

from heaven. These are the days of chopping, piling, stamping and falling "frolics"—days when neighbors helped each other at certain seasons, and in certain farming operations, as a matter of course. Every farmer has each year a field of larger or smaller dimensions to stamp. Now, stamping single-handed is very dull and very heavy work, and hired labor is almost impossible to be procured. It goes round among his neighbors, and asks them to come on a certain day to "lend him a hand."

On the day named fifteen or twenty neighbors come and help him to pull out and pile up a few glasses of whiskey. In the evening a few of the neighboring lasses drop in, and the hardy work is ended by a dance of longer or shorter continuance. This is the stamping frolic of the good old times.

As every one gives frolics, every one goes to them. And then the thickening or falling frolics. These were for a long time to the country people of this Island, what balls and evening parties are to the well refined circles of towns and cities. The ostensible business of the gathering was to fill the piece of home spun— invariably blue in those days—yearly spun and woven by every farmer's family. But, besides this, there were done at these social gatherings the tasks and lasses of the courting and flirting that the lank and lasses of those times were guilty of. Many a happy marriage has sprung from an acquaintance first made at a falling frolic. As we said before, the cloth manufactured by the farmers' wives and daughters was flung by hand at these frolics. This is the way in which it was done. A long and strong table of rough boards, firmly braced, was erected in the largest room that the house contained. The web being unrolled, and the ends saved together, it was laid on this table like an endless chain. It had been previously soaked in water for some time. The boys and girls—there were no young ladies in those days—sat themselves on both sides of the table, and passed the cloth backwards and forwards across the board, at the same time shoving it along on one side towards the top, and the other towards the bottom of the table. At intervals the cloth was wetted with a strong solution of soap. As this was pretty hard work there were generally relays of hands, one ready to take its turn when the other was tired. The young men showed their gallantry by offering to relieve their fair companions; and a pretty girl might be seen shyly offering to take a young man's place—not her lover's, you may depend upon it. She had to consider a fair share of the work. This work went on with merriment and song, and laugh, and jest. The merriment might not have been very refined, but it was, for the most part, pure and hearty. Those who were not at the board were not by any means idle. Every chair and bench in the house had its burden of loving couples, whispering the tender nothings that have such a charm on young folks all the world over. The security of seats rendered it necessary for the young men to accommodate their sweet hearts with a seat on their knees, which, to tell the truth, was not found to be a very great inconvenience by any of the parties concerned. The work done, and the web rolled up in due form, all sat down to a substantial hot supper; after which, the chairs and tables being cleared away, the youngsters either danced away the remaining hours of the night, or when the old folks would not allow dancing, amused themselves with forfeits and other games for an hour or two before breaking up. The young men, of course, escorted the girls to their homes, and then long walks over the crisp snow in the bright starlight were by no means the most unpleasant of one's life experiences.

If we were disposed to be philosophical, we would pass here to write a dissertation on the changes that have been made in the social habits of the people of this country by the introduction of Felling Mills. The change is, we verily believe, not an improvement. People in those days were much more sociable than in these. There were fewer jealousies, bickerings and heart-burnings, and infinitely more enjoyment. There are now too few social gatherings among the people in the rural districts—too little amusement—too little healthy excitement. People, not knowing enough of each other, do not understand one another. It is, besides, our honest conviction, that not only would the amount of enjoyment be greater, but that the tone of general morality would be raised if we could go back to the good old days of Thickening Frolics, when all well-behaved people met on an equality, and before young ladies and young ladies were invented.

We have much more to say, but we have already gone beyond the limits assigned us; and have also, we fear, transgressed on the patience of our readers. But we think that we have said enough to convince them that very great changes have taken place in our Island Home within the last thirty years; and that if any one who left it at that time, or even ten years later, were now to return, there is not a single element in the country that he would recognize; and that he would observe almost as great changes in the condition and manners of the people as in the general appearance of the country.

That spark'd in her eye?
Did woid'nt' hopes of other years
Awake in memory?
She hush'd the sigh of sadness,
And wiped the tear away;
And with the groups of gladness
Seem'd happy now and gay.
Still music'd to the joy bequ'd,
And time went sweetly by;
But though she danc'd, and sang, and smiled,
She'd burn away and sigh.

WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO EACH AND EVERY elector who will be shortly called on to decide the political fate of this Island for several years, these words of Horace: *Eripe turpi colub jugo: liber, liber sum, dic age.*

The most talented and energetic politicians often become careless and apathetic when cloyed with the sweets of office; but when they have neither talents nor energy they are mere nuisances, and serious obstacles to liberty and to social and political advancement. That our present rulers are not possessed of talents, energy, or administrative honesty, is quite evident from their political acts during their tenure of office. When they succeeded the Liberals they made great promises, for the fulfillment of which the people have waited with patience, but in vain. For example, our tenants were to be all freeholders in eight short months; but they have now waited eight long years, and their grievances remain as yet unredressed. The Land Commission was established, and Delegates were sent to England at an enormous cost to the country; the Fifteen Year's Purchase Bill was passed; but nothing was achieved except the strengthening of the doubtful title of the proprietors. It is no wonder then that the tenants long to get rid of masters whom they have placed in power only to tyrannize over them and deceive them. We are not disappointed, for we never imagined that the Conservatives would settle the Land Question in a manner satisfactory to the tenants. We judged according to their antecedents, or according to the Greek proverb, *Kalon koros kalon oon*—Bad the crow, bad the egg. And, in fact, can our rulers point out to any acts of theirs which have been of any practical benefit to the general interests of the Island, other than a few laws which they have passed to give, rabbits, partridges, oysters, dogs, rams, ewes and pigs? which could as easily, and with one-fifth of the cost, have been passed by two or three aldermen of any tenth rate city or county corporation in any other part of the civilized world. This, certainly, is small legislation; but our statement is no burlesque—it is the plain, literal truth. According to their own version, the Conservatives possessed, within their own charmed circle, all the talent, energy, wealth and influence of the Island; but they have proved themselves to be not unlike all vain boasters. The best proof of this is to be found in their acts. They have not had the brains to initiate a single measure for the benefit of our ill-used people; on the contrary, they have been obliged to fall back on the Land Purchase Bill, formerly passed by the Liberals against the most dogged and determined opposition of those in power. Never had a Government a more inglorious career than that which is now tottering to its downfall. Select a dozen of old women from Belfast, Strathalbyn and West River, and get them to legislate, they certainly could do no less for the good of the Island than the pompous individuals who now lord it over us. When our masters stepped into authority, the ship of state was in an excellent condition. She was new; the sails, cordage, and all the other necessaries for a prosperous voyage were in a splendid condition. There was plenty of provisions on board; the crew were in the best of spirits, and the passengers were rejoicing in the hope that they would soon arrive in safety at the wished-for haven. But, alas! how have matters now changed? The ship is leaky, the cordage is rotten, the sails are rot; provisions have failed; the crew have mutinied; several have been attacked by malignant distempers and have been thrown overboard—some of these latter have been swallowed up by the waves of Confederation; others, having escaped a watery grave, have drifted to foreign lands, where they have consoled themselves in studying Natural History. The old captain has been put in iron, the mate has absconded, the second mate has lost the confidence of the crew; the new Captain steers now in one direction, now in another; sometimes the ship is left to herself, and is violently tossed about by the waves; even the rats, that have stuck to the ship for a long number of years, are fast abandoning her—a pretty sure sign, it is said, of speedy shipwreck; and the passengers, naturally enough, are in a state of extreme trepidation and despair, seeing that they are fast drifting towards the rocks and quicksands of destruction. The captain, in order to enforce his authority, has armed on board the ship a number of marines, armed *cap-a-pied* with swords, cutlasses, &c., and has pointed on the disabled passengers two large pointed guns to keep them within bounds. Under such circumstances the poor fellows must be very civil and circumpect, but it is evident that they are only waiting the first opportunity to seize the captain and his satellites and swing them to the yard-arm, in order to preserve themselves and the ship from imminent destruction.

The Conservatives have humbugged and deceived the tenants; they have unsettled the Land Question more than it ever was before; and, as a consequence, they have had to repress popular indignation; the point of the bayonet; they have had recourse to the most odious measures to maintain the rule of the law; they have plunged the Colony into debt in building barracks and all the requirements of a military establishment; they have squandered the public money in delegations; they have, we may say, confirmed the proprietors' title; they have virtually destroyed the Five Education Act; they have dissipated many years of their own friends. In a word, by their meanness and political deceit they have reflected themselves odious. The words of the poet are applicable to their administration: *Serenas crevit aora*— "a slavery to former times unknown." The political atmosphere may at present seem calm and serene, but we may rest assured that the public feel secretly their confidence has been betrayed, how they have been deceived, bullied and insulted, and they are only awaiting the proper opportunity to give manifest proofs of their hatred of political deception and tyranny. Some think that there is but little difference between Liberals and Tories, and hence that those should be a Coalition. Well, it is only blind men who cannot see. Who got Responsible Government for the people? Who passed the Free Education Bill? Who introduced popular suffrage? Who the One-third Bill? The Land Purchase Bill, and who other useful measures? The LIBERALS, and who other the measure's tooth and nail!

Who always favored the proprietors? Who spent something like ten or twelve thousand pounds in building barracks? Who brought the soldiers here and sent them through the country? The Tories. The Liberals always sympathized with the tenants; the Tories sent Sheriffs and soldiers after them. It is no wonder, then, that irrespective of the neglect of public improvements the tenants should abominate the present Government. A large majority of every other section of the community—except the proprietors and land agents—have more than sufficient reason to long for the day that will drive our rulers from a position which they have shown themselves so unworthy and so incapable of filling. Notwithstanding this, let all be on the alert against their trickery and double-dealing; and let all liberal-minded and progressive men form themselves into a solid phalanx, so that they may be enabled with greater ease to resist the attack which the enemy is secretly projecting, and hurl back into oblivion those who have brought the confidence of the people and brought odium on the Colony.

A WORD OR TWO ON AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT.
If any one thing within the reach of political action shows more clearly than another the paternal nature of a Government, it is surely the mode of action which that Government adopts with regard to the encouragement of education. We confine ourselves, for the present, to a small portion of what the history of England teaches us in this respect, and we ask the most superficial student of that important branch of study if the sovereigns who have most endeavored themselves to their subjects, from Egbert to our own Victoria, have failed to interest themselves in the intellectual improvement of the nation? Alfred the Great's extraordinary labors in this direction are too well known to require repetition here; they were such as few sovereigns of any country since his time have equalled. To the Plantagenets, Tudors, and Stuarts, considerable praise must also be awarded for their liberal patronage of education, however much some of them may have disgraced their country, and humanity itself, in other respects. That English literature made very great progress during this period, no one is at the present day foolhardy enough to deny. A distinguished Irish scholar, for instance, and sometime ago, "Eliza, both James, and Charles encouraged learned men, and adopted a policy favorable to literature. Almost all the poets, and many other writers, were either courtiers themselves, or under the immediate protection of courtiers, and were constantly experiencing the smiles or benefactions of royalty. The court, therefore, exercised great influence on learning, and it is no wonder that writers should fix this era as 'by far the brightest in the history of English Literature.'" Of this period also the *Edinburgh Review* thus speaks, and its authority on such a subject, notwithstanding its prejudices, is certainly very considerable: "There never was any thing like the sixty or seventy years that elapsed from the middle of Elizabeth's reign to the period of the Restoration. In point of real force and originality of genius, neither the age of Pericles, nor the age of Augustus, nor the times of Leo X., nor of Louis XIV., can come at all in comparison; for in that short period we shall find the names of almost all the great men that this nation has ever produced,—the names of Shakespeare, and Bacon, and Spenser, and Sydney, and Hooker, and Taylor, and Barrow, and Raleigh, and Napier, and Hobbes, and many others; men, all of them, not merely of great talents and accomplishments, but of vast compass and reach of understanding, and of minds truly creative and original. . . . and enlarging to an incredible and unparalleled extent, both the stores and the resources of the human faculties." Of what has been done in England since that era under the sanction of public authority we need not speak; every citizen tolerably well read in the history of that country knows that, although much unquestionably requires still to be done, yet much has been done. One of the latest instances of the encouragement given to Education by the British Parliament, is the granting of a Supplemental Charter to the Queen's University in Ireland, enabling that body to grant degrees to the students of the Catholic University,—a very small item, however, towards paying a very large Bill.

It did not fear being accused of making a rather hurried descent from the sublime to the ridiculous, we would here wish respectfully to ask our Island folks if their sage heads were ever engaged for some moment in considering the great lesson that we have endeavored to derive from the conduct of their masters in the art of legislation. Can they find, in the whole range of British history, a single instance of a party in power that has continued for eight years to employ as Vicars of Schools an individual who is scarcely fit to act in the capacity of Secretary to a Temperance Meeting? Does British legislation furnish any precedent for spending a nice little sum yearly in supporting what is generally believed to be a kind of School-teacher Factory, but of whose influence on society the public see as little as if its doors were for ever kept locked, and the words, "Haunted House," painted in hideous letters over the "Professor's" window? There is another little question about crippling the Acts of Education for which we would wish to ask a precedent, but as the days of our enlightened Government, for good or for evil, are all but ended, we are not disposed to remind them of any more of their sins. We are content to let them pass through the death-struggle with as little remorse of conscience as possible.

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THE GOOD OLD TIMES.
The Good Old Times and the wisdom of our Ancestors are favorite subjects of admiration with a great many persons. They never cease lamenting that their lot is cast in our degenerate day. Perhaps no prejudice has done more harm than this superstitious reverence of antiquity. Among politicians abuses the most glaring have been defended and maintained on the sole ground of their being sanctioned by the wisdom of our ancestors. Theologians have adhered to the most bigoted, narrow and intolerant maxims for no other reason than that these maxims were stamped with antiquity, and handed down from our venerable ancestors. Legal proceedings have been disgraced by fictitious, and arbitrary, non-sensical rules which frequently prevented justice and afforded a shield for chicanery and fraud, and which were allowed long to survive the exposure of their ridiculousness, just because they were products of the Good Old Times that gave birth to John Doe and Richard Roe. There are even in our days many worthy people who will tell you in the most solemn style of moralization that the men of the present day have no fixed principles of honor like our ancestors—that politics have degenerated into selfishness and snobbery—that "the religion has either altogether fled from the earth, or is so much mixed up with error as to be no longer the Simon Pure article that prompted the burning of the Lollards and the witches of New England—that, in short, public virtue has almost wholly left the earth. At what precise period this calamity passed upon mankind the worshippers of antiquity are not quite agreed. Some say that the decay of public virtue was contemporaneous with the decline of classical literature—others make it exist about the time of the last of the Apostles suffered martyrdom. Some assert its departure at the rise of the Reformation—others trace its last flicker about the time of the death of George III., or the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act. Be the precise period when it may, to them it is palpable and notorious that the present is a most degenerate and irreligious age—that the world is not so much as good as it used to be, and that the people who inhabit it are pignies, intellectually and physically, with little honor, honesty or goodness.

The vanished wisdom and perfections of our ancestors will be found more imaginary than real by any one who takes the pains to inquire wherein that superior wisdom consisted. At what particular period were mankind more happy, more comfortable or wiser than at the present? When did the supremely best period called the Good Old Times begin and end? Were the people of that undisciplined and undisciplined period better Christians than their degenerate descendants of to-day? At a time when religion, or rather scholastic theology formed the principal, almost the only subject of study or of thought, and when all intellectual energy was exerted in speculation on that one topic, we might naturally expect to find people better. We are told that the time was when a knight whenever present at mass, held the point of his sword before him, while the Gospel was read, to signify his readiness to support it. But this was like devotion to more lamentable consequences, inasmuch as it led the devotee to look upon deviation from orthodoxy as a thing not to be tolerated. He first stigmatized Doubt by the odious name of *Heresy*, and then punished it as a crime. In our day, when every civilized man allows every other man to pursue his thoughts on religious and profane subjects to any extent of speculation, we can scarcely appreciate the blessings of such liberty, and are apt to forget the horrors of the stricter orthodoxy of our forefathers. Further argument on this subject may be avoided by referring to one horrible deed devised by the wisdom and enforced by the piety of our ancestors; so common as to be one of the legal forms given in elementary Books of Practice, and so long and lately cherished by our wise forefathers that a Protestant Sovereign repeatedly executed by the self-same or his predecessors, and yet reverently and blindly followed in their footsteps.

When we remember the vast amount of ridiculous nonsense our forefathers believed, and the prolific source of misery that their credulity and ignorance were to mankind, it is astonishing that any measure should be now supported merely because it recommended itself to the wisdom of our ancestors. The mass of nonsensical beliefs and crude theories, now happily exploded, proves that our ancestors were far from being paragons of wisdom—that they were scarcely moderately wise. Nor is the distant past the *Old Times*—it was but the infancy of the world—the green age of our nation's youth, when our forefathers, ignorant of things now familiar to little children, groped their way in unadvised regions of experiment to search at haphazard for results which their knowledge did not enable them to arrive at by an act of reason. The Good Old Times indeed! The Good Old Time—the best Old Time that ever dawned upon the world is the Present. We are older because we number more years from the creation. We are wiser because we have the experience of all ages as a lamp to our feet. The Present is the Good Old Time, hoary with age, learned in all knowledge, wise in the accumulated wisdom of all the sages of the past. Instead of foolishly worshipping the imaginary pretensions of the excellent merays of the Present, and look forward to the Good Time Coming; for—

There's a good time coming, boys,
We may not live to see the day,
But earth shall glisten in the ray
Of the good time coming.

Worth not Birth shall me mankind,
And be acknowledged stronger;
The good time coming has been given,
Wait a little longer.

FOR THE EXAMINER.
A CURSE.
A curse there is of ample bound,
In human circles ever found—
A genuine thing of fatal taint,
Insidious, life-consuming taint—
Winding around the human frame—
Round head and heart, and soul, and brain,
Dread as hell, and deeper than the ground,
His scaly nervous taint around;
Dill crush'd and bleeding, fleshless lay,
The creature for the monster's prey—
But all a winning, pleasing form,
This curse which charms to utter wrong,
In friendly guise—deceptive, worn,
Seductive, wily, cheerful born—
And blandly to its converts invites:
There glides the base of false delight—
Cheers on with subtle artful voice;
Might Pandemonium's hosts rejoice,
Till treacherous vice triumphant stands,
And smiles o'er ruin of her lands.
If further of this curse you'd know,
Read on—these lines lay bare and show
Its taint, its victims, vice and woe.
Then come, my friend, no wizard hand
Hilative points at my command—
No foul impostor here I stand,
No dark delusion do present,
But truth unfold of dire intent.
If such you seek, with me agreed,
Enquire and learn as we proceed—
To scan crime's wretched victims o'er
And probe this curlew into its core.

FOR THE EXAMINER.
NOW I LAY ME DOWN.
"Now I lay me down to sleep—
Sweet these words recur to me—
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep."
Lay'd beside my mother's knee,
As I'd her hushing child in joy
She said "God bless my prating boy!"

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tion of his own soul and those of his ancestors, release to all Christians a lifted part of what was owing to them to Jews." Courts of justice have ceased to extract evidence from witnesses by the thumb-screw and the boot; Catholics are no longer forbidden to have their children educated in their own religion; nor are they disqualified from holding or inheriting land by reason of their not subscribing the Declaration against Popery. Wizards no longer by wind and rain from wizards; nor are old women burnt alive for riding the wind on a broomstick. Formalists for exorcisms are no longer prescribed to protect the innocent of both sexes from the pollution of intercourse with infernal fiends. The Devil no longer attempts to throttle those he cannot vanquish in argument, as he repeatedly did with the redoubtable Martin Luther. Dutch women no longer bring tortoise-shell—no Rob Roy McGregor steals cattle he was too lazy to rear;—daring Freebooters and Borderers, who, in their day, achieved historical notoriety, would now be convicted as thieves or hanged as murderers. Our moonlight has no fairies, and the darkness has no ghosts. Men's lives are not endangered by the baneful influence of comets, or rendered miserable by the response of the angurer or the interpretation of a dream. We may still have vices to curb and errors to correct, but a review of the superstitious credulity of our ancestors will surely convince every unprejudiced man that our race has outlived a great many of its follies and errors that rendered mankind miserable by exciting unfounded fears, and punishing as crimes speculations and opinions that are now properly considered not amenable to legal correction. The long and arduous struggle for liberty by the people of every country in modern times has been one continuous contest with intolerant and oppressive legislation and absurd maxims, fabricated in the Good Old Times by the Wisdom of our Ancestors, and perpetuated by the self-same or his predecessors, and yet reverently and blindly followed in their footsteps.

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Death lurks within its treacherous spell—
A spirit of the art of life—
All potent with a serpent charm
To fascinate to deadly harm
To allure, to draw the weak away—
Alone, deep, soul-deep, astray—
O'er Virtue's corpse and honor dead,
Leads the lost slave with impious tread.

This curse of base estate's birth,
Suites hope of heaven—wrecks peace on earth;
Within its pale of midnight dye
The virtues all deformed lie,
And vice succeeds all infancy.

What millions loved, what millions prized,
This monster curse has sacrificed;
And hourly still oblations rise,
In crimes, and tears, in groans and sighs,
From its foul fane of agonies.

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