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made him drink it all. Soon he was very sick and the contents of his stomach came up and she saved his life and cured him of the sickness.

**Emigration** – When I was in Boston, U.S.A., the late Dr. McCarthy, the Irish-American poet [who was born in Carrick-on-Suir], told me that the descendants of the famine emigrants were much more anti-British than the Irish who had emigrated more recently.

**Food** – Mrs. Shanahan (aged 99 or 100) told me the other day of how they used to have to buy the yellow meal by the pound and could not always get even that. Her other memories were too vague to record. My grandparents, John and Rebecca, Quakers, ran a soup kitchen in Carrick-on-Suir. There was no thought of soupism or proselytism. Food was given to all who were in need.

**Relief Schemes** – Edmund Wall says that at Curraghmore (the Marquis of Waterford's demesne some five miles from Carrick-on-Suir) they gave some sort of allowance, and the men were to dig round the "Steeple" (a modern round tower on top of a hill) and they dropped because they were too weak to hold the spades.

## *The Famine from Cashel to Kilfeacle*

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By Edward Delaney

The crop was so promising that the people were delighted. But the blight came when the stalks were in full bloom. That was in the second year. In the first year [1845] there was a good harvest of potatoes; but these blackened in the pits. It was in subsequent years that the stalks were affected. The blight did return in successive years, even after '47.

On the road between Cashel and Tipperary great numbers died. At the height of the Famine fifteen or sixteen dead bodies would be found every morning between Golden and Kilfeacle. Anthony O'Dwyer's father told me that he saw people dead, dying and staggering about at a rest-house at Knockroe, a short distance on the Cashel side of Golden. These people had been on the way to Castle Lake near Cashel, where there was then a workhouse.

The people who died along the road were so numerous that they were thrown inside the ditches where they lay, and [were] buried there without the sacred rites of sepulture. In recent times, when a labourer's cottage was being built in Heaney's [?] field outside of Kilfeacle beside the main road, bones were unearthed at the digging of the foundation. Bones were also dug up when building a bungalow beneath the Moat of Kilfeacle on the side of the road.

Martin Donoghue, who lives near Cashel on the Hoare Abbey side, told Anthony Dwyer that he often heard his father speak of a night during the Famine when a knock came to the door in the middle of the night. He got up and opened the door, to find outside a man who had brought his mother's corpse on his back from a place near Clonmel, to be interred in her burying-place at Hoare Abbey. Her son had knocked at the door to ask for help with the burial. All those I spoke to had heard of people going blind during the Famine, but I can get no specific instances.

I have searched the district in vain for accounts of the dissolution of individual families during or after the Famine. But there must have been migration or eviction. Thomas Maguire remembers hearing of many people – he has no names, though – who got free passage to

America and Australia from the Government. He was told that the Government packed them into rotten ships, so many of which went down that he heard a neighbour named Kennedy say in years gone by that there were enough Irish bodies gone down in the Atlantic to make a road from Ireland to America. People were also given passage to Australia for thirty shillings [£1.10].

Thomas Maguire says that the lands of the people who died were taken by Scotch people who were imported at the time. He gives examples such as Pearsons (Kilfeacle), Payne (Ballywalter), Trayer (Lyonstown, beyond Cashel), South (Ballykisteen, near Limerick Junction) and Thompson (Kilmore). All the houses on these large holdings were built in the same style, as can be seen in all of them today, except in Ballykisteen, which was re-modelled. The Trayers are still [1945] in Lyonstown and Thompsons in Kilmore; but the other houses have changed hands and are now owned by Catholics.

The nearest local poorhouse was at Castle Lake near Cashel. The local landlords, the Mathews of Thomastown Castle, had the meal distributed in Golden by their employees. The meal was distributed at Golden, 1 lb. per person, by a man named Quirke [Burke?] who was an employee of the local landlord, the Mathews of Thomastown Castle. The lb. of meal was also distributed at Pat Heffernan's, Suirville, by John Quinlan, originally from Cappawhite, who lived in Ballycarron. He later became a clerk with Thomas Butler, Ballycarron, who was agent to the Thomastown estate of the Mathews.

The scales, Anthony O'Dwyer, says, which was [used] to weigh the meal was still to be seen at Heffernan's twenty years ago. This he was told by John Ryan, Cloughaleigh, who did not know what became of the scales. The 1 lb. of meal, Anthony O'Dwyer heard, was the only payment given for work on some of the local relief schemes. Much of the meal was mouldy, "growing in the bags". A local story, Thomas Maguire says, tells of a parson named Whitty in the rectory at Golden, who said that when the meal wouldn't kill the Irish, the devil wouldn't kill them!

The parson was unpopular, especially as every farmer had to give him "every third sheaf", the story goes. One day a man named O'Donnell, driving his horse and common-car, met the parson on the road, and whatever exchange took place between them, O'Donnell, who was a powerful man, pulled a *bolcoon* from the car and with a blow of it dispatched the parson. For this he was apprehended. (*Bolcoons* – a term Maguire still uses – are strong sticks or stakes, placed at the corners of a car and inclined from the perpendicular towards the front and rear, to make it carry a "fill" or load of hay, straw or corn.)

There is no further account in the district of soup kitchens or food-centres. The people ate turnip-tops; they often went at night to steal them. They were afraid to eat the turnips themselves for fear of transportation. There were men employed in some instances to watch the crops, and there were man-traps which gripped a man fast by the leg, and he then found the trap chained to a tree. There is some faint recollection of another type of trap, which discharged a gun.

The remains of a cabin at the side of the road through Kilfeacle can still be seen. In this lived a Mrs. O'Brien; O'Dwyer remembers when her son Thade Brien lived in the cabin. Mrs. O'Brien was murdered for her lb. of meal when she had returned with it from Golden by a local ruffian named Sean ----- [surname deleted], who killed her with a bill-hook. Thomas Maguire's version of this story says that he killed her on her way home with the meal about a mile from her cabin; he names the exact spot as being opposite where the doctor's house now is.

The road from Ballycarron to Bansha – it runs from Ballycarron Cross to join the road between Thomastown and Bansha – was made as relief work in Famine days. The cutting at Knockanulla, near Cashel on the road from Golden, was also made at that time. Patrick Finn, who afterwards worked in the garden at Ballycarron for James Butler, walked six miles daily to and from the work at Knockanulla.

