

Sunday, May 29, 1921.—The ——— were at the Lyons' last night; they are just back from a fortnight in London, with the latest gossip. Mrs. ——— considers Harvey's appointment a disastrous thing; she said that his first speech has not made a happy impression; the intelligent at London consider it to have been rather vulgar in tone; and they did not like its affected cynicism and materialism. The English have put their finger on the weak spot in Harvey, to wit, his innate vulgarity, which all his cleverness cannot hide. Lyon spoke of the article in the *New Statesman*, and laughed, or smiled, but thought that it should not have been published. Mrs. ——— said that King George is furious at Lytton Strachey for having written as he did of Queen Victoria. He said that the King had sent for Strachey, and that Strachey would not go, but fled to Paris. The King said that the statements in the book to the effect that King Edward, when Prince of Wales, was afraid of his mother were not true; that the story about his being late to dinner one night at Osborne and fearing to go in, standing behind a column wiping the perspiration from his forehead, is not true; he said that there is no column at Osborne—which does not prove, however, that Bertie was not afraid of his mother! Another story to which the King objects is that which describes Victoria's having the Prince Consort's clothes laid out for him every night for dinner, and the hot water drawn for him, after his death, just as had been done during his life. That, said the King, would have been madness.

This has been a lovely day. This morning Nell and I took the dogs and went for a long walk across the fields that lay behind Woluwe. Hearing the strains of the music of a band blown to us on the wind, we paused, and for a long while watched a religious procession—today is God's day—winding along a distant road to the church of Ste.-Anne at Andergheses: The little girls in white; some with lavender veils, some holding the red ribbons of the day carried above an image or a relic, the choir boys with their red and white, the priests in white, the banner, the slow march, and all far enough away to dissolve any too material details in the im-

pressionistic effect of the whole—it was all very beautiful, very touching. We stood and watched it a long time, standing in the sunlit fields, where the oats are now as high as Nell's head, the dogs sitting at our feet; one of those strange, sweet moments that one remembers—remembers with pain, Nell said, to think that they are gone.

We have read, Nell and I, a most interesting account of life in Ireland, written by an officer's wife and published in *Blackwood's* for May. It is a moving tale of the horrors of that bloody Sunday, 21st of November last, when the Sinn Fein ruffians dragged a score of officers out of their beds and murdered them. The account is obviously true, and most convincing in its simple narration of the awful facts.

The Irish are a hopeless lot; the conception we had of them in Central Ohio when I was a boy, namely, that they were half-savage, ignorant, superstitious, dirty, dishonest, drunken, cruel, lying, vicious, was in the main and in all essentials correct. The Irish who came to America have improved somewhat, and the opinion of them has consequently changed, especially since they have grown numerous and hence powerful in politics, so that our demagogues, that is, every one that wants a public office, fears them and courts and flatters them. But they have not changed in Ireland. There they remain savage, ignorant, dirty, and superstitious still. The American notion of them as a race of charming, witty, kindly folk is all the veriest rot. The Irish are not charming, quite the reverse. They are seldom witty, they have absolutely no sense of humour, and taken as a whole, are extraordinarily stupid and dull, and quick to take offence. The reception by the Irish in America and in Ireland to Synge's plays, to George Birmingham's plays, and the fate of the Abbey Theater shows this. And if one only stops and thinks of the Irish he knows or has known, thinks of them honestly, and objectively (and privately), he will be convinced that this estimate of them is true. What we call wit and humour in the Irish—all those Irish stories, that are told all over America,—are unconscious, when they exist at all. One may laugh *at* the Irish; one never laughs *with* them. The fact is we never knew the Irish in America; or we of this generation haven't known them. I began to know them when I went to Ireland in 1912, and saw how filthy and depraved they were; the opinion, wholly unfavourable, except in two or three individual instances, that I then formed has been confirmed since. During the war, though the subjects of all sorts of favours and

exemptions, they were what they always were, traitors and cowards; even the Irish regiments that were got together had to be broken up and their numbers distributed among English or Scotch regiments; they were not, as long as they remained Irish regiments, as good as our Negro troops. Their "rebellion" in 1916 was to help the Germans, and the cowardly guerilla warfare they have carried on since has grown out of that original impulse, and was inspired by it. . . . What they need now is another Cromwell.

But this is the fundamental cause of the horrors that are done in Ireland, this, to wit: That a man may assassinate another, and before he sleeps have a priest shrive him and assure him that he has done no wrong.