rigid system of "boycotting" was most strictly enforced during the stay of the *Neptune* in Simon's Bay will be seen from some extracts which I shall give presently. A month before the ship arrived, the governor of the colony, Sir Henry Smith, had been forced by the

colonists to promise that he would not receive any convicts, at least until he should have had time to communicate with the home authorities. So the first visitor the *Neptune* had in Simon's Bay was the harbour-master. He brought a note to Dr. Dees, telling him not to enter the harbour, but to cast anchor in the bay, and warning him neither to go ashore himself nor to suffer any communication between the ship and the shore till further orders. A Dr. Stewart, the health-officer of the port, came along with the harbour-master. He introduced himself to Mitchel, gave him some newspapers, and told him that so far as he (Mitchel) was concerned, there was no objection to his landing; the agitation had reference only to the other sort of convicts. Mitchel answered that he entirely approved of the conduct of the colonists in the matter; that he thought they were completely in the right, and hoped they would hold out to the last; and that, as to himself, though he certainly did not admit he was a felon, yet he did not expect or wish that the colonists should make any distinction in his favour.

The harbour-master further informed the people on the ship that the colonists, knowing the *Neptune* had left Bermuda some five months before, had concluded that she had gone down with all hands. "In fact, several clergymen had been praying to God in their pulpits to avert the infliction, and complacently remarking in their sermons upon the presumed loss of the *Neptune* with every soul on board as one of the most special providences yet recorded."

Mitchel also learned from the harbour-master that about a week before the arrival of the *Neptune* the *Swift*, a man-of-war brig, touched at the Cape and took in provisions, on her way to Sydney, having on board O'Brien, Meagher, O'Donoghue, and McManus.

The anti-convict rebellion, as it was called, lasted just five months. The *Neptune* reached Simon's Bay on Sep-

tember 19, 1849; she left it on February 19, 1850. During the whole of that time the ship remained at anchor in the bay, and her living cargo remained on board, procuring the necessaries of existence with extreme difficulty. Occasionally one of the officers would visit the shore, but no attempt was ever made to land any of the convicts. Simon's Bay, where the ship so long rode at anchor, is thus described in the "Journal":—

Simon's Bay is a cove, or recess, on the west side of the great False Bay, inclosed by rugged hills, from eight hundred to fourteen hundred feet in height; and the town, with its dockyard buildings, is built round the head of the bay, on the steep face of the hill, like a small Genoa. At one end of the town a deep ravine brings down a stream from the mountains, and close to its mouth stand a few trees. Several handsome houses, hotels, a good many shops, a church, a small barrack, a range of navy store-houses, make up the whole town; and three or four gardens have been made to climb up the abrupt acclivity behind, though for some of them the soil must have been carried up, not in carts, but in *hods*. There is about as much pasture near the water's edge as might feed three cows.

During the whole five months the anti-convict pledge was rigorously enforced throughout the colony. Any one who showed signs of weakening, and in particular, any one who dared to supply the enemy with provisions, was denounced as a traitor and most strictly boycotted. The course of the agitation and the intensity of the feeling aroused may be gathered from the following extract from the "Journal":—

Everything goes on favourably. The meeting yesterday resolved on applying the anti-convict "pledge" rigorously. The pledge is against selling anything to anybody on board the *Neptune*, or to anybody who will so deal, or to any one who will assist any convicted felon to land, or enable him to live when landed—or to the Government, or anybody for the Government,

so long as the *Neptune* remains even afloat within the waters of the colony. All the Simonstown shopkeepers were made to sign this pledge on the spot, though sore against their will; for this little town depends wholly on the dockyard and the custom of men-of-war's men. Watch has been set on shore (men with telescopes, called committee of vigilance) to keep a constant eye upon the *Neptune* and the boats to and fro—also, on the Simonstown shopkeepers, who need watching too. They are bent upon starving us—after our five months' voyage. The commodore, indeed, yesterday sent us fresh beef for all hands, but a message with it that he could not hope to supply us for more than a day or two, as, if found out, he would get no more beef for himself and his crew.

The "commodore," be it observed, was an officer who commanded a war frigate lying at anchor near the *Neptune*, and who "had supreme command over everything afloat in those waters." The Cape newspapers were occasionally brought on board, from which they gathered the course of events on shore. In the remoter parts of the colony the Dutch inhabitants were even more determined in their hostility to the convicts than the English. They did not very well know what a convict was, but the matter was sufficiently explained to them by their newspapers. Graaf Grey had sent a ship-load of *bandieten* from England and Ireland to be let loose upon their colony. The theme was enlarged upon by the native orators, until the worthy Boers were

excited to the utmost, and they thought of Lord Grey's "exiles" as of a band of præternatural desperadoes, coming with an express mission to rob, ravish, burn, and murder—*Donner en blitzen!* the worthy farmers, in hot Dutch wrath, not only adopted the pledge by acclamation, and signed it on the spot, but swore, gutturally, lifting their hands to heaven, that they never would submit to this wrong—would renounce their allegiance rather, and take up their rifles to repel the felon invasion with more hearty goodwill than ever they had marched against Caffirs. And the

stout Boers are like to be as good as their word. I trust they are ; one would gladly fall in upon some corner of the world where men who threaten loud have some notion of putting their threats into execution.

The struggle was maintained, as such struggles generally are, at the cost of suffering on both sides :—

Our old skipper went ashore to-day, taking a brace of pistols with him. He found the people very quietly disposed ; only they would “hold no intercourse” with him. He walked into several shops, tried to buy a tobacco pipe, a glass for his watch, a fresh roll of bread, but in vain ; they would hold no intercourse. He went into the house of a poor woman, who keeps a small bakery and confectionery shop, and who has hitherto lived by supplying the men-of-war with fresh breakfast bread. She told him, with tears, that she was utterly ruined—that the farmers and millers had ceased sending flour or grain to Simonstown, that but one baker could now keep his oven hot, and was restricted to selling at each house what would feed its known inmates only. While they talked, the baker’s cart came up ; the captain begged her, as she was buying for herself, to get two loaves *more*, and sell them to him ; but she protested, in the greatest agitation, that if she even asked for such a thing, she would get no more bread for herself. He came on board again, declaring he had never met with such fools in his life. Our skipper belongs apparently to that numerous class of persons who cannot understand how sane men, Britons, too, professing Christianity, and living in the nineteenth century, can bring themselves, on mere public grounds, to refuse to *turn a penny*. He is an old East India captain, and knows a sure way, he tells me, to bring these people to reason—namely, to give, “three dozen all round” to the colonists, and a double allowance to the clergy.

The supply of meat ran out, and they had nothing but fish to eat. The commodore determined to inaugurate a system of forays by night. The first of these nocturnal expeditions took place about the end of September, and was brilliantly successful. A herd of bullocks was driven

into Simonstown in the morning with a fife and drum heading the procession. Of course, the commodore paid for the cattle ; but this did not prevent the colonists from being very indignant at the proceeding.

Amongst other visitors who called on Mitchel during this time was one who seems to have impressed him very favourably. This was Dr. Gray, the Bishop of Capetown. He came one Sunday to read service and preach to the convicts, and after service was over he asked to see Mr. Mitchel. He proved to be a very agreeable and intelligent person. He told Mitchel that he was in entire sympathy with the anti-convict movement, and that if the colony were but a little stronger, it would try the issue by arms. All which sentiments Mr. Mitchel very earnestly approved.

There is something decidedly amusing in all this. The British Government had first passed a special Act of Parliament, and then most carefully packed a jury in order to make a felon of this man—not a political felon, or a special kind of felon, but a felon pure and simple, the express object of the Treason-Felony Act being, as we have seen, to cause political convicts to be viewed in the same light as burglars and cut-throats. That in Ireland the Act should have an effect the direct opposite to that hoped for by its authors was a matter of course. But even amongst British officers and high dignitaries in British colonies, the failure was hardly less conspicuous. The fact is that when in truth a man is not a felon, no amount of statutory definition can make him one, or can force others, who have the instincts of gentlemen, to treat him as a felon.

We have seen that the anti-convict movement was maintained at the cost of considerable suffering to the colonists. The shopkeepers of Simonstown were almost entirely ruined by the business ; and even in Capetown the people suffered severely. In these seaport towns the prin-

cial customers of the shopkeepers were just the very classes whom the Anti-Convict Association forbid them to supply. Hence in these places business was almost suspended, and the distress was severe. But such was the intensity of the feeling throughout the colony in general, that the business classes in the towns did not dare to openly oppose it. On the whole, it would seem that, while the struggle lasted, the decrees of the Anti-Convict Association were generally enforced.

During the first three months or so of the delay in Simon's Bay, Mitchel's health was fairly good; but during the last two months he had several severe attacks of his old enemy, the asthma. This he himself attributes to "the close imprisonment, the suspense, and the want of exciting occupation." He must certainly have found it pretty hard to kill time on board the *Neptune*. He does not give us much account of his reading during these five months; that is, I mean, of book-reading, for of newspaper reading he seems to have had a good deal more while at the Cape than while at Bermuda. During the voyage from Bermuda to the Cape, he heard nothing of home news with the exception of one batch of English newspapers received while they were lying off Pernambuco. But at the Cape, newspapers came to hand from time to time, and in this part of the "Journal" several pages here and there are devoted to commenting upon the course of Irish and European politics. Thus, under date of October 26, 1849, I find notice of two items of news just then come to hand, the first being that Mr. Duffy had advertised a new series of the *Nation*, and the second, that the Queen had visited Ireland and had been most loyally received. In each case the comment is sufficiently bitter. In referring to the matter of the Queen's visit to Ireland, he takes occasion to repel with indignation the insinuation of the *Times* that he

had ever proposed to "sprinkle the Queen with vitriol." Again, under date of January 1, 1850, there are some pages of comment upon the state of affairs in Europe, and in particular upon the defeat of Hungary by the Austro-Russian alliance. From this he passes to a further criticism of the new *Nation*, from which he had now seen some extracts. Mr. Duffy's comments upon the Ballingarry attempt and the lessons to be learned therefrom are handled by Mitchel with fierce indignation and scorn. Mitchel's own comment on the Ballingarry failure and the lesson *he* derived from the same are set forth in the "Journal." I give the passages at length as helping to further elucidate and exemplify what I have said in a former chapter regarding Mitchel's views of policy:—

The Ballingarry failure is hardly, I suppose, to be treated as a criterion. A gentleman—a very estimable and worthy gentleman, certainly—goes with three or four attendants (who are wholly unknown to the people they go amongst), into the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary—and there tells several persons they are to rise in insurrection under his guidance and free the country. He has no money, this gentleman, to pay the troops, no clothing nor arms to give them, no food to keep them alive. He just exhibits a pike, and bids them follow him and free the country. Well, the people are desirous enough to free the country. Let them be but *half* armed, half clothed, and one quarter fed, and they will show what mind they are of. But this abrupt proposal of the worthy gentleman takes them by surprise. Very few of them have any arms at all. For fifty years it has been the constant policy of the hostile Government to disarm them; and *twenty* Arms Bills have been enacted since the Union, with that special purpose. Very politic policy it was; for the enemy knew, that if once these people became familiar with arms, they would be sure to put them to the only righteous and Christian use. All kinds of weapons, therefore, for half a century back, have been associated in the minds of *Catholic* Irishmen, with crime, gaols, informers, petty sessions, handcuffs, and policemen. And as if that were not

enough, all the influence of the constitutional agitators, and in a great measure of the priests also, has been exerted to make the use of arms appear a sin against God. They have not been taught that it is the prerogative of man to bear arms; that beasts alone go without them; that Arms Bills are passed by the British Parliament, on the same principle on which other robbers disarm those whom they mean to plunder. No, they have been taught such drivelling maxims as—"Let others die for their country—we prefer to live for her." "One living patriot is worth a churchyard full of dead ones." Now, this is not the sort of people—so debased, so benighted, and reduced to a beastly helplessness—that you can expect to rise *en masse* on a call to arms, be their slavery as intolerable, their wrath as deadly, as you will. Before there can be any general arming, or aptitude to insurrection, there must first be sound manly doctrine preached and embraced. And next, there must be many desultory collisions with British troops, both in town and country, and the sight of clear steel, and of blood smoking hot, must become familiar to the eyes of men, of boys, and of women.

The American Revolution was begun by riots, "paltry riots," on the streets of Boston; the last grand Lombard insurrection was prepared and ripened by months and years of exasperating collisions in theatres and at the corners of streets, until society became one angry ulcer. And such will for ever be the history of resistance where the oppressed people are individually high-spirited, and not emasculated by vicious teaching.

Between Irish affairs, European affairs, and Cape affairs, it would seem, if we may judge from the "Journal," that Mitchel's thoughts ran more on political, and less on literary or philosophical subjects during this sojourn in Simon's Bay than at any previous period since his removal from Ireland.

At last, after even more than the usual amount of red-tapeism and unmeaning delay, the despatches arrived containing the final decision of the home Government in the matter of landing the convicts. The result was what Mitchel had looked for. When England lost the greatest of her colonies, she received a lesson which she has never

since forgotten. Ever since the American Revolution it only needs one of England's colonies to show that it is thoroughly in earnest in making a reasonable demand to ensure that such demand will be conceded. Lord Grey's despatches arrived at the Cape about the middle of February, 1850. The captain of the flagship came on board the *Neptune* to apprise the convicts of their fate. Here is Mitchel's description of the scene as given in the "Journal":—

He took his stand on the quarter-deck at the capstan; and the prisoners were all ordered up from below to hear their fate. I was walking on the poop, and stopped at the rail a few minutes looking down at the scene. The men poured aft as far as the gangway in gloomy masses, some scowling black, some pale as death; and when Captain Bance unfolded his papers the burliest burglar held his breath for a time. *Neptune* to proceed forthwith to Van Diemen's Land; on arrival there, prisoners to receive (in compensation for the hardships of their long voyage and detention) her gracious Majesty's "conditional pardon"—except "the prisoner Mitchel," whose case Lord Grey says, being entirely different from all the others, is reserved for separate consideration, but special instructions respecting it are to be forwarded to the governor of Van Diemen's Land. When the reader came to the exception of "the prisoner Mitchel," he raised his voice, and spoke with impressive solemnity. In a moment all eyes, of officers, sailors, prisoners, soldiers, were fastened on my face; if they read anything but *scorn*—then my face belied my heart.

Yet, although for the moment scorn may have been, and no doubt was, the predominant feeling in Mitchel's heart, he felt a strangely intense aversion to the idea of living in Van Diemen's Land. For one thing, he could not as yet endure the notion of bringing his family to live in a country where "more than three-fourths of the whole population were convicts, or emancipated convicts, or the children of convicts begotten in felony and brought up in

the feeling that their hand must be against every man, as every man's hand against them." But Van Diemen's Land had been selected as his destination, and the fact had to be faced and endured. So, summoning to his aid "what tincture of philosophy soever he had drawn in his eclectic method from Porch, from Garden, from Grove, yea, from Mount of Olives too," he schooled his soul to face the ordeal and bear it as best he might.

On February 19, 1850, the *Neptune* again put to sea. There was great rejoicing at Capetown. The rival parties were reconciled, and Moderates and Immoderates buried their differences. The last of the Cape newspapers which Mitchel got sight of contained announcements in large capitals, of the dinner, the illuminations, and the fire-works which were to celebrate the departure of the *Neptune* with her convict cargo. These rejoicings were not very complimentary to the convicts, but Mitchel was in no humour to resent them. On the night before the *Neptune* was to sail—"a most lovely night"—he took his last look of Africa, and made this entry in his "Journal":—

So the contest is over; and the colonists may now proceed about their peaceful business, with no worse enemies to disquiet them than the Caffirs and the panthers. May their vineyards and cornfields be fruitful to them while the sun visits Capricorn! Long may they sleep in peace, without bolt or lock on their hospitable doors, and travel over *kloof* and *karroo* with the bullock-whip for their sufficient weapon! Most heartily I congratulate the Cape on the fearful importation she has escaped.

I watched the sun set behind the hills; and his last purple gleams blushing on the peaks of distant mountains, turning every splintered cliff into a perfect amethyst. And well I know within the foldings of those amethystine ridges lie many emerald vales; and to the good people who dwell there, the feet of those who carry this day's tidings will be beautiful upon the mountains. Morning will dawn to-morrow on the proudest day South Africa has yet beheld.

The voyage from the Cape to Van Diemen's Land took just six weeks, and was entirely uneventful. They were running straight before the wind all the time, and often made as much as two hundred miles a day. During almost the entire time Mitchel was very ill. It was now nearly a year since he had set his foot on dry land, and the life at sea, which at first had been a healthful change, had now become a horror to him. On the 6th of April they got their first sight of Van Diemen's Land :—

The mountainous southern coast of Van Diemen's Land ! It is a soft blue day ; soft airs laden with all the fragrances of those antarctic woods, weave an atmosphere of ambrosia round me. As we coast along over the placid waters, passing promontory after promontory, wooded to the water's edge, and "glassing their ancient glories in the flood," both sea and land seem to bask and rejoice in the sunshine. Old Ocean smiles—that multitudinous rippling laugh seen in vision by the chained Prometheus. Even my own sick and weary soul (so kind and bounteous is our mother Earth) feels lightened, refreshed, uplifted. Yet there, to port, loom the mountains, whereunto I am to be chained for years, with a vulture gnawing my heart. Here is the very place—the Kaf or Caucasus where I must die a daily death, and make a nightly descent into hell !

On that same evening they entered the inlet known as D'Entrecasteaux Channel, which runs up twenty-five miles on the west side of Bruin Island and divides it from the mainland of Tasmania. By two o'clock next afternoon they were at anchor in the Derwent, a quarter of a mile from the quays and custom-house of Hobart Town. Of the town and its surroundings we have this description :—

Why should I write down, here again, what I see, what everybody sees, at every seaport ? The town slopes from the river to the hills precisely like any other town. Several church steeples, of course ; a small battery on a point ; a windmill on a height ; merchants' stores along the quays ; waggons carrying merchandise

hither and thither ; and the waggons have wheels ; and the horses are quadrupedal and solidungular. A good many ships lie in the harbour ; and one Carthaginian frigate, the *Mæander*.

* * * * * * *

The harbour is the broad estuary of the river Derwent. The town lies on the western side, backed by gardens and villas, rising on the slope of wooded hills and ravines, which all lose themselves in the vast gloomy mass of Mount Wellington. On the eastern side, which seems nearly uninhabited, there are low hills covered with wood ; and directing the eye up the river-valley, I see nothing but a succession of hill and forest till blue mountains shut up the view. I long to walk the woods, and leave behind me the sight and sound of the weariful sea.

Mitchel was not allowed to land until the governor could be communicated with. This official—Sir William Denison by name—was absent on a hunting expedition, and the official despatches regarding Mitchel were sent after him. Meantime the real convicts on board were in high spirits ; they were to be landed free. Some of them were invited to serve as constables on the island ; and the principle upon which these were selected was a curious one :—

Doctor Gibson, our superintendent, who has been here before, and knows the ways of the place, informs me that almost all the petty constables on the island, and even some of the chief constables, are convicts ; and, further, that the most desperate villains are actually selected for the office. “A dozen of our worst *Neptune* ruffians,” said the doctor, “you will see in a few days dressed in blue, armed with carbines, and placed in a position to predominate over *you*, and your friends who have arrived here before you.”

No very long time elapsed before the instructions regarding Mitchel arrived. They were brought by a convict official known by the name of Emmett :—

A convict official by the name of Emmett ! He handed me a communication from an individual styled “Comptroller-General,”

informing me that instructions had been received from the Secretary of State, to allow me to reside at large in any one of the police districts I might select (except those already used as the dungeons of my friends)—subject to no restriction, save the necessity of reporting myself to the district police-magistrate once a month. This condition of existence is, I find, called "Ticket-of-leave." I may accept it or not, as I think proper; or, having accepted, I may at any time resign it. But, first of all, I must give my promise that so long as I hold the said "ticket," I shall not escape from the colony.

O'Brien had refused to give this promise; but Martin, Meagher, and O'Doherty had given it, and Mitchel decided to do likewise. The prospect of this "comparative liberty" amongst the Tasmanian woods was tempting to him after his ten months of solitary confinement at Bermuda, and eleven months and seventeen days cruising in the *Neptune*. Moreover, there was some hope of the companionship of a convict, who, like himself, was of a peculiar kind. Dr. Gibson, the superintendent, made a strong report to the authorities regarding the state of Mitchel's health, and expressed himself confident of obtaining leave for him to reside in the same police district as John Martin. Mitchel wrote a note to the Comptroller-General, giving the required promise; also a further note at the doctor's suggestion, stating that he was and had been very ill, and was unfit to be sent by himself to some remote district. This statement was backed by the doctor's authority.

While he was awaiting the official answer, he received a novel application. Mr. Patrick O'Donohoe had established in Hobart Town a paper entitled the *Irish Exile*, and in this promising enterprise he invited Mitchel to join. The thing was, as Mitchel truly observes, a hideous absurdity, and of course he decided to have nothing to do with it.

The answer of the Comptroller-General must have been

favourable, for on the 12th of April I find this entry in the "Journal":—

Sitting on the green grass by the bank of a clear, brawling stream of fresh water. Trees waving overhead; the sunshine streaming through their branches, and making a tremulous network of light and shade on the ground. It is Bothwell, forty-six miles from Hobart Town, from the *Neptune*, and the sea; and high among the central mountains of Van Diemen's Land. Opposite sits John Martin, sometime of Loughorne, smoking placidly, and gazing curiously on me with his mild eyes.

For some three or four months after Mitchel's arrival, he and Martin lived in the village of Bothwell. Their lodging was in a neat cottage of the village, their hostess being a woman who conducted the church singings on Sundays. "She was very attentive to them, and to show that she was a person of respectability, she took an early occasion of informing Mitchel that she 'came out free,' which, in fact, was the patent of nobility in Van Diemen's Land." After a few months they left this lodging and removed to a small cottage about six miles from the town, and there they continued to reside until Mitchel's family came out about a year later. Of Bothwell and its surroundings we have in the "Journal" the following description:—

The village of Bothwell, where John Martin and myself are now privileged by "ticket-of-leave" to live or to vegetate, contains about sixty or seventy houses; has a church where clergymen of the Church of England and of Scotland perform service, one in the morning and the other in the evening of Sunday; has four large public-houses or hotels, establishments which are much better supported on the voluntary system, and have much larger congregations, than the church; has a post-office, and several carpenters' and blacksmiths' shops, for the accommodation of the settlers who live in the district; and a police-office and police-barrack, with the police magistrate of the district predominating there.

It is situated in a valley about three or four miles in width, and twice that in length, at an elevation of thirteen hundred feet above the sea; and is surrounded by rough, wooded mountains, rising perhaps a thousand feet higher. Through the valley, from north to south, runs the little river Clyde, turning two mills.

Between the climate, the "comparative freedom," and the society of John Martin, Mitchel's health improved rapidly. He tried to keep constantly before his mind the fact that he was still a convict and a ticket-of-leave man; but he could not quite succeed. The old tendency to take keen joy in the beauties and melodies of his mother earth would assert itself at times in spite of his savage mood:—

I grow stronger every day. And whether it be the elastic and balmy air of these mountain-woods that sends the tide of life coursing somewhat warmer through my veins; or unwonted converse of an old friend, that revives the personal identity I had nearly lost; or the mere treading once more upon the firm flowery surface of our bounteous mother earth, after two years tossing on the barren, briny ocean—mother earth breathing vital fragrance for ever, for ever swinging the censer of her perfumes from a thousand flowers, for ever singing her eternal melodies in whispering tree-tops and murmuring, tinkling, bubbling streams,—certain it is, I feel a kind of joy. In vain I try to torment myself into a state of chronic savage indignation; it will not do here. In vain I reflect that "it is incumbent on me diligently to remember" (as Mr. Gibbon says) how that I am, after all, in a real cell, hulk, or dungeon, yet; that these ancient mountains with the cloud-shadows flying over their far-stretching woodlands, are but Carthaginian prison walls; that the bright birds, waving their rainbow wings here before me, are but "ticket-of-leave" birds, and enjoy only "comparative liberty;"—in vain—there is in every soul of man a buoyancy that will not let it sink to utter stark despair.

Of regular occupation they had none, but they tried to kill time by talking, walking, and riding. The sort of life they led is summarized in a short entry in the "Journal"

made about a year after Mitchel's arrival in Van Diemen's Land :—

Bothwell. For many months I have not jotted down a date or incident. Our life here has been uniform and dull ; and our main object has been to kill thought by violent exercise on foot and on horseback. We still go to the lakes and meet with Meagher ; and this is our chiefest pleasure ; but O'Doherty has removed to Hobart Town, and has employment in his profession.

The expeditions to the lakes here referred to formed the chief variety in their lives. I find in the "Journal" a long and picturesque account of the first visit they paid to Meagher and O'Doherty shortly after Mitchel's arrival. The three police districts in which Meagher, O'Doherty, and Martin were respectively located all touched upon a large lake known as Lake Sorel. The three prisoners had been in the habit, before Mitchel arrived, of meeting every week at the lake, and one of these weekly meetings was fixed to take place a day or two after Mitchel's arrival. He and Martin started in a violent rain-storm ; and as they ascended the mountain the rain turned to snow. It was a pretty long ride to the place of rendezvous, but Mitchel, who had been a practised rider at home in Ireland, did not anticipate much trouble. However, he soon found that he had miscalculated. The long confinement and illness had told on his strength more than he had supposed, and before they reached the rendezvous he became exhausted, and was obliged to stop at the hut of a hospitable shepherd named Cooper. Here they stayed to dry their clothes and have some food, while Cooper rode on to the place of rendezvous to tell O'Doherty and Meagher that Mitchel was waiting for them at the hut. In the course of an hour or so Cooper returned with the others, and Mitchel heard outside the hut "a loud laugh well known to him" :—

We went to the door ; and in a minute Meagher and O'Doherty had thrown themselves from their horses ; and as we exchanged greetings—I know not from what impulse, whether from buoyancy of heart, or *bizarre* perversity of feeling—we all *laughed* till the woods rang around ; laughed loud and long, and uproariously, till two teal rose startled from the reeds on the lake shore, and flew screaming to seek a quieter neighbourhood.

How they talked that evening in Cooper's hut over their gum-tree fire ; and what they talked about ; how they amused themselves at Lake Sorel for the next two days ; how Mitchel and Martin returned to Bothwell on the third day ; and how Mitchel's mind was affected by seeing his friends again ;—all these things are told at length in the " Jail Journal."

The respectable—that is, the non-convict—class of settlers were, as a rule, very kind and hospitable. There were a few who pretended to regard Mitchel and Martin as on a level with the ordinary convicts, and who acted accordingly. But these formed but a very small fraction. Mitchel's relations with his neighbours may be gathered from the following :—

Went up to the first settler's place we came to, a rather humble wooden house ; but with a large barn and offices near it. John Knox (John Martin) approached the door like a man who knew the way, and was received most joyfully by the proprietor, one Kenneth McKenzie, an ancient settler, from Ross-shire. He brought us in, sent our horses to the stable, introduced me to his wife (one of the MacRa's), a true Gaelic woman, of tall stature and kindly tongue, who speaks Erse better than English, though thirty years an exile here. She has never been in Hobart Town since she passed through it on her arrival, and hardly even in our metropolis of Bothwell for many years. Here is a genuine family of Tasmanian Highlanders, trying to make a Ross-shire glen under the southern constellations. In the parlour stands a spinning-wheel.

There were a number of Scotch families in the valley. The reader will have noticed the names of the town and river were Scotch. There were representatives of the Lowland, as well as of the Highland Scotch :—

Some of the principal settlers in the neighbourhood of Bothwell have called upon me ; and we have spent some agreeable evenings in their houses. They are all large landed proprietors, and have myriads of sheep and cattle upon a thousand hills. The convict-class, who form the majority of the entire population of the island, are strictly *tabooed*. But by common consent we Irish rebels are excepted from the proscription. It gave me a sort of home-feeling, when I found myself, for the first time in two years, seated in the pleasant parlour of Ratho, the home of a most amiable and accomplished Edinburgh family ; the social tea-table, presided over by one of the most graceful and elegant of old ladies ; the books, music, flowers—and the gentle converse of high-bred women, could not fail to soothe and soften an exasperated soul in any but its very darkest hour ; and I walked home to our cottage dreaming, dreaming how blessed a privilege it is to have a *home*.

As regards the labouring classes, and the bulk of the rural population, the language in the “Journal” is not flattering :—

“Rural population !” It is almost profane to apply the title to these rascals. All the shepherds and stock-keepers, without exception, are convicts, many of them thrice-convicted convicts ; there is no peasantry ; very few of them have wives ; still fewer families, and the fewer the better. The wives are always transported women too, shoplifters, prostitutes, pickpockets, and other such sweepings of the London pavements. Yet, after all, what a strange animal is man !

* * * * *

One is perpetually reminded here of that hideous description of Van Diemen’s Land, given by a person who knew it well : “Let a man be what he will when he comes here, the human heart is taken out of him, and there is given to him the heart of a beast.” What a blessing to these creatures, and to mankind, both

in the northern hemisphere and the southern, if they had been hanged !

Yet strong and natural as was Mitchel's aversion to the idea of bringing his family into such surroundings, the longing for something like a home prevailed with him in the long run. Under date of July 22, 1850, he makes this entry :—

Have had a serious consultation with John Martin, as to whether I should at length allow my wife and family to come out to Van Diemen's Land. None of our friends, except Mr. O'Brien, seems to regard my speedy release as a thing at all probable.

* * * * *

Several families—one especially, in which I have grown intimate—express a strong wish to see my family residing with me here ; I could devote a good deal of time, also, to teaching the children ; and, in short, I do so pine for something resembling a home—something that I could occasionally almost fancy a real home—that I have written this day to Newry, inviting all my household to the antipodes. Pray God, I have done right.

The getting out of his family from Dublin to Van Diemen's Land was a work of time. It was not until nearly a year after the letter above referred to was written that Mrs. Mitchel arrived. A letter written by Mitchel to his friend John Dillon about the middle of the period will give some idea of the sort of life he was leading, and of its effect upon his health and spirits. The letter is written from Bothwell, and dated November 9, 1850. Dillon was at this time in New York :—

MY DEAR DILLON,

I was very much delighted to see your handwriting again, and as I have the opportunity, only regret that Mr. McH— goes away in such a hurry as to give me no *time* to write you a long letter. He will explain to you more minutely how we are situated, and it is enough for me to say here that we are all (save O'Brien) utterly disabled by our parole from availing

ourselves of any proposals to assist escape. It is true we might retract the promise ; but then we would be instantly taken into custody, probably separated and locked up in different prisons, so as to prevent even communication with one another, and guarded as closely as O'Brien is now. As to O'Brien himself, his failure in the first attempt having made all hope of escape quite absurd, I believe he will give them his promise shortly, and come out. He does not yet absolutely consent to this, but I have had some correspondence with him lately, which convinces me that he is beginning to entertain the idea, and before long he will be riding with us through the grand forests of this most beautiful country. We are all *supposed* to be living in separate districts, and never to meet ; but, in fact, we go into one another's districts whenever we please, and stay as long as we like, and no constable even takes notice of us, except to touch his cap. Martin is this very day with O'Doherty at Oatlands, and nearly every week O'Meagher, O'Doherty, Martin, and I rendezvous at Lake Sorel, a noble sheet of water up in the mountains which is on or near the boundary of our three districts. We are all in excellent health, and the climate is assuredly the best in the world. It has made a strong man of me ; indeed, far stronger than I ever was before, though I landed here seven months ago worn to a shadow, and, in fact, very nearly dead. The reports about O'Brien's ill-treatment are very much exaggerated. He has a little cottage and garden to live in, and room enough for exercise, wears his own apparel, has a servant to attend him, gets as many books as he wants, and has abundance of good victuals. There is nothing that irritates me more than any outcry about our "treatment." When the "Government" kidnapped us, and under the false pretence of law sent us out of our country as "felons," *they did their worst*. To talk either of mitigations or aggravations of that atrocity is paltry. O'Brien is where he is because he will not leave it on the same terms with the rest—no dishonourable terms either—and he knows he can come out any day he chooses. At any rate, he is far better off in every way than I was for two years. I wish I could tell you about my long detention at the Cape, and the really spirited and noble behaviour of that colony. Though to me personally their success might have been thought a disappointment and hardship, it was, in fact, the reverse. I witnessed

the struggle with delight, and wish the good Boers joy of their anti-convict triumph. If we are kept here very long, I mean to bring out Mrs. Mitchel and the young ones, and begin keeping sheep, and tilling the ground. At present we are all painfully idle, and though I have lost but little time yet (being hitherto usefully occupied re-establishing my health), yet I cannot think of leading such a life long. In fact, I have not the means to do it.

In the middle of May, 1851, Mitchel went down to Hobart Town to await his wife and family.

After John Mitchel's so-called trial and conviction, Mrs. Mitchel, with her five little children, had first gone to stay at the house of Mr. Thomas O'Hagan. I have already mentioned Mr. O'Hagan as being one of Mitchel's friends during the Dublin period. Immediately after Mitchel's arrest, the Government sent to retain Mr. O'Hagan, afterwards Lord-Chancellor O'Hagan, as one of the prosecuting counsel. Mr. O'Hagan declined to hold a brief in the case, and at the same time he called upon Mrs. Mitchel, and intimated to her that, in the event of her husband's conviction, his house was at the service of herself and her children. Widely as John Mitchel differed from Thomas O'Hagan in after years, this timely act of kindness to his wife and family was never forgotten by him.

During the short time that she stayed at Mr. O'Hagan's, Mrs. Mitchel had many visits of condolence from friends. One visit in particular touched her deeply. It was from old Robert Holmes. Mrs. Mitchel felt the compliment all the more because the old gentleman, being then eighty-two years old, had long ceased to make visits.

After a few weeks' stay at Mr. O'Hagan's, Mrs. Mitchel went with her children to Newry, and stayed for a time at Dromalane with her husband's mother. During the rest of the time she stayed in Ireland, she lived for the most part in or near Newry. In the summers of 1848 and 1849,

she took her children to the sea at Carlingford Bay for the bathing season. After Mitchel's transportation, a testimonial had been set on foot for his family, which in a short time amounted to some £2000. Thus Mrs. Mitchel was saved from pecuniary trouble; but during all these three years she kept herself in constant readiness to join her husband in case the opportunity offered. She thought of going out to Bermuda, and again she thought of going out to the Cape of Good Hope when he was removed there. But in each case she was induced to give up the attempt, partly by her husband's letters, partly by the advice of friends. During this period, Mrs. Mitchel had many and long letters from her husband; but these letters were all, or nearly all, lost in after years when she ran the blockade of the Southern Confederacy.

At length, in the autumn of 1850, Mrs. Mitchel received her husband's letter giving her leave to come out to him with the children. She immediately began to prepare for her long voyage. She took passages for herself and her children by the *Condor*, which was to sail from Liverpool for Adelaide and Hobart Town on January 22, 1851. Late in 1850, Mrs. Mitchel visited Dublin again, and bid adieu to her many friends there. She sailed with her five children from Liverpool on the day appointed, Father Kenyon and Mr. Hill Irvine—a brother-in-law of John Mitchel's—going over to see them off. The voyage to Adelaide took nearly four months, owing to an alternation of calms and storms, by both of which the ship was delayed.

Mitchel, as I have said, went down to Hobart Town about the middle of May, 1851. Kevin O'Doherty had, some time previous to this, removed from his retreat at Lake Sorel to Hobart Town, and was there practising his profession, that of a doctor. While Mitchel was awaiting

the arrival of his family, his time was mostly spent in O'Doherty's society ; and they made several excursions together in the neighbourhood of Hobart Town. He gives us this description of the environs of the town :—

On the right, mountains that form the roots of Mount Wellington ; on the left, the broad blue Derwent. For some miles the road is studded with pretty villas, the country residences of some of the wealthy Hobartonians ; and all these have luxurious gardens. Gardens, indeed, are a luxury to which this soil and climate afford all facilities and temptations. All the flowers that grow in English gardens, and many of those which must in England be protected by greenhouses, thrive and flourish here with little care ; and some of the ornamental flowering shrubs, for instance the common hawthorn and sweet-briar, which have been brought from Europe by the colonists, blossom in Tasmania more richly than at home. There is now hardly a settler's house without hedges of sweet-briar ; and they are more uniformly and all over radiant, both summer and winter—in summer with roses, in winter with scarlet berries—than I ever saw hedges before. Besides the imported European flowers and shrubs, there are some very beautiful native trees, generally found in deep mountain valleys, which add much to the glory of the gardens.

On the 23rd of May he received a letter from his wife, dated from Adelaide, in South Australia. The ship she came out on was to be delayed a month at Adelaide, and Mrs. Mitchel wrote to say that she would take passage for either Hobart Town or Launceston in the first brig or schooner that might sail for either of those places. A few days later he received further news. A ship-captain just arrived from Adelaide, called at Mitchel's lodging. He stated that Mrs. Mitchel had taken passage in a brigantine bound for Launceston ; “and,” added the captain, “if you intend to meet your lady on her arrival, you had better go over to Launceston at once.” That same evening Mitchel took his seat in the mail coach for Launceston—a journey of one hundred and twenty miles.

At Launceston, while he was awaiting his wife's arrival, a rather unpleasant adventure befell him. Before leaving Hobart Town he had to apply for leave to go to Launceston. The official in authority told him to start at once, and that the necessary papers would be forwarded by mail to the authorities at Launceston. It would seem, however, that this was not done very promptly, and Mitchel arrived at Launceston before the papers. The morning after his arrival, he went to report himself to the police-office. As soon as the magistrate was pointed out to him, Mitchel addressed him. "My name is John Mitchel. I have come to tell you that I am now in Launceston, and that I stay at the Cornwall." The effect of this announcement and the results which followed it, are described in the "Journal":—

Mr. Gunn seemed in consternation whenever I mentioned my name—because it was from Launceston, and from within his jurisdiction, that MacManus had happily escaped only a few weeks before. He asked me, with some agitation, what my errand was in Launceston. "To meet my wife and family, now due, and expected at this port." "Have you had permission to come here?" "Yes." "I have had no notification of it." "Can't help that." "Sir, I tell you I know nothing of your being permitted to come here." "Sir," I replied, "I did not come to discuss the matter with you, I came to tell you that I am John Mitchel, that I am in Launceston, and that I stay at the Cornwall Hotel." With that I turned and left the office.

An hour or so after Mitchel left the office, he was walking down the main street of Launceston. A man came up to him and informed him that Mr. Gunn required his immediate attendance at the police-office. To the police-office accordingly they went. Mr. Gunn was much ruffled by the previous scene:—

When we entered the police-office, Mr. Gunn was looking very formidable and determined. "Pray," he said, "have you any written authority to be in Launceston?" "No." "Then, Davis

(the chief constable), make out the examinations." "Now, sir," he said to me, "I shall teach you to pay proper respect to a magistrate on the bench. When you came into this office, an hour ago, your deportment was exceedingly incorrect; it was haughty, sir; it was contemptuous, sir; it was insolent, sir. Davis, have you that examination ready?" I asked him what he was going to do with me. "Send you to jail, sir."

And to jail, accordingly, he had to go. He was not, however, kept there very long, only one day. The official at Hobart Town had only missed a post or two, which was fully accounted for by the fact that the loyal population at Hobart Town were busy celebrating the Queen's birthday.

After some ten days of uneasy waiting (for the weather had become very stormy), Mitchel received a letter from O'Doherty announcing that his wife and children had just arrived at Hobart Town by the brig *Union* from Adelaide. So his friend the ship-captain had sent him on a fool's errand. He wrote to his wife to meet him at a place called Greenponds, being the point on the road between Hobart Town and Launceston which was nearest to Bothwell. Under date of June 20, 1851, the "Journal" has this entry:—

To-day I met my wife and family once more. These things cannot be described. To-morrow morning we set off through the woods for Bothwell.

It took them some two months to get settled in a place that suited them. The place they finally settled on was called Nant Cottage, and it is thus briefly described in the "Journal":—

Here we are established, at last, on a farm of two hundred acres, nearly three miles from the village, situated on the Clyde, which runs along the eastern end of the land. From the windows we command a noble view of the valley stretching about three miles northward to the base of the Quoin Hill. The land is capital pasture; and I am stocking it with sheep and cattle.

Four hours every day are devoted to the boys' lessons; then riding or roaming the woods with the dogs.

Smith O'Brien had suggested to Mitchel that he should settle with his wife and family in the Avoca district, that being the district in which O'Brien himself was then residing. Mitchel had been at first tempted to act upon this suggestion, but had eventually decided in favour of Bothwell. Some of the grounds of his decision are stated in letters to O'Brien, written shortly after his wife's arrival. Under date June 26, 1851, he writes:—

Many thanks for the information you have given me about Avoca district. I am sure I should like the district exceedingly, and still more, I should like to be within reach of you, that Mrs. Mitchel and I might sometimes induce you to spend a leisure hour with us. But I am not to be permitted to live in any district inhabited by any of the other Irish prisoners (except Martin, who has lived with me from the first). Since I arrived in Bothwell I have received an official letter announcing to me that Martin and I may, if we choose, go to reside in any other district of the island, except one inhabited by some of the "other four." And further, that I—not Martin—may for the future go into any district I please, "under the regulations in force for ordinary ticket-of-leave holders." So that you see the circumstance of Mrs. Mitchel coming out to me has raised me to the status and rank of a common swindler or burglar, with the rights and privileges thereunto appertaining.

And again, from Nant Cottage, on the 7th of September in the same year:—

In the above cottage we are at length settled or rather encamped in a nomad fashion. I was strongly tempted for a while to look out for a place in Avoca district, which has, at any rate, the recommendation of being solitary and beautiful. But there were two strong objections, one being that Martin could not have gone there; and the other that Mrs. Mitchel was greatly prejudiced in favour of Bothwell, and had in some measure made acquaintance with some kind friends of mine here even before she

sailed from home. At any rate we are now housed ; yet not so that we could not at any time arise like the Israelites "in one night" whenever chance, or time, or profound British statesmanship shall set us at liberty to shake the Tasmanian dust from our feet. . . . For my own part I have made up my mind that Tasmania will be my dungeon for five or six years to come, at least, and have commenced farming with diligence or rather with vehemence. My industry is but restlessness, and instead of tranquilly occupying time, I kill it. Do you not feel intensely and at every moment this vital difference between your whole way of life in chains and at liberty? This is not life, but syncope and coma in life.

However, I do not lack now any of the appliances for occupying myself like a rational being in so far as (in such death-in-life) one may. I have books, companions, fields to till, children to teach, and in fact am busy from morning till night ; yet I feel idle, listless, unsatisfied. And I repeat to myself the words of the preacher, "All things are full of labour ; man cannot utter it : the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."

Three or four hours each day I spend in hearing the lessons of my two eldest boys, one of them approaching fourteen years. Mrs. Mitchel and the children enjoy themselves exceedingly, for our cottage is in a beautiful spot, three miles from Bothwell township, with the river Clyde running in front, and fine hills all round covered with wood. My wife has grown a great equestrian, and the children are all in high health. Martin lives about four miles off, and of course is with us very often.

He then proceeds to give details of a plan which he and Mrs. Mitchel had formed for visiting O'Brien in Avoca district. This plan was carried into effect in the following month, as we shall presently see.

At Nant Cottage Mitchel and his family continued to reside from the time of their first removal down to the time of Mitchel's escape from Van Diemen's Land—that is to say, for nearly two years. The life during this time was monotonous enough, but the monotony was occasionally relieved. The first important variation recorded in the

“Journal” was the visit to O’Brien above referred to. O’Brien had at first refused to give his parole ; but about a year before the visit in question he had consented to do so. He was now residing in Avoca district, at the house of a Dr. Brock, whose children he had undertaken to instruct. Mitchel and his wife set out on horseback in the middle of October—the Tasmanian spring. They had to ride twenty-four miles to a place called Oatlands, where they were to take the coach for Avoca. Here is the description of the start, as given in the “Journal” :—

This morning we set off, my wife and I, on horseback. We had twenty-four miles to ride through the woods to Oatlands, where we were to take the coach. The horses, Tricolour and Fleur-de-lis, were in high order, and devoured the bush. The spring day has been most lovely ; and the mimosa is just bursting into bloom, loading the warm air with a rich fragrance, which an European joyfully recognizes at once as a well-remembered perfume. It is precisely the fragrance of the Queen of the Meadows, “spilling her spikenard.” At about ten miles’ distance, we descend into a deep valley, and water our horses in the Jordan. Here, as it is the only practicable pass, in this direction, between Bothwell and Oatlands districts, stands a police-station. Two constables lounge before the door as we pass, and, as usual, the sight of them makes us feel once more that the whole wide and glorious forest is, after all, but an umbrageous and highly perfumed dungeon.

From Oatlands they travelled by mail coach to a place called Campbelltown, the nearest point to Avoca on the stage road. Campbelltown was in a state of high excitement. There was an election going on. The two political parties were the Government party and the Anti-transportation party—the issue being whether the transportation system was to continue or not. The matter was one of vital importance to the inhabitants, and both sides were making every effort to win.

From Campbelltown they travelled in a spring cart

through the wild valley of the South Esk on to Avoca. Avoca was, I presume, called after the Irish Avoca, and had its "meeting of the waters;" the South Esk was there joined by the St. Paul's river. The meeting with O'Brien is described in the "Journal":—

We alighted at a decent hotel; and in a few minutes a gentleman passed the window, whom, after nearly four years, we had some difficulty at first in recognizing for William Smith O'Brien. We met him at the door as he entered; and our greeting was silent but warm and cordial, although the last of our intercourse in Ireland had been somewhat distant. He seems evidently sinking in health. His form is hardly so erect, nor his step so stately; his hair is more grizzled, and his face bears traces of pain and passion. It is sad to look upon this noblest of Irishmen, thrust in here among the off-scourings of England's gaols, with his home desolated, and his hopes ruined, and his defeated life falling into the sere and yellow leaf. He is fifty years of age, yet has all the high and intense pleasure of youth in these majestic hills and woods, softened, indeed, and made pensive by sorrow, and haunted by the ghosts of buried hopes. Here is a rare and noble sight to see, a man who cannot be crushed, bowed, or broken; who can stand firm on his own feet against all the tumult and tempest of this ruffianly world, with his bold brow fronting the sun like any other Titan, son of *Cœlus* and *Terra*; anchored immovable upon his own brave heart within; his clear eye and soul open as ever to all the melodies and splendours of earth and heaven, and calmly awaiting the angel of death.

As in the case of the first interview with Meagher, so also this visit to O'Brien is dwelt on and lingered over in the "Journal." They talked of '48, of the events which had happened after Mitchel's removal from the scene in Ireland; they compared their views as to the lesson to be learned from the result—upon which point they widely differed. O'Brien gave them a full account of his recent attempt to escape, and how it was frustrated. On the following morning O'Brien had to return to Dr. Brock's. Mr. and Mrs.

Mitchel walked some distance up the St. Paul's valley with him, and then they parted. As O'Brien went on his solitary way, Mitchel stood and watched him with feelings compounded of sadness and wrath :—

We stood and watched him long, as he walked up the valley on his lonely way ; and I think I have seen few sadder and few prouder sights. O Nicé, queen of Carthage, pour thou out upon that haughty head all the vials of thy pitiful revenge, heap on that high heart all the ignominy that can be imagined, invented, or created *by thee*, and that head bows not, that heart breaks not, blanches not. Of honour and dishonour, thou, O queen, art not the arbiter or judge ; and the Parliament, platform, pulpit, press, and public, of thy mighty people, know nothing about the same.

We turned slowly away, I with a profound curse, my wife with a tear or two, and came back to Avoca.

On their way home from Avoca they visited Meagher at Lake Sorel. They approached the mountain ridge upon which Meagher's retreat was situated from a direction different from that by which Mitchel had used to approach it in coming from Bothwell ; and this new aspect gives occasion for a passage in the "Journal" descriptive of Tasmanian scenery :—

And now, how shall I describe the wondrous scene that breaks upon us here, a sight to be seen only in Tasmania, a land where not only all the native productions of the country, but the very features of nature herself, seemed formed on a pattern the reverse of every model, form, and law on which the structure of the rest of the globe is put together ; a land where the mountain-tops are vast lakes, where the trees strip off bark instead of leaves, and where the cherry-stones grow on the outside of the cherries ?

After climbing full two thousand feet, we stand at one moment on the brink of the steep mountain, and behold the plain of Ross far below ; the next minute, instead of commencing our descent into a valley on the other side, we are on the edge of a great lake, stretching at least seven miles to the opposite shore, held in here

by the mere summits of the mountain-range, and brimming to the very lips of the cup or crater that contains it.

Following this, we have another long description of a visit to Meagher. They stayed all that day, and part of the next, having much to talk about, and Mrs. Mitchel not having seen the beautiful scenery about Lake Sorel. They had a boating excursion on the lake in Meagher's little sailing-boat, the *Speranza* :—

We had a delightful sail to various points of the lake. The air up in these regions seems even purer and more elastic than in other parts of the island, the verdure brighter, the foliage richer ; and as we float here at our ease, we are willing to believe that no lake on earth is more beautiful than Sorel. Not so be-rhymed as Windermere is this antarctic lake ; neither does the cockney tourist infest its waters, as he infests Loch Lomond or Killarney ; not so famous in story as Regillus or Thrasymené ; in literature, as Como or Geneva, is our Lake of the Southern Woods. It flows not into its sister Lake Crescent with so grand a rush as Erie flings herself upon Ontario ; neither do its echoes ring with a weird minstrelsy, as ring, and will ring for ever, the mountain echoes of Katrine and Loch Achray. What is worse, there is no fish ; not a trout, red and speckled, not a perch, pike, or salmon. But, *en revanche*, see the unbroken continent of mighty forest that clasps us round here.

At Cooper's hut they found their horses waiting for them, and started on their ride for Bothwell, back to their home, for Mitchel had now again a home, of a kind. They found John Martin and the children walking in the field with the dogs. The children were, of course, delighted to see them again, and were greatly rejoiced at the sight of a little kangaroo which Mitchel had picked up at a house by the way, and brought home for a present to the children.

After the account of this expedition there is no entry in the "Journal" for more than a year. During this period Mitchel's time was mainly spent in attending to his farm

and stock, and teaching his children. John Martin was with him all the time, and of course there was much talk between them. Sometimes, too, he and Martin would go off with some of the neighbours on a kangaroo hunt, and in the "Journal" we have a lively description of one of these hunts. A few extracts from his letters written during this period will give some idea of the sort of life he led physically and mentally.

Shortly after a visit to O'Brien, subsequent to that before referred to, he writes to a lady friend in Ireland as follows :—

MY DEAR MISS THOMPSON,

. . . I spent a day lately with Mr. O'Brien, and went with him in the evening to the house of an acquaintance of his, Major L——, who has a very agreeable family circle. He read me letters from relatives in Ireland, all urging him to make some kind of submission, to "subdue that pride which ruins so many men," and so on. This is very hard to bear, especially as all his friends seem to think his release is a matter that depends solely on himself. "Contrition" is all his enemies want. O'Brien studies much, and exercises a good deal, but is often gloomy and miserable. Indeed, but for the kind solicitude and attention of a few friends, whose society is always made pleasant to him, I believe he would go mad. May Heaven help us! We are all crossing the gulf on the sword-edge bridge of the prophet, or we are sailing through a dark stormy sea with one plank between us and the ravening midnight waves. Mr. Martin is well, and proof against influenza. The children all send their loves to you. Thanks for the newspapers, and farewell.

On March 14, 1852, he writes to another lady friend, a sister of John Martin's :—

MY DEAR MRS. SIMPSON,

I have so long neglected the business of writing to my acquaintances and friends in Ireland, that I am ashamed to begin. And for that omission I have not only no reason to plead, but even no caprice, notion, or whim (which justify many things), for I always take pleasure in writing to those I like. And nothing

gives me more pleasure than to hear from them in return. On the whole, I rather think it is because John Martin is a constant correspondent that I am a negligent one, that we may have something to snap and snarl about. It is now two years nearly since I joined John at Bothwell, and it is astonishing how much we have snapped and snarled during that time, yet continued good friends.

But I need not begin to tell you anything about our life here (if life be not too strong a word to use). Of course John, in his voluminous letters, has already told you all—how we ride, how we smoke, what acquaintances we have, etc. Indeed, to be perfectly candid, it is but a painful and dreamy passing or killing of our time—a good deal enlivened indeed and mitigated since Jenny came out—but still the bitter sense of captivity oppresses us, and I often think of the Homeric sentiment that the day when a man passes into slavery takes away one half of his manhood. But I am not going to entertain you with our complaints. There is much to compensate for our captivity, and if we could but be sure that we had incurred all this to good purpose and with good effect, we might be well enough content. *Our cause is lost*, and that is our true and only punishment.

I have been delighted with your account of your sojourn at Marburg and of the way of life of those decent Germans. For I get the benefit of your letters without earning it by writing myself, which is one reason why I don't write. You like the Germans, and have not worshipped British civilization in the great crystal cathedral dedicated to that nasty god. And you think our poor Irish are more to be compassionated than execrated, and that it was not mere insanity to make an effort (even our effort) for their salvation, and that it is not *low* to entertain even yet a national faith and hope. All this is something, and though no more than I might have expected of you, it somewhat surprised me.

John Martin has been at Connellville to-day. You know where Connellville is? He took Johnny with him, and they are just home after a ride of forty-five miles. James goes with me up to the lakes to-morrow, and we are to have a couple of days' sailing. So you see we take amusement enough. A fortnight ago Jenny went with me to Hobart Town on horseback, for which journey I had to take out a "pass" (I enclose you one of these

documents, by which you will perceive that I have not hazel eyes); and we had a very pleasant ride through a most lovely country. She has grown very fond of riding, and has an uncommonly pleasant and pretty chestnut mare to carry her. She has also grown a zealous dairy-woman, and sells butter. You have already perhaps got a description of Nant Cottage; but I fear John Martin has not impressed you with a high idea of my farming operations, not having so high a respect for my judgment and energy in that respect as he ought. No matter, it is a very nice cottage, and if the farming be not very successful, there is at least a beautiful grassy field of a hundred acres in front of the door, with the Clyde running through it, and bounded by fine forests and the mountains which divide us from the lake countries. All the boys and girls not only enjoy the thing exceedingly, but have first rate health here. As to health, you would be astonished to see John Martin now. He never has had the smallest symptom or threatening of asthma here. My own health, though not so constantly good as his, is good enough.

You are not to suppose, from my silence hitherto, that I have not been aware of and sensible of your and Maxwell's most valuable friendship to poor Jenny while she was a widow and needed friends. Indeed, of all her female friends in Ireland, you and Mary Thompson are the two she speaks of most affectionately, as she has a good right to do. Have you met Miss Thompson? If not, I wish you were acquainted with her, for I have seldom heard of a more excellent creature.

There is little to tell you about our associate felons. O'Brien is now living at New Norfolk, and tolerating existence well enough; but he absolutely won't allow his wife to come out. Says it is enough for himself to be a prisoner, without making one of her. This, you know, is nonsense. But if it should happen—and it is possible—that we are not destined to stay here many years, he will have been right after all. O'Doherty is now in charge of our extensive hospital in Hobart Town, and is pretty well off, seeing he is earning some small pittance, and has a house over his head, and some practice in the way of his own profession; but he has great reason to complain of his brother in Dublin for neglecting to send him out his College of Surgeon diplomas or certificates, which he has written for repeatedly, and cannot even

get an answer about. He paid us a short visit three months ago at Nant, but without leave—in the manner of a “bolt” (which is the term here for leaving one’s dungeon district without authority). You have heard long since of MacManus’s escape, and how O’Meagher also has gone away.

Give my very warmest regards to Maxwell. And, now that Williams (R. D. Williams) has emigrated, I don’t remember any acquaintances of yours in Dublin that I want to be remembered by, except John O’Hagan and John Pigot. To both of them I ought long since to have written, and I suppose they have renounced me for not doing it. Yet I have the greatest regard for them both. George Kidd also is a capital fellow, and I hope is prospering, and is still a friend of mine.

When you write to Mrs. Todd, pray give my love to her, and tell her she ought to modify her opinions about the “P.Ps.” Do you visit with Miss O’Hagan? If so, will you tell her I do not forget her visit to me in Newgate.

Certainly I will, some day soon, alter my habits about letter-writing, and then I will overwhelm all my friends with sheaves of correspondence. But in the mean time, dear Mrs. Simpson, take this small instalment for yourself. I am not sure that I shall write again soon, but in whatever part of the world I may be or whatever may befall me, be certain that I cannot forget what firm friends and allies you and yours have long been to me and mine, and that nobody in either hemisphere has warmer wishes for your happiness and that of your good husband than your sincere and grateful friend.

William Mitchel, John’s brother, had been in America since shortly after his brother’s transportation. Efforts had been made to get the American Government to interfere, and make “friendly representations” with a view to the release of the political prisoners in Van Diemen’s Land. Under date August 5, 1852, Mitchel writes to his brother:—

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

. . . We are all waiting now with some impatience to hear whether the American movement in our favour is to have any result. I am not without some hope that it may; and although the appeal to British magnanimity is not palatable to

me, yet I will gladly accept my freedom if their magnanimity grant it to me. I comfort myself with reflecting that I have not only not asked pardon myself, but that I have given warning to all mankind through the public papers that nobody is to ask pardon for me, as I am not a British subject. One cannot be degraded save by one's own act, and it no way compromises me that the Yankees choose to ask my release as a grace, and that the Queen of England gives me what she calls a pardon. Let me once get from under the poisonous shadow of this British flag without any base compliance of my own, and I will speak my mind (as indeed I do now, and that publicly) about the magnanimity of the pardons. I have neither been ignorant of nor inattentive to the events that have passed in Ireland, in England, and on the Continent since I arrived in this place. Kossuth I admire and reverence as the greatest and best man whom the late European convulsions have turned up; and next after him Mazzini. Yet I think it not unnatural that his too polite flattery to England should have provoked the American-Irish, though had I been in America myself, I should not have allowed that circumstance to prevent me from moving heaven and earth for the noble fellow and his noble cause. Dillon and O'Gorman, I was glad to see, came out in that sense. In truth, Ireland had not deserved that he should take the name of her into his mouth. There is but one way in which our poor country can ever win the respect of the world. As for my own politics, they have undergone no change at all, except that every one of my views has become clearer, and every one of my feelings more intense. . . . I cannot account for your great change except by reference to the state of mind you say you got into at Washington—"a kind of sane insanity"—I consider *insane sanity*, which is my condition, far better and safer. . . . I wish greatly, from all you have told me of General Shields, to have the pleasure of making his acquaintance some day. He seems to be the type of a good citizen-soldier. But I also greatly admired General Cass's speech on our business. It had more boldness and originality of conception than I have remarked in other Americans. Indeed, America must be full of good and brave men; but I wish their non-intervention policy were frankly given up at once. The world expects more of them than the making of dollars.

Of lady correspondents in Ireland, the one to whom he wrote most frequently after his wife came out was the Miss Thompson referred to in the above-quoted letter to Mrs. Simpson. He seems to have valued very highly the friendship of this lady, and all through the period of his exile from Ireland he corresponded with her from time to time. There is a very interesting letter to Miss Thompson under date October 4, 1852 :—

DEAR MISS THOMPSON,

Jenny, oppressed with household cares, but also oppressed by epistolary obligation to you for several long and most agreeable and highly valuable letters, has desired me to take pen in hand and give you a bulletin of our news. First, then, I have mentioned that she is oppressed with household cares. The reason of this is that a little girl was born here four weeks ago, and Jenny is much occupied by nursing and the like. The little one has no name, and nameless she is to remain while we remain in this unblest land. She may be christened if ever we get back to Christendom. Jenny is quite well again, as indeed all are in the house. Henrietta and Willy are now two of the strongest and wildest children in the family.

Your last letter is dated the 8th of May. And I must say it gives a dreary picture of affairs in Ireland. No such utterly prostrate country, I presume, the sun has yet seen—at least of the lands inhabited by white men—since history began. To try to prevent such an utter and final conquest of our country was surely in itself a *good cause*. And if we failed entirely, through folly or weakness, or because the destinies were against us, it is at least a consolation that ourselves pay the penalty. From your account of the preparations for an election, and indeed from the newspapers generally, I find that the priests are systematically trying to merge all national feelings in Catholicity. Their nationality henceforward is to be papal nationality only. And how universally men's minds are tending that way! I mean tending to merge the nationality of race and country in some more universal principle or cause—republicanism, monarchism, Christianity, commerce. Can all our national zeal, then, have been a mere mistake? Were

we hunting moonshine and making ourselves drunk with the east wind? My dear lady, I do not believe it. We were entirely and exclusively right. This is not modest, but it is true. The nineteenth century is on a wrong track, and before the century is over will confess the same with gnashing of teeth. You ask if I have any hope of our cause for the future. I answer distinctly, *Yes*. I hope that even in our day Ireland will be an independent nation. The graves indeed will not give up their dead. The hearths that have been quenched lie quenched there, and will never, never be kindled again. The tears and agonies of a nation sick to death are past; the tears are shed and the earth has covered them; the bitter agony has wailed itself silent. And there seems to be no vengeance, no threat of vengeance in heaven or on earth. So far the conquest seems complete. The enlightened genius of British commercial civilization *has* actually brought matters so far—it cannot be gainsayed; *has* quenched so many warm hearths; *has* killed so many men, women, and children; *has* brought to their knees, cowed, broken-down, and degraded in mind, body, and estate, all the survivors. And British civilization marches over our ruins exulting and canting. Yet nature is bountiful, and the breed of brave men is never quite trampled out, “the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.” And I am strong in the faith that the perpetual oscillation of human affairs (or wagging of the world) does bring about compensations here and there, and does now and then punish national crimes, raising the lowly and bringing the proud to the dust. It is the humdrum and multifarious Alison, I think, who says that “Nations are punished for their crimes in this world; they have no future state.” If that be true, what a tribulation is brewing now for the true Britons. May we live to see it!

After all, you know how a “gentleman on the other side” would apply all that I have been saying. Yes, so many men killed or routed to the four winds; so many Celtic benighted hearths quenched, because ignorance, darkness, brutishness, brought in contact with energy and knowledge, must go down, must vanish, and that weeping and wailing in sorrow and shame. Yes, time does bring compensations and punish national crimes, for see what a penalty sloth and dark popery and Celtic ferocity have brought upon *you*.

Which of these two versions of the story is true, and which is lying, greediness, and cant? I, being still *uncontrite*, entertain no doubt.

Is it not strange to be writing thus to a young girl, one who has had a gay season in Dublin, and who is taking counsel as to what watering-place she will favour for the summer, nay, perhaps what bonnet-trimming she will adopt for that season? These dismal or vengeful vaticinations of national doom; these moanings of a beaten monomaniac for a lost cause, so most people would call them. But *you* will not think my letter strange, far less insane. You will not laugh at me, nor yet shrink from me (as Lord Eglinton does) with abhorrence, for if I read your letters right, thoughts of the same sort are no strangers to you. In times that try men's souls there will always be women too who can grow transcendental, and the race of *them* also was not extinguished at Carthage, or Zaragoza, or Limerick. The human race is certainly not improving, but, thank God, it is also not growing worse, and going all to the devil.

I wonder a little at your longing for the West. You cannot, I think, much admire the western form of human civilization, at any rate, in its northern or genuine Yankee development. One would like to give hearty applause to America—its institutions and government, in all departments, are just; its soil is a refuge for hunted and denounced men. And even for the negro slavery I have no virtuous indignation; the grandest states and greatest and best nations have been slave-holding states and nations, so that I have no distinct fault to find with that great republic, and could so wish to be obliged to confess that those just laws and institutions, that majestic country, with its teeming soil, with its mighty power, respectable history, august destinies (as they hope)—that all this does indeed breed and nurse great men, generous passions, and high deeds. But does it? What higher thing than money, what greater end and aim of all social and political institutions, than just fair play for the making of money—*carrière ouverte aux talents*, for money making—have they any idea of? Is not commerce their god, as he is the god of England also? Commerce, who used to be called Mammon and a fiend? Consider this. Civilization, in its original, etymological, and only proper meaning, signified a high cultivation and development of all the

social and political functions, talents, rights, duties—high cultivation, above all, full acknowledgment and enthronement of *simple justice*. The most highly civilized state, then, was simply the state wherein, first, *justice* was sure, wherein, secondly, all the political and social order tended and conspired to enable and induce the citizens to exert their noblest faculties and strive towards the noblest aims. What does civilization mean now? It means *steam*, that carries all men rapidly on no matter how base an errand; it means the *printing-press*, that multiplies as the sands of the sea teachings no matter how false and vile; it means the *electric telegraph*, whereby lies will put a girdle round the globe in less than Ariel's forty minutes; it means upholstery, scrip, dividends, nuggets;—it means anything but *justice*.

Now, whereas the Americans, if they but knew it, *are* considerably civilized, and have in their power the attainment of true civilization in its very highest form, they are losing the idea of civilization itself. The idea of justice, on which their commonwealth was based, is disappearing before the genius of the commerce-fiend. So they let Czar Nicholas work his will with our immortal Hungary; but they ravage Mexico and bully Japan. They send a steamer, indeed, for Kossuth to make them speeches (they would send a fleet of steamers for Mdle. Wagner); they feast him, cheer him, and, as he does not praise them enough, soon tire of him. Poor noble heart! In the simplicity of his great nature he had dreamed that beyond the setting sun a race of giants grew, that in the New World man was indeed renewing his youth like the eagle, and starting afresh a demigod in an age of gold. He thought, good man, that in a free and rhetorical country, words meant things.

But it is not New England, it is Texas you pine for, and I admit that it is far better. Your brother's rancho must be tempting you. And certainly the life of a settler, in a new country with a fine climate, has some high attractions. Even here, with all the drawback of the hideous people one must employ and see about one, I could sometimes almost envy an extensive sheep-owner, with a fine house and lovely country and splendid horses to ride. The climate is certainly very genial to the races of dogs and horses as well as to the human kind. The men indeed are generally mean-looking; but amongst Tasmanian women are some

most superb and puissant beauties. In all these respects, perhaps, this island gaol is at least equal to Texas, but over it all is the trail of the serpent. Possibly before we leave this, you may indeed write to us from Texas.

No great prospect, I see, of the enemy setting us loose very soon. I am glad you are disgusted by the Liberation meetings in Ireland, and with the business of petitioning for our "pardon." Altogether, I must say nobody had any right to crave pardon on my behalf. I had warned people against it, and assuredly I do not thank my intercessors. I have just written a letter to Father Kenyon, and asked him to print it. When he does so, you will see what I have to say upon the subject of the Phoenix Park petitioners, and how I express my "contrition." Possibly, indeed, the publication of it may give our gaolers an excuse and occasion to take some further brutal revenge upon us, for the great British public is not very generous to an enemy; but I could not resist the inclination of showing the English Government how utterly I set it at defiance and despise all it can do to me. You ask about the other exiles. Mr. Martin lives with us, and is to do so until February next, when I am to quit this cottage and farm, and probably the district of Bothwell also. (Do not, however, fear the misdirection of letters—a letter addressed to us at Hobart Town will always find us.) Mr. O'Brien I see sometimes. We are very good friends, but he never loses sight of the necessity of avoiding solidarity with us. And, indeed, we can never be political associates again, even if we live to enter politics hereafter. Mr. O'Doherty is still in charge of an hospital in Hobart Town as house-surgeon, and is rather pleasantly situated there, having practice in his profession and a comfortable lodging in the hospital. He has, however, no *society* whatever. The people of Hobart Town—that is, the official people and their families, and the locality merchants, whose ambition is *to go to Government House*—all, of course, keep very shy of us, because the governor does not conceal his discontent at our being visited or spoken to by any decent people. So O'Doherty has not the *entrée* of their distinguished circles. As to Mr. O'Brien, and ourselves, there are two parties amongst the country settlers in our respective districts. Some are for giving us access to their society on a footing of equality, others pretend to be disgusted, as I understand, though,

to do the people justice, nobody has been mean and cowardly enough to insult us. The principal settler, however, in New Norfolk district, a wealthy person, who was formerly a clerk in the survey office here, and who resides within a few hundred yards of Mr. O'Brien, never called on him. He has a family, and fears convict contamination. In Bothwell, Mr. Martin and I have, from the first, been kindly received by *all* the families where there are ladies, save one, and they have also all called on Mrs. Mitchel; but owing to the distance and bad roads in winter, social intercourse is somewhat rare. It is also, I must confess, unsatisfactory; and, however little the good people may intend it, yet something often arises in our intercourse with them that secretly stings us. How could it be otherwise? They are British subjects, and *must* deem us criminals. Fortunately I am not very sensitive on my own account, but on account of my wife and children sometimes I am. Fortunately we are not dependent on society, having so much of a society of our own within doors. There is no scarcity of books, of certain sorts. Indeed, Bothwell has a very tolerable public library, such library as no village of similar population in Ireland ever had. Besides that, there is a Presbyterian clergyman here, a Scotchman, who is quite literary, and has many books, and although my own books were to have been sold in Dublin, yet Jenny saved a good many of them for me. It would be uncandid, however, to pretend that with all the furtherances and appliances we have we are content, or, at all events, near to contentment. Disguise itself as it will, *slavery* is a bitter draught. And sometimes, indeed, I am provoked at the vulgar rogues of newspaper men in Ireland upholding *me* as the *happiest* man of modern times. In a Limerick paper I read that I give in letters to my friends "a glowing picture of the position and prospects of myself and my family." Think of this. Later, again, in a Galway paper I read that I am as "happy as the day is long." Of course I always write in good spirits. If our position were even worse and our prospects blacker, I should still write in good spirits and defy the foul fiend, for I have no idea of being *subdued*; but as for happiness and glowing prospects, Ocho-n-crie! Happy! I am hardly alive. The first day of captivity took from me more than half my manhood, and I am not *all here*. The truth is, this state is a living death, and is only not utter

misery because it is not embittered by remorse or disgrace. Moreover, I do not like that either my friends or my enemies should be led to believe I made myself happy by getting kidnapped and chained.

So enough of that. Only I would that I had the wings of a dove, that with honour untarnished I might fly from under the poisonous shadow of the British flag.

Under date October 6, 1852, there is a letter to Smith O'Brien, also interesting as indicating the differences between his and O'Brien's views on Irish affairs. He refers first to the efforts of American and Irish friends to obtain the release of himself and his fellow-prisoners. He expresses anger at the Phoenix Park petitions, on account of their servility, and says he has denounced and will denounce them fiercely. He then goes on :—

Now, I know that, between you and me on all these points, there is no solidarity. We seem to regard our position differently. You admit that there is law in Ireland and that you were virtually and substantially tried by that law. I deny that there is any law at all, and that, if there be, I was tried at all. Therefore, I regard myself as a captive in the hands of pirates. You are content to accept the defeat of the insurrectionary attempt as a pronouncement of the country for British dominion, and you would now, if permitted, settle quietly in Ireland, and disturb English dominion no more. But the breath of my nostrils is rebellion against that accursed empire. I shall die either a rebel or the citizen of a free Irish state. And wherever the British flag throws its poisonous shadow, I may find a prison or a grave ; but a home *never*. Then there are institutions, social and political, in Ireland, which you respect, which you would not overthrow or declare war upon, even if that were proved needful in order to wrest the island from Britain. But I would clear our country of the English, at the price of levelling all that now stands there, at the price of leaving the surviving inhabitants as bare of all social and political order and garniture, as were the men of Deucalion when they ceased to be stones.

That all my notions are a dream is possible. It may be that

our cause is down and the history of Ireland over. But *with* those notions, can I sit silent and hear pardon asked for me because of the country being quiet, that is, being subdued, and not disavow and rebuke the petitioners?

It may be, too, that this last,* as well as several former letters of mine, may form part of the reason why the British Government perpetuate our captivity; for, you see, they notice our non-contrition. And it would be indeed hard if, with the very marked differences that have divided you from the ultra-republican party, and especially from *me*, first and last—it would be hard if your exile should be prolonged through my means. Therefore I am very glad that you have thought it right to make these movements in our favour the occasion of explaining your own share and your own views on the movement. In fact that should be so fully done that hereafter, when men speak of “Mr. Smith O’Brien and his associates,” there will be no danger of any one including me. In so far as I was associated with you, I am proud of it. I desire to have the full credit of it. But I also desire neither to exalt myself nor to injure you by taking credit for an identification that neither does, nor ever did, exist.

Perhaps the present is just the very moment to set these matters right. I have not, in the letter I wrote for publication, alluded to any differences between us at all. But if you have not already done what is needful in the affair (and possibly you have not *fully* done it out of consideration for some of us), let me suggest to you to lose no time. Forgive me, if I seem obtrusive with my advice, and attribute it to the uneasiness which really oppresses me when I think that the violence and bitterness of letters which I may write, may come to be visited on you from the habit people have got of lumping us all together. I entreat that no tenderness for me will prevent you from effectually setting yourself right. You cannot damage me more with the British Government than I continually damage myself by my letters.

Some readers may think I have given too much of these letters from Van Diemen’s Land. Yet I do not know any better way of conveying the impression I desire to convey.

* Referring to a letter written to Father Kenyon for publication in reference to the “Phoenix Park Petitions.”

The letter to Miss Thompson is certainly a long one ; but I doubt if any reader, who takes a warm interest in John Mitchel, and wishes to understand the story of his life, will find fault with me for giving that letter at length, as I find it.

END OF VOL. I.

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