

Setting the Scene

The Kearey family did not find it easy. Then why should they? Life in London in the 1800s was fast becoming almost an impossible place to live. Not that that put off Thomas for he remembered what it was like in Dublin... and this was better... here there was hope. He held the first-born's name - given through the ages, and no one doubted him. He was out to prove himself!

Kearey is not an Irish name but an anglicized version of Ciardha who populated land in today's northern Tipperary. The O'Ciardha were a clan who sided with the O'Neills..., didn't they invite Henry II to help them retrieve their homelands... what a mistake... Later there came the battle of the Boyne, and that put the lid on it!

Now the clan was scattered everywhere, there were those who joined other clans, adopting their name and habits. Some, as Catholics, knew the ways of the Spanish and moved there. Others sailed to America to try their luck in the gold fields and a few who travelled to Australia taking their joinery skills, as coachbuilders, with them. All were seeking a new way of life, away from 'the troubles'.

Those of the clan who remained hid from the Anglo-Irish up in the hills or in inhospitable places in lowland bog... many had their homes burnt being forced out by the bailiff. At onetime they could have been gallowglass and fought it out but it was a hopeless position.

Now Thomas was in London, Westminster, where the Irish ended up. A few years later, there would be more Irishmen in London than in Dublin. The rookeries gave them shelter... a place to move away from...

There was no turning back for nothing could be worse so they all had to go on, forget the past, and make a life for themselves. That the majority did was a reflection of their fortitude. This story gives a picture of those times and the way they integrated... Being used to fighting – thinking back to the days of Viking incursions and interclan cattle rustling they knew a thing or two about keeping their heads down. There were two more wars to come for them to show their mettle... England had much to be grateful for.