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EDITED BY
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Cover: Evening on the River Liffey with St John's Church in Distance by Rose Barton. Courtesy of Crawford Art Gallery, Cork. Reproduced by permission of Major Victor McCalmont.
The next moment he rolled over and slept beside us in the mud. The cider had affected our brains because our stomachs were empty. In about a quarter of an hour the trance was dissolved almost as suddenly as it fell on us; and we walked forward very mirthfully, reaching home just in time to hear the dressing bell ring. Only one light shone through the mullioned windows of the manor-house; and I remember Adare's remark as we drew near: 'Beside that light my little sister sits weeping. She is sure that I am dead.' At dinner we told the story of our adventures, and it excited much laughter. Lord Dunraven 'moralized the tale'.

'You see, young gentlemen, each of you undertook to support and guide his neighbour, though not one of you could take care of himself. That is the way of Ireland. You will help your neighbour best by taking care of each of himself.' His advice was like that of another old Irish gentleman, a relative of mine, whose 'good-night' to his grandchildren often ended with this counsel, 'Take good care of yourself, child; and your friends will love you all the better.'

From *Recollections of Aubrey De Vere*

Sir Aubrey De Vere (1788–1846) formerly Hunt, poet, was born and died at Curragh Chase.

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**William Carleton**

*The Hedge School*

The reader will then be pleased to picture to himself a house in a line with the hedge; the eave of the back roof within a foot of the ground behind it; a large hole exactly in the middle of the 'riggin', as a chimney; immediately under which is an excavation in the floor, burned away by a large fire of turf, loosely heaped together. This is surrounded by a circle of urchins, sitting on the bare earth, stones, and hassocks, and exhibiting a series of speckled shins, all radiating towards the fire like sausages on a Poloni dish. There they are — wedged as close as they can sit; one with half a thigh off his breeches — another with half an arm off his tattered coat — a third without breeches at all, wearing, as a substitute, a piece of his mother's old petticoat, pinned about his loins — a fourth, no coat — a fifth, with a cap on him, because he has got a scald, from having sat under the juice of fresh hung bacon — a sixth with a black eye — a seventh, two rags about his heels to keep his kibes clean — an eighth crying to get home, because he has got a headache, though it may be as well to hint that there is a drag-hunt to start from beside his father's in the course of the day.

In this ring, with his legs stretched in a most lordly manner, sits, upon a deal chair, Mat himself, with his hat on, basking in the enjoyment of unlimited authority. His dress consists of a black coat, considerably in want of repair, transferred to his shoulders through the means of a clothes-broker in the country-town; a white cravat, round a large stuffing, having that part which comes in contact with the chin somewhat streaked with brown — a black waistcoat, with one or two 'tooth-an'-egg' metal buttons sewed on where the original had fallen off — black corduroy inexpressibles, twice dyed, and sheep's-gray stockings. In his hand is a large, broad ruler, the emblem of his power, the woful instrument of executive justice, and the signal of terror to all within his jurisdiction.
In a corner below is a pile of turf, where on entering, every boy throws his two sods, with a kitch from under his left arm. He then comes up to the master, catches his forelock with finger and thumb, and bobs down his head, by way of making him a bow, and goes to his seat. Along the walls on the ground is a series of round stones, some of them capped with a straw collar or hassock, on which the boys sit; others have bosses, and many of them bobs - a light but compact kind of boggy substance found in the mountains. On these several of them sit; the greater number of them, however, have no seats whatever, but squat themselves down, without compunction, on the hard floor. Hung about, on wooden pegs driven into the walls, are the shapeless 'caubeens' of such as can boast the luxury of a hat, or caps made of goat or hare's skin, the latter having the ears of the animal rising ludicrously over the temples, or cocked out at the sides, and the scut either before or behind, according to the taste or the humor of the wearer.

The floor, which is only swept every Saturday, is strewn over with tops of quills, pens, pieces of broken slate, and tattered leaves of Reading made Easy, or fragments of old copies. In one corner is a knot engaged at 'Fox and Geese', or the 'Walls of Troy' on their slates; in another, a pair of them are 'fighting bottles', which consists in striking the bottoms together, and he whose bottle breaks first, of course, loses. Behind the master is a third set, playing 'heads and points' - a game of pins. Some are more industriously employed in writing their copies, which they perform seated on the ground, with their paper on a copy-board - a piece of planed deal, the size of the copy, an appendage now nearly exploded - their cheek-bones laid within half an inch of the left side of the copy, and the eye set to guide the motion of the hand across, and to regulate the straightness of the lines and the forms of the letters.

Others, again, of the more grown boys, are working their sums with becoming industry. In a dark corner are a pair of urchins thumping each other, their eyes steadily fixed on the master, lest he might happen to glance in that direction. Near the master himself are the larger boys, from twenty-two to fifteen - shaggy-headed slips, with loose-breasted shirts lying open about their bare chests; ragged colts, with white, dry, bristling beards upon them, that never knew a razor; strong stockings on their legs; heavy brogues, with broad, nail-paved soles; and breeches open at the knees. Nor is the establishment without a competent number of females. These were, for the most part, the daughters of wealthy farmers, who considered it necessary to their respectability, that they should not be altogether illiterate; such a circumstance being a consider-
Sir Charles Gavan Duffy

Schooling for a Patriot

An ardent youngster must have some outlet for his sympathies, and before patriotism awoke I was passionately religious. I can recall a time when I was despatched to bed at nightfall and took a coarse board with me to kneel upon under the blanket lest my prayers should be too luxurious; and for years after I read controversial books with avidity, and was ready on the shortest notice to defend the most abstruse mysteries of religion. But the first passion was superseded after a time by one which has lasted all my life – the determination to love, and, if possible, serve Ireland.

Some account of my early schools will help the reader to understand the social condition of Ulster at that time. The Ulster Catholics had been deprived by the Puritan Parliament in Dublin of their lands, their churches, and their schools at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and they were long forbidden by statute to obtain education at home or abroad, or to possess property in land. At the time I speak of their schools were still very often what were then known as 'poor schools'. The schoolroom was commonly a barn or a garret, the furniture rude and scanty, the walls and windows bare, and some of the pupils probably shoeless and unwashed. But these establishments were regarded as evidence of remarkable progress by those who remembered the 'hedge schools' of a previous generation, which had not even the shelter of a roof. My first schoolmaster was a one-handed man, named Neil Quin, who had probably become a teacher because this deficiency unfitted him for any other employment. He performed duties which were merely manual with marvellous dexterity – mending a pen, for example, as speedily and skilfully as a man with two hands. A long loop of twine passed through two holes in a table held the quill, flat, and was kept fast by his foot in the other end of the loop, while he trimmed it with his right hand, which happily remained. Of the elements of education Mr. Quin did not teach us much, I fear, but he told us stories, generally little apologetics or homilies, intended to impart a homely moral. His rudimentary science was taught with a scanty equipment of instruments, but he contrived to make it impressive. One day he let his hat fall from his head to the floor, and exclaimed, 'Now, boys, which of you will tell me why that hat fell down to the ground instead of falling up to the ceiling?'

My escape from this primitive institution was one of the most fortunate incidents of my life. My eldest sister, a girl of vigorous will, met me one day coming home from school in the midst of a clamorous swarm ofurchins, some of them barefooted and ragged, and all riotous and undisciplined, and she interposed with a vigour worthy of our grandmother Judith. She peremptorily declared that I should never return to that society. But where was I to go? There was not a Catholic school in the county a whit better. There was, however, a classical academy in the town taught by a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend John Bleckley, where the boarders were sons of the small gentry and professional men of two or three neighbouring counties, and the day boys sons of the principal townspeople. There were about fifty pupils, all Protestants or Presbyterians, a Catholic boy never having been seen within the walls. It needed a considerable stock of moral courage to contemplate sending me to such an establishment, where I might be ill-received, or, if not ill-received, where I might be taught to despise the boys of my own race and creed whom I had quitting. The consent of my guardian, a parish priest living a dozen miles away, had to be obtained, and he had liberality and good sense enough to approve of the project. Mr Bleckley received me graciously, but during the first day one of the boys told me (what I soon learned had been muttered among many others) that it was unpardonable presumption for a Papist to come among them. But the bigotry of boys is mostly inherited from their elders, and has little root.

This lad, Mat Trumble, son of a lieutenant in the British Army, but also grandson of a chaplain of the Volunteers, afterwards a notable United Irishman, soon became my close friend. He was a youth of good intellect, resolute will, and considerable reading, and with such aid I did not do badly in the strange society on which I had intruded. During the first year a boys' parliament, a boys' regiment, and a boys' newspaper were established, which I did something to initiate, and my connection with them was vehemently resisted in the name of Protestant ascendency. But after a fierce debate the majority voted my emancipation, three years before the legislators of larger growth at St Stephen's made a similar concession to my seniors. I used to boast that I was the first Catholic emancipated in Ireland, but though tolerated I was never
allowed altogether to forget that I belonged to the race who were beaten at the Boyne. A cynical lad, who afterwards became a noted local preacher, sometimes occupied the recreation hour with marvellous stories of Popish atrocities designed for my edification. . . .

Mr Bleckley was a careful and assiduous teacher, much devoted to his school, and for five years I profited by his instructions. We parted under circumstances which, as I have never since doubted, justified me in quitting him abruptly. One morning before the arrival of the head master I had a contest with one of the boys about something I have altogether forgotten. He complained to an usher, but, as the ushers were not permitted to punish the boys, this one promised to report me for misconduct. On the arrival of the master he did so, and Mr Bleckley, who was perhaps disturbed by some personal trouble, immediately laid hold of me, stretched me over a desk, according to his practice, and administered a sharp discipline with a leather strap. When he had finished he faced me and demanded, 'Now, sir, what have you got to say for yourself?' Though the result proved a great inconvenience to me, I can never regret what happened as a test of character. 'Say, I roared, say it is too late to ask for my defence after I have been punished; and that I will never suffer you to lay hands on me again.' I seized my cap and vanished out of the school. Mr Bleckley reported the facts to my mother, not ungenerously, I think, but I could not be induced to submit again to his authority. With the assistance of a student preparing for Maynooth, and in concert with my constant chum Mat Trumble, I read at home, to replace, as far as I could, the direction of a competent teacher. . . .

We did not know much of history, but we got what in recent times would be called ‘object lessons’, to keep it alive in our memory. The Orange drum was heard on every hill from June till August to celebrate the Boyne and Aughrim; Orange flags and arches adorned the town on party festivals; every office of authority in the province was held by Orangemen or their patrons and protégés, and to be a Protestant of any sort was a diploma of merit and a title to social rank not to be disputed. My comrade and I felt our present wrongs keenly, but we knew little of the remote causes from which they sprang. I had never seen a history of Ireland at that time. A few years earlier I had walked half a dozen miles to borrow a quasihistory, Moore’s Captain Rock, in a country parish which had the rare good fortune to possess a parish library. The Orange processions forbade us to forget the past, and there was a history transacted under our eyes of which it was impossible to be ignorant. The

bunch of magistrates who administered what was called justice was exclusively Protestant; the Grand Jury, who expended the rates paid by the whole population, were exclusively Protestant, and took care, it was alleged, that the improvements they projected should benefit only loyal citizens, themselves first of all. There had been a Corporation endowed out of confiscated lands, but the body had long ceased to exist, and its endowment had fallen to the local landlord, Lord Rossmore, who, to keep up the pretense of a Corporation, still named a town sergeant and other subordinate officials at his sole pleasure. There was a corps of Yeomanry receiving uniforms from the State, which was called out occasionally for inspection, and as the arms were left with the corps permanently, every Orange lodge had a liberal supply of guns, and used them freely at their annual festivity. One of my earliest recollections is to have seen a butcher named Hughes shot in the public street before my mother’s door by a Government gun fired from an Orange procession. Hughes had probably used some offensive language, or perhaps thrown a stone at the procession, and for his offence, whatever it was, the immediate punishment was death. He was carried to the grave in a coffin festooned with red ribbons, to signify a murdered man, but there the incident ended. To indict any one for the murder would have been the idlet work of supererogation. His comrades in the procession would not have given evidence against him, and his comrades in the jury box would not have convicted him. The ordinary result of a party conflict at that time was that if a prosecution followed the Catholics were convicted, and the Orangemen escaped scot free, either by an acquittal or a split jury. On such juries a Catholic was not permitted to sit one time in a hundred.

From My Life in Two Hemispheres

Sir Charles Gavan Duffy (1816–1903), journalist, poet and politician, was born in Monaghan. He emigrated to Australia in 1855, and later became Prime Minister of Victoria. His last years were spent at Nice.