

his uncle Maurice, Hunting Cap, and the Rt. Hon. Col. Maurice Fitzgerald, the Knight of Kerry, at Ballinruddery. Hunting Cap complains, on 19 March, 1803, when John was 25, "of the malignant attack made upon my nephew, John Connell, before the last Assize, for his zeal and indefatigable exertions on procuring the peace and tranquillity of the Barony of Iveragh and taking up the leaders of the Seditious Banditti," etc. The Knight of Kerry promised help and nothing more is heard of the matter.

In 1806 he *m* Elizabeth dau. and heiress of William Coppinger, of Ballyvolane (William *d.* 1816). Her 16 quarters, published at page 318, vol. ii, *The Last Colonel*, show her descent from, amongst others, the Galways of Lota, the Goulds of Cork, the Earls of Ormonde and Castlehaven, the Barnwells, Viscounts Kingsland, the 2nd Earl of Westmeath, the 12th Lord Delvin, Sir Laurence Esmonde, 2nd Bart. and *de jure* 3rd Lord Lymbrick, Theobald 7th Lord Cahir and Sir Redmond Everard, 2nd Bart. Through her mother she was heiress of the McMahons of Clenagh and heiress of the eldest branch of the Esmonde family.

After a year living with her father at Barry's Court they settled at Grena, on the Lawne River, near the north shore of Lough Lein, Killarney. Later Grena's name was changed to Grenagh, and it was the home of Daniel James O'Connell, John's nephew, and later still the home, temporarily, of Morgan Ross O'Connell, later of Lakeview.

At Grena John kept open house and lived lavishly on the expectation of a rich share of his uncle Hunting Cap's estate, and in the hope of great wealth from his wife's estate. In 1807 there were still-born twins, and later their sons, Maurice and Daniel, who *d.* as babies. It was not till 1811 that Morgan John O'Connell, who was to be his heir, was born. John led the Catholic party in Kerry, whilst Dan led the party in Dublin. John's style and sentiments were effective and he was a convincing public speaker. John was a noted pistol shot and is credited with 18 duels. One of those deserves special mention.

On 1 Aug., 1812, a meeting was held in Tralee, with the then Lord Castlerosse in the chair, to take action to repeal the Penal Laws. This was followed by a dinner party, at which John presided. In the town a commotion took place and the military were called out. Only good fortune and level-headed behaviour by John prevented the military opening fire on what was essentially a peaceable crowd engaged in viewing the decorations and celebrating the occasion. The incident, however, led to hot words and a vituperous correspondence between John, on the one side, and the leader of the opposing faction, Richard Francis Blennerhasset, on the other. An account of the conduct of this affair of honour, of the challenges and of the attempts at meetings between the parties appears at very great length in *Western Herald and Kerry Advertiser* of 15 Dec., 1812.

It must be confessed that John goaded Blennerhasset so persistently that the latter had either to fight or leave the country. However, knowing John's reputation as a dead shot, Blennerhasset practised assiduously with his pistols, and when they met, in 1813, it was John who fell with a bullet which entered his face and came out through his neck. It was only because of first aid rendered by Miss Mary Hussey dau. of Counsellor Rice Hussey, that John's life was saved. It probably cured John of his duelling, and may, indeed, be the reason why no picture of John survives.

He bred a special class of beagle of very large size, and used them for hunting. He kept both staghounds and beagles, and one finds references in the contemporary newspapers of special hunts held by him to entertain notables visiting Killarney. However, when Sir Walter Scott came there he refused to hold a hunt for him because he believed that the Author had anti-Catholic tendencies.

The only personal relic of him which appears to have survived is a hunting crop with a silver handle in the form of a hare, inscribed as presented to him by the followers of his Lawne Harriers.

On the death of his father-in-law, in 1816, the money due to him from the McMahon and Coppinger estates under the marriage settlement was not forthcoming, and his uncle, Hunting Cap, insisted on the execution of a writ of outlawry against the brother, William Coppinger, which drove the latter out of the country till 1860, when he *d.* In 1824, however, on the death of Hunting Cap, John became again a rich man, and he inherited further money from his uncle, the Count. But after Morgan John came of age John lavished money on him. On one contested election alone John spent £9,000.

Finally, the famine of 1846-7, and the consequent drop in the value of landed property in which most of John's money was invested, broke an ageing man, and he had to sell up and go to France, where he was befriended by a French Royalist family, the de Tourvilles. It was said at the time "that nothing became him more than misfortune." He *d.* on 9 Sept., 1853, at Dinan, in France, where a monument to his memory was erected.

His children who reached maturity were,

- L1A Morgan John O'Connell, M.P., J.P., D.L.
- L1B The Rev. John Dominic O'Connell.
- L1C Jane Frances O'Connell; firstly by Madame O'Donoghue and secondly by Mrs. MacCarthy O'Leary.
- L1D Catherine O'Connell, Mrs. Vines.
- L1E Maurice John O'Connell.