

Articles regarding the assassination plot and subsequent murder of Miss Charlotte Hinds at Ballyconnell, County Cavan, Ireland on Friday, 12 October 1855

Copied as transcribed:

***The Times***  
**London, Middlesex, England**  
**October 16, 1855**

**IRELAND**  
*(by electric telegraph.)*  
*Dublin, Monday evening.*

#### DREADFUL ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE

The following appears in the Mail of this evening: "Ballyconnell, Cavan, Oct. 13

"Miss Charlotte HINDS, on Friday last, about 4 o'clock, when returning from Ballyconnell, was met in the line or avenue leading to her house by two demons in human shape, who at once dragged her off the car, knocked her down with loaded sticks, and then deliberately fired no fewer than three pistol shots into her face and head, after which they walked quietly away, leaving her for dead. The unfortunate lady was shortly afterwards carried on a door to her own house, where she now lies in the most excruciating agony, having, besides the beating from the sticks, received no less than four bullets in the face and head, one of which is lodged in the brain. Her medical attendants entertain not the slightest hope of her recovery. Some 18 months ago sworn information was given that this lady was soon to be shot, and a communication to that effect was then made to the Government, who ordered that she should get a police escort at all times she might call for such, but she only availed herself of the privilege on one or two occasions. Miss HINDS dared to exercise the rights over the property which she had purchased in the Encumbered Estates Court – she dared to look for and enforce payment of her rents from refractory tenants and ejectment, which would have been tried at the approaching session of this town."

**October 17, 1855**

**IRELAND**  
*(From our own correspondent)*  
*Dublin, Tuesday morning*

#### DISGRACEFUL ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE

The following account of the barbarous attempt to assassinate a lady, who was, unfortunately for herself, the proprietor of land in the county of Cavan – a short report of

which was forwarded yesterday by telegraph – is supplied by the correspondent of the Evening Mail. Since the memorable massacre at Finnoe, in which one of the victims was a lady, the annals of Irish agrarian crime present no similar scene of atrocity to the one here recorded: "Ballyconnell, Oct. 13

"In the annals of assassination and Ribandism I have not, I think, read of anything equal in atrocity and barbarity to the act which I shall now endeavour to give you're an account of. Miss Charlotte HINDS, on Friday last, about 4 o'clock, when returning from Ballyconnell, was let in the lane or avenue leading to her house by two demons in human shape, who at once dragged her off the car, knocked her down with loaded sticks, and then deliberately fired no fewer than three pistol-shots into her face and head, after which they walked quietly away, leaving her for dead. The unfortunate lady was shortly afterwards carried on a door to her own house, where she now lies in the most excruciating pain and agony, having, besides the beating from the sticks, received no less than four bullets in the face and head, one of which is lodged in the brain. Her medical attendants entertain not the slightest hope of her recovery. Some 18 months ago sworn information was given that this lady was soon to be shot, and a communication to that effect was made to the Government, who ordered that she should get a police escort at all times she might call for such, but she only availed herself of the privilege on one or two occasions. Poor, unsuspecting creature, who set herself down to live in the midst of her property, thinking that, at least, a lone and unprotected woman might be safe among her own tenantry, but, alas! No. Neither age nor sex is now, nor ever was, respect by the hellish Riband code, which is "unchanged and unchangeable." It will be asked, in what did the unfortunate lady offend? She dared to look for and enforce payment of her rents from refractory tenants, and she dared against others to bring an ejectment which would have been tried at the approaching sessions of this town. Yes, all this she had the temerity to dare to do, and, notwithstanding her many acts of kindness – and they are admitted to be numerous – to her tenants and neighbours, she has paid the penalty of daring to look for her own. Such a heinous, cold-blooded, cowardly act is enough to make one's blood run cold to contemplate. This locality is in a frightfully bad state. It is well-known to some of the magistrates that another was on the list for assassination, and would have preceded poor Miss HINDS, if the dastardly agents of the Riband system could have taken him unawares. Let the Government, then, do what they can at once. They can station an active and determined stipendiary magistrate, and a sub-inspector of the same stamp, at Ballyconnell; and they can, under the act, form a police-station on the lands of Tubberlion (where the deed of blood was perpetrated), making the land liable for all expenses. When they do this, then I will give them credit for a desire to protect life and property in this doomed locality."

Referring to this terrible outrage the Mail remarks:

"Miss HINDS (a Protestant), a lady possessing a small property in Cavan, generally resident in Dublin, could get no rents from her reluctant tenants, who thought they should anticipate Parliament in enforcing tenant-right, and appropriate the whole

proceeds of their farms to their own use. After a struggle, seeing poverty staring her in the face, she ejected some of the non-paying tenants, and went down to occupy the farms herself, preferring to till the ground for subsistence to starving. Coming home on a car from Ballyconnell market she was fired at by two ruffians going up on a narrow lane leading to her house by the verge of Curra wood. Dr. ROE, of Cavan, was sent for, and found her in a hopeless state. Reports differ. Some say she still lives, some that she is dead. 'Property has its duties as well as its rights.' By property, the agrarian philosopher who uttered the axiom meant the owners of property. They have their rights – so the law says, and so the public in England suppose; but they enforce those rights at the risk of their lives. If they dare to ask for their rents, they are refused; if they enforce them, they are butchered. The day of their execution is generally publicly known, and, as they pass on to the slaughter, curious faces pop out of cabin-doors with a demoniacal grin, and are hastily withdrawn."

There are a few additional particulars in the subjoined account:

"This horrid outrage was committed in open day, shortly before 4 in the afternoon, in a populous place, with several houses immediately contiguous to the place, but, until the deed was done, and the fellows securely off through a neighbouring wood, not one made their appearance. It was also committed beside her own property, but it was remarked that almost if not all the tenants on the land made their appearances in Ballyconnell market that day most conspicuously, in order to be out of the way. One of her tenants, an old lame man named Andrew REILLY, Miss HINDS took up on the way; but as his life is in some of the leases on the lands he escaped, though he says he was fired at, but this is not believed. Miss HINDS's servant boy is committed to the Bridewall here for further examination, as he prevaricated, and told a most improbable story. Miss HINDS was a most kind, good, religious woman; her only crime was endeavouring to get her rights from a banded lawless set of tenants, who thought to hold the lands without the payment of rent. She had an ejection served a few days ago on one STEPHENS here, on the 26th inst., which is the cause of this deed of blood. When the report came in here to the market, it seemed to be nothing more than an every-day occurrence, and was received with savage exultation by many – even women. If the Government do not send an active, efficient, and determined resident magistrate and sub-inspector of police at once here, it is feared there are more such acts in contemplation; indeed, it is well known there are. If some strong measures are not taken in time with these murderers, neither life nor property is worth a day's purchase. Why not at once send a party of police to these lands, under the Crime and Outrage Act? Miss HINDS is still alive. She has considerable property of cattle and crops on the land, which will be all taken off if not protected, and she is in a low backward place, unable to be removed. She lies in a most precarious condition, all battered with blows, and many bullet wounds in the head. Are we in a Christian country, or among the Caffres? But even these would respect a woman."

Disgraceful and revolting as these details are, it must not be inferred that this, the first agrarian outrage of serious import that has occurred in the north for a long time past,

denotes a revival of the old Riband conspiracy in that quarter. There is no symptom of any such movement in the northern provinces, which up to Friday last enjoyed a state of profound tranquillity.

## **October 31, 1855**

### **THE MURDER OF MISS HINDS**

The quarter sessions for the Belturbet division of the county Cavan was opened at Ballyconnell on Thursday, by Mr. P. M. MURPHY, the Chairman. The court was unusually crowded. The learned gentleman addressed the grand jury as follows:

"Mr Foreman and Gentlemen of the Grand Jury, – I deeply regret I am unable to repeat on this occasion those congratulations on the peaceable condition of the districts which I have had so much pleasure in addressing to you for a considerable time back. I regret it the more because there is but one solitary case for your investigation during these sessions, this, however, only proves what experience has long taught us, namely, how fallacious a criterion the calendar, either at sessions or assizes, affords of the condition of society which exists among us; and how strikingly exemplified has this observation been by the appalling event which has taken place! It is a matter of notoriety that some years back this part of the country was in a fearful state of disorganization, arising, as we all know, from the secret proceedings of an illegal confederacy but too well and too familiarly known as the Riband Society. However, from the almost complete disappearance of those crimes usually denominated agrarian outrages, in common with yourselves I had shared the hope that a sound state of society had been permanently established. It is permitted to us still to indulge those pleasing hopes, or must we join in the apprehensions of those who tell us that under this smooth and tranquil surface there still runs that treacherous undercurrent which bears along in its poisonous course the seeds of crime, of desolation, and death? God forbid that by any word of mine I should prejudge a case which may yet, I trust, undergo a solemn judicial investigation; nay, so far, indeed, from doing so, I would fain hope that this surpassing crime, which has just affrighted the heard of every man in the community, is an isolated case, and has no connexion with a more extended combination. But if, indeed, the fears of many should prove to be true, and the dreadful crime is symptomatic of a return to those evil days to which I have adverted, then should I say, 'Wo betide this unhappy and devoted district.' I have already said I shall abstain from allusion to the circumstances of this case; but having had a long experience, both at the bar and on the bench, of the disastrous consequences springing from those illegal confederacies, I can speak with something like authority on this subject; and, therefore, I think it not out of place on this occasion to raise my warning voice, and to supplicate every man whom my words may reach to consider deliberately the character, the objects, and consequences of this Riband confederacy. Inquire then, in the first instance, of any man, the oldest and the most experienced in the community, if he can point out one single benefit arising to any human being from this association. Now, let this question be fairly considered and canvassed in a candid spirit, and I pledge my experience there will be but one answer,

and it is this—that misery, and misery alone, has been the result. Let us next examine the object of these associations. That object is clearly this: by the influence of terror and intimidation to establish an authority paramount to the law of the land, and, through the instrumentality of this machinery, to deter men from prosecuting their rights, whether for the recovery of lands or rents, or the execution of any legal process in connexion therewith. This I conceive to be a succinct but perfectly accurate description of their objects. Now, suppose for a moment that these confederacies had even a temporary success; is it to be believed that any man having the power to cast his fortunes in any part of the world out of Ireland would remain among us? What, then, would be the inevitable result? Why, that all the evils of absenteeism which are so generally deplored would be aggravated tenfold; rents would be collected—of course they would—by the agents of absentees, and enforced with increased rigour; all avenues and approaches to the proprietor would be shut up, he would be far away in a distant land, while the poor cultivator, bound down by necessity to the soil, would be compelled to struggle on in adversity and distress, unregarded and unpitied; and to complete the picture of this misery, in no respect overdrawn, all these calamities would fall indiscriminately on the innocent as well as the guilty. Now mark well, this is the result of the Ribandman's success—his complete success. Let us now turn to the consequences of his failure. He has brought down the vengeance of the law upon his district; he has stimulated the activity of every magistrate and policeman around him; he has compelled the Government to put forth all the terrors of the law, and, if these are found insufficient, he has induced the Parliament to forge new fetters for the Irish peasant. He it is who has revived the Coercion Acts, the Arms Acts, the Insurrection Acts, the Whiteboy Acts; in fact, he it is that has drawn forth the sword, that has long remained rusty in the scabbard, to fall upon the devoted heads of his countrymen. Then, let him count the gains. He has turned the heart of the landlord against the tenant, of the tenant against the landlord; the kind and affectionate regard he has converted into the averted look of mutual distrust, and then, perhaps, he terminates his guilty career by becoming the informer against those very associates in crime whom he first seduced and afterward betrayed. Is this an exaggerated picture, or is it the experience of every man among us? Trace the career and progress of the youthful Irish peasant who has been seduced into these illegal associations, and is met, perhaps, at some gathering or dance by some artful knave, who, at the very moment the unconscious boy consents to take the unlawful oath, is gloating over the price he will receive for his betrayal. How many and many an artless lad has thus been inveigled! His youthful vanity is first flattered by being 'enrolled,' as Ribandmen call it, in this association. His young heart would then have recoiled at the bare contemplation of murder, but soon, through the vile companionship of wicked and dissolute associates, he becomes familiar with crime, the barriers of virtue are broken down, and, step by step, he descends in the paths of guilt. He is afraid either to advance or retire; he is oppressed with terror at every step he hears, and at length he terminates a wretched existence either by the hands of the hangman or the assassin. Who, then, that has a heart to feel, or a tongue to give his feelings utterance, will not join me in imploring all men to unite in crushing in the bud the reviving efforts of this hell-born confederacy? Away with all recreant fear, and, still more, all guilty connivance. I do not appeal to those higher sanctions which, I doubt not, have been and will continue to be inculcated upon the hearts of the people by their spiritual instructors.

They will tell them, no doubt, that from the day of the first murderer the wrath of the offended God has ever pursued the footsteps of the assassin. I purposely abstain from alluding to the circumstances connected with the outrage upon the hapless lady who now lies almost in view of this court a lifeless corpse. The sad story of Charlotte HINDS has reached every corner of the earth. She, poor mangled and mutilated victim, has just been released from the indescribable agonies of her seven deadly wounds; her bruised spirit has been summoned before that dread tribunal where one day assuredly she will be confronted face to face with her ruthless murderers. There is, however, one caution which I desire to circulate far and wide, it is this—that every man or woman who harbours or conceals, or assists in any way whatever in the escape of the murderers, does in fact by so doing become an accessory to the fact, or, in more intelligible language, an actual party to the murder; and I have reason to know that the Government is intent on hunting out and punishing to the utmost extremity of the law any man who harbours or conceals the assassin. Let every man, therefore, use his best exertions to bring those wretches to justice. In this way, and this only, can you wipe away the stain which has been cast upon this district, by the perpetration of an outrage which, I will say, amity all the dark and dismal records of Irish crime, stands forth without a parallel."

This address was listened to with breathless silence, and produced a profound sensation. At the conclusion of its delivery the grand jury and magistrates presented an address to the learned Chairman, and requested a copy of his charge, as they considered its publication would be attended with the most beneficial results. The interest of the proceedings was heightened by the fact that during the delivery of the learned Chairman's charge the coroner was holding his inquest in the immediate neighbourhood on the remains of the unfortunate Charlotte HINDS.

***Anglo-Celt***  
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***October 18, 1855***

#### **HORRIBLE OUTRAGE**

As Miss Charlotte Hinds of Tubberlion Duffin, near Ballyconnell, in this county, was coming home on a jaunting car, from the market of that town, on Friday the 12th inst., she was set upon by two ruffians, in the avenue leading to her own house, and after being severely beaten on the head with sticks, and her thumb, forefinger and wrist being broken, as she put up her hand to save herself, two pistol bullets were lodged in her skull. She was living when the last account reached us, but her medical attendants declare that her recover is hopeless. At intervals she has been insensible, but she was able to swear against, at least one of the two villains, named Pat. BANNON, a deserter, we have heard, from the Cavan Militia. The servant who drove her, however, declares

that the parties are completely unknown to him. The perpetrators, whoever they were, are as yet at large, though the Lord Lieutenant has offered a reward of £100 for an arrest, payable on conviction. Everything goes ... now that the dreadful offence had an agrarian..... Miss Hinds dispossessed some parties in ..... to manage their farms herself, and she had ..... under ejectments pending for the coming sessions. She was warned that her life would be taken, more than a; year ago, and had damages off the county for salacious burning of some property of hers, at last spring (?) assizes for this county. But there is no reason whatever for connecting the rest of our population with the atrocious act' everywhere it was heard of with feelings of unmitigated horror, not with those of exultation, as some correspondents of the Dublin ..... with a malice hardly less than that of the ..... in heart, and we fear, in act, have written..... Surely a county is not to be stigmatized because it retains(?) black-guards. Does this need proof? One veracious fellow states that it is publicly known that murders by wholesale are to be perpetrated this..... We utterly deny that such a thing is public..... talked of. Another statesman in embryo recommends to the government to take the collection of rents into their hands and to eject every soul off the ..... where a murder has been committed! Poor fellow! IT is to be feared that his madness is a ..... one. To find the guilty punish the innocent; of course they could not prove for themselves their non-complicity, nor can another do this for them since they might be connected with the matter unknown to every one in the kingdom. What, if a murder was committed in a townland wholly in the hands of the landlord, should he be ejected out of his fee-simple. The character of a newspaper, in which such idiosyncrasies are inserted without repudiation, stands wonderfully committed. Let every energy be employed in find out the perpetrators, but, for every sake, let no ..... be paid to the diplomacy of the madhouse.