

**The Kellys and the  
O'Kellys**

**or, Landlords and Tenants**

by Anthony Trollope

1848

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# CHAPTER I.

## THE TRIAL

During the first two months of the year 1844, the greatest possible excitement existed in Dublin respecting the State Trials, in which Mr O'Connell, [1] his son, the Editors of three different repeal newspapers, Tom Steele, the Rev. Mr Tierney—a priest who had taken a somewhat prominent part in the Repeal Movement—and Mr Ray, the Secretary to the Repeal Association, were indicted for conspiracy. Those who only read of the proceedings in papers, which gave them as a mere portion of the news of the day, or learned what was going on in Dublin by chance conversation, can have no idea of the absorbing interest which the whole affair created in Ireland, but more especially in the metropolis. Every one felt strongly, on one side or on the other. Every one had brought the matter home to his own bosom, and looked to the result of the trial with individual interest and suspense.

Even at this short interval Irishmen can now see how completely they put judgment aside, and allowed feeling and passion to predominate in the matter. Many of the hottest protestants, of the staunchest foes to O'Connell, now believe that his absolute imprisonment was not to be desired, and that whether he were acquitted or convicted, the Government would have sufficiently shown, by instituting his trial, its determination to put down proceedings of which they did not approve. On the other hand, that class of men who then styled themselves Repealers are now aware that the continued imprisonment of their leader—the persecution,

as they believed it to be, of “the Liberator” [2]—would have been the one thing most certain to have sustained his influence, and to have given fresh force to their agitation. Nothing ever so strengthened the love of the Irish for, and the obedience of the Irish to O’Connell, as his imprisonment; nothing ever so weakened his power over them as his unexpected enfranchisement [3]. The country shouted for joy when he was set free, and expended all its enthusiasm in the effort.

At the time, however, to which I am now referring, each party felt the most intense interest in the struggle, and the most eager desire for success. Every Repealer, and every Anti-Repealer in Dublin felt that it was a contest, in which he himself was, to a certain extent, individually engaged. All the tactics of the opposed armies, down to the minutest legal details, were eagerly and passionately canvassed in every circle. Ladies, who had before probably never heard of “panels” in forensic phraseology, now spoke enthusiastically on the subject; and those on one side expressed themselves indignant at the fraudulent omission of certain names from the lists of jurors; while those on the other were capable of proving the legality of choosing the jury from the names which were given, and stated most positively that the omissions were accidental.

“The traversers” [4] were in everybody’s mouth—a term heretofore confined to law courts, and lawyers’ rooms. The Attorney-General, the Commander-in-Chief of the Government forces, was most virulently assailed; every legal step which he took was scrutinised and abused; every measure which he used was base enough of itself to hand down his name to everlasting infamy. Such were the tenets of the Repealers. And O’Connell and his counsel, their base artifices, falsehoods, delays, and unprofessional

proceedings, were declared by the Saxon party to be equally abominable.

The whole Irish bar seemed, for the time, to have laid aside the habitual *sang froid* [5] and indifference of lawyers, and to have employed their hearts as well as their heads on behalf of the different parties by whom they were engaged. The very jurors themselves for a time became famous or infamous, according to the opinions of those by whom their position was discussed. Their names and additions were published and republished; they were declared to be men who would stand by their country and do their duty without fear or favour—so said the Protestants. By the Roman Catholics, they were looked on as perjurers determined to stick to the Government with blind indifference to their oaths. Their names are now, for the most part, forgotten, though so little time has elapsed since they appeared so frequently before the public.

Every day's proceedings gave rise to new hopes and fears. The evidence rested chiefly on the reports of certain short-hand writers, who had been employed to attend Repeal meetings, and their examinations and cross-examinations were read, re-read, and scanned with the minutest care. Then, the various and long speeches of the different counsel, who, day after day, continued to address the jury; the heat of one, the weary legal technicalities of another, the perspicuity of a third, and the splendid forensic eloquence of a fourth, were criticised, depreciated and admired. It seemed as though the chief lawyers of the day were standing an examination, and were candidates for some high honour, which each was striving to secure.

The Dublin papers were full of the trial; no other subject, could, at the time, either interest or amuse. I doubt whether any affair of the

kind was ever, to use the phrase of the trade, so well and perfectly reported. The speeches appeared word for word the same in the columns of newspapers of different politics. For four-fifths of the contents of the paper it would have been the same to you whether you were reading the Evening Mail, or the Freeman. Every word that was uttered in the Court was of importance to every one in Dublin; and half-an-hour's delay in ascertaining, to the minutest shade, what had taken place in Court during any period, was accounted a sad misfortune.

The press round the Four Courts [6], every morning before the doors were open, was very great: and except by the favoured few who were able to obtain seats, it was only with extreme difficulty and perseverance, that an entrance into the body of the Court could be obtained.

It was on the eleventh morning of the proceedings, on the day on which the defence of the traversers was to be commenced, that two young men, who had been standing for a couple of hours in front of the doors of the Court, were still waiting there, with what patience was left to them, after having been pressed and jostled for so long a time. Richard Lalor Sheil, however, was to address the jury on behalf of Mr John O'Connell—and every one in Dublin knew that that was a treat not to be lost. The two young men, too, were violent Repealers. The elder of them was a three-year-old denizen of Dublin, who knew the names of the contributors to the "Nation", who had constantly listened to the indignation and enthusiasm of O'Connell, Smith O'Brien, and O'Neill Daunt, in their addresses from the rostrum of the Conciliation Hall [7]; who had drank much porter at Jude's, who had eaten many oysters at Burton Bindon's, who had seen and contributed to many rows in the Abbey Street Theatre; who, during his life in Dublin, had done



many things which he ought not to have done, and had probably made as many omissions of things which it had behoved him to do. He had that knowledge of the persons of his fellow-citizens, which appears to be so much more general in Dublin than in any other large town; he could tell you the name and trade of every one he met in the streets, and was a judge of the character and talents of all whose employments partook, in any degree, of a public nature. His name was Kelly; and, as his calling was that of an attorney's clerk, his knowledge of character would be peculiarly valuable in the scene at which he and his companion were so anxious to be present.

The younger of the two brothers, for such they were, was a somewhat different character. Though perhaps a more enthusiastic Repealer than his brother, he was not so well versed in the details of Repeal tactics, or in the strength and weakness of the Repeal ranks. He was a young farmer, of the better class, from the County Mayo, where he held three or four hundred wretchedly bad acres under Lord Ballindine, and one or two other small farms, under different landlords. He was a good-looking young fellow, about twenty-five years of age, with that mixture of cunning and frankness in his bright eye, which is so common among those of his class in Ireland, but more especially so in Connaught.

The mother of these two young men kept an inn in the small town of Dunmore, and though from the appearance of the place, one would be led to suppose that there could not be in Dunmore much of that kind of traffic which innkeepers love, Mrs Kelly was accounted a warm, comfortable woman. Her husband had left her for a better world some ten years since, with six children; and the widow, instead of making continual use, as her chief support, of that common wail of being a poor, lone woman, had put her

shoulders to the wheel, and had earned comfortably, by sheer industry, that which so many of her class, when similarly situated, are willing to owe to compassion.

She held on the farm, which her husband rented from Lord Ballindine, till her eldest son was able to take it. He, however, was now a gauger [8] in the north of Ireland. Her second son was the attorney's clerk; and the farm had descended to Martin, the younger, whom we have left jostling and jostled at one of the great doors of the Four Courts, and whom we must still leave there for a short time, while a few more of the circumstances of his family are narrated.

Mrs Kelly had, after her husband's death, added a small grocer's establishment to her inn. People wondered where she had found the means of supplying her shop: some said that old Mick Kelly must have had money when he died, though it was odd how a man who drank so much could ever have kept a shilling by him. Others remarked how easy it was to get credit in these days, and expressed a hope that the wholesale dealer in Pill Lane might be none the worse. However this might be, the widow Kelly kept her station firmly and constantly behind her counter, wore her weeds and her warm, black, stuff dress decently and becomingly, and never asked anything of anybody.

At the time of which we are writing, her two elder sons had left her, and gone forth to make their own way, and take the burden of the world on their own shoulders. Martin still lived with his mother, though his farm lay four miles distant, on the road to Ballindine, and in another county—for Dunmore is in County Galway, and the lands of Tonerroe, as Martin's farm was called, were in the County Mayo. One of her three daughters had lately been married to a

shop-keeper in Tuam, and rumour said that he had got £500 with her; and Pat Daly was not the man to have taken a wife for nothing. The other two girls, Meg and Jane, still remained under their mother's wing, and though it was to be presumed that they would soon fly abroad, with the same comfortable plumage which had enabled their sister to find so warm a nest, they were obliged, while sharing their mother's home, to share also her labours, and were not allowed to be too proud to cut off pennyworths of tobacco, and mix dandies of punch for such of their customers as still preferred the indulgence of their throats to the blessing of Father Mathew.

Mrs. Kelly kept two ordinary in-door servants to assist in the work of the house; one, an antiquated female named Sally, who was more devoted to her tea-pot than ever was any bacchanalian to his glass. Were there four different teas in the inn in one evening, she would have drained the pot after each, though she burst in the effort. Sally was, in all, an honest woman, and certainly a religious one;—she never neglected her devotional duties, confessed with most scrupulous accuracy the various peccadillos of which she might consider herself guilty; and it was thought, with reason, by those who knew her best, that all the extra prayers she said,—and they were very many,—were in atonement for commissions of continual petty larceny with regard to sugar. On this subject did her old mistress quarrel with her, her young mistress ridicule her; of this sin did her fellow-servant accuse her; and, doubtless, for this sin did her Priest continually reprove her; but in vain. Though she would not own it, there was always sugar in her pocket, and though she declared that she usually drank her tea unsweetened, those who had come upon her unawares had seen her extracting the pinches

of moist brown saccharine from the huge slit in her petticoat, and could not believe her.

Kate, the other servant, was a red-legged lass, who washed the potatoes, fed the pigs, and ate her food nobody knew when or where. Kates, particularly Irish Kates, are pretty by prescription; but Mrs. Kelly's Kate had been excepted, and was certainly a most positive exception. Poor Kate was very ugly. Her hair had that appearance of having been dressed by the turkey-cock, which is sometimes presented by the heads of young women in her situation; her mouth extended nearly from ear to ear; her neck and throat, which were always nearly bare, presented no feminine charms to view; and her short coarse petticoat showed her red legs nearly to the knee; for, except on Sundays, she knew not the use of shoes and stockings. But though Kate was ungainly and ugly, she was useful, and grateful—very fond of the whole family, and particularly attached to the two young ladies, in whose behalf she doubtless performed many a service, acceptable enough to them, but of which, had she known of them, the widow would have been but little likely to approve.

Such was Mrs. Kelly's household at the time that her son Martin left Connaught to pay a short visit to the metropolis, during the period of O'Connell's trial. But, although Martin was a staunch Repealer, and had gone as far as Galway, and Athlone, to be present at the Monster Repeal Meetings which had been held there, it was not political anxiety alone which led him to Dublin. His landlord; the young Lord Ballindine, was there; and, though Martin could not exactly be said to act as his lordship's agent—for Lord Ballindine had, unfortunately, a legal agent, with whose services his pecuniary embarrassments did not allow him to dispense—he was a kind of confidential tenant, and his attendance had been

requested. Martin, moreover, had a somewhat important piece of business of his own in hand, which he expected would tend greatly to his own advantage; and, although he had fully made up his mind to carry it out if possible, he wanted, in conducting it, a little of his brother's legal advice, and, above all, his landlord's sanction.

This business was nothing less than an intended elopement with an heiress belonging to a rank somewhat higher than that in which Martin Kelly might be supposed to look, with propriety, for his bride; but Martin was a handsome fellow, not much burdened with natural modesty, and he had, as he supposed, managed to engage the affections of Anastasia Lynch, a lady resident near Dunmore.

All particulars respecting Martin's intended—the amount of her fortune—her birth and parentage—her age and attractions—shall, in due time, be made known; or rather, perhaps, be suffered to make themselves known. In the mean time we will return to the two brothers, who are still anxiously waiting to effect an entrance into the august presence of the Law.

Martin had already told his brother of his matrimonial speculations, and had received certain hints from that learned youth as to the proper means of getting correct information as to the amount of the lady's wealth,—her power to dispose of it by her own deed,—and certain other particulars always interesting to gentlemen who seek money and love at the same time. John did not quite approve of the plan; there might have been a shade of envy at his brother's good fortune; there might be some doubt as to his brother's power of carrying the affair through successfully; but, though he had not encouraged him, he gave him the information he wanted, and was as willing to talk over the matter as Martin could desire.

As they were standing in the crowd, their conversation ran partly on Repeal and O'Connell, and partly on matrimony and Anty Lynch, as the lady was usually called by those who knew her best.

“Tear and ’ouns Misther Lord Chief Justice!” exclaimed Martin, “and are ye niver going to opin them big doors?”

“And what’d be the good of his opening them yet,” answered John, “when a bigger man than himself an’t there? Dan and the other boys isn’t in it yet, and sure all the twelve judges couldn’t get on a peg without them.”

“Well, Dan, my darling!” said the other, “you’re thought more of here this day than the lot of ’em, though the place in a manner belongs to them, and you’re only a prisoner.”

“Faix and that’s what he’s not, Martin; no more than yourself, nor so likely, may-be. He’s the traverser, as I told you before, and that’s not being a prisoner. If he were a prisoner, how did he manage to tell us all what he did at the Hall yesterday?”

“Av’ he’s not a prisoner, he’s the next-door to it; it’s not of his own free will and pleasure he’d come here to listen to all the lies them thundering Saxon ruffians choose to say about him.”

“And why not? Why wouldn’t he come here and vindicate himself? When you hear Sheil by and by, you’ll see then whether they think themselves likely to be prisoners! No—no; they never will be, av’ there’s a ghost of a conscience left in one of them Protesthant raps, that they’ve picked so carefully out of all Dublin to make jurors of. They can’t convict ’em! I heard Ford, the night before last, offer four to one that they didn’t find the lot guilty; and he knows what

he's about, and isn't the man to thrust a Protestant half as far as he'd see him."

"Isn't Tom Steele a Protesthant himself, John?"

"Well, I believe he is. So's Gray, and more of 'em too; but there's a difference between them and the downright murdhering Tory set. Poor Tom doesn't throuble the Church much; but you'll be all for Protesthants now, Martin, when you've your new brother-in-law. Barry used to be one of your raal out-and-outers!"

"It's little, I'm thinking, I and Barry'll be having to do together, unless it be about the brads; and the law about them now, thank God, makes no differ for Roman and Protesthant. Anty's as good a Catholic as ever breathed, and so was her mother before her; and when she's Mrs Kelly, as I mane to make her, Master Barry may shell out the cash and go to heaven his own way for me."

"It ain't the family then, you're fond of, Martin! And I wondher at that, considering how old Sim loved us all."

"Niver mind Sim, John! he's dead and gone; and av' he niver did a good deed before, he did one when he didn't lave all his cash to that precious son of his, Barry Lynch."

"You're prepared for squalls with Barry, I suppose?"

"He'll have all the squalling on his own side, I'm thinking, John. I don't mane to squall, for one. I don't see why I need, with £400 a-year in my pocket, and a good wife to the fore."

"The £400 a-year's good enough, av' you touch it, certainly," said the man of law, thinking of his own insufficient guinea a-week,

“and you must look to have some trouble yet afore you do that. But as to the wife—why, the less said the better—eh, Martin?”

“Av’ it’s not asking too much, might I trouble you, sir, to set anywhere else but on my shouldher?” This was addressed to a very fat citizen, who was wheezing behind Martin, and who, to escape suffocation in the crowd, was endeavouring to raise himself on his neighbour’s shoulders. “And why the less said the better?—I wish yourself may never have a worse.”

“I wish I mayn’t, Martin, as far as the cash goes; and a man like me might look a long time in Dublin before he got a quarter of the money. But you must own Anty’s no great beauty, and she’s not over young, either.”

“Av’ she’s no beauty, she’s not downright ugly, like many a girl that gets a good husband; and av’ she’s not over young, she’s not over old. She’s not so much older than myself, after all. It’s only because her own people have always made nothing of her; that’s what has made everybody else do the same.”

“Why, Martin, I know she’s ten years older than Barry, and Barry’s older than you!”

“One year; and Anty’s not full ten years older than him. Besides, what’s ten years between man and wife?”

“Not much, when it’s on the right side. But it’s the wrong side with you, Martin!”

“Well, John, now, by virtue of your oath, as you chaps say, wouldn’t you marry a woman twice her age, av’ she’d half the money?—Begad you would, and leap at it!”



“Perhaps I would. I’d a deal sooner have a woman eighty than forty. There’d be some chance then of having the money after the throuble was over! Anty’s neither ould enough nor young enough.”

“She’s not forty, any way; and won’t be yet for five years and more; and, as I hope for glory, John—though I know you won’t believe me—I wouldn’t marry her av’ she’d all Sim Lynch’s ill-gotten property, instead of only half, av’ I wasn’t really fond of her, and av’ I didn’t think I’d make her a good husband.”

“You didn’t tell mother what you’re afther, did you?”

“Sorrow a word! But she’s so ’cute she partly guesses; and I think Meg let slip something. The girls and Anty are thick as thieves since old Sim died; though they couldn’t be at the house much since Barry came home, and Anty daren’t for her life come down to the shop.”

“Did mother say anything about the schame?”

“Faix, not much; but what she did say, didn’t show she’d much mind for it. Since Sim Lynch tried to get Toneroe from her, when father died, she’d never a good word for any of them. Not but what she’s always a civil look for Anty, when she sees her.”

“There’s not much fear she’ll look black on the wife, when you bring the money home with her. But where’ll you live, Martin? The little shop at Dunmore’ll be no place for Mrs Kelly, when there’s a lady of the name with £400 a-year of her own.”

“Deed then, John, and that’s what I don’t know. May-be I’ll build up the ould house at Toneroe; some of the O’Kellys themselves lived there, years ago.”

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