'Old lords of the soil': *The O'Donoghue* (1845) by Charles Lever

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Charles Lever, 'Dr Quicksilver', was once a star of the Victorian novel, compared with Scott and a rival to Dickens, his near contemporary. A doctor in the Irish countryside, a literary editor in Dublin, a diplomat in Italy: life provided him with a wide range of material to be transformed into fiction.[1] Yet he managed to alienate audiences on both sides of the Irish Sea by means of an early commercialism, on the one hand, which appealed to English audiences but not Irish critics, especially Carleton, and the mid-life blossoming of a social concern and an artistic aspiration, on the other, which reduced his standing in Britain as he became more critical of the political predicament of Ireland. As a result his novels are today not in print and register only occasionally on the academic radar. A recent biographer, indeed, dubbed him 'the lost Victorian'.

The O'Donoghue (1845) marks the transition in Lever's fiction.[2] James McGlashan,

1 Tony Bareham, 'The famous Irish Lever,' in Tony Bareham (ed.), *Charles Lever: new evaluations* (Gerrards Cross, 1991), pp 1–17; Edmund Downey, *Charles Lever: his life and letters*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1906); W.J. Fitzpatrick, *Life of Charles Lever* (London: Ward, Lock, 1884); Lionel Stevenson, *Dr Quicksilver: the life of Charles Lever* (London, 1939); Stephen Haddelsey, *Charles Lever: the lost Victorian* (Gerrards Cross, 2000); James H. Murphy, *Ireland: a social, cultural and literary history, 1791–1891* (Dublin, 2003), pp 83–5. 2 The story: the mid 1790s. The O'Donoghue, an aged, self-absorbed, bankrupt Irish chieftain, lives in the ruinous castle of Carrignacurra in the valley of Glenflesk, between Macroom and Bantry Bay, bordering counties Cork and Kerry. With him are his Scottish brother-in-law, Sir Archibald McNab, his discontented elder son, Mark, his academically-inclined younger son, Herbert, and his French-convent-educated niece, Kate, who has given her £10,000 fortune to her uncle and whom Mark secretly loves. Mrs Branaghan is his cook and Kerry O'Leary his servant. Most of the valley is now owned by Sir Marmaduke Travers, an English banker intent on improving the conditions of his tenants. Having previously relied on his agent, the evil Capt Hemsworth, and his assistant, Sam Wylie, Sir Marmaduke takes up residence in his local home, the Lodge, with his daughter, Sybella, and son, Frederick, a captain in the guards. The Lodge is attacked by a group of French smugglers though it is saved from burning down by Terry the Woods, a local eccentric. The two families are brought together socially when Herbert saves Sybella from a flood, though it nearly costs him his life. Mark and Frederick, however, dislike each other. Mark allows himself to be persuaded by Lanty Lawler, a horse dealer, and Mary McKelly, whose inn conceals a secret store of arms and explosives, to aid the secret preparations of the United Irishmen for a French invasion. The Traverses spend the winter season in Dublin, together with Kate. Kate and Sybella become the central attractions of fashionable society. Herbert studies at Trinity College and becomes a

who represented Lever's publishers William Curry, was so disturbed by the adverse reaction to the book of Tories, who had accused it of supporting repeal of the Act of Union, the great nationalist cause of the 1840s, that Lever had to find a new publisher for his future books in Chapman and Hall.[3]

In terms of genre it is in part an old-fashioned national tale[4] – with a possible national marriage in the offing between Kate O'Donoghue and Frederick Travers – but also a satire of the travel literature of the early nineteenth century. In part it also looks forward to the realistic analysis of Ireland's social and political situation of Lever's later novels, while occasionally lapsing into the comic stereotyping of his early work. It is also an historical novel, set against the backdrop of the United Irishmen though tellingly it culminates in the failed French landing in Bantry Bay in 1796, rather than in the bloody internecine conflict of the rebellion of 1798.[5] Above all though the novel is an ostensible attempt to open up a new line of communication between Britain and Ireland, to find a common language for a renewal of understanding and sympathy between the two countries. In attempting this highly pressurized enterprise, however, Lever forces history into unaccustomed grooves and seems to embark on a policy of degrading possibilities for knowledge and communication between characters within the novel, and undermining the traditional reliability of the narrator for the reader.

One of the most manifest issues in the novel, especially of the early part, is the satire not only of travel writing as a genre but of liberal and utilitarian English attempts to understand and improve Ireland. It is a necessary part of the novel. For Lever to assert that new ways are needed by which England might understand Ireland he must first disabuse the English of their belief in their hitherto accustomed ways.

Protestant. Mark, too, visits the capital in the company of a man whom he believes is a revolutionary called Harry Talbot, though others allege that he is a common criminal called John Barrington. Mark learns from him of his father's dishonest dealings with Hemsworth over money. Hemsworth both seeks to endear himself to Kate and to pressurise Lawler for information about the rebellion which he hopes to use to his advantage with the government. Two months later Mark is in hiding in the valley of Glenflesk as a suspected rebel. Kate has also returned to the area, having refused Frederick's marriage proposal, and is now being seriously wooed by Hemsworth, though the latter ruins his chances by threatening not to help Mark if she does not marry him. Mark unsuccessfully tries to raise the local peasantry to rebellion when the French fleet arrives in Bantry Bay, though when the French are unable to land he decides to leave with them and join the French service. Hemsworth is killed in an explosion, when he maliciously burns down Mary McKelly's inn, not knowing it houses gunpowder. The O'Donoghue dies, Herbert becomes a Member of Parliament and Kate returns to schooling in France. Nearly twenty years later, in 1815, Mark and Kate, now married to each other, return to visit the valley. 3 Haddelsey, *Charles Lever*, p.73; Stevenson, *Dr Quicksilver*, pp 142–3. 4 It has been said to be based on Edgeworth's *Ennui* (Haddelsey, *Charles Lever*, p. 21) and Morgan's *Wild Irish Girl* (Stevenson, *Dr Quicksilver*, p. 134). In addition, the character of The O'Donoghue himself bears a resemblance to the irresponsible landlords in Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*. 5 Stevenson, *Dr Quicksilver*, p. 149. Lever had actually originally thought of continuing the story until 1798 but McGlashan had opposed it.

Of key importance is the land and the relationships it sets up between landlord and tenant. Lever centres the issue on Sir Marmaduke Travers, a London banker of landed background, who arrives in Glenflesk determined to be an improving landlord and to educate his tenants in enlightened ways.

The narrative links Sir Marmaduke's role as someone in the traveller-analyser tradition with his ambitions as an improving landlord. The problem is that though the traveller appears to be observing the realities of Irish life he is doing so through the lens of obdurate *a priori* assumptions:

> The state of Ireland had latterly become a topic of the press in both countries [...] The strange phenomenon of a land teeming with abundance, yet overrun by a starving population, had just then begun to attract notice; and theories were rife in accounting for that singular and anomalous social condition [...] Sir Marmaduke was well versed in these popular writings [...] and so firmly was he persuaded that his knowledge of the subject was perfect, that he became actually impatient until he had reached the country, and commenced the great scheme of regeneration and civilization [...] Like most theorists, no speculative difficulty was great enough to deter; no practical obstacle was so small as not to affright him.[6]

Sir Marmaduke believes the Irish to be ignorant, superstitious, and lazy. In order to bring about his 'Irish reformation'[7] – a phrase tellingly used about his efforts – he reduces rents and increases wages, and provides schools, medical help and better houses. The narrative warns the reader in a more general analysis, however, that comparisons between the husbandry of landlords and the recalcitrance of Irish tenants conceal a more exploitative reality:

> If, then, the eye ranged over a district poverty-struck and starving peasantry [...] let the glance but turn to the [well-cultivated] farm around the Lodge [...] and the astounding lesson seemed to say: 'Here is an object for imitation. Look at yonder wheat; see that clover, and the meadow beyond it. They could all do likewise [...] but yet ignorance and obstinacy are incurable. They will not be taught'. [...] Yet what was the real cause? [...] Duty-labour calls the poor man from the humble care of his own farm to come, with his whole house, and toil upon the rich man's fields [...] Duty-labour is the type of slavery that hardens the heart [... until] the wretched man grows reckless of his life, while his vengeance yearns for that of his taskmaster.[8]

When it comes to describing Sir Marmaduke's particular interactions with his own tenants, however, the novel lapses into the use of stereotypes. One morning Sir Marmaduke reviews his lack of progress and 'unhesitatingly ascribed to the prejudices

6 Charles Lever, *The O'Donoghue: a tale of fifty years ago*, 2 vols (Boston, 1899), i, 16–17.
7 Ibid., i, 138. 8 Ibid., i, 140.

of the peasantry what with more justice might have been charged against his own unskilfulness'.[9] The better tenants had refused to become involved in what the narrative describes as his worthless schemes for improvement while the worse ones 'became converts to any doctrine or class of opinion which promised an easy life and a rich man's favour'.[10] One woman wants the new slates on her roof replaced with a thatch; a man returns the key to the shop he has been given as everyone wants credit; and another man, with a swollen face, reports that he has had to destroy the bees Sir Marmaduke gave him, though it emerges that he had placed the beehive within his house.

None of this though is intended as an argument for the return of an older order, quite the contrary. Though one character praises the former rule of the O'Donoghues it is because there was always a keg of spirits in the servants' hall and the ham was boiled in sherry wine: '"Them was the raal improvements."'[11] And Sir Marmaduke's earnest interaction with the peasantry can be compared with that of the careless O'Donoghue who is seen laughing at a window when beggars arrive at his castle for the morning distribution of alms.

Two ironies appear to attend the novel's critique of English observation and improvement. The first is that the novel's own authority for the critique is that Lever himself has been 'wandering through the south of Ireland' and concocting his own theories about Irish character.[12]

There is another minor curiousity here. Lever's 1872 preface to the novel recalls his 1844 summer tour of southern Ireland when he had visited Glengariff and Glenflesk.[13] He recalls meeting a poor old man and being told later that his son, Tim O'Donoghue, was now a prosperous attorney in Tralee – an odd mixture of the Wordsworthian and the mercantile. This decides him on using the location and name O'Donoghue in the novel that was taking shape in his mind.[14] However, this smacks of disingenuousness because Lever uses the name for a character who was that rarest of survivals, an old Irish chieftain, and one from that very area. Few of them had survived the Elizabethan, Cromwellian and Williamite eras. One of those who had done so, however, was The O'Donoghue of the Glens, Lord of Glenflesk, a cadet branch of the extinct O'Donoghue Mór.[15]

The second apparent irony concerning Lever's satiric view of English improvements is that of course Sir Marmaduke's schemes for his land are in themselves perfectly good ones, though perhaps inexpertly introduced, and are not necessarily

9 Ibid., i, 158. **10** Ibid., i, 159. **11** Ibid., i, 10. **12** Ibid., i, vii. **13** Stevenson, *Dr Quicksilver*, pp 129–30. **14** Lever, *The O'Donoghue*, i, pp vii; x. **15** In spite of being on the losing side the family had managed to retain its lands throughout most of the conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and, indeed, the chieftaincy is still extant today. Ironically, the then holder of the title would become prominent in politics shortly after Lever had written his novel. Daniel, The O'Donoghue of the Glens (1833–89) was a Member of Parliament between 1857 and 1885 and for a time in the early 1860s, when he was known by the soubriquet, The Young Chieftain, it seemed likely that he might even accede to the leadership of the constitutional nationalist movement.

the 'absurd efforts' of the novel's appraisal.[16] More generally, there is a persistent problem of knowledge, communication and judgement within the novel, a work whose ambition is to find new channels for the communication of knowledge. Sir Marmaduke finds the peasants 'uncommunicative and shy [...] Their very idiom required translating, and he could not advance without an interpreter'.[17] In turn they consider him 'a mere simpleton' in his ideas for improvements and therefore they do not engage with him.[18]

The attack on Sir Marmaduke's home, the Lodge, to take another example, is a locus for great hermeneutic dispute. After the attack is repelled almost all aspects of it, including the number and disposition of the attackers involved, become disputed. The more the facts are questioned the more individuals become certain of their own particular accounts, 'circumstances dubious a moment before, were then suddenly remembered and sworn to'.[19] The O'Donoghue's Scottish brother-in-law, Sir Archy is the only one who seems alert to the complexities of meaning. When the O'Donoghue's niece Kate shows him the evil land agent Hemsworth's letter to her offering help for the O'Donoghue's elder son Mark, Sir Archy notes that '[s]tatements seemingly clear and open, were in reality confused and vague'.[20]

The problem with knowledge and communication in the novel affects more than the relationships between the characters. It also impinges on the relationship between narrator and reader and the latter's trust for the former's pronouncements. Time and again the narrator's analysis of what is happening and his moralising upon it, are in stark contrast to what appear to be the facts of the case. When Mark, in spite of his better interests, promises to remain by his father's side, the narrator's comments seem to presume that he has done the opposite: 'Mark mistook his selfishness for a feeling of independence; he thought indifference to others meant confidence in himself – and he was not the first who made the mistake'.[21]

When Kate returns to the castle from her continental education she is shocked by the poverty in which her family are living. The narrator considers that the worst aspect of poverty is that '[i]t is in the plastic facility with which the poor man shifts to meet the coming evil that the high principle of rectitude is sacrificed'.[22] This means that the worst aspect of poverty is the way in which it makes the individual sacrifice honour and principle. Yet, this is precisely the reverse of the case as far as The O'Donoghue and Mark are concerned. Their problem is that they refuse to adjust their views of themselves and their family honour to take account of their diminished circumstances. Even the O'Donoghue's death occasions an unsustainable response from the narrator. A short time before he had behaved so badly that the ever loyal Kate, 'stung by the old man's selfishness, spoke almost angrily'.[23] And yet when he does die the narrator goes into unqualified eulogy mode: 'The courage that withstood every assault of evil fortune – every calamity which poverty and

16 Lever, *The O'Donoghue*, i, 164. **17** Ibid., i, 42. **18** Ibid., i, 43. **19** Ibid., i, 111. **20** Ibid., ii, 36. **21** Ibid., i, 130. **22** Ibid., i, 181. **23** Ibid., i, 159.

distress can bring down – failed at last. The strong heart was broken, – the O'Donoghue was dead'.[24]

All of this is part of a general critique of traditional forms of perception and judgment of Ireland. The practice of pronouncements upon Ireland, even by the narrator of Lever's own novel, is no longer to be trusted. But what better form of communication can be found for the relationship between England and Ireland? *The O'Donoghue* experiments with two options, both of them related to the land. The first is the notion of nature, though more than in a simply Wordsworthian sense. The second is the idea of chivalry.

Nature is an important theme in the earlier part of the novel. In some ways it is determinant of human experience. The valley of Glenflesk seems both 'wild and picturesque'[25] and noticeably bereft of human beings:

> In vain the eye ranges to catch sight of one human being, save that dark speck be such which crowns the cliff, and stands out from the clear sky behind. Yes, it is a child watching the goats that are browsing along the mountain, and as you look, the swooping mist has hidden him from your view.

Because of his isolation, his thoughts must be 'sad and melancholy,' his dreams 'mournful' and his superstitions 'fearful,' shaping the clouds so that they seem 'things of life and substance'.[26] Sybella Travers, daughter of Sir Marmaduke, is the closest character in the novel to a Wordsworthian:

> the tall and peaked mountains lost in the white clouds, the waving forest with its many a tangled path [...] realized many a poetic dream of her childhood, and, she felt that visionary happiness which serenity of mind, united to the warm imagination of early life, alone can bestow.[27]

As for the peasants she thinks they seem grateful and affectionate: 'All appealed to her mind with a very different force from what they addressed themselves with to her father's'. She liked their 'figurative eloquence,' their 'fervour of fancy she had believed an attribute of highly wrought temperaments only she found here amid poverty and privation'.[28] And yet though she fantasizes about the good nature of the peasantry she is changed neither by them nor by nature. Indeed, she assumes that nature exists for her own personal consumption: 'It was a fairy existence to live thus secluded in that lonely valley, where the flowers seemed to blossom for them alone'.[29]

Later the Lodge is transformed to fully utilize its position in a location of natural beauty and thus to enhance its function of providing domestic pleasure:

> The ample windows, thrown open to the ground, displayed a suite of apartments furnished with all that taste and luxury could suggest, – the walls

24 Ibid., i, 161. **25** Ibid., i, 1. **26** Ibid., i, 2. **27** Ibid., i, 42. **28** Ibid., i, 43. **29** Ibid., i, 42.

> ornamented by pictures, and the panels of both doors and window-shutters formed of plate glass, reflecting the mountain scenery in every variety of light and shadow. The rarest flowers, the most costly shrubs, brought from long distances at great risk and price, were here assembled to add their beauties to a scene where nature had already been so lavish.[30]

The locals, who see the land in terms of food production, are generally perplexed by the Traverses' admiration for the least fertile parts of the valley:

> 'whenever we passed a little potato garden, or a lock of oats, it was always, "God be good to us! But they're mighty poor hereabouts"; but when we got into the raal wild part of the glen, with divil a house nor a human being near us, sorrow word out of their mouths but "fine! beautiful! elegant!"'[31]

Nonetheless, their relationship with nature is also the way in which the locals situate themselves and their experience, particularly through their contemplation of art. When Herbert, The O'Donoghue's younger son, reads passages from Homer to a nine-year-old boy the child likens the sound of one to 'the cry of the big stag-hound at Carrignacurra' and of another to 'the way the thunder comes down the glen'[32] and when a local man is ushered into Sir Marmaduke he notices a painting on the wall of a local scene and insists on identifying himself with a figure in it, 'ay, there's a fellow going up – musha that's me'.[33]

Nature plays a role in a whole variety of ways in the lives of the principal characters. For Mark nature is the occasion of an epiphany in his progress from reckless youth to mature adult:

> In tranquil spendour the planets shone on, as though to say, the higher destiny is rather to display an eternal brightness than the brilliancy of momentary splendor, however glittering its wide career [...] The stars looked down, like eyes, into his very soul, and he felt as if he could unburden his whole heart of its weary load, and make a confidence with heaven [...] '*They* point ever downwards,' said he to himself, as he watched the bright streak of the falling stars, and moralized on their likeness to man's destiny.[34]

Immediately afterwards he sees supporters of rebellion marching silently through the countryside. The transcendent moment has an immediate political corollary.

Kate uses nature for didactic purposes. Lecturing the Traverses about her nationalist beliefs she dramatically illustrates her point that life is full of surprises by drawing their attention to the evening landscape: '"That mountain peak was dark but a moment back; and now, see the blazing fire that has burst forth upon it."'[35] Finally,

30 Ibid., ii, 29. **31** Ibid., i, 13. **32** Ibid., i, 54. **33** Ibid., i, 115. **34** Ibid., i, 131. **35** Ibid., i, 245.

Mark's climb to the top of a mountain and ecstasy when he sees the arriving French fleet is accompanied by the pathetic fallacy of a storm which mirrors his climatic emotions. He and his brother Herbert struggle up the mountain, in spite of dangerous precipices and gullies.

> If at such times as this the eye ranges not over the leagues of coast and sea, long winding valleys and wide plains, the prophetic spirit fostered by such agencies looks out in life, and images of the future flit past in cloudy shapes and changing forms. There, see the back mass that slowly moves along, and seems to beckon us with giant arms. You'd not reject an augury so plain.[36]

Mark finally reaches the summit. '"As if he had left his load of care with the nether world, his light and bounding movement, and his joyous voice, spoke of a heart which, throwing off its weight of sorrow, revelled once more in youthful ecstasy,"'[37] and he speaks of '"a secret whispering at my heart"'[38] that his time of disaster is over and the turning point of his life has come.

It is though with the language of chivalry, a code of behaviour reliant on a hierarchical structure of social relations that derives ultimately from possession of land, that the novel attempts to communicate a sympathetic understanding to an English audience of an Irish rebel such as Mark O'Donoghue, with whom that audience might normally have been disinclined to identify. The novel is a Bildungsroman of Mark's development from ill disciplined youth to disciplined maturity:[39]

> His course was rather to throw passion and impulse into the same scale with circumstances, and take his chance in the result. He had little power of anticipation, nor was his a mind that could calmly array facts before it, and draw the inference from them.[40]

And yet by the end he has learned those very skills. Indeed, Lever attempts to make the novel a new mode of communication between Irish experience and an English audience in terms of the presentation of Mark, heir to The O'Donoghue name, within a tradition of chivalry with which an English Victorian audience might identify.

Of course the utilitarian Sir Marmaduke cannot understand 'the alliance between pride and poverty – between the reverence for ancestry and an utter indifference to the present' which he detects in The O'Donoghue and his position as a chieftain.[41] The latter feels that Sir Marmaduke has no sympathy for relationships based on a connection with the land and intends '"to banish the old lords of the soil"'.[42] The O'Donoghue's demeanour is truly aristocratic, in an uncompromising but rather

36 Ibid., ii, 99. **37** Ibid., ii, 100. **38** Ibid., ii, 101. **39** Haddelsey, *Charles Lever*, p. 60. **40** Lever, *The O'Donoghue*, ii, 36. **41** Ibid., i, 119. **42** Ibid., i, 128.

useless sense, inasmuch as when he receives Kate's inheritance his instinct is not to pay off his debts but to spend more as '[t]he very act of succumbing [by paying debtors] smacked of defeat'.[43] The serious issues concerning the family, its position and future, devolve therefore on his son Mark.

Lever attempts to show how Mark O'Donoghue struggles through personal difficulties towards a sense of chivalrous honour which, no matter how its political ends differ from those of an English audience, can nonetheless be admired by that audience. Lever shows this as a complex issue, touching matters of personal character, class and politics.

Mark's notion of self-identity is rooted in his family's connection with their ancestral lands. During his first appearance in the novel he remarks of his family's position that '"[c]onfiscation cannot take away a right"'.[44] Ironically, however, the O'Donoghues have not had their lands confiscated in the manner of so many Irish chieftains: they have lost them due to importunity. This though is not a point that Mark, seeing himself as a representative of an aristocracy based on a connection with the land, can afford to recall.

At times his resentment can be haughtily aristocratic. When Frederick Travers, Sir Marmaduke's son, who has made the unforgivable error of mistaking Mark for a game keeper, compliments Herbert's courage in saving Sybella from a flood, Mark retorts '"It is not out custom here to listen to compliments on our courage. We are O'Donoghues"'.[45] His jealously over Frederick's attentions to Kate also leads to an aristocratic incandescence:

> 'That fellow's gay jacket and plumed hat are dearer to her woman's heart than the rude devotion of such as I am. Curses be on them! they carry persecution through everything – house, home, country, rank, wealth, station – ay, the very affection of our kindred they grudge us. Was slavery ever like this?'[46]

Though his resentments grow from his sundered relationship with the land, Mark's commitment to rebellion and revolution as a matter of honour and chivalry is, ironically, learned from Frederick Travers, a British officer and his rival in love and enemy in politics. His chivalry is thus subtly presented as an English quality which he has acquired. When Frederick warns him that the government knows of his correspondence with the leaders of the United Irishmen, he accuses Frederick of wishing 'to humble me by an obligation'.[47] Frederick's reaction is to apologise to Mark for his behaviour to him when they first met. Mark '"could better have looked on Travers wounded and bleeding than have seen him thus elevated above himself by temper and manly candour"'.[48] Frederick goes on to recognise Mark's bravery but also to suggest that he redirect it, '"the courage that would seem madness in a hopeless cause will win you fame and honour where the prospects are fairer"'.[49] Mark

43 Ibid., i, 242. **44** Ibid., i, 5. **45** Ibid., i, 200. **46** Ibid., i, 206. **47** Ibid., ii, 9. **48** Ibid., ii, 10. **49** Ibid., ii, 10.

should go to India where war has all the features of chivalry, where personal daring and heroism are surer roads to distinction than influence and patronage.[50] Mark responds with a grudging recognition of all that Frederick has done for him but says he cannot go to India as it would involve wearing the same epaulette Travers does and this would be a disgrace to him. However, his final parting from Frederick, when the latter, in a move surely at odds with his own loyalties, lets him escape from his custody, is more fulsome, '"Few, either friends or foes, have done me the services that you have"'.[51]

The novel ends with a vignette set in 1815 on the conclusion of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. A couple, identified as foreign, visit the valley of Glenflesk. They meet a local woman who recognizes them as Mark and Kate, who had left Ireland after the failed French landing at Bantry Bay. She refuses their money, because '"it isn't by a purse full of gold you'll ever make up for desarting the cause of ould Ireland"'.[52] The political situation of Ireland thus remains properly contentious. But then the novel has never sought directly to elicit its readers' sympathies for the cause of rebellion; far from it. What it has done is to evoke respect for Mark as an honourable and chivalrous individual, albeit one in some way representative or typical of Ireland. Lever has sought to establish what he would undoubtedly have considered a new and metapolitical form of communication of understanding and respect between England and Ireland. What the novel has argued for is that, allowing for a different political context and setting aside all the superficial marks of French foreignness about him, Mark O'Donoghue, schooled by Frederick Tavers, has become something akin to an English gentleman. Irish land, for all the antagonism it creates, can thus sustain an acceptably English mode of being, according to Lever.

50 Ibid., ii, 11. **51** Ibid., ii, 149. **52** Ibid., ii, 165.