

irregularity within the pattern was an indication of something wrong.

Baby Glover was the daughter of a carpenter, and her brother Victor was the Church of Ireland schoolteacher whose classroom was part of their dwelling. They lived across the street from us and my mother and her sisters had grown up with the Glover girls. Baby never married, but she was an eternal romantic and the finest cook in Ireland; the open hearth fire in her kitchen was always alive with smouldering hand won turf, and their food was cooked upon it in three legged cast iron pots, either suspended over the fire or buried in the embers beneath. Porter cake, two inch glazed apple tarts, turkeys, geese, hams — the crescendo came at Christmas. There was a small Protestant community in the Foxford of those years and their pastor was Canon McQuaide, a tall distinguished looking clergyman who always wore the typical ministerial gaiters; the canon was a saintly man and his charity extended in good measure to his less fortunate Catholic neighbours. The rectory and the gardens were typical of Irish Protestant husbandry, and those gardens contained in serried rows every fruit and vegetable known to man; there was a tennis court, and when we played there, each set was followed by bowls of Mrs. McQuaide's loganberries and raspberries smothered in cream from Victor Glover's dairy.

In 1895, just four years after the mill had opened, changes had come about in Foxford. My grandfather recorded:

'Changes take place without our noticing. A block of houses rising in a familiar street soon makes it difficult to remember what that street previously looked like. So it is that I have to pause and reconstruct mentally the Foxford of early days; the low convent looking out on the fair green, the straggling street of houses that knew neither modern sanitation nor had dreamt of bathrooms, the little wooden chapel, the wooden school, the modest mill buildings.

† recall well the arrival of the first piano ever seen in the village; it came in 1895 and was a great source of interest. I remember the terrible problem presented by the necessity of hauling a boiler from Castlebar for use in the mill. It was dragged by horses unused to team work and at first it simply seemed immovable, only when Lord Lucan lent us three horses for the job did we make any progress. One of the horses was said to be the oldest horse in Ireland at that time; it was reputed to be 39 years of age and they say it slept standing supporting itself against a stone wall. It pulled its weight however when our boiler was on the way!

The year of 1898 was that of a very bad harvest and he wrote:

'There were other visitors to the mill — Lord and Lady Cadogan came, also Sir Francis Cruise and a young girl whose beauty I have

not seen equalled or even approached. She arrived one day on an outside car, not as might have been supposed from her elegant appearance, to see if we had anything alluring for her to purchase, but as a sympathiser with the poor and the downtrodden. It was the year 1898 - once again the crops had failed and many parts of the country were in distress and the poor West most of all. The young girl who came personally to inquire into the troubles of the poor was Maud Gonne. She was the loveliest person I ever saw.

Things were indeed bad that year and on my Sunday surveys, I saw some pitiable sights. I went into a little house in Quinmore, which with Rininanny was one of the districts worse affected. There was sheer starvation in that home, and in it I saw the most awful sight I ever witnessed - two little girls, aged perhaps six or seven and evidently suffering from acute starvation, were rolling on the floor like dogs and grimacing horribly. The man who did most at that time to try to alleviate such suffering was Michael Davitt — he died in 1906, and the grandfather attended the funeral:

That year I attended in Foxford, a historic funeral - that of Michael Davitt. As a leader of the Land League Agitation, he sacrificed himself unselfishly. He had, as a boy, seen his father and mother evicted from their home in Straide, and the bitter memory remained during the years of exile, when his parents were forced to emigrate to Lancashire to make a living. He himself worked, when a mere child, in a Lancashire cotton mill, tending a loom, and in the course of that employment lost an arm through being caught in a machine. He grew to manhood with a vivid memory of the hardships of the poor and set himself to redress the grievances of one sorely tried section of the Irish people, the small farmers from whom he had sprung. His efforts landed him in an English prison cell and he did a long term of penal servitude but his release saw him once more busy. On the site of his home in Straide - he called on men to band themselves together to demand fair rents and security of tenure. It was the beginning of the Land League. That is the story in brief, of the man whose body came to Foxford station in May of 1906. A hearse conveyed the remains by road to Straide; I attended the funeral and saw John Redmond, amongst the many prominent men. But I did not see there the small farmers for whom Davitt and his like had won a succession of Land Bills that gave them security and fair dealing. At least I saw some of them, but not in the cortege - they were lookers-on standing in the ditches.....

Foxford in my own time was a typical Mayo town and turf was still the common fuel, there were brown stains on the gable ends of the houses, stains which grew over the years as the tarry deposits from the turf smoke seeped through the walls and lifted the plaster