

HISTORY OF IRELAND

1798—1924

BY
THE RT. HON.
SIR JAMES O'CONNOR

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

SECOND IMPRESSION

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD & CO.

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I IRELAND IN 1798	1
II THE REBELLION OF 1798	61
III PITT CARRIES THE UNION	107
IV THE ACT OF UNION EXPLAINED	121
V WHY THE UNION FAILED	138
VI IRELAND, 1800-1829.	156
VII IRELAND, 1829-1840.	198
VIII IRELAND, 1840-1848.	235

HISTORY OF IRELAND

1798-1924

HISTORY OF IRELAND

1798—1924

BY
THE RT. HON.
SIR JAMES O'CONNOR

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

SECOND IMPRESSION

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD & CO.



PREFACE

Upon the face of it, the Act of Union of 1800 was a fair bargain. In reality, it can scarcely be called a bargain at all. Ireland's consent to it was of a spurious character, not only because of the means whereby that consent was won, but also because those who purported to give it were a minority, differing in race and creed from the majority of the people.

Moreover, whatever advantages the Union may have offered to both countries, it was impossible to weld into one political unit two nations separated from each other by so profound a spiritual gulf as are England and Ireland.

The Act of Union was a well-intentioned blunder. The forcible insistence upon it by England long after Ireland had unequivocally repudiated it was an injustice and a crime.

There followed the Union many injustices—the denial of Catholic Emancipation for twenty-nine years; the continuance of an alien minority Church for sixty-nine years; delay in land reform and in the provision of a University acceptable to a Catholic country. The government of the country lacked consistency, firmness and due consideration of the needs of a backward, ill-educated and peculiarly circumstanced country. Violence extorted what should have been granted to reason. The contest between English Liberalism and English Toryism made Ireland a pawn in the English political game; turbulence was alternately repressed and rewarded; the whole system was damnable and produced damnable results.

Ireland, fighting for close on a century and a quarter for her release from the partnership, developed that distressing malady—war mentality—to an extraordinary degree. She reached the most amazing depths of self-deception. Claiming for herself a supereminence in genius and in virtue, in her enemy she detected every stupidity and every vice. Her resources were absurdly exaggerated. All evil in the State was the result of Westminster rule. Her propaganda contained much truth, but it suppressed much truth, and contained much falsehood.

The Treaty of 1921, which seems to me an eminently just bargain, may or may not have as many material advantages as Ireland supposes. It brings Ireland political freedom. What, however, is far more important is that it brings her intellectual freedom, for the Anglo-Irish conflict, as long as it lasted, made correct thinking impossible; the Irish people could do justice neither to themselves nor to their neighbours.

I present this book as an attempt to sum up, fairly and in a spirit of detachment, the case of Ireland *v.* England and the cross case of England *v.* Ireland—for there are well-founded complaints upon both sides.

I am greatly indebted to Mr. H. B. Usher, who read the manuscript and proofs, for most valuable suggestions, whereby a number of redundancies and other defects in the book have been eliminated.

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I IRELAND IN 1798	1
II THE REBELLION OF 1798	61
III PITT CARRIES THE UNION	107
IV THE ACT OF UNION EXPLAINED	121
V WHY THE UNION FAILED	138
VI IRELAND, 1800-1829.	156
VII IRELAND, 1829-1840.	198
VIII IRELAND, 1840-1848.	235

HISTORY OF IRELAND 1798-1924

CHAPTER I

IRELAND IN 1798

A Glance at the Rebellion of 1916—Act of Union—Size and Population—Two Classes in Ireland—State Church—Political Situation—Protestant Advantages—City of Dublin—Manufactures, Industries and Trade—Condition of Land-Workers—Peasant Associations—Agrarian Disturbances in the North—Religious Factions in the North—Education—Police Force—Finances—Coinage—Roads—Anglo-Irish Relations—Last Days of the Irish Parliament—The Spirit of the Times.

The sun as he rose on Easter Monday of 1916 looked down upon a peaceful, prosperous, and apparently happy Ireland. The war that meant so much for humanity and civilization had scarcely touched the country. Ireland, remote from the scene of conflict, and protected by the British fleet, had been spared its major ravages. The heartrending processes which, in other countries, combed out the ranks of the peaceful producers of the community, and devastated every home that had a male of fighting age, had no counterpart in Ireland; her contribution of men, such as it was, was purely voluntary. The currents of life and business flowed in their usual channels. There was no need to tighten the hunger belt; there was food in plenty, and little restriction upon the use of it. The agricultural community, forming three-fourths of the population, were in the hey-day of their prosperity; prices soared. Such coveted articles of food as butter were, by law, kept in the country itself. Wages and the standard of living were high; bank deposits increased amazingly. Nor were there any landlords to take their toll of the produce; with few exceptions they had disappeared; the terminable state annuities which had displaced rent were a burden of negligible consequence. Most of the industries of the country, such as the shipbuilding, linen and tobacco industries, were benefited by the war. Munition works absorbed the unemployed. Trade boomed; the exports and imports in-

creased every year. In 1920, before the momentum given by war conditions had spent itself, Ireland's exports and imports exceeded, in proportion to the population, both in money value and in amount, those of any country in the world—they came to £200,000,000 each way for a population under 5,000,000. All of which Bishop Fogarty, the bishop of Killaloe, translates into episcopal language: "During the Great War Heaven spread a mantle of protection over Ireland, while the rest of Europe was undergoing its dreadful castigation. While others were starving, God lavished abundance and plenty on the land."¹ A Home Rule Bill was on the statute book which was the germ of a settlement as ample as that which emerged from the revolution.

The war period, whilst greatly adding to Ireland's wealth, did not mark the beginning of Ireland's prosperity. That can be traced even farther back than the early eighties, when the drastic legislative interference with the rights of the landlords inaugurated a land revolution which was almost peaceful and which was certainly thorough. In 1914, Ireland was a wealthy country, with the wealth well distributed amongst the various classes of the community. In other respects the signs of progress were abundant. The educational wants of the people were reasonably well provided for. The admirable system of primary education, established in 1831, left little room for improvement. There was an excellent scheme of state aid for secondary schools. The foundation of the National University in 1908 provided a higher education for the Catholics who could not see their way to enter Dublin University. Thanks mainly to Sir Horace Plunkett, the organization and business education of the farmers was in advance of all countries save Denmark. The patronage of the country had passed from the hands of the old ascendancy; county government had been transferred by the Local Government Act of 1898 to the people's representatives. So far as the higher positions in the country were concerned, the Catholics had their share of them. If Ireland had to endure as its principal administrator an Englishman or a Scotchman, it was because Ireland refused to have it otherwise; the settled policy of the Irish Nationalist Party was to discountenance and even forbid the appointment of any Irishman to the post of Chief Secretary for the country. In the field of legislation, Ireland had received the benefit of the numerous liberal measures passed at

¹ *Irish Times*, Feb. 23, 1925.

Westminster—such as the Factory Acts, the Children Act, the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, the Workmen's Compensation Acts, the National Insurance Act, the Old Age Pensions Act—while, where her special interests seemed to require it, special legislation was passed to meet them, such as the Town Tenants Act and the Labourers Acts. By virtue of the last named code 50,000 agricultural labourers were in occupation of comfortable cottages with half an acre or an acre of land attached, at rents varying from 10d. to 1s. 6d. a week. In the British House of Commons, 103 Irish members, out of a total of 670 had their places, having an effective and sometimes even a controlling influence upon Government policy, whether that policy was concerned with foreign affairs, or the domestic affairs of Irishmen, Englishmen, Scotchmen or Welshmen. Citizenship of Great Britain was of enormous advantage to the Irishman. The legal and medical professions were open to him; the Civil Service of the Empire was and is largely manned by Irishmen, many occupying posts of great importance and responsibility; the protection of the British flag and of the British Consular Service was the right of every Irishman. More than two and a half millions of Irish Catholics, most of them of humble position, had their permanent homes in Great Britain.

The sun as he set upon Easter Monday of 1916 saw Ireland in the throes of a German-aided rebellion. It was fortunate for France, for Belgium and for England, that even the aid of the Irish rebels was not sufficient to make a German victory. It was fortunate for Ireland too. The zany who killed the goose that laid the golden eggs had as much wit as the eleutheromaniacs who planned the 1916 rebellion. In the social order a revolution was impossible; for practical purposes it had already taken place. In the political order, a successful revolution, even if Protestant Prussia put Protestant Ulster under the heel of a Catholic Dublin parliament, would be achieved at the cost of national bankruptcy. The fundamental condition of Ireland's prosperity is England's prosperity. Ireland has, and in the nature of things can have only one customer; a German victory would have bankrupted the customer and producer alike. In due course, the tale will be told of the quelling of the rebellion; of the subsequent reign of terror imposed upon the Irish people by a small minority of fanatical patriots and communists; of the time when, for fear of murder, no man dared write the word "murder" in a public print or even in a private

epistle or mutter it above his breath where it could be heard ; of the doctrine that the shooting of policemen, if it be frequent enough, constitutes war ; of the counter methods, as infamous as they were unintelligent, adopted under the ægis of a coalition British cabinet which included the Keeper of the King's conscience, an ex-contingent rebel—himself ; of the denunciation of the shooting campaign by the vast majority of the Irish Catholic bishops and priests ; of the manner in which their Christian precepts were rendered nugatory by the action of a minority whose fanaticism blinded them to the grave they dug for their own authority ; of the action by the heads of all Christian communities in England upon the Black and Tan Campaign, and of the spirited denunciation of it by Randall Davidson, Archbishop, of Canterbury ; of the specious lies, false hopes and frenzied teaching whereby the most intensely Catholic country in the world was induced to set the seal of its approval on a system which differed from that of the Ku Klux Klan only in its greater cruelty, intensity and extent ; of the degradation of the fair name of Ireland and the demoralization of its people ; of the outrages upon men, women and property which were the inevitable result of the new-fangled theories concerning the application of the Fifth Commandment ; of the treaty of December 1921 by which Ireland, bereft of character, lost her grievance ; and finally, of the establishment of a new political order, under which the hopes of the rank and file of those who craved for it are doomed to disappointment, and anarchy and turbulence are quelled by methods much more severe than any adopted by a British Government since the time of Cromwell.

The treaty of 1921 did not establish a Republic, did not create a united Ireland, but established a Free State for twenty-six Irish counties, subject to a clause as to boundary adjustment which, as I write, is the subject of judicial determination. It impliedly repealed the Act of Union, passed in 1800. Supplemented by some necessary references to earlier Irish history, we may take the end of the eighteenth century as a convenient starting point for the story of modern Ireland. The history from that date will give a sufficient clue to the forces that go to the making of Ireland as it stands to-day.

Two years after the formidable rebellion of 1798, a legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland was effected by identical statutes passed in that year by the British Houses of Parliament

at Westminster and by the Irish Houses of Parliament at Dublin. The circumstances under which the Irish Parliament and the British Parliament respectively ceded their powers to a Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the effect of the transaction upon Ireland, have ever since been the subject of bitter controversy. For the formation of a judgment upon these questions, and for the comprehension of Irish history since the Union, a clear conception of the political, material and social conditions of Ireland when the Union was passed, is the first essential.

The island of Eire (*anglice*, Ireland), 32,000 square miles in extent, is separated by a strip of water less than fifteen miles at its narrowest point¹ from the island of Great Britain, 88,000 square miles in extent.

The estimates as to the population of Ireland in 1800 differ widely enough, but we find that two, from opposite quarters, coincide. The loyalist Luke Fox² and the rebel Jackson³ both estimated the population at 4,500,000, which may be accepted as correct.⁴

Dublin, the Irish capital, had a population of 172,000; Cork probably something over 70,000; Belfast about 25,000. In 1800 London (including Westminster) had a population of 818,000; Edinburgh of 30,000; Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester had each between 50,000 and 100,000.

Ireland was—and is—inhabited by two⁵ classes of people, separated from each other by differences of stock and religion, and, up to recent times, of interest as well.

The original invasion of the country in 1172 by the Anglo-Normans was followed by various migrations from Great Britain, some of a

¹ That is, from Fair Head, Antrim, to Mull of Cantyre, Scotland.

² Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 409.

³ Paper prepared by the United Irish Society and designed to be sent to France. Cooper's *Letters on the Irish Nation*, p. 135.

⁴ Other estimates are as follows: Castlereagh, in the Union Debates, puts it at 3,500,000 to 4,000,000 (Lecky's *Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. V, p. 367 n.). George O'Brien, in his *Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine* (Footnote 5, p. 71), gives it at 5,000,000, and states that it was estimated by Newnham in 1805 at 5,395,456. Lecky says it was 4,500,000, and according to some writers 5,000,000 (*Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. V, p. 187). Mr. Anderson, of Cork, states it at 4,000,000 (Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. III, p. 28); Carr's *Stranger in Ireland* puts it, in 1805, at 5,000,000 (p. 401). The population of Great Britain in 1801 was nearly 11,000,000 (Lecky, vol. V, p. 80 n.).

⁵ Some would say three: the Catholic Irish, the Protestant Anglo-Irish, the Presbyterian Scoto-Irish; but for the present purpose a division into Catholic and non-Catholic, Irish and non-Irish is preferable.

peaceful, some of a warlike character. Successive swarms of English barons and soldiers of fortune dispossessed many of the native Irish chieftains. The periodic attempts to expel the invaders were for the most part feeble, and always ineffectual, for the Irish were hopelessly divided amongst themselves. Jealousy was, no doubt, partly the cause of the dissensions, but there are indications that some of the Irish chiefs were attracted and awed by the manifestations of English power and culture. They probably conceived that the old Gaelic system of tribal communism was a thing of the past, and that good grace in an inevitable submission was a prudent as well as a patriotic policy; there were West Britons even in those days. Whatever the cause, there were always to be found prominent Irishmen in the English service, and Ireland was kept in subjection to England largely by Irishmen themselves.¹ The result was that every attempt to regain the lost lands was mercilessly crushed—to be followed by sweeping confiscation and grants of the forfeited territory. Of the many rebellions, that which took place in 1641 was the bloodiest—lasting for a decade, it devastated the country. When the Cromwellian settlement²

¹Standish O'Grady mentions that at the outbreak of the Nine Years' War the army of Queen Elizabeth, in Ireland numbered only 750—Preface to *Pacata Hibernia*, XXXII; that though there were sporadic insurrections, the nation was, on the whole, friendly to the Government (XXXIII). "The Queen not only permitted but compelled her Irish subjects to bear arms" (XXXII). "The nation, as distinguished from the insurrectionary lords, was always strong for the Crown" (XXX); in the Great Desmond Rebellion "at the bidding of the Crown all the rest of the South of Ireland flew upon the doomed Geraldine like hounds upon a quarry" (XXXI); in Tyrone's rebellion the Crown had two-thirds of the country on its side; "if it ever became a question whether the State or Tyrone should rule them" (the Munster Lords) "they were pretty well determined in their minds that it should not be Tyrone" (*Ibid.*); "the minor lords, ground down and tortured by such cruel rents and exactions as MacCarthy More wrung from the O'Sullivans, hated the great ones, and co-operated with the State for their overthrow" (XLVII); "the Queen's fighting men in every war were for the most part Irish" (LIII), and so on.

²It is interesting to note the differences of opinion as to the ancestors of many of the Irish gentry. Mr. Denis Scully, a well-known pamphleteer in favour of Catholic Emancipation, speaks of them thus: "You see what misery that army caused (in 1641); these tailors, tinkers, smiths, cobblers, drummers, and trumpeters, after the slaughter of 100,000 persons, obtained various estates and lands amongst us." Dr. Duigenan, a strenuous opponent of Catholic Emancipation, and a pervert, treats this passage as a gross libel on "the gallant army which went to Ireland to punish the Irish rebels and murderers of 1641"; and "the superior officers of this gallant army thus reviled by Mr. Scully, were the chief instruments in restoring Ireland to the monarchy of England, and their descendants at this day compose a most considerable part of the Irish nobility and gentry" (see *Debates on the Catholic Petition*, p. 184).

that followed this last rebellion was completed, there were but few acres of Irish soil in the ownership of the ancient Irish. Thenceforward, until the peaceable land revolution in the last quarter of the nineteenth century transferred the lands to the peasant proprietors, the native Irish were, for the most part, the workers on the land, paying a yearly rent for its use to those who were the descendants of the usurpers, or who claimed title through them.

The central fact in Irish history is the existence, for centuries, of a territorial aristocracy who were alien in origin, and whose root of title lay in successful plunder. There was the added difference of religious creed.

The possibilities of trade and agriculture brought over other settlers. The settlement of Scottish Presbyterians in Ulster dates back to 1610 and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland was founded in 1642. These Scotsmen, with French Huguenot assistance, established the linen industry of the Belfast district, and laid the foundations of the great manufacturing industries of the North-East. They also peopled this corner of the island with a race of industrious farmers. Elsewhere, some Protestants, a considerable number of Methodists, and a few Quakers settled down peaceably to farming or commercial pursuits; many of the most successful shopkeeping class came from Methodist stock.¹

Duvergier, writing on the state of Ireland in 1826,² describes the country as being inhabited by

"two nations, the conquerors and the conquered. . . . Except in some of the principal cities in vain do you look for those intermediary classes, who are at once the strength and ornament of society. There is nothing between the master and the slave, between the cabin and the palace; there is nothing between all the luxuries of existence and the last degree of human wretchedness; nothing, in fine, between the Englishman and the Irishman, the Protestant and the Catholic—for to this everything resolves itself at last."

¹ Samuel Smiles, in his *History of the Huguenots* (p. 360 *et seq.*), gives an account of the various Huguenot settlements about 1698 in Ireland—at Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Kilkenny, Lisburn, and Portarlington. They started the poplin industry in Dublin, the linen industry in Lisburn and Kilkenny under Louis Crommelin and his brother William Crommelin respectively, and woollens at Cork under Fontaine. The author states that Fontaine's efforts to found a fishing industry at Berehaven were brought to nought by the systematic hostility of the inhabitants of that backward region. Another Huguenot refugee, Peter Goyer, established a silk manufacture in Lisburn, but it was destroyed in the rebellion of 1798.

² See 2 Wyse App. L 1.

To the same effect is *M'Lennan* :¹

"There are in Ireland, as it were, two nations interfused, yet distinct, with separate traditions, and differing in blood, temperament and religion. The larger represents the tribes which occupied the country before the conquest; the smaller represents the conquerors. Their relations have always been hostile. The growth of the society which they compose has, consequently, been abnormal; its growing pains acute and prolonged without parallel. They have not yet ceased; they are constantly inducing popular feverishness and delirium."

Cavour² says :

"Ireland has been divided into two hostile classes; one which possesses, the other which tills the soil. Its population is composed of proprietors, Protestant, intolerant, haughty, treating with contempt those whom they have conquered; and of tenants, Catholic, poor, ignorant, superstitious, animated by a violent hatred of the despoilers of their country. Such a social state has no parallel in Europe. . . . The Catholic cultivator regards the Protestant proprietors as cruel strangers who have robbed him of his goods: as sacrilegious persons who have profaned his holy temples; as enemies still stained with the blood of his forefathers."

In point of numbers, the religious persuasions were thus estimated by Luke Fox: at least 3,000,000 Catholics; 500,000 Protestants; 1,000,000 Presbyterians and Dissenters.³ Jackson's estimate was pretty much the same: Catholics, 3,150,000; Protestants, 450,000; others, 900,000.⁴ Lord Greville, in moving the Catholic Petition in 1805, puts the Catholics at three-fourths of the whole.⁵

There was an established church—the Church of Ireland—which had large revenues, derived partly from church lands provided by the state and partly from direct exactions from the people. The law entitled the Protestant clergy to a tithe of the produce of all tilled land, from Catholics, Protestants, and Dissenters alike. The tithes were collected by an agent or proctor appointed for the purpose.

An interesting account of tithes was given by Dr. Doyle, bishop of Kildare and Leighlin (the famous "J.K.L.") in his evidence

¹ *Memoir of Drummond*, p. 186 (1867).

² *Thoughts on Ireland*, pp. 50 and 51.

³ *Castlereagh's Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 409.

⁴ *Cooper's Letters on the Irish Nation*, p. 135.

⁵ *Catholic Debates*, p. 11.

before a parliamentary committee on tithes in 1832. At a Synod of Cashel, held in 1172, at which the Pope's legate presided, a canon was enacted that tithes should be paid in Ireland. In 1186, at a synod in Dublin, the enumeration of articles titheable seems to have been copied from an ancient law of Edward the Confessor, for it not only extended to corn or hay, but also to cattle and fowls and fishponds and bees and everything that produced an annual increase; but the tithe system for long obtained a footing only within the pale.¹ Matters were more or less in this state till the reign of William III (1689-1699) "when the Catholic power and interest in Ireland were almost annihilated." In the time of Anne (1702-1714), the Irish nobility and gentry, "almost exclusively Protestant" bitterly opposed the levying or collection of tithes; and the Irish parliament of 1736 passed "the famous vote of agistment, or rather three votes, which delivered all the grazing land of Ireland from tithes and threw the Protestant clergy for their support upon the poor Catholic peasantry of the Southern and Midland districts. These votes of agistment afterwards were sanctioned by the Irish Parliament in 1800 and converted into law.² The immunity given to pasture lands created a tendency to pasturage. Dr. Doyle goes on to say that the North were as adverse to tithes as the old Irish, but the burden was somewhat lighter, for example, in Armagh there was no tithe on potatoes. The West was so poor that almost nothing could be produced from it, but in the South and middle of the country tithe was rigorously exacted. Dr. Doyle's views as to the opposition of the Irish gentry to tithes is confirmed from Protestant sources: "Some landlords have been so base as to instigate the insurgents to rob the clergy of their tithes, not in order to alleviate the distresses of the tenantry, but that they might add the clergy's share to the cruel rack rents already paid."³

The exaction of tithes was one of the chief grievances of the

¹ That is, the area really subject to English control. Its size varied greatly from time to time.

² In 1735 a petition to the Irish House of Commons was presented, alleging that the tithe of agistment was a new claim; that it had not been in force before 1722, and then only partially. Hence the resolution of 1736. The Irish Parliament, when they were engaged in passing the Union, were apprehensive that a mere resolution might not be binding in the future; hence the Act of 1800 (see *Cornwallis Correspondence*, vol. II, p. 220).

³ Speech of Attorney-General Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare in debate on Irish disturbances (*Irish Debates*, vol. VII, pp. 57-9). To the same effect is the testimony of Mr. Lowther in the same debates; and a pamphlet published in 1787 by Dr. Woodward, Bishop of Cloyne, (*Ibid.* p. 23).

Irish peasantry, and contributed to the formation of the many peasant associations that kept Ireland in turmoil for the best part of a century. Dr. Doyle quotes, with obvious approval, a speech of Chief Secretary Grant in the House of Commons, on April 22, 1822: "The commotions that have for the last sixty years desolated Ireland have all sprung from local oppressions." The tithe proctors earned special animosity. Dr. Doyle says that they were "farmers or proctors who resorted, I will not say to unjust means only, but means of the most tyrannical and cruel kind." Grattan called the tithe proctor "a species of wolf left by the shepherd to take care of the flock in his absence." In addition to this cause of unpopularity, the Protestant clergy needlessly added others: (1) the proselytizing efforts, in which they indulged in most obvious calumny of the Catholic Church; "the people saw they were calumniators"; (2) their opposition to the education of Catholics;¹ (3) their opposition to emancipation.

There was also a Vestry Cess,² by which the Catholics were obliged to contribute their share to the upkeep of Protestant churches, though they had no control over the amount or expenditure.

The total Church revenues exceeded £1,000,000 per annum, a very large sum in these days. The system, a tyranny in itself, was fraught with abuses. Rectors had fat incomes and slender congregations. Dr. Doyle³ mentioned a Dean Scott, who drew £500 a year from the Parish of Mountrath, though he had not set foot in it for forty years. The Earl of Bristol, who was also Bishop of Derry, in an interview with Jeremy Bentham at Bowood in 1781, said that the rectors in his diocese enjoyed incomes from £250 to £1,500 a year, and declared it to be a wonder and a shame that they should be suffered to remain in possession of so much wealth, since scarcely any of them resided, and since they only paid their curates £50 a year which was their own estimate of what the service done was worth.⁴ Absenteeism, however, was not confined to rectors; there were absentee bishops as well. The Bishop of Derry himself gave much of his time to wild political adventures of one sort or another,

¹ They were bitterly opposed to the National Education scheme of 1831.

² It was "levied in vestry meetings upon Roman Catholics for cleaning the church, ringing the bell, washing the minister's surplice, providing bread and wine for the Communion and paying the salary of the parish clerk" (Godkins Land War).

³ Evidence before the Tithe Commission in 1832.

⁴ 2 Lecky, 861.

and spent the last ten years of his life in Italy, where he became notorious for his eccentric and profligate conduct. Curran, in the Irish House of Commons in 1787,¹ mentioned an insurrection of "Right Boys" in Kerry "to banish a seraglio kept by a rector who received £1,000 a year from the Church, and to reinstate the unoffending mother and innocent children in their mansion."²

There was political independence of a kind. The law-making authority in Ireland for eighteen years prior to the Act of Union consisted of the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland—the King of England, by a statute passed in 1693³ was also by law the King of Ireland. Prior to 1782, the Irish legislature had no real independence, for their enactments were⁴ subject to revision or rejection by the English Privy Council. The British Parliament in the time of Henry VIII and also in the time of George I had passed Acts declaring that it had power to bind Ireland, but the right was denied. There was much friction between the two countries, and at length, under circumstances noted, p. 43 post, a body of armed Irish volunteers—consisting entirely of the Anglo-Irish Protestants⁵—demanded complete legislative independence. In face of this revolt, England gave way, and by statutes passed by the British Parliament in 1782, the right of the Irish Parliament to legislate, without English interference, was fully conceded.

The measures of 1782 have usually been extolled as an absolute cesser of power from England to the Irish people. But the state-

¹ Irish Parl. Debates, Feb. 27, 1787.

² Butt's *Irish People and the Irish Land*, p. 76.

³ 4 Wm. and Mary, 2 Froude, 544.

⁴ By virtue of Poyning's Act, a statute passed by an Irish Parliament summoned at Drogheda in 1495 by the deputy Sir Edward Poyning (2 Lecky, p. 60). Poyning's Act "was at the time one of the most popular Acts ever passed in Ireland, on account of being thereby relieved from thousands of local oppressions under the cover of Acts of Parliament" (R. M. Martin's *Ireland Before and After the Union*, p. 11; see O'Driscoll's *Views on Ireland*, vol. II, p. 180).

⁵ The Volunteers were originally formed, in 1778, to resist an apprehended invasion by the French (2 Lecky, 222). The Catholics were not allowed to join (*Ib.* 223). In 1784 some two hundred Catholics were enrolled in a Corps of the Volunteers in Dublin. "Such a proceeding was wholly contrary to the wishes of Charlemont" (the leader of the Volunteers), "and to the law which forbade Catholics to carry arms without licence," and the other corps refused to join them in their exercises; "but neither the Government nor the leaders of the volunteers ventured to take the decisive step of disarming the new recruits, and the example of Catholic Enlistment began to spread," but apparently to no very great extent (2 Lecky, 394). The Volunteers were substantially Anglo- or Scoto-Irish, mostly people of position.

ment is subject to qualification. The control of military and naval power remained in England as before. The Viceroy was appointed by the King on the advice of his English Ministers; so was the Lord Lieutenant's secretary, or Chief Secretary for Ireland—an office which, in course of time, became at least as important as that of the Lord Lieutenant himself. Under his patent of office, the Lord Lieutenant was not only the head of the army in Ireland, but he also had vested in him all the patronage of the country; so that the administration of the country was in English and not in Irish hands. It not infrequently happened, under the pre-Union régime, that Englishmen would be sent over to act as judges or bishops in Ireland.¹

But the serious blot on the political conditions of the country was not so much the lack of control of administration as the constitution of the Irish Parliament itself. These were the days of the pocket boroughs,² when representation was a mere sham. The Irish House of Lords consisted of the great territorial magnates, with a sprinkling of Protestant bishops. The House of Commons consisted of 300 members, of whom 110 boroughs returned 220, 32 counties returned 64, 7 cities returned 14, and the University of Dublin returned 2. The boroughs were at the disposal of the borough owner, whose henchmen or henchman—for some boroughs had only one "elector"—constituted the "electorate." Of three hundred members of the Irish Commons, two hundred were chosen by one hundred individuals; near fifty of the two hundred were elected by ten individuals; several of the boroughs had no resident electors at all, and some of them had but one. On the whole, two-thirds of the representatives of the House of Commons were returned by less than one hundred persons. The right of nomination to a borough was a very valuable asset, fetching large prices. O'Connell, for example, offered the proprietor of the borough of Tralee £3,000 for the representation during the remainder of the session.³ The right was sometimes made the subject of a marriage settlement.⁴

¹ This went on for some time after the Union—Lord Sugden, perhaps the most eminent of English lawyers—he was, by the way, the son of a London hairdresser—was Lord Chancellor of Ireland 1834–5 and again in 1846; he became Lord Chancellor of England in 1852.

² The same observations apply to England, where not two per cent. of the population had the right to elect representatives to Parliament.

³ MacDonagh's *Life of O'Connell*, p. 185.

⁴ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. I, p. 648.

Into this privileged body no Catholic¹ could enter, for by a statute of 1692, the taking of an oath of abjuration and a declaration of supremacy were a condition precedent to entering either House of Parliament. This injustice was not removed till 1829.²

The Anglo-Irish aristocracy were not even decently grateful to the English power, on whom, in the ultimate resort, they had to depend for support. Their unnecessary and futile nagging over the regency question affords a fair example of their spirit. George III was subject to fits of insanity, one of which overtook him in 1788-9. The British Parliament proposed to appoint the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV, regent in his stead, but subject to certain important limitations upon his power.³ While the Regency Bill was under consideration by the British Parliament, the Irish Parliament proceeded, as a gesture of independence, to pass an address vesting the regency of Ireland in the Prince, without restrictions. This involved a grand constitutional question, for if the Irish Parliament had this power, it was but a very short step to complete severance. Subsequent complications were prevented by the recovery of the King.

This incident is of considerable importance, for it was one of the causes that drove Pitt's mind to the conclusion that a political Union was the only solution for the friction between the two countries. It made a deep impression at the time upon Fitzgibbon, afterwards Earl of Clare, who saw clearly its significance :

"certainly if it be the scheme to differ in all imperial questions from England, and if this be abetted by men of great authority, they mean to drive us into a Union, and the method they take is certainly more effectual to scrap away opposition than if all the sluices of corruption were opened together and deluged the country's representatives, for it is certain, nothing less than the alternative of a separation could ever force the Union."

¹ Presbyterians and other Dissenters were eligible, and were also entitled to exercise the franchise, which Catholics were not. In 1780 Dissenters were relieved from the Sacramental Test which, since 1704, had debarred them from corporations, army, civil service, etc. This boon was not conferred on their English brethren till 1828, though the statutes were evaded by means of an Annual Indemnity Bill.

² The Irish extremist, Tynan, in his *History of the Irish Invincibles*, p. 3, thus describes the Irish Parliament: "This assembly, which sat in Dublin, was in no sense 'Irish,' and had the same claim to the title 'Irish Parliament' as would have had a legislative chamber of African cannibals, who, after settling in Ireland's metropolis by force, assumed to themselves the power to make laws, and to enact some measures as to how or in what manner they would cook the natives to make them more palatable eating."

³ He was to have no power to create new peers or to grant offices for life, etc.

The general attitude of the Anglo-Irish was, at a later date, referred to by Cornwallis with biting contempt :

"the patriotic Irish Gentlemen who are so enraged at the insolent interference of England in the management of their affairs, if ever they dare to go to their country houses, barricade their ground floor and beg for a garrison of English militia, or Scotch fencibles."¹

This then was the position of affairs in 1798. The Protestant Anglo-Irish had a monopoly of all state positions. They had a state Church. In Trinity College, founded by Elizabeth, they had a University amply endowed. They were the landowning and official classes, having all the power and patronage and most of the wealth, education and refinement of the country.²

A considerable gulf separated them from the other non-Catholic inhabitants, business people, or farmers, whom the constitution of the period despoiled of all political power. But much further down the scale were the native Catholic Irish. With the exception of a few landed proprietors who had managed somehow to retain comparatively small possessions, and of a few business people, the Catholics were of the small peasant class, and their position, for the most part, one of extreme misery ; they were the hewers of wood and the drawers of water.

A great lover of liberty thus expressed his opinion of the Irish Government and Parliament at the time of the Union :

"The ancient edifice of the Irish Constitution, let it never be forgotten, was a monstrous assumption of injustice and iniquities ; since it was not possible to reform it, its destruction was a deed well done."³
 "It may be affirmed without exaggeration that the Irish Parliament, even after 1782, was of legislative bodies the most corruptible and the most corrupt."⁴

There were certain superficial signs of prosperity.

Dublin was then—and to some extent still is—a city of contrasts ; squalor and splendour abode cheek by jowl. It contained many noble public buildings—the Parliament House in College Green,

¹ Letter to General Ross, 13th Feb., 1799. (*Cornwallis Correspondence*, vol. III, p. 60).

² The local administration of each of the thirty-two counties in Ireland, with all the patronage it carried, was in the Grand Jury, a body of landed proprietors selected by the High Sheriff.

³ Cavour, *Thoughts on Ireland*, p. 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Trinity College, The Four Courts, the Custom House ; ¹ and many private mansions, with pretensions to elegance and splendour. Its Parliament contained men of rank, wealth and ability ; its court and other functions were frequented by a brilliant society.

But the elegant edifices were flanked by the meanest hovels ; dirt, ugliness, misery, insanitary conditions were the lot of the populace. The Revd. James Whitelaw, M.R.I.A., writing of the conditions of Dublin in 1798, says that :

“ the poorer parts of Dublin are pregnant with nuisances unusually destructive of health and comfort. In the ancient parts of the City, the streets are generally very narrow, and the backyards of the houses very confined. The great number of these streets, with their numerous lanes and alleys, are tenanted by little shopkeepers, the labouring poor, and beggars crowded together to a degree painful and affecting to reflection. A single apartment in one of these truly wretched habitations lets from one to two shillings per week, and to lighten this rent two, three, and even four families become joint tenants. A house in Braithwaite Street contained 108 souls. In July 1798 the entire side of a house four stories high in Schoolhouse Lane fell from its foundation to an adjoining yard, where it destroyed an entire dairy of cows. Mr. Whitelaw ascended the ruin, through the usual approach of shattered stairs, stench and filth ; the inhabitants had not deserted their apartments.” ²

Arthur Young, writing in 1779, says : “ Walking in the streets in Dublin, from the narrowness and populousness of the principal thoroughfares, as well as from the dirt and wretchedness of the *canaille*, is a most uneasy and disgusting exercise.” ³

Sir John Cooper,⁴ writing in 1800, says : “ The traveller who lands in Dublin finds that the streets are crowded with craving wretches whose distresses are shocking to humanity and whose nakedness is hurtful to the eye of decency.” As late as 1811 there was not one covered sewer in the most populous district of the city—the Liberty, south of the Coombe—and when the great sewer through Capel Street was commenced after 1806, the sewer was covered in at the desire of the inhabitants and left unfinished.

¹ The old Parliament House originally built in 1729–1739, was burnt and rebuilt about twenty years before the Union ; Trinity College was begun in 1591 and finished in 1687, the Four Courts were commenced in 1786 ; the Custom House in 1781 (Carr's *Stranger in Ireland*, 464, 687) ; the King's Inn was commenced in 1805 (*Ibid.* p. 480).

² Carr's *Stranger in Ireland*, p. 55.

³ *Tour in Ireland*, vol. I, p. 6.

⁴ *Letters on the Irish Nation*, p. 107

"For want of sewers, the filth and water were received in pits called cesspools, dug before the doors and covered in, and these continued in Sackville Street and other places, long after the year 1810; and many now remember the horrid sight and smell which periodically offended the inhabitants in the most fashionable streets, when these stygian pools were opened and emptied."¹

The populace were described as a despicable populace whom "no change could make worse."² The grandeur and magnificence were the monopoly of a few. The poet Shelley, writing in 1812 of an Irish mob, says:

"Can they be in a worse state than at present? Intemperance and hard labour have reduced them to machines. The oyster that is washed and driven at the mercy of the tides, appears to me an animal of almost equal elevation in the scale of intellectual being. . . . I had no conception of the depth of human misery until now. The poor of Dublin are assuredly the meanest and most miserable of all. In their narrow streets thousands are huddled together—one mass of animated filth."³

"The rich grind the poor into abjectness, and then complain that they are abject. They goad them to famine, and hang them if they steal a loaf."⁴

Froude gives a remarkable example of how the poor were treated at this period. A foundling hospital in Dublin, to which Parliament made large grants, received in one year 2,187 children; 2,000 disappeared; during ten years 19,368 children had been entered on the books; 17,000 were dead or missing; the wretched little ones were sent up from all parts of Ireland, ten or twelve of them thrown together in a "kish" or basket, forwarded on a low backed car, and so bruised and crushed and shaken at their journey's end that half of them were taken out lifeless and were flung into the dung heap. When the charge was first made, the Protestant Dublin Corporation met and made inquiries, and reported that the charges were without foundation, and Grattan spoke in favour of the management. But Sir John Blaquiere, who was then Irish Secretary, persisted. A committee of inquiry of the House of Commons was constituted, and found the charges proved.⁵

At the time of which we speak there were no great industries.

¹ Walsh's *Ireland Sixty Years Ago*, p. 67.

² This is the language of Tone in a document found on Jackson when arrested at the rebel Bond's house in 1798 (see Whiteside's *Life and Death of the Irish Parliament*, pp. 192, 194).

³ Letter to Wm. Godwin, March 8, 1812.

⁴ Letter to Elizabeth Hitchener, March 19, 1812.

⁵ Froude's *English in Ireland*, vol. III, pp. 34-6.

The process of substitution of large scale machine production for hand-work at home had only begun; the amount of whole time employment in manufactures was very small. Thus, the linen industry, afterwards destined to achieve such gigantic proportions,¹ was almost exclusively a domestic industry, in which the weaving was done by means of a hand-loom at home, intermittently, as interest prompted or the seasons dictated.² The cotton industry was somewhat more flourishing, and threatened to extinguish the linen industry, many linen makers turning their attention to cotton weaving; ³ 13,500 people were employed in cotton manufacture.⁴ The volume of the shipbuilding industry was so small as to be negligible.⁵ In 1791 there was no regular place for laying down a vessel in Belfast.⁶ The history of Belfast shipbuilding really commences with the coming to Belfast, in 1858, of Edward Harland, the founder of Harland and Wolff.

There were, apparently, a great many breweries, but the total output, in 1791, was only 400,000 barrels.⁷ In 1791 a certain fillip was given to the brewing industry by concessions as to duties, but the increase in production was slight enough, as the returns of the malt tax show.⁸

The output of Irish breweries in 1914, was 3,592,000 barrels; there was a falling off in 1916-1919 owing to war restrictions.⁹

There was also a very large number of distilleries, but "the amount of spirits distilled is now three times as great as the amount produced a century ago, though the number of distilleries at present working is less than one-third of the number at work at the beginning of the nineteenth century."¹⁰

There were certain other small industries, for example, silk, glass, potteries, which disappeared in 1811; paper; provision industry.

¹ In 1839 it employed 9,017 persons; in 1917, 90,000 (Riordan's *Modern Irish Trade and Industry*, p. 110).

² See Report of Handloom Weavers Commission, cited O'Brien's *Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine*, p. 316.

³ Coyne's *Ireland, Industrial and Agricultural*, p. 415.

⁴ O'Brien, p. 308.

⁵ O'Brien, p. 366.

⁶ Coyne's *Ireland, Industrial and Agricultural*, p. 446.

⁷ In 1760 it was 600,000.

⁸ See Coyne's *Ireland, Industrial and Agricultural*, pp. 455, 6.

⁹ Riordan's *Modern Irish Trade and Industry*, p. 156.

¹⁰ *Ireland, Industrial and Agricultural*, Coyne, p. 496, written in 1902; the amount distilled in 1919 was 11,076,515 gallons of proof spirits (Riordan's *Modern Irish Trade and Industry*, p. 161).

The return of Irish exports and imports at the time of the Union was, exports £5,650,853; imports, £5,275,063;¹ the figures for Great Britain were, exports £31,272,865; imports £42,688,534. In 1914 the figures for Ireland were:—exports, £41,607,000; imports, £27,101,000; Great Britain (1913) exports £634,000,000; imports, £768,000,000.

As probably nine-tenths of the population of the country were engaged in agriculture, it is to the condition of the workers on the land we must look if we are to form a just conclusion as to the social and economic state of the country. That condition was one of extreme misery.²

The cultivable area of Ireland was in 1809, according to Newenham³ 13,454,375 acres out of a total of 19,439,960. When Young wrote in 1779 the proportion of waste land was less than in England.⁴

The soil is, on the whole, naturally fertile; "the natural fertility," according to Young, "acre for acre over the two Kingdoms is certainly in favour of Ireland."⁵ The great plain in the centre of the country comprises some of the richest grazing land in the world. On the other hand, R. M. Martin⁶ says:

"It is a great mistake to call Ireland the 'Emerald Isle,' or, as it is sometimes called, the 'Green Isle.' The really very fertile land is of small extent compared to the entire area, while a very large portion is of inferior land—reclaimed bog or mountain sides, from which the stones and rocks have been removed."⁷

The climate is equable, but very moist and uncertain; many a promising harvest has been ruined by heavy autumn rain. Macaulay called Ireland "a marsh, saturated with the vapours of the Atlantic."

The phenomena that mark certain stages in the development of

¹ Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. III, p. 191.

² But it was by no means the worst in Europe, a position which, according to Whitton (*History of Poland*, p. 206), must be reserved for the Polish peasants, who lived in the most abject misery and filth, were exposed to constant epidemics and famine, had no personal liberty, being forbidden to leave their villages, and were subject to forced labour on the lords' estates.

³ *View of Ireland*, p. 62.

⁴ Young's *Tour in Ireland*, Suppl. p. 69. As to "modern calculations and proportions of waste land see Chapter "Ireland in 1914," vol. II.

⁵ Young's *Tour*, vol. II, part 2, p. 3, quoted with approval by Newenham—*Newenham in Ireland*, p. 78.

⁶ *Ireland Before and After the Union* (1843), p. 172.

⁷ And he cites the Irish guide book published in 1838, which gives the lake area as 465,577, and 6,610,680 improved mountain and bog.

an agricultural community took place in Ireland at a later date than in the adjoining island ; ¹ they were, too, accompanied by circumstances which aggravated the sores of a body politic in a period of transition.

After the communal system has disappeared, there comes a time when private ownership of land is recognized indeed, but imperfectly ; when the boundaries of properties are uncertain or ill defined ; when the profusion of land in proportion to the scanty population is so great that trespasses are allowed to pass unchecked ; when there are great tracts which, whatever be the legal position, are used as a sort of commonage by all and sundry. But soon, with the increase of population, the frequency of trespasses can no longer be ignored. With the growth of a legal system imposed by the more forceful units upon the people, titles to the land are strengthened ; those who claim to own the land set out to protect themselves from encroachment. The period of enclosure begins and with it a struggle between the landholders and the landless.

With a further increase of population, the struggle is intensified. The methods of production are still primitive ; congestion has not yet made tillage an imperative necessity, and a large proportion of the land is left in pasture ; there is not enough employment to go round. To be without land is to starve ; the fight for it, like every other fight for existence, becomes savage in character.

In England the danger point in these processes had been passed in the time of Edward VI. The corresponding period in Ireland was the middle of the eighteenth century. One of the first peasant associations was the Whiteboys ² or Levellers, formed in 1761, including in its objects the levelling of fences of newly enclosed waste land.

The first and most obvious cause of aggravation of the Irish agrarian problem lay in the fact that the landlords, with their fat demesnes and estates, and many of the big middlemen and occupying tenants who held from them, were of English breed, Protestant

¹ "All degrees of all nations begin with living in pig styes. The King or the Priest first gets out of them ; then the noble, then the pauper in proportion as each class becomes more and more opulent. Better tastes arise from better circumstances ; and the luxury of one period is the wretchedness and poverty of another. English peasants in the time of Henry VII were lodged as badly as Irish peasants now are ; but the population was limited by the difficulty of producing a corn subsistence."—Peter Plymley's *Ireland and England*, 1820.

² So called because on their raids they wore white shirts over their clothes.

in religion, and tracing their titles to successful dispossession of the ancient Irish race. The tradition of a descent from the lawful owner was strong in the Irish peasant. If right were to prevail, every man would have land in plenty. He did not know that the origin of most titles to land is forcible dispossession, at some time or another, of somebody else; had he known, it would not have lessened his sense of grievance. Nor did he appreciate that if there were no Anglo-Irish gentry to lord it over him, their place would be held by Catholic Irish landlords, possibly of not less rapacity or selfishness.

The greatest source of Ireland's economic difficulties, however, arose from the extremely rapid rate of population increase, which, during the eighteenth century, exceeded that of any other country in Europe.¹ In 1700 the population was about 1,250,000²; in 1800 it had increased to 4,500,000. Raleigh's gift of the potato, while it increased the fecundity of the Irish people, was fatal to their peace and prosperity. It made the mere subsistence problem absurdly easy. Any patch of soil could grow sufficient potatoes for a couple who wanted to set up housekeeping; to throw up a mud hovel and thatch it with boughs and furze cost nothing beyond a few weeks of not over strenuous toil. The cultivation of the small plot took up only a small fraction of the man's time, so that his labour was at the disposal of the landowner in exchange for the hire of the land.³ Things shaped themselves to a multiplication of a class of cottier tenants with no possessions save a bare and wretched cabin, a pig, a donkey and perhaps a cow. Each succeeding generation complicated the problem. New mouths had to be fed; new plots to be found; the cottier tenants class increased and multiplied, sinking lower year by year in the social scale.

There were several artificial causes that tended to accelerate the pace of the increase in population. In the interests of morality, the Catholic clergy encouraged early marriages.⁴ According to

¹ *Malthus on Population*, Book II, c. 10 *ad fin.*, Vol. I, p. 470, 6th ed.

² Mason's parochial survey gives the following estimates: 1169, 300,000; 1641, 1,460,000; 1652 (the reduction being attributable to the great rebellion), 610,000; 1672, 1,100,000; 1691, 1,200,000; 1731, 2,317,000.

³ Cottier tenants were very common in Scotland in 1775, and at one time were very common all over Europe.—Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Book I, ch. 16, p. 1.

⁴ A curious piece of evidence, given by the Rev. M. Duggan, parish priest of Moyfesta, Co. Clare, before a House of Commons Committee in 1824, points to another reason for early marriage; it also illustrates the predatory character of the peasant of the period. Father Duggan said that parents

Young, "Marriage is certainly more general in Ireland than in England. I scarce ever found an unmarried farmer or cottier; but it is seen more in other classes which, with us, do not marry at all." ¹ Foster's Corn Law in 1784 led to much subdivision of holdings with a view of profit from the bounty on exported corn granted by that statute. The Napoleonic war, while it lasted, acted as a stimulus to tillage. The preference given to Irish corn imported into Great Britain free, while foreign corn had to pay toll, lasted till the repeal of the corn laws by Peel in 1846. In 1793 the 40s. freeholders got the franchise. It was to the landlords' interest, in these days of open voting, to increase the number of voters who would obey his behest at the polls. In 1847 the population, mostly potato fed, had mounted up to eight and a half millions.

Nor was there any outlet for the excess population. Few of the cottier class or of the younger sons of small farmers could afford to emigrate. The priests, fearing for the interests, spiritual and material, of their flock in foreign lands, discouraged emigration, which up to 1830 took place mostly from Ulster, where the peasants were able to afford it, were not under any influence adverse to emigration, and were not content with a bare subsistence at home. While, in England, the industrial revolution enabled the towns to give employment to the surplus of the rural population, Ireland, without coal or iron, had no such alternative. The possession of land was a condition of existence.

Nature is never still. She exists for change, shaping, moulding, destroying and—sometimes in the act of destroying—creating. *By accident of agriculture.* New tissues and structures are constantly taking the place of old. The process is incessant, and, when gradual, free from risk and pain. But sudden changes and very rapid growths are different; they take place to the accompaniment of pain, distress and danger. And so of the structures of society; it, too, is constantly changing; it, too, resents an over-rapid transition from one state to another. Ireland had to suffer from this law; her growth and increase were too quick for the structure wherein they took place. Fevers and famines, culminating in the great famine of 1847, supplied the terrible remedy, and eased the pressure.

used to marry their daughters, "before they were hardly arrived at the age of puberty," to prevent their abduction, which was extremely common: that early marriages, accordingly, became fashionable; it became a reproach to a young woman to exceed the age of twenty before she was married.

¹ *Town in Ireland*, Part II, p. 21.

There were, to be sure, many other classes of the agricultural community outside that of the cottier tenant. It was the proportion of the cottier tenants and their rapid increase that constituted the economic unsoundness of the rural position. Young, writing in 1779, speaks of large graziers, in Limerick, Tipperary, Clare, Meath and Waterford, some of whom paid a rent of £3,000 to £10,000 a year; and there were many grades separating these plutocrats of the agricultural world from the wretched cottier eking out a miserable existence on his potato patch. Young saw the country in 1782, when it was on the eve of a transition from pasture to tillage. The operation of Foster's Corn Law and the high prices paid during the war led to a great breaking up of the grazing ranches. Sir Lawrence Parsons describes it in 1793: ¹ "Consider the state of the country; first, the great increase of tillage. Those large farms which a few years ago were all in pasture ground, each occupied by a single Protestant farmer, are now broken into several patches, tenanted for the most part by Catholic husbandmen, so that seven or eight Catholics hold the ground at present which one Protestant held formerly." Between Young's time (1782) and Wakefield's (1809) "large farms had been generally broken up into small ones, and at the period of Wakefield's visit the process was nearing its completion."² The linen-industry, at this period a domestic industry, led to small tillage in the North. In Young's time ten acres was a large farm in the North and five or six a good farm.³

In countries where landlord and tenant are of the same race, or of the same religion, or where the landlord's title rests upon peaceable acquisition, there is much to alleviate and soften the relations between them. The community of interest is recognized; the lord takes an interest in the welfare of his tenant; the tenant responds to sympathy or bounty; a human touch is given to the business relation; the burden of rent is adjusted, in some measure at any rate, to the tenant's ability to pay. Above all, the relationship is looked upon as a perfectly natural and proper one, to which no reasonable exception can be taken.

But in Ireland not one of the conditions necessary for mutual accommodation was present. The lord despised, disliked and feared

¹ Irish Parl. Deb.: Butt's *Irish People and Irish Land*, p. 87.

² Butt's *Irish People and Irish Land*, p. 87. This was a change from 1727, when the average size of the farms in the three southern provinces was 1,000 Irish acres.—See 1 Froude, p. 44.

³ Young, p. 21.

the peasant; the peasant returned the dislike with compound interest; there was harshness on the one side, and outrage when occasion served, on the other. "The idea of an insatiable plunderer began to be associated with the idea of a Protestant, in the mind of a Roman Catholic; the idea of a refractory vindictive rebel the idea of a Roman Catholic in the mind of a Protestant." ¹ "In Tipperary," said Mr. Trench in 1852—and he might have said the same of most other counties—"two races, each pugnacious, and each unscrupulous, have been pitted against one another for centuries, and, with the utmost mutual repulsion, have been forced into constant contact as landlord and tenant, employer and employed. The consequence has been an hereditary animosity smouldering or bursting forth." ² It was no wonder that Tone said to Hoche, "When we get to Ireland, the aristocracy and gentry are so odious, that I am afraid we shall not be able to save them from a general massacre." ³ General Abercromby wrote (Jan. 28, 1798) to a member of the Government:

"There exists amongst the gentlemen the greatest despondency; they believe or affect to believe that there is a plot in every family and a conspiracy in every parish, and they would abandon the country unless the troops were disposed over the face of it for their protection. I believe the lower ranks heartily hate the gentlemen because they oppress them; and the gentlemen hate the peasants because they know they deserve to be hated." ⁴

That a race disseised of its land by another should steadfastly refuse to admit a moral title in the disseisors or their successors—even when there has been much intermediate bona fide disposition of the property—is no mere Irish phenomenon. It is to be found in many parts of Eastern Europe. In Latvia, for example, the recent agrarian revolution has gone extraordinarily far, because the lords were not racy of the soil; they were foreign barons; expropriation was a natural consequence. Certain it is that the idea that the landlords had no moral right took a fast hold of the Irish people. No doubt, education, coupled with land reform, somewhat loosened its grip. In process of time authority lessened its power for mischief, but it was never quite dispelled. It is no exaggeration to say that

¹ *Newenham on Ireland*, (1809), p. 168.

² Nassau Senior, *Journals, etc., relating to Ireland*, Vol. II, p. 17.

³ Whiteside's *Life and Death of the Irish Parliament*, p. 194.

⁴ Pretymann MSS.; see, too, *Diary of Sir John Moore*, 1 Chap. XI, Rose's *Life of Pitt*, Part 2, p. 352.

it is the central and pivotal fact of Irish history for the past century, and the driving force of much of the political agitation during that period. It shot forth its tentacles in great vigour when the forces of law and order were weakened by the revolution 1916-1921. It has been responsible for much crime, and, what is worse, for much loose thinking about crime. The murders of landlords have been, occasionally, defended by some people of authority and influence; and very frequently condoned or palliated by others. And when loose ideas on the subject of taking life to regain land are not or cannot be dispelled by those on whom the duty lies¹ then these ideas will not be confined to the land, but will spread to the acquisition of other objects, political or otherwise, that may take hold of the desires of men. We may trace much of the evil things wrought by the Irish people in pursuit of ends, themselves perfectly legitimate, to the notion that any force or fraud was lawful and right which enabled them to get back their land.

The existence of this spirit, and its consequences, have been vouched for by almost every writer on Irish affairs.² The Catholic Committee, in 1792, deemed it necessary to renounce all claim to the forfeited estates. Mr. T. M. Healy, afterwards Governor-General of the Irish Free State, speaking in the United States on March 4, 1882, said: "It is a movement to win back from England the land of Ireland which was robbed from the people by the confiscating armies of Queen Elizabeth and Cromwell." To the same effect O'Connor Power in 1880: "If you ask me to state in a brief sentence what is the Irish Land Question, I say it is the restoration of the land to the people of Ireland;" and Sheehan, M.P., in 1886: "By then" (March 1886), "the new Irish Parliament would allot the land for ever to the present holders without any compensation to exterminating landlords." On the passing of a Free State

¹ The Catholic priests denounced personal violence in connection with the land movement. But, frequently enough, such denunciations were accompanied by equally strong denunciations of the landlord system. The effect upon the peasant's mind of the two-edged denunciation was perhaps not always satisfactory.

² See, for example, Arthur Young's *Tour in Ireland*, vol. II, p. 133: "In most parts of the Kingdom the descendants of the old landowners regularly transmit by testament or deed the memorial of their right to those estates which once belonged to their families." See also Carr's *Stranger in Ireland*, p. 510; Lord Westmoreland to Dundas, noted in Froude's *English in Ireland*, vol. III, p. 41; Lord Carleton in the *Catholic Debates*, pp. 78-9; Walsh's *Sixty Years of Irish Life*, p. 193; Sir Horace Plunkett's *Ireland in the New Century*, p. 21.

Statute in 1923, which effected a compulsory purchase of the last lands in Ireland remaining unsold, a speaker in the Irish Parliament, instead of treating this piece of legislation as a solution of an economic problem, described it as "an outside symbol of the victory of the Gael over the Gall";¹ and at a meeting of unpurchased tenants, on June 11, 1923, presided over by a Parish Priest, a spirit of hostility to a measure, which was one of extraordinary generosity to the tenants, is obviously traceable to the same origin. A small estate near Wexford was put up for sale in 1923. A person with college education and of some local consequence attended and forbade it, as his forbears had been dispossessed in 1641! In June 1923, during the progress of a dispute between the farmers and the agricultural labourers in West Waterford, the spokesmen of the latter informed the farmers that they, the farmers, had no title to the land, it being acquired only by British statute.² Michael Collins was a notable and relentless exponent of the tradition.³

Sir Horace Plunkett has a theory that the feeling of the Irish peasantry towards the lands is traceable to the recollection of the tribal system of ownership before the acts of dispossession took place.

"Land holding in Ireland remained largely based on the tribal system of open fields and common tillage for nearly eight hundred years, after collective ownership had begun to pass away in England. The sudden imposition upon the Irish, early in the 17th century, of a land system which was no part of the natural development of the country, ignored, though it could not destroy, the old feeling of communistic ownership."⁴

One would, perhaps, hesitate to ascribe the peasant mentality, even in part, to such a subtle cause, were it not that this theory derives corroboration from the conception which lately took such a hold of the fancy of the Irish people, that a reversion to what

¹ Debates Dail Eireann, May 29, 1923. Gall=stranger.

² One occasionally observes what curious by-products there are of this mentality. In 1923 a writer to a provincial newspaper, who gave his name, challenged the title of Mr. A to the lands of Blackacre because the former owner should have willed them, not to Mr. A, but to Mr. B, who was much more kind to the former owner, the implication being that Mr. A should be boycotted out of the holding. An incident of this kind cannot be dismissed as of no consequence, for it is not merely the mentality of the writer that is in question. * A reputable newspaper, of large circulation, publishes it; no one raises his voice against it.

³ See his *Path to Freedom*, p. 57.

⁴ *Ireland in the New Century*, p. 21.

they call "the Gaelic state" is not alone possible but desirable.

The antagonism between the Anglo-Irish Protestant landlord and the Catholic Irish tenant, due to the causes that have been recited, has profoundly affected the agricultural policy and the development and education of the country. It has been the main cause, if not the sole cause of the small culture theories that have obsessed the Irish mind. The conditions in Ireland forbade the existence of a landlord class who, by equipping and improving farms, would in the agricultural milieu, serve the purpose that capital serves in the manufacturing industries; who by the example of methods employed on farms in their own hands and in divers other ways, would become an enormous educational force, each in his own district; who by precept and, if need be, by exercise of power, could prevent the subdivision of the land into farms too small to be economic; who could guide and direct the rural communities upon the path of progress. But in the absence of any moral influence over the people, the Anglo-Irish landlords could not, if they would, do these things. The time came in Ireland when rents were judicially adjusted and when the tenants had no grievance; but even then the tenants were not content until the system of land held by the stranger was completely swept away—the Gael had to have his triumph over the Gall.

The contrast with the English system, where landlordism still flourishes, is remarkable. In England, the landlord equipped the farm; and buildings, drainage works and so forth were constructed at his expense. What he received in rent was not merely the price of the hire of the land; it included interest on his capital as well. In Ireland, with very rare exceptions, the landlord spent not a sixpence on the land or buildings. In England, an honest tenant willing to pay a reasonable rent might with confidence reckon on not being disturbed. In Ireland a tenant who had no lease, or one whose lease had expired, would get no favour; if the landlord could get a higher rent from anybody else, the old tenant would not be considered. The tenant was always rented on his own improvements. In England, culture on the big scale was possible; even as late as a period which commenced in 1760 and ended in 1840 many enclosure acts were passed; much distress was caused to many occupiers of commoners who received but inadequate compensation; they were sacrificed for the common weal, but there was the town life as an alternative. England to-day is a country of large holdings;

the farmer has two or three hundred acres, in which he employs a dozen or more labourers. In Ireland, there was nothing of this sort. If a landlord attempted to enlarge holdings on the English plan, he or his agent was almost certain to be shot. Some landlords who tried to amalgamate holdings gave up the job in despair; others, from apathy or fear of assassination, preferred to allow things to take their uneconomic course. Instead of a two hundred acre farm with a dozen paid hands, there were ten farms of twenty acres, with a complement of cottier tenants as well. In England, the class of people seeking to rent land was small in number and composed of men with capital to lose, with knowledge of their business, accustomed to a decent standard of comfort. They would not pay for a holding a sum which would not leave them a decent margin of profit; rents were economic and not impossible rents. In Ireland, the petty farmer, accustomed to a very low scale of living, with little or no capital or skill, would agree to pay any rent at all and take his chance for the future. "The Irish smallholder lives in a state of isolation, the type of which is to be sought for in the islands of the South Sea rather than in a great civilized community of the ancient world."¹ The evils of the Irish system were accentuated by the existence of a great number of absentee landlords, having no care for or knowledge of the condition of their tenantry, and leaving the management of the estate to an agent, whose business and interest it was to keep up the rent roll and to stifle complaints.

As might have been expected under these conditions, the output of the country bore no relation to the fertility of the soil. Young calculated that it would have taken an expenditure of some £88,000,000 on building, fencing, planting and draining to put Irish land in a condition to be on a par in those respects with English land of the same period;² and the products were much inferior both in quantity and quality to those of England.³ The evidence collected in 1836 and 1837 by the Poor Law Commissioners, showed that at that time the land of Ireland, though four times as much labour as in England was expended on it, yet gave per acre only one half of what would have been the English produce.⁴ Tillage was little understood, and an antiquated system of rotation of crops was pursued.⁵

¹ Trevelyan's *Irish Crisis*, 1848.

² Young's *Tour in Ireland*, vol. II, Supp. *ibid.* p. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴ Nassau Senior, vol. I, p. 22.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 25.

Ignorance, apathy, and indolence depressed the countryside. The large graziers were as arrant slovens as the most beggarly cottiers, the rich lands of Limerick being in respect of fences, drains, buildings, weeds, etc., in as waste a state as the mountains of Kerry.¹ In the arable counties of Louth, part of Meath, Kildare, Kilkenny, Carlow, Queen's and part of King's, and Tipperary, the occupying tenants were much more industrious, but their manuring was trivial, their tackle and implements wretched, their teams weak, their profits small, and their living little better than the cottiers they employed—circumstances necessarily resulting from the smallness of their capitals.

The standard of living was exceedingly low. The peasantry at the end of the eighteenth century were "hopelessly miserable."² The potato was the chief food, supplemented perhaps by a little milk. The peasant was almost a stranger to the use of bread.³ The cabins of the labouring classes were of the most miserable kind, mud cabins with walls from five to seven feet high, and containing only one room; the door serving the purpose of a window; the furniture consisting of a pot for boiling potatoes, a table, one or two broken stools, beds not universal; the habitation usually shared with the live stock, cows, calves, pigs.⁴

"An Irish cabin in general, is like a little antediluvian ark; for husband, wife and children, cow and calf, pigs, poultry, dog and frequently cat, repose under the same roof in perfect amity. A whimsical calculation some time since ascertained in 87 cabins there were 120 full-grown pigs and 47 dogs."⁵

"The Irish peasant lives in a low, narrow hut, called a cabin; which is built of the slightest materials, cemented with clay, and thatched with straw. It is generally without glass to its windows, or a door to shut out the wind and rain. It seldom enjoys the convenience of a chimney, so that the smoke is seen ascending through every quarter of the roof. In this cold and comfortless habitation, the two sexes promiscuously herd together. These narrow precincts must not only afford shelter to a wife and family but they must also inclose within them his live stock, if indeed the peasant rises in worldly fortune to the possession of a cow or a pig."⁶

Clothing was very scanty; the children scarcely ever had shoes or

¹ Young's *Tour in Ireland*, p. 21.—"From what I have observed, I attributed this to the idleness and dissipation so general in Ireland."

² Froude's *English in Ireland*, vol. III, p. 5.

³ Cooper, p. 114.

⁴ Young, pp. 31 and 36.

⁵ Carr's *Stranger in Ireland*, written in 1805, p. 152.

⁶ Cooper's *Letters on the Irish Nation* (1800), p. 114.

stockings ; and a great number of men and women even were also without them.¹ About the time of the Union, not one quarter of the inhabitants of Ireland had shoes and stockings.²

The common people were subject to the most flagrant oppression.

"The landlord of an Irish estate, inhabited by Roman Catholics is a sort of despot who yields obedience in whatever concerns the poor, to no law but that of his will. A landlord in Ireland can scarcely invent an order which a servant, labourer or cottier dares to refuse to execute. Nothing satisfies him but an unlimited submission. Disrespect or anything tending towards sauciness he may punish with his cane or his horsewhip with the most perfect security ; a poor man would have his bones broken if he offered to lift his hand in his own defence."³

The rents were high.

"Since the year 1782 the rent of land which a short time before that year had begun to fall in many places, has been much more than doubled in all parts of Ireland one with another, more than trebled in many, and the greatest rise has been in those counties where tillage has been most pursued."⁴

Newenham goes on to say that if Young was right in computing the rent at £6,000,000 in 1778, "there can be no hesitation in stating it now at upwards of £15,000,000."⁵

The evidence as to the tyranny of the landlords is overwhelming. Oliver Cromwell, in 1649 said : "These poor people have been accustomed to as much injustice and oppression from their landlords, the great men, and those who should have done them right, as any people in what we call Christendom."⁶ Arthur Young and Sir John Cooper make frequent reference to it. Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare, speaking in 1787 of the province of Munster, with which he was intimately connected, said :

"I know that it is impossible for human wretchedness to exceed that of the miserable tenantry of that province. I know that the unhappy tenantry are ground to powder by relentless landlords."

And again :

"As to the peasantry of Munster, it is impossible for them longer to exist in the wretchedness under which they labour. A poor man is

¹ Young, p. 35.

² Evidence of Newenham in 1830, cited Martin, p. 116.

³ Carr, pp. 40, 41.

⁴ Newenham, p. 231.

⁵ I.e. in 1809. *Ibid.*, p. 231. But this is probably an overestimate.

⁶ Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. II, p. 287.

obliged to pay £6 for an acre of potato ground, which £6 he is obliged to work out with his landlord for sixpence a day."

Mr. Ogle, a bitter anti-Catholic, voices the same opinion :

"The fact is that the landed man of Ireland is a great extortioner. There is hardly an estate which is not let to the highest penny and much above its value. The poor tenant feels the oppression, and not knowing which way to turn, falls upon the clergy as the weakest and most unprotected body of men. This is the true state of the case."

"The two aristocracies" (that is, the aristocracy of Great Britain and the aristocracy of Ireland) "have assuredly no more in common than a sound or vigorous arm has with its fellow which gangrene has blighted."¹

Where the labourer on the land was paid in money, his wages were, in 1796, sixpence a day,² and in 1809, the same amount on an average for the whole year.³ But he was usually paid for his labour, not in money, but in land, by the letting of a cabin and garden, or by taking in a cow for grazing.

Froude⁴ described the condition in 1793 :

"The Irish peasants remained in rags like their ancestors ; lodged under one roof with their pigs and cows, paying rent to masters who had no care for their bodies ; paying tithes to clergy who cared little for their souls ; maintaining gallantly, in the midst of their wretchedness, their own hedge schools and their own priests ; crooning their own songs and airs and nursing their melancholy history."

In all countries the enclosure period—and the post enclosure period as well if population still presses upon the land—is attended with distress and disturbance. There is a struggle, more or less incessant, between the large holder and the peasant, who increases yearly in numbers and in the power that numbers give. The discontent and resentment of the peasant is natural ; he takes what steps he can to regain his lost privileges. Having no legal rights,

¹ *Cavour on Ireland*, written in 1844, p. 89.

² Report of a Committee of the Irish Whig Club, cited in Grattan's *Life and Times*, vol. IV, p. 246. The committee, over which Grattan usually presided, reported that the price of labour was 6d. a day, while oatmeal was 18d. a stone and potatoes 3½d. a stone ; that the cottier paid 30s. to 40s. for house and garden and from 30s. to 40s. for the grazing of a cow, and got an average of 5d. or 6d. a day ; that there were frequent migrations to England in search of work ; the wretched conditions were attributed by the committee to the dearth of manufacturing industries.

³ *Farmers' Inquiry*, cited O'Brien's *Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine*, p. 17.

⁴ *The English in Ireland*, vol. III, p. 123.

and powerless by himself, he unites with others similarly circumstanced; he adopts coercive measures of his own whereby he hopes to stem the tide which he sees advancing to his extinction.

But organized society, if it survives at all, must prove itself too strong for land pirates; it marches on relentlessly in the establishment and vindication of legal rights. It has to overcome, however, a fierce resistance, begotten of the instinct of self-preservation. In these circumstances, the contest between the system of law and the system of irregular force may be bloody and protracted. Two systems co-exist frequently for a long time; on the one side are ranged the judge, the magistrate, the policeman, enforcing their code by the prison and the scaffold; on the other, the masses of the people enforcing what is, too, a rough code by brutal and savage methods. England, in the time of Edward VI, passed through a phase of this sort; there were levellers and agrarian disturbances in that country analogous to those that existed in Ireland down to the middle of the nineteenth century. Finally, agrarian problems were solved in England by Watt's invention of the steam engine. The latent energy of its vast coalfields, made available in the creation of motive as well as lighting power, made the industrial revolution. That revolution had its own terrific problems; but it absorbed the excess of population into the great industrial centres of activity; it made the relation of landlord and tenant a commercial one in which sheer necessity had no part in the making of the bargain.

In Ireland there was no hope of such a peaceable solution. There was no alternative employment; little or no emigration; but still the population went on increasing its numbers and dreaming of recovering, some time or another, the lands which a foreigner had filched from it some centuries before. There was no poor law; if a man could not get work or land, he must steal or beg or starve; not an element of danger and discord was absent.

It is not surprising that these conditions made the peasant associations of Ireland more formidable, more enduring and more savage than in any country with any pretence to civilization. Their periodic demonstrations were so formidable up to the close of the first quarter of the nineteenth century as, from time to time, to deserve the title of "insurrections." Their power, for openly organized mischief, diminished as the forces of law and order grew; and the establishment of an efficient police force by Drummond in 1838 limited their activities to the methods of the midnight

assassin or hougher of cattle. But the land hunger, which was the motive force of their organization, is manifest to this day; cattle driving¹ was rampant up to the end of the British régime in Ireland (1921); it was one of the disorders which the Free State Government set itself sternly to put down.

A letter from a gentleman in Youghal in 1762 (printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1762) gives an interesting account of the "Boughleen Bawins" (i.e. Whiteboys) in Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Tipperary:

"Their first rise was in October last (1761) and they have ever since been increasing; they then, and all along, pretended that their assembling was to do justice to the poor, by restoring ancient commons and redressing other grievances, for which purpose they always assembled in the night with their shirts over their clothes, which caused them to be called Whiteboys. Their number in the County of Waterford is computed at 600 or 700. They have done infinite damage in the country levelling ditches and stone walls, rooting up orchards, etc. On the 11th ult. (March 1762) I saw several ditches they had levelled, part of an orchard destroyed, and two graves they had dug on the road between Clonmel and Cappoquin; the graves were to hold those that did not comply with their orders. Some time before this they came by night into the town of Cappoquin, where is a horse barrack, drew up in the green near the barrack, fired several shots, marched by the sentry with their piper playing 'The Lad with the White Cockade.' The 13th I saw a bier near Affane Church, which they had caused two days before to be made, to carry people alive and bury them in those graves. An Esquire at Cappoquin, when a bachelor, agreed with a peasant for the use of his daughter, for which he passed the peasant his bond for £100; but on the esquire entering into the matrimonial state, he was compelled to take up his bond. They wrote to the peasant to refund the money, upon pain of having his tongue drawn through his under jaw, and fastened with a skewer. On the 14th they assembled at Lismore, posted an advertisement on the door of the post office requiring the inhabitants to have their houses illuminated, and a certain number of horses bridled and saddled, ready for them to mount, against next night, which was complied with. On the night of the 10th they mounted, went to Tullow Bridge, where they levelled the ditches of several fine parks, and cut down a number of full grown ash trees (knee high); they then proceeded to Tullow; the horse marched to the West Bridge, where the commander called out, 'Halt, to the right about,' and then proceeded into the market place in a smart trot. They broke open

¹ If a man has what seems to the landless men too much land, a party of men assemble, frequently by day, proceed to the lands, and drive his cattle off them, leaving the unfortunate beasts a dozen or more miles from the place whence they were taken.

the Marshalsea, discharged the debtors; sent an advertisement to the justice, to lower the price of provisions one half; which he tamely complied with, though a troop and a half of Dragoons were quartered very near him. On the 22nd they came to the Ferry Point opposite this town, levelled the ditches of a small park opposite the back window of my parlour, and a musket shot off the town; they made a large fire, dug a grave, and erected a gallows over it, fired several shots; and at each discharge huzzad, and sent several audacious letters to the inhabitants of a house at a small distance, which they said was built upon the waste. On the 29th the ditches of Firkelling and Ballydaniel near Tullow were levelled; 500 men in a day could not repair the damage."¹

These associations comprised in their objects the redress of all grievances; the breaking up of grass lands, the regulation of wages, the regulation of priests' dues and of parsons' tithes, all came within their purview. They exhibited a laudable impartiality in dealing with clergymen of the various denominations. The Protestant clergy were illtreated and threatened, some of them having to fly to the towns for refuge.² In 1775 the Whiteboys at Johnstown, Co. Kildare, buried a priest to his neck, first inclosing him naked in brambles and thorns, and threatened the like usage to every priest they could lay hands on, on account of their endeavours to dissuade them from their wicked practices.³ The society prescribed certain fees for all clergymen. A proclamation from William O'Driscoll, who styled himself Secretary General to the Munster Peasantry, date July 1, 1786, which was posted upon chapel as well as church, being very specific in its reference to priests' dues.⁴ *O'Leary's Defence*, p. 43, gives examples of two Catholic clergymen, one a secular and the other a regular, who were robbed the same night of their wearing apparel; of a priest being shot at; of the robbery of a Parish Priest of all he had, even to his bed; of an attempt to murder a priest upon the altar.

No doubt, much of the resentment of the Whiteboys against their own priests was due to the circumstance that from the beginning the Catholic bishops and clergy set their faces resolutely against these methods of remedying grievances. Dr. Troy, the Archbishop of Dublin, amongst others, several times pronounced the sentence of excommunication against them. Such ecclesiastical censures were read from the altar and aroused the ire of those against whom they

¹ Cited Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 6 n.

² Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 24.

³ *Ann. Reg.* 1775, p. 170.

⁴ Lewis, p. 28, citing *O'Leary's Defence*, p. 147, *Irish Debates*, vol. VI, p. 409.

were directed. The Catholic Bishop of Cloyne, writing to his clergy in March, 1762, refers to the attempted intimidation of his clergy owing to their promulgation of censures against the Whiteboys. In 1787, a Catholic petition laid stress on the activity of the Catholic nobility and gentry and their prelates and clergy in suppressing disturbances, and goes on: "During these disturbances their chapels have been nailed up, the pastors abused and forced from their parishes, and no distinction made in the paroxysm of popular frenzy." A Catholic clergyman, writing to Newenham on June 12, 1806, said that the influence of the clergy had been diminished by the relaxation of the popery laws, but it received the *coup de grâce* by the Whiteboys disturbances of 1786. They got back their confidence in 1798 because of the persecution of all, innocent and guilty alike.

The Whiteboy and other associations enforced their orders by shocking and cruel outrages. They cut off the ears of obnoxious persons; a frightful method of punishment was to strip a person naked, and place him on horseback, the saddle being covered with the skins of hedgehogs.¹ Chief Justice Bushe, at the Maryborough commission in 1806 thus describes their activities:²

"houses and barns and granaries are levelled, crops are laid waste, pasture lands are ploughed; plantations are torn up; meadows are thrown open to cattle; cattle are maimed, tortured or killed; persons are visited by parties of banditti, who inflict cruel torture, mutilate their limbs or beat them almost to death; men who have become in any way obnoxious to the insurgents or opposed their system, or refused to participate in these outrages are deliberately assassinated in the open day; and sometimes the unoffending members of a family are indiscriminately murdered by burning the habitation. A state in which even those best able to protect themselves—the gentry—are forced to build up all their lower windows with stones and mortar; to admit light only into one sitting-room and not into all the windows of that room; to fortify every other inlet by bullet proof barricades; to station sentinels around during all the night; and the greater part of the day; and to have firearms in all the bedrooms, even on the side-table at breakfast and dinnertime."

The North was not without its agrarian troubles. In 1764 a body was formed styling itself Oakboys—from the fact that they wore branches of oak in their hats. Their original object was to resist gross jobbery in connection with the making and repair of roads.

¹ Crawford, vol. II, p. 241, cited Lewis, p. 12.

² Lewis, p. 44.

Each householder was, at this period, obliged to contribute labour for this purpose, but the distribution of the work was unfair, and the rich were exempted; further, roads were frequently made to advantage individuals of influence rather than the public. The society started in one parish, then went to several, then extended to baronies and counties, "at length the greater part of the province was engaged."¹ The objects were enlarged to embrace the reduction of tithes, and the regulation of the price of land, especially of peat bogs. "They appeared in bodies of four or five hundred, headed, it is said, by farmers of respectable property."² County Armagh was their principal seat of operations. They were of rather a better class than the southern societies, which consisted of the labourer, the small cottier and a very small sprinkling of discontented farmers. To this fact the greater mildness of the Oakboys may be attributed; for though they threatened and insulted, no violent cruelty was exercised, nor was a single life lost, nor a single person maimed in the County of Armagh; a "species of conduct totally opposite to that of the southern insurgents, but which his Lordship ascribed not to any diversity of religion but to the oppression under which the unfortunate creatures in the south laboured. A rebellion of slaves (continued he) is always more bloody than an insurrection of free men."³ These Oakboy disturbances were quelled; the following year their road grievances were redressed.

In 1772 the counties of Antrim and Down were the theatre of risings like those of the southern Whiteboys. The Hearts of Steel owed their origin to exorbitant demands by the Marquis of Donegal on the tenants of his County Antrim estate on the falling in of leases. The tenantry could not pay, were evicted, and formed the Hearts of Steel. They maimed the cattle of those who had taken the land. The neighbouring counties were affected. Many emigrated, and "contributed powerfully, by their zeal and valour, to the separation of the American Colonies from Great Britain."⁴ This movement was also quelled, but its baneful effects were felt for a long time.

Of far more serious and lasting consequences were certain other societies in the North, marking the beginning of the religious feuds that have lasted to this day.

The Protestant and Presbyterian farmers, as part of the conquer-

¹ Campbell's *Phil. Survey of Ireland*, p. 309.

² Hardy's *Life of Charlemont*.

³ Hardy's *Life of Charlemont*.

⁴ Gordon's *History of Ireland*, vol II, 250, 251.

ing and dominant race, were the prosperous and disciplined portion of the agricultural community. They disliked, distrusted and feared the lower classes, who were mostly Catholics; they probably heard very one-sided accounts of the activities of the Catholic Whiteboys in the south in relation to the Protestant party and clergy. Accordingly, when statutes were passed forbidding the unauthorized possession of arms, nothing would do the Protestants but to arrogate to themselves the duty of seeing that these statutes were obeyed. The Peep of Day Boys and Break of Day Boys, who seem to have comprised some Presbyterians,¹ were formed, and commenced nightly searches of the houses of Catholics for arms. These intrusions were little relished by the Catholics who had no arms—who were probably the great majority—still less by those who had, for lynch law is a very unpleasant business. There was resistance; there were reprisals; one violence begat another; in the end the demon of religious hatred was unloosed; an orgy of tyranny and destruction followed. The Protestants “attacked the houses and chapels of the Catholics, sometimes burning the building and sometimes destroying all the property and furniture contained in it.”² Sweet are the uses of persecution. The Catholic who went to no Mass when his chapel was snugly roofed now braved the rain and storm to attend the Holy Sacrifice in the ruined edifice; the practising Catholic redoubled his fervour.³ It is to be wished, but scarcely to be expected, that his prayers were for those who had committed such grievous trespass against him.

A counter organization was formed styled the “Defenders.” The Defenders having originally been (as their name purported) a defensive, soon became an aggressive body. They extended their ramifications to counties where there were no strong bodies of Protestants to alarm them, and in many cases they became mere gangs of robbers, breaking into and plundering houses and committing other outrages.⁴ They

“were all, as far as the committee could discover, of the Roman Catholic persuasion, in general, poor, ignorant, labouring men, sworn

¹ Gordon's *Ireland*, vol. II, p. 334. Gordon, who wrote immediately after the Union, is very reliable.

² Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 36.

³ Evidence of James Christian, a County Down Quaker, before a House of Commons Committee on Orange Lodges in 1835, No. 5707.

⁴ Plowden's *Hist. Rev.*, pp. 437, 460, 537, cited Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 37.

to secrecy and impressed with an opinion that they were assisting the Catholic cause; in other respects they did not appear to have any distinct particular object in view, but they talked of being relieved from hearth money, tithes, county cess, and of lowering their rent."¹

"At length the Defenders were partially dissolved, and partly absorbed into the body of United Irishmen; till they were finally lost in the more important movements which gave rise to the rebellion of 1798; since which time their society has been revived under the name of ribbonmen."²

In 1795 the Peep of Day Boys disappeared, their members going to the Orange Society which was then formed.³

If we except certain schools established for the purpose of proselytizing the inhabitants⁴ there was not at the time of the Union, nor for a considerable period afterwards, any provision for the education of the common people of the country, most of whom were illiterate. Here and there a hedge schoolmaster flourished in a fashion, his remuneration consisting mostly of occasional supplies of the necessaries of subsistence, of which turf formed not an inconsiderable part. Newenham, writing in 1809, speaks of two districts, comprising one half of the County of Cork, in which 21,892 children, chiefly of the lowest class of Catholics, were educated in 316 unendowed schools, in reading, writing, arithmetic and navigation.⁵

Trinity College was opened to Catholics in 1793, but few took advantage of it. Well-to-do Catholics sent their children abroad for the purpose of education.

In 1795, in consequence of a memorial to the Lord Lieutenant presented by the Catholic bishops for the foundation of a seminary for the education of the clergy, Maynooth College received its charter with a grant of about £8,000 a year. Apparently at the time of the charter the notion was that it should form a sort of university for lay as well as ecclesiastical students; but in fact lay students have never been admitted within its walls. It is curious, too, how the prediction upon which the State Grant was supported has been falsified. It was thought that it was dangerous to allow priests to be educated abroad, for fear they might imbibe

¹ Secret Committee of House of Lords; Plowden's *Hist. Rev.* 389; Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 37.

² Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 37.

³ Plowden's *Hist. Review*, p. 530, cited Lewis, p. 38.

⁴ For the history of these schools see p. 217 *post*.

⁵ Newenham on Ireland, p. xix.

the continental revolutionary ideas ; therefore, let the State provide, in part, for the education of the priests at home. But the former system tended to produce men of broad and enlightened views, in whom the excesses of the revolution created an aversion from revolutionary principles, whereas the Maynooth system tended to produce zealots afflicted with every bias of the class from which they sprang.

The Irish language

“is spoken throughout the province of Connaught by all the lower orders, a great part of whom scarcely understand any English, and some of those who do, understand it only so as to conduct business ; they are incapable of receiving moral or religious instruction through its medium. The Irish language is spoken very generally through the other three provinces, except among the descendants of the Scotch in the North. There are about two millions of people in Ireland who are incapable of understanding a continued discourse in English.”¹

In 1787, an Act was passed creating a police force of 3,000 constables and 250 chief constables. The force, which was purely Protestant, was utterly inefficient and inadequate ; its further history will be traced in a subsequent chapter.

~~In 1797~~ the Irish Government was nearly bankrupt ; there was no money to equip troops in case of a French invasion ; the Government was obliged to pay eight and three-eighths per cent. for a loan.²

The Irish National Debt, which in 1783 was £1,917,784, had swollen to £28,551,157 on January 5, 1801.³

The backward state of the country is shown by nothing better than the condition of its coinage system. Ireland had her own currency till 1820.⁴

There was at the date of the Union an extreme scarcity of gold and silver coin in the country, and the tally system was in great use, not alone in the country districts, but also in the purchase of commodities in the towns.⁵ There was the greatest possible ignorance as to the value of money, whether in the form of specie or of notes, both being pawned for less than the value of the pledge.⁶

Carr, in 1804, found that shopkeepers in Dublin were in the habit

¹ *Observations on the Character of the Irish*, by Dr. Daniel Dewar, 1812.

² *Rose's Life of Pitt*, p. 347.

³ Miss Murray, p. 306.

⁴ The Irish £ in relation to the English £ always seems to have been below par.

⁵ O'Brien's *Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine*, p. 526, referring to Wakefield, vol. I, p. 676.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 527.

of weighing coin to prevent loss, owing to the great number of deficient coins in circulation ;¹ and he speaks of a blacksmith near Limerick who issued notes for village circulation for sixpence,² and of another blacksmith in Abbeyfeale who issued Bank notes for a shilling ;³ and of the barrister sitting as County Court Judge, having on the bench a machine for weighing shillings, the legal luminary being paid by fees there and then handed up.⁴

The best feature in Ireland at the date of the Union was the excellent character of its roads. Arthur Young (1779) speaks of them as much in advance of the English roads, paying high tribute to the system of grand jury presentment under which most of them were made and maintained ;⁵ they were much improved in 1810, and even down to 1850 they were much superior to the English roads.

The commercial relations that existed between England and Ireland prior to the Union had important political consequences. They led to the establishment of Irish political independence in 1782 ; the sense of hostility to England which they aroused is operative to this day ; the impossibility of putting them on a satisfactory basis was one of the reasons that induced Pitt to press on the Union.

All of the restrictions imposed by the British legislature on Irish trade were stupid, but some of them were clearly within the province of that legislature and afforded Ireland no just cause of grievance. Adam Smith's free trade doctrines had made little headway in England before the end of the eighteenth century ; the country was still a protectionist country. It was as competent and as fair for England at that period to put duties upon Irish produce coming to England or to forbid the import of Irish produce altogether, as it was for the Irish Free State to put duties in 1923 upon English manufactured goods coming into Ireland. Consequently, we may rule out of the list of genuine Irish grievances statutes of 1663 and 1666 which, respectively, imposed tolls on the import of Irish cattle into England and forbade such import altogether,⁶ and a statute which at one time prohibited the import of corn into Eng-

¹ *Stranger in Ireland*, p. 59.

² *Ibid.* p. 349.

³ *Ibid.* p. 313.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 375. The author describes the legal proceedings ; they were in the nature of a farce ; the solicitor threw the testament at one witness's head.

⁵ *Tour in Ireland*, Supp. p. 56.

⁶ Miss Murray's *History of the Commercial and Financial Relations between England and Ireland*, pp. 27, 31.

land from any country save when the price was immoderate.¹

So also, as it appeared to Lecky,² there is something to be said for the English point of view in excluding Ireland from or allowing Ireland merely conditional admittance to the markets of the colonies. The "English plantations had been established under the sole direction of the English Parliament and Government"³ and, it may be added, had been established and were maintained and defended solely at England's expense. The Navigation Acts of 1670 and 1671 which prohibited the export from the plantations to Ireland of commodities of primary importance, such as cotton, wool, sugar, tobacco, and coffee, unless they were previously landed in England, do not, therefore, seem to be positively unjust.

But there were restrictions to which no other description than that of naked tyranny can be properly applied. The chief of these was that which dealt a death-blow to the Irish woollen trade.

At the end of the seventeenth century, the manufacture of woollen goods was England's great, and indeed her only great industry. Ireland also possessed a woollen industry which promised to be a serious rival to the English. It was in Protestant hands, was flourishing not alone in the North but the South of Ireland, and the country, in which large grazing tracts were universal, was eminently suited for it. Ireland had also a linen industry, which, though flourishing, was not comparable in importance to the woollen. It was also in Protestant hands; the Huguenot brothers Crommelin had established it in Lisburn in the North and in Chapelizod (Co. Dublin) and in the County of Waterford in the South.⁴ England rather favoured the Irish linen industry, her own interests not being vitally concerned, and it was apparently at the instance of William III that the Crommelins had come over and brought with them a number of Protestant artizans from France and the Low Countries. Louis Crommelin, who chose the North, received an official appointment as overseer of the linen industry.⁵

It was in these circumstances that the English Government plotted the destruction of the woollen industry. The Irish Parliament was induced, by promises of British encouragement of the Irish linen industry, to pass an Act in 1698, imposing heavy duties upon all woollen goods exported out of Ireland.⁶ The following year,

¹ Lecky, II, 171.

⁴ Miss Murray, p. 117.

² See II, 437.

⁵ *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 438.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 56.

the English Parliament, purporting to exercise the right—which had never been conceded—to pass measures binding Ireland, passed a statute which prohibited the export of all woollen goods from Ireland to any part of the world save to England, and there only with the consent of the English revenue authorities.¹ The Irish woollen trade was thus destroyed, for there was no home market—“there were no independent peasantry or respectable and wealthy middle class for them to supply.”²

No transaction in Anglo-Irish history is more important than this. It is spoken of in Ireland to-day as if it happened yesterday. A conclusive proof of England's perfidy and selfishness, it has always been a trump card in the secession propaganda. The Englishman of to-day has to bear the stigma of what his forefathers did over two centuries ago; it had a very real influence in stimulating the anti-British feeling which found vent in the rebellion of 1916; and this influence is all the stronger because the facts, so striking and undeniable, are stressed most strongly by Protestant and pro-English writers. The attitude of these writers is perfectly natural; they think that if the woollen trade had been fostered, or, at any rate, allowed to continue, Protestantism and Anglicization and loyalty to the British connexion would have been strengthened; that another Ulster would have arisen in the South; and that Ulster itself would have been greatly strengthened. Miss Murray³ vouches for the fact that it was the Ulster Presbyterians who suffered the most; the failure of the industry caused a great exodus from Ulster in the eighteenth century.

It is very doubtful whether these speculations are well founded or not. The conditions in 1689 were very different from those that obtained in much later years. Hampered in its inland seats by dear transport and everywhere by dear coal, could the industry have stood the strain, in the world's markets, of the competition of the English industrial revolution, or, in later days, of the big mills of Yorkshire, operating on Australian wool? The probability is that the trade would not have radically changed Ireland at all, but would ultimately have been reduced to very modest limits, supplying part of the home market.

Isaac Butt was obviously of opinion that the destruction of the

¹ Miss Murray, p. 59.

² Otway's *Evidence before Commission to Inquire into Condition of Handloom Weavers*, 1840.

³ P. 68.

Irish woollen trade was a blessing in disguise. In *The Irish People and The Irish Land* ¹ he says :

“ I have already stated my belief that if it were worth while to pursue the inquiry we should find that the suppression of the woollen trade of Ireland, so far from being an injury, was a boon to the old occupiers of the soil. There are many of the queries of Bishop Berkeley which point clearly to the conclusion that the success of the woollen manufacture would only have led to the extermination of the peasantry by making it the interest of the proprietors to turn their estates into sheep walks.”

After pointing out that, by law, manufacturing industry was at that time confined to Protestants, and that the suppression of the woollen trade injured the Protestant artisans he goes on to say : ² “ Whatever loss that suppression may have occasioned to the Protestant landlords or the Protestant artisans, I am disposed to think that the discouragement of the woollen trade was, if anything, an advantage to the mass of the people.”

The English Parliament had pledged itself to help the linen industry. The help which it did give was tardy and scanty ; but had some real effect in producing the great linen industry of the North. The linen manufactures in the South—in Killeigh, Inishannon, and Douglas (all in the County Cork) and in Carrick on Suir (Co. Waterford) and Chapelizod (Co. Dublin) ³ all languished and died.

Various other statutes, such as the prohibition of the export of glass from Ireland ⁴ were of no great consequence ; but a restriction of a capital character was imposed in 1778 when an English order in council was passed which forbade, for three years, the export, save to Great Britain, of provisions, then a very important trade, on the ground that it was necessary to prevent the export of provisions to France or to the United States, with which countries Great Britain was then at war.

The cumulative effect on the Irish mind of these commercial restrictions, whether just or unjust, was immense. The blow at the provision trade was a desperate one, coinciding, as it did, with a period of grave distress, and the Irish propagandists put it about that the real object of the measure was to cripple Ireland. When Grattan, in 1778, moved an amendment to the Address in the Irish House of Commons urging the necessity of a “ free export trade,”

¹ P. 192.

² *Ibid.* p. 93.

³ Miss Murray, p. 119.

⁴ 1743, 16, Geo. II, c. 12.

he had the entire House with him ; and the amendment, which was altered to a demand for " free trade " was carried with enthusiasm. The King's answer being deemed unsatisfactory, the Volunteers, in martial array, paraded the streets of Dublin with their cannon labelled " Free Trade or This."¹ The British Government gave way, and in 1779 repealed the Acts prohibiting Irish export of woollens and glass. The Act also threw open the colonies to Ireland, but this was revocable at pleasure, and certain other concessions were granted.

The Volunteers followed up their success by demanding political independence. Grattan on April 16, 1782, moved the famous Declaration of Independence which asserted that while the crown of Ireland was inseparably united to that of England, Ireland was a distinct kingdom, and that her King, Lords and Commons alone had a right to bind her. The British Parliament conceded the claim and passed an Act of Renunciation renouncing all claim to bind Ireland.

This, of course, left England and Ireland as free as ever to injure each other by tariff walls, and Pitt foresaw all sorts of complications and trouble. When a sensible Dublin Quaker named Joshua Pim put some propositions before him, as the basis of a commercial treaty between the two countries, Pitt, in 1784, had them put into the form of a bill, which he caused to be introduced into the Irish House of Commons. The propositions provided for an equalization of duties in both countries ; that the Irish linen should retain the advantages it possessed² and that Ireland should have the right to control the duties on linen manufacture in both countries.³ For these concessions Ireland was asked to agree to pay something for Imperial defence. The provision was that if the yield of Irish taxation should exceed £650,000, the surplus should go towards the expenses of the fleet. The debate in the Irish House of Commons is a curious illustration of that mixture of shrewd common sense with childish vanity that is so marked a feature of Irish national life and that can be witnessed every day in the proceedings of the Free State Dail. The principle that Ireland should pay something for the common services it shared was, of course, beyond argument,

¹ " Free trade " did not mean trade between England and Ireland free of tariffs, but trade free from such restrictions as those that prevented the export of Irish goods abroad.

² E.g. Russian and other foreign linens were excluded from British markets.

³ See Plowden, III, 105.

but that she should be asked to enter into an agreement binding herself to pay was a slur upon her honour. "I will never be a slave to pay tribute," said Mr. Brownlow. The Irish cabman, when asked to name his fare will "leave it to yourself," but if "yourself" falls into the error of suggesting anything less than three times the legal fare, there will be serious trouble. This is our princely way of dealing with such sordid details.

But common sense peeped out from under the skirt of injured pride. The proposal as to financial contribution was, obviously, unjust to Ireland. If it were agreed to, Ireland could never have more than £650,000 to spend on her own administration, for the surplus would go to the fleet. Grattan countered it by another proposal which was as obviously unjust to England. He carried an amendment which limited an appropriation for navy purposes to years in which the expenditure should not exceed the revenue. This would mean that Ireland need pay nothing at all. Pitt, however, was so anxious to benefit both islands by the fullest and freest interchange of goods that he brought the scheme as amended before the British House of Commons. A great storm of opposition arose. The political education of the manufacturers of England in 1784 was almost as backward as that of Arthur Griffith and the Sinn Feiners in 1916. The propositions would give Ireland control of English industries. Pitt had to abandon them.

Pitt recast his scheme, on lines less favourable to Ireland, including a provision that, whatever Navigation Laws were adopted by the British Legislature, the Irish Parliament should be bound to re-enact. With some difficulty, Pitt carried this scheme through the English Parliament in 1785. Though it contained substantial advantages, the Irish Parliament rejected it ignominiously; it was derogatory to their independent national status. Fitzgibbon, in vain, rubbed in the true condition of affairs, "without the assistance and protection of Great Britain, you have not the means of trading with any nation on earth."¹

Pitt abandoned his attempts to put the commercial relations of the two islands upon a satisfactory basis. His mind turned more and more upon the solution of the Union.

As the nineteenth century grew older, the vices of the last Irish Parliament were forgotten; its glories were remembered; a tradition grew up that it was a model of toleration, wisdom and

¹ Froude, II, 482.

benevolence. The existence of the tradition was a factor that had an important bearing on the course of political thought subsequent to the Union. And the tradition was the reverse of the truth.

It was corrupt to a degree far surpassing the limits of the corruption of the period. Froude speaks thus of the sale and use of rotten boroughs: "The perpetual advowson (if the phrase may be used) of a borough was worth £8,000 or £9,000. A single seat in a single Parliament could be had for £2,000, and the purchaser avowedly intends to recoup himself by the sale of his vote."¹ The House of Lords seems to have been little better. The Duke of Portland in a letter of April 19, 1784, outlines a scheme for the procuration of noble adherents for the Government programme by the creation of salaried sinecure offices, and weeps over "the scantiness of the provision which is at the disposal of Government for the support of an increased and increasing number of claimants." According to O'Connell, the Irish "independent" Parliament created fifty new boroughs in one day.² The pension list, prior to the Union, amounted to £85,000 a year, lucrative places were bought and sold; the hereditary revenues of the Crown were prostituted to the most unworthy purposes; the spirit of corruption pervaded every department of the public service.³

Credit has been falsely assigned to the Irish Parliament for such prosperity as preceded the Union. It is, perhaps questionable if such prosperity existed. If it did, the reasons for it are to be found in the natural development of the country, and in the artificial war conditions which put a premium upon tillage and which turned Ireland from a corn-importing to a corn exporting country. The country prospered not because of its Parliament but in spite of it. And such prosperity as there was co-existed with the wretched serfdom of the masses. The body of the nation was prostrate, and likely to remain so. A comparison between the years immediately preceding the Union and those immediately following it is, of course, by no means conclusive in estimating the effects of that measure upon trade and commerce—sequence and consequence are not the same thing—but as the period before the Union is so frequently referred to as a proof of the damage wrought by the Union, the comparison may legitimately be given. The facts and figures

¹ Froude, II, 397.

² *Ann. Reg.* 1834, p. 20.

³ Speech of Chief Secretary Littleton, *Ann. Reg.* 1834, p. 29.

given by R. Montgomery Martin¹ are taken from official statistics. He conclusively establishes (1) that building advanced in Dublin at a far greater rate after the Union than before the Union;² that the tonnage of ships was actually decreasing from 1788 to 1797, whereas after the Union it increased; that Irish trade for ten years before the Union (1790 to 1801) was: Imports, £49,396,254; Exports, £51,322,620, while for ten years after the Union (1802–1813) the figures are: Imports, £74,511,058; Exports, £63,483,718; that there was a decrease in the consumption of luxury articles prior to the Union and an increase afterwards; that between 1781 and 1797 no less than twenty-three petitions were presented from Cork, Dublin and Belfast complaining of languishing industries and poverty; and he gives many more facts and figures of the same nature.³

To expect from the Irish Parliament, constituted as it then was, any unforced measures of reform would be to put a premium on human nature itself. An alien, landlord, and Protestant garrison, living in the midst of a native Catholic hostile peasantry, controlled the legislature and, in conjunction with the British Government, the administration and patronage of the country as well. The needed reforms related to the State Church, the land, the reform of parliament, the franchise, the right of Catholics to sit in Parliament. Interference in these directions would imperil the rents, the sale of boroughs, the tithes, the jobs. The edifice of privilege and power, in which the minority reposed with such ease, security and dignity, would tumble down about their ears. The result was that they effected no reforms save under terrific pressure, and only in the fear that unless they yielded a worse fate might befall.

Nor were those boasted lovers of liberty, the Irish Volunteers, in any better case. A convention of the Volunteers having been called for February 15, 1782, Charlemont, Grattan and Flood met at Charlemont's house to prepare the agenda. Grattan Junior tells the story.

"After the meeting terminated, it occurred to Mr. Grattan that the omission of any mention of the Catholics in their resolutions was impolitic, but as Lord Charlemont and Mr. Flood were not favourable to

¹ *Ireland Before and After the Union*, pp. 40–57.

² Even though, before the Union, Dublin was helped by many bounties, such as bounties on corn brought coastwise thereto.

³ These facts are not to be explained by the Rebellion. Leaving 1797, 1798, and 1799 out of the calculation, the result would be the same.

them, he thought it vain to press them on the matter. But he conceived it would be well to unite the Catholics to their party and that it would be politic to throw out some conciliatory idea at the meeting. Accordingly, without further consultation, he drew up a resolution, in the following terms:—"That we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow subjects and that we conceive these measures to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland." "

Mr. Dobbs, the messenger, "was already mounted when this resolution was forced into his portmanteau by Mr. Grattan." This pious expression of opinion, which did no harm to the Protestants and no good to the Catholics, passed with only two dissentients.¹ So far so good. But, after independence had been won, a further meeting of the Volunteers was held on September 8, 1783.

"A proposition relative to the concession of the elective franchise to the Roman Catholics was brought forward—it not only would not have met support from the Protestant part of the community in 1783, but any warm efforts in its favour must have only added to that flame which already began to blaze with too great violence: Lord Charlemont's friends took the lead in the rejection of this proposition,"²

and a similar motion before the same body was, later, also defeated.³ MacLennan sums up the attitude of the Volunteers accurately:

"The Irish volunteers represented, not Ireland, but the ascendancy clamouring for free trade, a reformed parliament, and political independence. The glowing patriots and advocates of liberty decided, in public convention, against the admission of the Catholics to the franchise in their projected parliamentary reform."⁴

"Those who battled for Ireland's independence in 1782 were amongst the most virulent opposers of the emancipation of their countrymen."⁵

The Irish Parliament never even seems to have given the question of land reform a single thought. Henry Grattan, probably the most enlightened man of the day, either in Great Britain or in Ireland, brought forward the question of tithes on several occasions; in 1787; twice in 1788; in May, 1789. The motions were on two of these occasions beaten by large majorities; on the third, the motion had to be withdrawn. The attempt in 1789 "was his last effort on the subject; redress appeared hopeless."⁶

¹ *Life and Times of Grattan*, by His Son, II, 203.

² Hardy's *Life of Charlemont*, II, 100.

³ MacLennan's *Memoir of Drummond*, p. 230.

⁴ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, I, 12.

⁵ *Life and Times of Grattan*, vol. III, p. 336.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 131.

As to reform of Parliament, the question was many times brought before the Irish Parliament. Reform bills were beaten in 1784, in 1785; in 1793; in 1794. Finally, reform was beaten in 1797, when Grattan and his followers seceded from the House—"Having no hope left to persuade or dissuade, and having discharged our duty, we shall trouble you no more, and from this day we shall not attend the House of Commons."

The dealings of the Irish Parliament with the Catholic question needs a prefatory statement of the history of that question.

Before 1641, the Catholics possessed two-thirds of the fee simple property of the country, the Church and Protestants the remainder. After the great rebellion of 1641, these two-thirds were seized by Cromwell. By the Act of Settlement the Irish Protestant Church obtained 5,140,000 acres; various grants were made from time to time to English settlers; towards the end of the century, according to Lawrence, of 10,868,949 acres¹ returned on the survey, the Catholics had only 2,041,108, some writers putting it at less.² This does not mean that the seized lands were not occupied by Catholics; but that the Catholic landlords had disappeared from them, and were obliged either to take to business pursuits or to become, with their kith and kin of a lower social order, the occupying tenants, holding from the Protestant landlords, either at will, or at all events, without any security of tenure. Various statutes were passed by the Irish Parliament to stereotype this condition of affairs, which, of course, was an effectual bar to any attempt by the Catholics to better their condition. Thus, a statute of William III prohibited Catholics from purchasing any of the forfeited lands, annulled leases thereof, and even forbade residence on one million acres of the lands of their forefathers.³

The policy of enfeebling the Catholics, which, no doubt, was largely due to a natural apprehension that a powerful Catholic body would adopt similar measures to get back their property was followed in other directions. The principal enactments were: By a statute of the English Parliament passed in 1692 (3 and 4 Wm. and Mary, c. 2) and recognized by the Irish Parliament,⁴ they were prevented from sitting in Parliament.⁵ By various Irish

¹ Irish measure.

² See Wyse's *History of Catholic Emancipation*, vol. I, p. 116 n.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 19. ⁴ *Lord's Journal*, vol. I, p. 496; Wyse, I, p. 15.

⁵ For the statute made the taking of the Abjuration Oath and the Declaration against Transubstantiation conditions precedent.

statutes,¹ they were afterwards deprived of the elective suffrage, excluded from the corporations, from the magistracy, from the bar, from the bench, from the grand juries, and from the vestries. They could not be sheriffs or solicitors, or even gamekeepers or constables. They were excluded from the army and navy. They could not even possess a horse of the value of more than £5, and any Protestant on tendering that sum could appropriate the hunter or the carriage horse of his Catholic neighbour.² They could not have arms without a licence and they were forbidden to have schools of their own or to send their children abroad for education.³ Intermarriage was forbidden under penalty of certain forfeitures.⁴ Various statutes had been passed for the expulsion of the Bishops and the monastic orders,⁵ and for the prevention of priests from coming from abroad.⁶ Catholics were prohibited from buying lands or from taking a lease for more than thirty-one years; Protestant lands were to descend to Protestants; Catholic lands were to descend in gavelkind, that is, to go to all his descendants.⁷

No doubt, a great many of these statutes had fallen into desuetude before they were formally repealed. The statutes prohibiting the purchase of land were frequently got over by conveying the land to a Protestant on a secret trust for the Catholic owner;⁸ the evasion was well known, but was winked at in practice. So also, the terrible provisions with regard to worship and education were probably never fully enforced with all the rigours of the law; in time they came to be practically obsolete. But nevertheless, while "the Revolution of 1782 had placed Ireland, ostensibly at least, in the rank of free and self-governing kingdoms, it left the Catholics with no more political rights than the serfs of Russia or of Poland."⁹

¹ 7 Wm. III, c. 5; 10 Wm. III, cc. 8, 13; 2 Anne, c. 6; 6 Anne, c. 6; 8 Anne, c. 3; 2 Geo I, c. 10; 6 George I, c. 10; 1 Geo. II, c. 9; 9 Geo. II, c. 3; 15 & 16 Geo. III, c. 21.

² Lecky, I, 118 n.

³ 7 Wm. and Mary, c. 10 (Ir.). 2 Anne, c. 6.

⁴ 9 Wm. III, c. 3 (Ir.).

⁵ 1 Anne c. 32.

⁶ 9 Wm. III, c. 1 (Ir.).

⁷ 2 Anne, c. 6.

⁸ "A great portion of the estates of one of the largest counties in Ireland was conveyed to a Protestant barber whose whole property did not exceed a few pounds in value, and whose self-importance was never raised by the great extent of estate which he held in fee. This man was faithful as he was humble and unassuming, and died as poor and honest as he had lived."—O'Driscoll's *Views on Ireland* (1823), p. 75.

⁹ Lecky, III, 24.

On the other hand, various active steps were taken to Protestantize the country. The Charter Schools, which were maintained largely by Parliamentary grants, were founded in 1730 "out of concern for the salvation of these poor creatures, who are our fellow subjects, and to try all possible means to bring them and others over to a knowledge of the true religion."¹ Many attempts were made to induce non-Catholics to come and settle upon the soil. Most of them became quickly absorbed into the native population. Slieve Grine, in the County of Waterford, was originally an English Protestant colony, whose descendants were all Catholics, and when Wyse wrote, spoke nothing but Irish.² Of these settlers, many of the Palatinates, who settled in Limerick, retained their religion.

In 1756 a Catholic Association was established, but it met with little or no support from the gentry or clergy, some merchants of Dublin being its first and for a while its sole members.³ In 1760 it was revived but melted away in 1763.⁴

The Catholics of the better class were much alarmed and hampered in their efforts by disturbances amongst the peasantry, over whom the gentry and clergy had little control; "the thunders of the episcopacy and the exhortation of the lower clergy in the insurrection of Munster fell idly on the affections and fears of the infuriated peasantry," often irritated by "the more than Protestant severity of the Catholic landholders."⁵

As long as the Catholics were prevented from acquiring any real interest in lands, the tendency was for the progressive amongst them to become merchants, while the Protestants continued to be the spender and consumer of the produce of the Irish Catholics' toil.⁶ But in 1778⁷ owing, one may suppose, partly to the growth of a more tolerant spirit, and partly to the good behaviour of the Catholics themselves, a genuine Relief Act was passed. It enabled Catholics to hold lands on leases for lives, or to take a lease for 999 years. As Wyse rightly remarks, this recognition gave new desires, new desires produced new efforts, "it was the first step which really emancipated"⁸ In 1781 they acquired the right to purchase in fee simple and to teach schools.⁹ According to the same author,

¹ Lecky, III, p. 29.

² Wyse, p. 97 n.; Graigue Shoneen in the County Waterford means the Rock of the Protestant, but is now entirely Catholic.

³ Wyse, p. 57.

⁴ Wyse, p. 89.

⁵ Wyse, p. 90.

⁶ Wyse, p. 100.

⁷ 18 Geo. III, c. 60.

⁸ Wyse, p. 101.

⁹ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. I, p. 14.

the progress of Catholic wealth and Catholic intelligence was most remarkable; the Catholic became a miser, and then went into land, and then desired political power.¹

In 1790, the Catholic Committee, acting in conjunction with the Catholic Committee in Dublin, prayed the Irish Parliament for a further removal of their disabilities.² Not a single member of the Irish House of Commons could be found to present the petition.

It was to London Keogh and the other representatives of the Catholic Committee went for relief; and it was from London they obtained it.

Pitt, through Dundas, proceeded to put pressure on the Irish Parliament. His motives in doing so are the subject of much speculation. Froude thought that he was merely using the Catholic question as a lever to force the Union.³

Pitt was not of an illiberal turn of mind. In 1791, in consequence of English Catholic pressure, he caused inquiries to be made at various seats of learning on a point concerning which there was much difference of opinion—in substance, could a Catholic be a good and loyal citizen, or was a divided allegiance a bar? He received satisfactory assurances on the point from the Universities of the Sorbonne, Douay, Louvain, Salamanca, and Alcala, and thereupon caused a Bill of partial relief to the English Catholics to be passed.

Lecky, referring to the year 1792, says: "Pitt and the majority of the other ministers were free from every vestige of religious intolerance, and the events of the French revolution had thrown them into close alliance with the Catholics of Europe."⁴ He was genuinely concerned at the consequences of keeping the Catholics in servitude. In November, 1792, he wrote that if a Catholic Convention which was about to be held were suppressed, it "would

¹ Wyse, 115.

² These disabilities, at the time, included the following: Catholics could not be barristers or magistrates; they could not marry Protestants; they could not exercise the franchise; they could not sit in Parliament; they could not possess arms; there were certain restrictions on their education; they were limited as to the number of apprentices they might take into their houses or places of business; they could not be officers in the army.

³ Froude, III, 108. Pitt had thought of the Union so far back as 1792. See letter to Westmoreland, November 18, 1792, Lecky, vol. III, p. 74; see also Westmoreland to Dundas, December 12, 1792, Froude, III, p. 89. But when Westmoreland wrote to Pitt, November 28, 1792, suggesting that the controversies between Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics could be used, ultimately, to forward a legislative union, Lecky says (III, 99), "I cannot find any evidence that Pitt responded to these speculations." Lecky, later on (pp. 289, 294), seems to share Froude's view.

⁴ Lecky, III, 29.

be the signal for a general rising." The truth may be that Pitt would have been content either way ; had the Irish Parliament granted the concessions to the Catholics there was some hope of attaching Ireland to the Empire ; if they did not, the old ascendancy, fearing that Catholic Emancipation might be forced upon them, would clutch at the Union to save themselves from shipwreck.

The English pressure on the Irish Parliament commenced with letters from Dundas of December 26, 1791, to Westmoreland, the Irish Viceroy, recommending to the Irish Parliament the concessions already made in England, namely, the admission of Catholics to the bar and the magistracy, the repeal of the Intermarriage Act, the repeal of the law which forbade Catholics to possess arms. One of the letters very plainly intimated, as Froude puts it, that if concessions were not made and the Catholics chose to rebel, the English Government would not interfere.¹ Richard Burke, son of Edmund Burke, went over to Dublin with a letter of introduction from Pitt to the Viceroy. The Irish law officers and others called in to council, however, reported that neither the question of arms nor of the franchise could be carried in the then humour of Parliament ; but it was decided that a relief bill, not touching on these debatable matters should be brought in. It was under these circumstances, and as a result of these forces, that the Catholic Relief Act of 1792 reached the statute book. It admitted Catholics to the profession of the law, it removed the remaining restrictions which interfered with their education, it repealed the Intermarriage Act, it abolished the limitation on the number of apprentices they might take into their houses or places of business.

During the debate, a petition from the Belfast Presbyterians for the complete removal of all Catholic disabilities was presented, but the House of Commons refused to receive it. A similar petition from the Catholic Committee in Dublin, praying for some share in the elective franchise was rejected by 208 votes to 23, though the Committee renounced all claims to the forfeited estates and promised not to meddle with the Protestant establishment.

The advent of Burke had caused as much elation in Catholic circles as alarm to the Irish Government. The poor results caused bitter disappointment and indignation. Many of the Catholics

¹ Froude, III, 45 ; " they must not expect," the letter ran, " the power and resources of England to be exerted in any contest that might arise for pre-eminence and power between religious distinctions of Irishmen."

joined the ranks of the United Irishmen; "they have coalesced with the United Irishmen and with every turbulent spirit in the country";¹ the revolutionary movement² grew in strength. Arms were imported; and a "review" of the United Irishmen's armed "National Guard" was called for December 9. Westmoreland wrote to Dundas for help. Dundas replied, "England required all the forces she possessed at home to protect herself from her foreign and domestic enemies" and threw the responsibility for any decision on the Irish Government, which forthwith proceeded to issue a proclamation against unauthorized bodies assembling in arms. The National Guard declined the challenge and did not meet. A Catholic Convention, however, met, drew up a petition; selected five of their number to proceed to England to present it; passed a vote of thanks to Wolfe Tone for his assistance.³ Tone accompanied the delegates to London. The petition was favourably received. Dundas wrote the views of the Cabinet to Westmoreland on January 23, 1793:

"We are perfectly ready to declare our determination to support the Protestant establishment of Ireland and maintain its form of government; but, unfortunately, we and His Majesty's servants in Ireland differ essentially as to the best mode of securing those objects. We consider the Catholics less likely to concur in disturbing the existing order of things when they participate in the franchise than if totally excluded from those benefits which must be most dear to men living in a country where the power of an independent Parliament has been recognized. Had the franchise been granted a year ago it would have been enough; now it will probably not be enough. We recommend to your Excellency and your Irish advisers a candid consideration of the whole subject, and the danger of leaving behind a sore part of the question."

This letter convinced the Irish bigots that they stood in extreme danger of being thrown over altogether by the English Government. Their position changed "miraculously," "the Protestants and people of property . . . have fallen into a most miserable state of despondency which has worked a spirit of conciliation to the Catholics on the principle of attaching the Catholics to the constitution to save it from the levellers."⁴

¹ Westmoreland to Dundas, November 17, 1792, Froude III, 75.

² As to which see Ch. II.

³ Tone, who had written a pamphlet in favour of Catholic Emancipation, had in the spring of 1792 been appointed secretary of the Catholic Committee in the place of Richard Brooke.

⁴ Westmoreland to Dundas, December, 1792.

The Catholic Relief Act of 1793, which passed with only three dissentients, of whom Charlemont was one,¹ was the result. That Act (1) swept away all disabilities affecting ownership or disposition of land; (2) enabled Catholics to exercise the franchise; (3) qualified Catholics for the magistracy; (4) enabled Catholics possessing property of annual value of £10 and upwards in freehold or of the value of £300 in personalty, to carry arms; (5) enabled them to act as grand jurors and as petty jurors in all cases; (6) enabled them to hold commissions in army and navy—the higher ranks excepted—and qualified them for subordinate civil appointments; (7) opened Trinity College and the College of Physicians. The condition attached to these privileges was to take an oath (1) abjuring the principle that a heretic could be murdered, etc., (2) declaring that wrong is not excused by being done for the good of the Church, (3) not to disturb the established religion.

The statute of 1793 contained another important provision—it admitted to the franchise persons having a freehold² of the annual value of forty shillings. The landlord party calculated on increasing their influence by increasing the number of tenants who had a vote, for, of course, in those days of open voting, the tenant had to vote as his landlord wished, or quit.

The Act of 1793, while it qualified the Catholics to hold many offices, was, up to a period much later than the Union, allowed, so far as appointments were concerned, to remain a dead letter. No Catholic was chosen into a corporation. In many militia regiments there was not a Catholic commissioned officer; in others a very small proportion. Catholics were excluded from the Bank of Ireland.

During the year of Fitzwilliam's memorable Vice-royalty—1795—the Catholic question was raised again. Lecky, who seems to me to manifest a bias in favour of the Anglo-Irish, and a desire to transfer the responsibility for conduct of a reactionary character from their shoulders to those of the wicked English statesmen—writes of the Protestant position in 1795 as follows:

“The Protestant gentry of Ireland had many faults, but they were at this time remarkably free from religious bigotry; ³ one fact, however

¹ Hardy's *Life of Charlemont*, vol. II, p. 298.

² A freehold would include a lease for a life or lives—a very common form of tenure in those days.

is as certain as anything in Irish history—that if the Catholic question was not settled in 1795, rather than in 1829, it is the English Government and the English Government alone that was responsible for the delay.”

Both propositions seem to me to be opposed to the main facts of this period of Irish history, and to the tendencies of human nature.¹ The Protestant Parliament did little or nothing in the shape of Catholic relief until 1793, and then only under the most tremendous pressure from England. They did nothing whatever at any time to alleviate the tithe system, the infamy and abuses of which none knew better. Their policy of resisting any statesmanlike effort to raise the condition of the Catholics was manifested in 1831, when a scheme of National education, just to all, met with bitter opposition. The policy was perfectly intelligible, for to enfranchise, empower and educate the Catholics meant the death of the ascendancy which they enjoyed. Their attitude to the disestablishment of the Irish Church (1869) was one of uncompromising hostility to the end. The Rev. Timothy Corcoran, S.J., points out that the great measure of 1793 “was forced through the Parliament of Dublin by the strong hand of Pitt, when the same members had by a majority of almost ten to one rejected with contumely the petition of the Irish Catholics made but the year before.”²

Fitzwilliam, whose enlightened views, imbibed from his great friend Grattan, were known to all, may have been sent over in pursuance of Pitt’s policy to frighten the Protestant gentry into a Union. His coming must have been a terrific shock to the Protestant oligarchy; under its influence they were probably prepared to swallow anything. But when it was discovered that Fitzwilliam had no such sweeping mandate as was at first supposed, or that if

¹ A letter from Westmoreland to Pitt of January 18, 1792 (see Lecky, III, p. 48) graphically describes the fever of alarm and rage with which the Irish Protestants received the British suggestions for the emancipation of Catholics. Again, “the alarm was of the strongest kind. An address in favour of Protestant ascendancy was voted by the Corporation of Dublin and was likely to be re-echoed by every corporate town in the Kingdom” (*Ibid.* p. 55). Lecky, however, thinks the Irish Protestant opinion was not fairly represented by the Irish Government in its communication to Pitt (*Ibid.*, pp. 59, 60), and yet he says (p. 64), “It is, I think, undoubtedly true, that a wave of genuine alarm and opposition to concession at this time passed over a great part of Protestant Ireland” (*Ibid.*, p. 64). The Grand Juries of most of the counties in Ireland in 1792 passed strong resolutions protesting against the holding of a Convention by the Catholics (*Ibid.*). The instances given by Lecky (III, 285–6) prove nothing to the contrary: the Protestants were willing enough, on occasions, to be kind on the terms of preserving their own ascendancy.

² *State Policy in Irish Education*, p. 34.

he ever had ¹ it was withdrawn, they showed themselves in their true colours. Grattan's motion in May, 1795, to allow Catholics to enter Parliament was ignominiously rejected. Thus "the question of Catholic Emancipation was dismissed from the Irish Parliament, to be raised again as opportunity offered for purposes of faction, but never more into serious prospect of acceptance, as long as Ireland had a separate constitution."² A further motion by Grattan in favour of the Catholics, on October 17, 1796, was defeated by 143 to 19. And Cavour says: "During the whole of the last century the whole business of the Irish Parliament was to keep the Catholic masses in check, without a single thought of improving their condition."³

It is a noteworthy circumstance, in connection with the agitation for Catholic Emancipation, that the Catholic Hierarchy of Ireland, the higher ranks of the clergy, and the lay bodies of the Catholic organization were always profuse in their expressions of loyalty to the Throne. So far back as 1666, a petition of the "Roman Catholic Clergy of the Kingdom of Ireland solemnly protested before God and His Holy Angels that we own and acknowledge your Majesty to be our true and lawful King"; "that the petitioners were bound in conscience to be obedient to your Majesty in all civil and temporal affairs," and engaged to discover rebellion and conspiracy. A Catholic address to the Duke of Bedford in 1806 was almost slavish in its expressions:

"bound as we are to the fortunes of the Empire, by a remembrance of past and the hope of future benefits—by our preference and our oaths—should the wise generosity of our lawgivers vouchsafe to crown that hope which their justice inspires, it would be no longer our duty alone, but our pride to appear the foremost against approaching danger; and, if necessary to remunerate our benefactors by the sacrifice of our lives."

In 1800 the Catholic prelates prescribed a form of catechism in which obedience to the constituted authority was inculcated. In January, 1799, the Catholic Bishops passed a resolution, "That in the appointment of prelates to the Roman Catholic religion to vacant sees within the Kingdom, such interference of Government as may enable it to be satisfied with the loyalty of the person appointed is just and ought to be agreed to." This resolution was

¹ See pp. 72-77 as to the Fitzwilliam episode.

² Froude, III, 173.

³ *Thoughts on Ireland*, p. 56.

signed, by Archbishops O'Reilly, of Armagh, Troy of Dublin, Dillon of Tuam, Bray of Cashel; Bishops Plunkett of Meath, Moylan of Cork, Delany of Kildare, French of Elphin, Caulfield of Ferns, Cruise of Ardagh; and at the same time it was "admitted that a provision through Government for the Roman Catholic clergy of this Kingdom, competent and secured ought to be thankfully accepted."¹

The ultra-loyalty of the educated Catholics was exhibited during the War of American Independence. An address was presented in 1775, through Sir John de Blaquiere, "justly abhorring the unnatural rebellion which has lately broken out among some of his American subjects against his most sacred person and government. We humbly presume to lay at his feet two millions of loyal, faithful, and affectionate hearts and hands," and they vouch that "our dispositions and sentiments we well know to be those also of all our fellow Roman Catholic Irish subjects." This highly flown declaration, signed by Lord Fingall and other Catholic leaders, was scarcely in accordance with the facts. The Irish peasant of the period was too ignorant to be capable of forming an opinion on the merits of the War of American Independence, or upon any other question whatever save the hard problem of his own existence. What opinion there was amongst the Irish masses on the subject of the war with America was in Ulster and was in favour of America. Many of the kinsfolk of the Northern Presbyterians had emigrated to America and were fighting on the side of America. It was not till a considerable period after the Union that Irish Catholics emigrated to America at all.

At the period with which our narrative opens, we are confronted with many shocking examples of criminality on the part of the Irish peasant, of intolerance and selfishness on the part of the Irish lord. Some allowance must be made for both.

Man is largely the product of circumstances external to himself; his education, his environment, his needs, social influences, the mental habits of his day and class all go to the making of his character. The peasant of the period was illiterate, ignorant, without the guidance or example of any middle or upper class whom he could

¹ Wyse, vol. II, App. XVII. The document commences thus: "At a meeting of the Roman Catholic prelates, held in Dublin the 17th, 18th, 19th of January, 1799, to deliberate on a proposal from Government of an independent provision for the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland under certain regulations."

respect and trust. He was fighting for existence ; he had a sense of intolerable wrong ; his primitive instincts were subject to no check.

So far as concerns the lord, the ethical standards of the day on the subject of State religion and religious and class oppression must be borne in mind. In most countries there was a belief (1) that a state church was essential for the preservation and well-being of the state ; (2) that the monarch should belong to the state church ; (3) that it was necessary that his advisers and officers should belong to it ; from which it followed (4) that the admission to power of those who did not belong to it was a source of danger. That persons who did not belong to the state church had to help to pay for it was their misfortune. This view had a certain amount of Catholic acquiescence. One of the Southern Bishops, Dr. Coppinger, put a chapel under an interdict because some of the parishioners had put up in the chapel a notice against tithes ; ¹ the Catholic Bishop of Cork, Dr. Moylan, writing to Sir John Hippisley on September 14, 1799, said : “ Far be it from me to harbour the most distant idea of lessening in the smallest degree the income of the gentlemen of the established church, but, I am convinced that, unless the mode of collecting the tithes be changed, it will be an annual source of disaffection.” Even O’Connell said that “ he should like to see the church sufficiently but reasonably provided for—Archbishops £5,000 ; Bishops £4,000 ; Inferior clergy £400 ; Archbishop of Armagh £15,000 to £20,000.” ² The long-suffering Irish peasant, in the beginning of the anti-tithe agitation, seems to have directed his attention to the amount of tithe and the method of its collection rather than to its principle, though one may suppose that at bottom, in spite of the specious reasonings of his betters, he regarded it as rank robbery.

The backbone of the objection to Catholic Emancipation both before the Union and after the Union lay in the allegation that a person could not be a good Catholic and a good citizen at the same time. Reliance was placed on the Pope’s claim to temporal power, upon claims, in very early times, to depose kings and princes at will, and, indeed, to universal monarchy.⁴ It took a great deal

¹ See the Bishop’s letter dated September 2, 1799, quoted Castlereagh’s *Memoirs*, II, 337.

² Castlereagh’s *Memoirs*, II, 401 ; see also speeches in Catholic Debates.

³ *Life of O’Connell*, by his Son, II, 467.

⁴ There were other allegations as well, that a Catholic was taught that he need not keep faith with heretics, and that heretics could be lawfully perse-

to convince people that the papal attitude had been tacitly, if not expressly, abandoned. Even Gladstone, writing in 1875, could not quite get over the prejudice caused by what the great Bishop Doyle ("J.K.L."), who never blinked facts and was, for that and other reasons, one of the most powerful controversialists of his day, himself spoke of the Pope's "aggression" in mediæval times.¹ "We are taunted," wrote the same Bishop, "with the proceedings of Popes, what my Lord, have we Catholics to do with proceedings of Popes, or why should we be made accountable for them?"² In his own delightful fashion, the Rev. Sidney Smith, Canon of St. Paul's, writing in 1800, describes the intolerance of the day:³

"In England, I solemnly believe blue and red baboons to be more popular than Catholics, and Presbyterians—they are more understood, and there is a greater disposition to do something for them. When a country squire hears of an ape, his first feeling is to give it nuts and apples. When he hears of a Dissenter or a Catholic his immediate impulse is to commit it to the country jail—to shave its head—to alter its customary food, and to have it positively whipped."

Indeed, England seems to have emancipated itself from these notions sooner than most countries; and the time is gone by for keeping up the pretence that any side has an especial claim to upbraid the other for having ever entertained them. According to the Jesuit writer, Schrader, the Pope in 1856 condemned the then recent Spanish law which tolerated other forms of worship,⁴ and in 1848 a papal concession of a new constitution to the Papal States made it one of the conditions that non-Catholics should not have the franchise.⁵ Writing, in 1826, of the "demon of persecution," Bishop Doyle said, "Protestants and Catholics have

cut. Up to 1796, a Catholic Bishop on his consecration took an oath "hereticos persequor et impugnabo." The Sacred College at Rome in that year declared that these words "are to be understood as referring to the Bishop's solicitude and efforts in convincing heretics of their error and procuring their reconciliation with the Catholic Church," but directed that the words should thenceforward be omitted—Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, III, 134.

¹ Evidence of Bishop Doyle before Lords Committee, March 18, 1826, *Report*, p. 190; Gladstone *On the Vatican Decrees* (1875), p. 12.

² *Essay on the Catholic Claims by Bishop Doyle to Lord Liverpool*, 1826, p. 111. This essay refutes, in an irresistible fashion, the "arguments which," as the Bishop himself says, "are still urged with some degree of plausibility, against the prayers of His Majesty's loyal and devoted Catholic subjects" (Preface, p. ii).

³ *Plymley's Letters*, p. 73.

⁴ "Der Papst und die Modernen Ideen" referred to in Gladstone's *Rome, Newest Fashions in Religion*, p. 25.

⁵ Trevelyan's *Gaibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic*, p. 7.

alike to deplore the ignorance and infatuation of their ancestors."¹ After all, if Mr. Hilaire Belloc in 1924² thought that there is a "necessary conflict between the Civil State and the Catholic Church where the two are not identified," British and Irish Protestant statesmen can hardly be blamed for thinking the same thing in 1800 or up to 1829.

The same instinct of self-preservation that made the Irish peasant a savage made the Irish landlord a ruthless and exacting tyrant. To recede an inch, he thought, would start a landslide involving himself, his family and dependants, his possessions and his religion.

Something can also be said in mitigation of the judgment upon Great Britain for the trade restrictions she imposed upon Ireland. They were wholly in accord with the spirit of the times. The view long prevailed that any country might legitimately treat its colonies and dependencies as it suited the mother country; fostering their trade at one time; depressing it at another, but always in the intended interest of the mother country. When it was thought expedient to help the cultivation of tobacco in the colonies so that they might be able to pay for manufactured goods, a flourishing tobacco growing industry in Kent was ruined by an absolute prohibition. Conversely, when the woollen industry of England showed signs of becoming the staple industry of that country, Ireland, which was looked upon as a mere colony, suffered the loss of its woollen manufactures. Now and again Ireland benefited by English trade restrictions. Thus, Ireland was up to 1846 advantaged by the existence of a stiff import duty upon corn imported into England from abroad, while Irish corn was admitted free of duty. Trade policy of this kind was shortsighted and unjust, but it was universal.

Misgovernment in the British Isles up to the eighteenth century was not confined to Ireland. English Catholics and Dissenters were persecuted as well as Irish Catholics; the lot of the English hind or factory hand was no better than that of the Irish peasant. The political, religious and economic thought of the period was extremely crude, and both islands suffered in consequence. But it was natural that Ireland should feel the persecution more, for it was the persecution of a native by a stranger and of a majority by a minority. The memory of the period is to-day for Englishmen a matter of mere historical interest; it is for Irishmen a cause of bitter resentment.

¹ *Essay on the Catholic Claims*, p. 126.

² *The Contrast*, p. 182.

CHAPTER II

THE REBELLION OF 1798

Character of the Rebellion—Republican Movement in the North—Formation of United Irish Society—Revolutionary Propaganda amongst Peasantry—Intrigues with France—Attitude of Leading Catholics—Assassination Denounced—Number of United Irishmen—Recall of Fitzwilliam—The Battle of the Diamond—Orange Society—The Rebellion—Excesses in Rebellion—Humbert's Landing—Punishments for Rebellion—Was the Rebellion "Fomented" by Pitt?—Effects of Rebellion—Note as to Leaders of the United Irish Society.

When, in an armed civil conflict, the interests, passions and instincts of one religious persuasion tend in one direction, and those of another persuasion tend in the opposite, it is plausible to say that the war is a religious war. Castlereagh thought the rebellion of 1798 fell into this category, for he called it a "religious frenzy,"¹ and the same assumption drove shoals of Protestants to the Catholic baptismal fonts in Wexford, when the rebels were in possession of that town. Yet neither at the top nor at the bottom was the driving force of the rebellion of a religious character.

The founders of the United Irish Society in Belfast and Dublin in 1791 were educated men of various persuasions or of no persuasion,² who were agreed upon the necessity for some great constitutional change. As to the nature and extent of the change they differed much amongst themselves. Some, influenced by the happenings in America and France, were republicans by conviction and temperament; others would have been content with a reasonable measure of Parliamentary reform and removal of religious disabilities.

The tendency of the moderates to swing from right to left became

¹ Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, I, 219: "the religious persecution to which the Protestants in Wexford have been exposed." *Ibid.*

² Tone, Butler, Emmet, Hamilton Rowan, Napper Tandy, Arthur O'Connor, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Bond, Russell, Neilson, and the two Sheares were all, nominally, Protestants (Lecky, III, 202). Goldwin Smith says that the rebellious movement "began . . . amongst the rationalists and freethinkers of the North who sympathized with the French Revolution."

more marked as time went on. The tide of the continental war did not flow in England's favour ; the prospect of Parliamentary reform receded day by day ; a sinister significance was attached to the recall of Fitzwilliam ; ¹ foreign support would be forthcoming for an attempt to break the English connexion, but France had no interest in mere schemes to reform Parliament ; conspiracies, when forced to take a narrow underground channel, as this was, gain in speed and fury. Many of the moderates were swept off their feet or were shamed into bolder methods by fear of the stigma of desertion.

But the untutored Southern peasants, who formed the rank and file of the insurgent forces, had no share in the political visions of their leaders. They knew only that they were oppressed. The millstones of tithes and rents hung heavily upon them ; they had no security of tenure ; their condition was as miserable as that of serfs. They were told, as will appear, that a successful issue of the rebellion would secure the spoliation of their landlords and their own emancipation. Their fears, too, were wrought upon by suggestions that it was intended that oppression of their class should go even further. They were out to end their wretchedness or mend it by the means that came readiest to their hands.

Wolfe Tone, in a document found on Jackson,² divided the inhabitants of Ireland into three classes : the Church Protestants, who were described to be in favour of England ; the Dissenters who were said to be enlightened Republicans ; ³ the bulk of the population, the Catholics, who were stated to be in the lowest state of ignorance, and ready for any change, because no change could make them worse.

In all this there was no religious motive, and the leading Catholics, lay and clerical, were almost unanimously opposed to the rebellion. But when, in the heat of conflict, the Catholic peasant faced the Protestant landlord and his Protestant aiders and abettors, a confusion was inevitable. Every Catholic came to be looked on as an enemy of the established government, and every non-Catholic as an enemy of the people.⁴ The war took on many of the aspects

¹ See p. 72 *post*.

² See Whiteside's *Life and Death of the Irish Parliament*, p. 191.

³ But this is obviously an overstatement. The Presbyterians were very divided in opinion.

⁴ This, at any rate, applied to the South. In the North, the non-Catholic rebels went to their homes on hearing of the course of events in the South, see p. 89.

of a religious war ; its bitterness and excesses, indeed, were none the less because its origin or motives were not religious at all.

Lecky was of opinion that a republican form of government found favour with the Ulster Presbyterians, as being more in accord with the temperament of members of that persuasion and with their form of worship.¹ This theory may have some foundation, but a more obvious cause for the Northern participation in the rebellious movement lay in the fact that the Northern Presbyterians suffered almost as much from political and other disabilities as the Catholics of the South. The privilege of sitting in Parliament was a hollow one as long as the Protestant borough-mongers controlled nine-tenths of the so-called constituencies. The Presbyterians had only recently been relieved of the provisions of the Test Act. Tithes were exacted in North and South alike. The relations between landlord and tenant, though not quite so oppressive as elsewhere, owing to the growth of the Ulster custom, which gave security of tenure, were far from satisfactory. The Presbyterian Scot, of comparatively humble origin, had no reason to love the Anglo-Irish Protestant landed aristocracy. Moreover, the commercial restrictions had hit the North at least as hard as the South.

At any rate, there was much sympathy in Ulster with the Americans in their fight for independence ; and the men of that province looked with pride and approval on those of their stock who contributed so much to the successful issue of that struggle. Nor did the Belfast Presbyterians share the fears and hatred of the French revolution which the genius of Burke instilled into the minds of most people in Great Britain and Ireland. On the contrary, in 1791, the Belfast Volunteers celebrated the anniversary of the revolution and exchanged fraternal greetings with the revolutionaries in Bordeaux.² Still, the people of North-East-Ulster had had some measure of prosperity ; they were of British stock ; they valued the British connexion ; and it is highly unlikely that their scheme of things embraced a complete severance of it. A real share in political power would have contented them. If any considerable body of them ever became out and out Republicans, it was probably because they saw no other method of achieving reform. If Gordon is right, the original Peep of Day boys were Presbyterians.³

In 1791 the Society of the United Irishmen was founded in Bel-

¹ Lecky, III, 8, 202.

² Gordon's *Ireland*, II, 324.

³ Gordon's *Ireland*, II, 334.

HISTORY OF IRELAND

fast and Dublin. The Belfast Society had for its avowed object "the purpose of forwarding a brotherhood of affection, a communion of rights, and a union of power, among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, and thereby to obtain a complete reform in the legislature founded on the principles of civil, political, and religious liberty."¹

In the South, the success of the French Revolution and the writings of Paine and others had produced some doctrinaire Republicans, like the brothers Sheares.² The Dublin Society of United Irishmen was founded on November 9, 1791. Its manifesto, drafted by Tone, contained the following: "Antiquity can no longer defend absurd and oppressive forms against the common sense and common interests of mankind. All government is acknowledged to originate from the people. We have no national Government. We are ruled by Englishmen and the servants of Englishmen"; it went on to call for "an equal representation of all the people in Parliament," so as to effect "the equal distribution of the rights of man throughout all classes."

There was no difficulty in impressing the populace into the service of the United Irish Society. The condition of the country has been described in the preceding chapter. The majority of the people were in a state of abject misery, the slaves of landlords and tithe proctors. Their sense of oppression was quickened by the reflection that the landlord and the parson were aliens having no moral right to the smallest portion of the produce of the soil. To destroy their power and confiscate their property was as praiseworthy as it was desirable. The present condition and past history of the country united to form a terrible current of jealousy and hatred. McNevin, in his evidence before the Secret Committee of the Irish House of Lords (1798) puts the case thus: ³ "The lower order of Catholics consider Protestant and Englishman, that is, English settler, as synonymous and as their natural enemy—the same Irish word (*sassena*) signified both." And the Irish peasant felt in his bones how futile were all appeals to an Irish Parliament, made up of landlords and parsons

¹ Gordon's *Ireland*, II, 325.

² The extreme Republican tendencies of the brothers Sheares appears from the incident related by them to Daniel O'Connell. They managed, by bribing two National Guards, to be present at the murder of Louis XVI, and dipped a handkerchief, which they showed to O'Connell, in the blood of the King.—*Life and Times of O'Connell*, by His Son, I, 10, 535.

³ App., p. 45.

or their partizans or hirelings—to whom any real measure of reform meant extinction.

The revolutionary agents moulded this plastic material at will. Hopes were held out to the peasants of a quick deliverance by methods that struck his intelligence as the most ready and most likely—the pike and the gun. No appeal to his sense of wrong, his desire for revenge, his fears, his greed or cupidity was omitted. The Irish House of Commons Committee in 1797 reported :

“Your Committee think it necessary to state, as their decided opinion, upon a review of the whole evidence that has been laid before the Committee, that a complete revolution and confiscation of property and the establishment of a republic upon French principles, are the real objects of the conspiracy and not amelioration of their present condition.”¹

And the House of Lords Committee in 1798 stated :

“The people were next taught to believe that their organization would lead to the abolition of tithes and to a distribution of property, inasmuch as they would become members of a democracy which would govern the country.”

This conclusion is borne out by the declarations of many of the revolutionary leaders, which show the nature of the sweep that was to be made. The rebel Miles Byrne² says :

“The Church property becoming immediately the property of the state, and the estates of all those who should emigrate or remain in the English army, fighting against their country, the revenues arising from their funds would have been employed to provide for and defray all the expenses necessary for the defence and independence of the country.”

In the nature of things, a confiscation upon these lines would have comprehended virtually all the propertied people in the country. In the house of the brothers Sheares³ was found a proclamation intended to have been published the morning after the insurrection had broken out.⁴ This document promised to those who took part in the insurrection “from the hands of the grateful nation an ample recompense out of the property which the crimes of our enemies have forfeited into its hands” ; it also promised that every person in the country should be

¹ *Secret Committee*, p. 71.

² Arrested May 21, 1798.

³ *Memoirs*, p. 4.

⁴ Plowden, vol. II, p. 683.

"restored to those equal rights which the God of nature has given to all men ; until an order of things shall be established in which no superiority shall be acknowledged among the citizens of Erin⁶ but that of virtue and talents. Vengeance, Irishmen ! Vengeance on your oppressors ! "

On the other hand, Emmet seems to have held more moderate views. He said that Sheares was not a member of the old executive ; that the design was to avoid bloodshed as much as possible, but to retain men of rank as hostages ; that, though it was natural to expect confiscations, it was intended merely to confiscate in the case of those who opposed them, allowing their families a maintenance out of their properties.¹ Tone said to Hoche, " when we get to Ireland, the aristocracy and gentry are so odious, that I am afraid we shall not be able to save them from a general massacre." ² Tone also bears witness that Plunket asked him for Carton (the Duke of Leinster's property) when the land would be redistributed ; he replied that Plunket could not have Carton because the Duke of Leinster was his friend, but he might have Curraghmore, the Marquis of Waterford's estate. A resolution of the United Societies of Donaghadee and its vicinity ran thus : " 6th Resolved that there are a great many inimical and will no doubt prove hostile to the cause of liberty ; their estates or property shall be confiscated and directed to the national benefit." ³ The *Union Star*, an organ of the United Irishmen, after referring to the various confiscations of Irish property, including that of " the 17th year of Charles I, confiscating three millions of acres at one sitting " goes on to say : " Remember that the lapse of years does not justify any right in your masters to retain the property of your fathers ; ⁴ the tyrants of Ireland must restore the plunder of ages to the country, when their acres will be brought to the national hammer." ⁵

The fears and religious prejudices of the uneducated were also wrought upon. The Irish House of Lords Committee reported :

" The emissaries of treason, in order to prevail with them to adopt the system of organization, first represented that it was necessary in their own defence, as their Protestant fellow subjects had entered

¹ Plowden, vol. II, pp. 684-5. But the limitation of confiscation to those who opposed them was illusory ; all the landed property owners were bound to oppose a movement of the kind.

² Whiteside's *Life and Death of the Irish Parliament*, p. 194.

³ *Commons Secret Committee*, 1798, p. 56.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1798, p. 256.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

into a solemn league and covenant to destroy them, having sworn to wade up to their knees in Popish blood."

Copies of the alleged rules of the Orangemen were found in the house of Marlay, a tailor, in Hoey's Court, and on the persons and in the houses of United Irishmen. These rules included a rule or resolution that every man should be ready at a moment's warning to burn all the chapels and meeting houses in the county and city of Dublin. These rules were a complete fabrication.¹ The *Union Star* contained the following: "The above named,² we know to be part of the standing committee for burning villages and Catholic chapels, murdering fathers, mothers and children indiscriminately."³ The *Press* of October 17, 1797: "The Orangemen have solemnly sworn to exterminate His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects."⁴ An Orange oath to exterminate the Catholics was published. This has been again and again denounced by leading Orangemen as a fabrication. Miles Byrne's memoirs contain an admission that, prior to the rebellion, he used to gallop his horse up and down the streets and villages at night to convince the people that the Orangemen were coming.

Under the influence of these hopes, fears, and threats, the United Irish Society penetrated to the provinces.

Up to 1794, the United Irish Society, whose avowed objects were perfectly legal, flourished quite openly. The extremists amongst them were, however, gaining ground, and newspapers and pamphlets appeared in which sedition was preached, and hopes expressed of a French invasion. Prayers were offered up in a Belfast church for the success of the French revolution. Men were drilled at night in Belfast; arms were imported; attempts, which proved unsuccessful, were made to seduce the military. In the South, a body of men calling themselves the First National Battalion was formed. Their uniform was copied from the French and they wore devices upon which a harp without the Crown appeared.⁵

The Society was proclaimed in 1794. It then became a secret society, with district and county delegations carrying out the orders of a central committee at Dublin. The signed confession of Arthur

¹ *Commons Secret Committee*, 1798, p. 252.

² Clare, Carhampton, Drogheda, Clonmel, Pelham, Cuff, Monk, Mason, Wolfe, Fitzgerald and Lodge Morres, who had signed a proclamation in council proclaiming the *Union Star* as a "vehicle for inciting assassination."

³ *Secret Committee*, p. 258.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁵ *Report of the Secret Committee of House of Lords in 1793.*

O'Connor, Thomas Addis Emmet and Wm. James McNevin places the inauguration of an elaborate military organization at the end of 1796 and the plan of a general insurrection in the month of March, 1798.

Negotiations between France and the United Irishmen were set on foot in 1795, and in that year one Edward John Lewins was sent to France, becoming "the accredited resident ambassador of the Irish rebellious Union to the French Republic." The Bantry Bay invasion in December, 1796, was arranged at an interview, which took place in the summer of 1796, in Switzerland, between Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Arthur O'Connor, and General Hoche. A document found on one John Lynch states that "very flattering accounts have been received from abroad, which will, in a very few days, be officially handed down." They also addressed themselves to Spain. The progress of the French negotiations is described in the confession of O'Connor, Emmet, and McNevin :

"About the middle of 1796 a meeting of the Executive was held, more important in its discussions and its consequences than any that had preceded it"; "this meeting was convened in consequence of a letter from one of the society¹ who had emigrated on account of political opinions; it mentioned that the state of the country had been represented to the Government of France in so favourable a light as to induce them to resolve upon invading Ireland, for the purpose of enabling it to separate itself from Great Britain; it was resolved to employ the proffered assistance for the purpose of separation."

About October, 1796, a messenger from the French Republic arrived who told the leaders of the intention of the French to invade Ireland speedily with 15,000 men and a great quantity of arms and ammunition. In December, 1796, the armament, consisting of seventeen ships of the line, thirteen frigates and other vessels to the number of forty-three in all, and carrying about 15,000 soldiers, set sail from Brest under Hoche. It met with ill luck of all sorts. It was scattered by a fog, and only a part of it reached Bantry Bay, where it anchored. A fierce storm arose and did much damage to the ships. The enterprise was ignominiously abandoned on December 24, and the bedraggled remnant of the squadron found its way back to its French harbours—without ever having sighted a British ship.

In April, 1797, negotiations with France were resumed and an

¹ This was Tone.

agent of the Society was sent to request men, arms, ammunition and officers. Another agent was sent with the like request in June, 1797; the force asked for was 10,000 at the most, 5,000 at the least. The second agent, while at Paris, and after the negotiations for peace between England and France at Lille were broken off, got an assurance "that the Irish never should be abandoned until a separation was effected."¹ A message was received stating that a fleet was ready at Texel. It never came. Delayed by contrary winds it emerged in October, 1797, and was overwhelmed by Duncan at Camperdown.

The Catholic Bishops were alarmed.

Dr. Lanigan, Catholic Bishop of Ossory, writing on March 10, 1798, to Dr. Troy, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, says :

"The priests told me, and I believe them, that the fear of assassination prevents them from speaking as much as they wished against United Irishmen. This did not deter me from exposing, at the altar, in the neighbourhood of the Queen's County, their horrid principles."

Dr. Dillon, Catholic Bishop of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, addressed a pastoral to the Catholic laity of his diocese, dated April 6, 1798 :

"Let me conjure you to reject, with horror, all clandestine oaths which may be proposed to you. As for my part, it will be the pride of my life, and the greatest consolation which I can enjoy here below, should I be, in any degree, instrumental in preserving you from the machinations of dangerous and designing men."

Dr. Troy wrote to the clergy of his diocese on May 27, 1798, directing them to call upon any of those who have been seduced into a combination against the State to withdraw; to deliver up arms; the insurrection "has already produced the most horrid effects. Assassinations, murder, atrocities of every kind, have been committed." After the Rebellion, the Masters of Maynooth College issued a statement dated April 22, 1799, that the President, Masters and others of the seminary had exerted themselves in suppressing it, and that the students had been sent home for fear of being forced by the rebels to join them. A certain number of the students were

¹ Ireland was never even mentioned in the negotiations in 1797 at Lille—see Lecky, IV, 161—but the hopes of peasant dupes were kept up by such statements as this: "Your country is represented by brethren of ability and virtue; they plead your cause at Lille; they negotiate for an independent Irish Republic in the teeth of that diplomatic spy, Malmesbury; they are countenanced and encouraged by the French Commissioners" (*Union Star*, an organ of the United Irishmen).—*Commons Secret Committee*, 1798, p. 257.

expelled for sedition. The Pope, through the Cardinal Secretary of State, wrote a circular letter in 1793 to the Irish Bishops exhorting the condemnation of sedition. "You may signify emphatically how much you condemn the conduct of those misled Catholics."

Some of the younger clergy were Republicans. A memorandum sent to the French Directory by Dr. McNevin, after giving a glowing description of the preparations in Ireland to co-operate with a French invasion, goes on to say: "the Catholic priests . . . are in general good Republicans." But the statement was a gross exaggeration, framed for the purpose of encouraging the French invasion. Miles Byrne¹ is probably much nearer the truth: "The priests did everything in their power to stop the progress of the association of United Irishmen."

The Catholic lay leaders took the same view as their bishops, and published a declaration on May 6, 1798, signed by Lords Fingall, Gormanstown, Southwell, Kenmare, Sir Edward Bellew and forty-one gentlemen and by all the bishops, professors of divinity and the President of the College of Maynooth, exhorting those who were in the rebellious movement to return to their allegiance and not to be led away "by a set of desperate and profligate men, availing themselves of the want of education and experience in those whom they seek to use as instruments for gratifying their own wicked and interested views."

The leaders of the United Irishmen warmly resented the imputation that their society favoured assassination as a method of achieving their aims. The confession of O'Connor, Emmet, and McNevin states:

"It has been alleged against the United Irishmen that they established a system of assassination. Nothing has ever been imputed to them that we feel more pleasure in being able to disavow. . . . It is unfair and unjust to charge the whole body with the vices of a few of its members. . . . We solemnly declare we disbelieve such committees" (i.e. of assassination) "having ever existed. . . . We also declare that, in no communications from those who were placed at the head of the United Irishmen, and in no official paper, was assassination ever inculcated but frequently and fervently reprobated; it was considered by them with horror, on account of its criminality, and with personal dread, because it would render ferocious the minds of men in whose hands their lives were placed, most peculiarly placed, inasmuch as, between them and the rest of the body, they were out of the protection of the

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 7.

law. In proof of this assertion, we would beg leave to refer to a sketch of a publication which we believe was seized among the papers of one of us at the time of his arrest, and which it was intended should appear, if the paper to which it alluded had not been discontinued."

It is likely that the newspaper referred to was the *Union Star*, which had no qualms whatever in the matter, as appears by the following passages :

"As the *Union Star* is an official paper, the managers promise the public that no characters shall be hazarded but such as are denounced by authority, as being the partners and creatures of Pitt and his sanguinary journeyman, Luttrell. The *Star* offers to public justice the following detestable traitors, as spies and perjured informers. Perhaps some arm, more lucky than the rest, may reach his heart and free the world from bondage." (Here follows list of proscribed.) "Though we are not advocates for assassination, we know on the authority of history that assassination preserved the liberties and rescued many of the ancient republics. "We certainly do not advise, although we do not decry, assassination, as we conceive it is the only mode at present to bring to justice the royal agents." ¹

Gordon states that in the May of 1797 the number of men enrolled in Ulster as members of that society amounted to nearly 100,000.² As appears by a report of the Ulster Provincial Committee, held at Dungannon on September 14, 1797, at the house of Samuel Thomson, reports were delivered that

"Leinster was in a tolerable state of organization, as also Connaught and Munster, and there had been a great number of United Irishmen made, more since the proclamation. They had also erected an executive in Leinster, which would co-operate with the Ulster Executive."

A return found amongst Lord Edward Fitzgerald's papers stated that there were 279,896 armed rebels, of whom 110,999 in Ulster.

Somewhat elaborate instructions dated April 19, 1798, were drawn

¹ Neilson seems to have been in favour of some measures of an extreme kind, for when he was arrested on May 23, 1798, a letter was found on him signed by John Sheares:—"Your scheme I view with horror"; it goes on to say that if he did not give an assurance to prevent the perpetration of the plot, Sheares would denounce him to the Government: Musgrave Appendix. Neilson tried to explain this in his evidence (*Commons Secret Committee*, 1798, p. 317) by saying that it referred to a proposed attack on Kilmainham jail.

² Gordon's *Ireland*, vol. II, p. 356. Amongst the reports of the branches discovered there was one which gave the number for Belfast as follows: Men 2,639, Guns 526, Bayonets 399, Pistols 88, Pikes 567, Ball Cartridges 12,130, Balls 15,952, Cannons 6, Mortar 1 (*Commons Secret Committee*, 1798, p. 60).

up and circulated by the Provincial Committee of Leinster, relative to preparations for an immediate campaign. It gives the numbers as follows : Carlow, 11,300 ; Kildare, 11,910 (6 Colonels) ; Kilkenny, 6,700 ; Co. Dublin, 7,412 (3 Colonels) ; Meath, 8,596 (3 Colonels) ; Wicklow, 14,000 ; King's Co., 6,500 ; Westmeath, 5,250 ; City of Dublin, 8,597.

There were societies in England also formed to promote Republican principles. The United Britons sent an address and a delegate to the United Irishmen on February 5, 1798 ; in the address it is pointed out that the emancipation of both countries was aimed at.

Two events did much to strengthen the extreme section of the United Irishmen—the recall of Fitzwilliam, and the Battle of the Diamond.

In 1794 the war emergency produced an English coalition ministry. There was the usual reshuffling of offices, and the Whig leader, the Duke of Portland, became Home Secretary in place of Dundas, who was transferred to another position. The Earl of Fitzwilliam, a Whig nobleman of great possessions and family influence, was appointed Lord President of the Council, but he wanted the Vice-Royalty of Ireland. This post Fitzwilliam had been offered in 1789 by the Prince of Wales during the King's incapacity, but the King's recovery prevented the matter going any further. Fitzwilliam was a close friend of Grattan, and had very advanced views on the question of Catholic emancipation. There was a struggle between the two sections of the Coalition ministry over the appointment, and especially as to the terms upon which Fitzwilliam should go to Ireland, if he were to go at all. The proposed appointment had got so far in August, 1794, that on the 4th of that month Fitzwilliam thought himself justified in writing to Grattan intimating his appointment and hoping for Grattan's support.¹ Grattan, afterwards, on October 15, 1794, saw Pitt, at Pitt's request, and, according to his son, was offered but declined office in the Government.² Lord Loughborough, who was the Lord Chancellor,³ busied himself in the matter, whether with Pitt's authority or without it is not clear,⁴ and had Fitzwilliam and Grattan frequently to his house in Bedford Square. There was a suggestion to get rid of

¹ In a postscript Fitzwilliam says "this letter is written rather prematurely."

² Grattan's *Memoirs*, vol. IV, pp. 173–5.

³ As to Loughborough's subsequent conduct in reference to Catholic Emancipation, see p. 157 *post*.

⁴ See Rose's *Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters*, p. 23.

the Irish Lord Chancellor, Fitzgibbon, but Pitt put his foot down, and would not consent.¹ By the middle of October Portland had become very insistent and threatened to leave the Cabinet if his demands as to Fitzwilliam's appointment were not complied with.² The meetings in Bedford Square and the proposed appointment of a popular Viceroy were, of course, bruited about in Ireland, but Grenville, writing on October 24, referred to the fact that the reports of a change of system had blown over, though in the meantime, he said, they had done infinite harm.³

So matters stood when, on November 14, 1794, Pitt wrote to Portland suggesting an interview to discuss the question of the Viceroyalty. At that or a subsequent interview Fitzwilliam was nominated but he did not receive his actual appointment until December 10. There are conflicting accounts of the interviews at which his appointment was agreed to. The account given by Grenville, who was present, appears from the Dropmore papers, which were unearthed by Lord Ashbourne in 1898⁴ and were published in 1899. If Grenville's account is correct, it is clear that no change of policy or men in Ireland was sanctioned or contemplated, and indeed as to policy, the Viceroy was instructed to defer to the opinion of the King's Government in London the Catholic question.⁵

Fitzwilliam's recollection differs from the memorandum of Grenville. In the first place, he said that in one of his interviews with Pitt, he had told Pitt that he proposed to dismiss Beresford, a reactionary high-placed official in Ireland. Pitt, however, denied this. As to the Catholic question, Fitzwilliam's account was thus given by himself in a debate in 1799 :

"Yielding to the argument of not wishing to entangle Government in difficulties upon the subject at that period, I admit that, under orders, clearly understood by me, not to give rise to or bring forward the question of Catholic Emancipation on the part of the Government, I assumed the government of Ireland. But, in yielding to this argument, I entered my protest against resisting the question, if it should be brought forward from any other quarter, and I made most distinct declarations that, in case of its being so brought forward, it should receive my full support.

¹ Stanhope's *Pitt*, vol. II, p. 283.

² Rose's *Pitt and Napoleon: Letters and Essays*, p. 24.

³ *Buckingham Papers*, vol. II, p. 317.

⁴ Ashbourne's *Life of Pitt*.

⁵ Rose's *Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters*, p. 30.

With these declarations, I assumed the government of Ireland. This I state upon my honour."¹

Save for the purpose of estimating the characters of Pitt and Fitzwilliam respectively—with which this volume is not especially concerned—it is immaterial whether Fitzwilliam's recollection is correct or not, for a force was soon to be brought into play which prevented in 1795, as it prevented in 1800, the possibility of further concessions to the Catholics. The importance of the Fitzwilliam crisis lies in the hopes that his advent aroused, in the cruel disappointment caused by his recall, and in the fact that Irish propagandists, including Arthur Griffith, have depicted the episode as having been deliberately engineered, from start to finish, to stir up an insurrection as a preliminary to carrying the Union.

Fitzwilliam arrived in Dublin on Sunday, January 4, 1795. On the following Wednesday he gave notice to Beresford that he intended to dispense with his services. Beresford had enormous influence; he was the prime jobber of his day and had stuffed his dependants or connections into one-fourth of the positions in Ireland; "the influence of John Beresford was, or was believed to be, so overwhelming, that he was called the King of Ireland."² He had no intention of submitting tamely, and proceeded to set the wires in England in motion against Fitzwilliam. He wrote to Auckland immediately, and crossed to London, when the weather would permit, on January 23.

Fitzwilliam, on January 8, reported to Portland, "I tremble about the Roman Catholics," and announced that he would use the best efforts he could to stop the progress of a Catholic petition and to defer the agitation on the question.³ In a further letter to Portland of January 15, after describing the disturbed state of the country, he wrote:

"I shall not do my duty if I do not distinctly state it as my opinion, that not to grant *cheerfully* on the part of Government all the Catholics wish, will not only be exceedingly impolitic, but perhaps dangerous. . . . No time is to be lost. . . . Pray do not delay to talk with Pitt on the subject. If I receive no very peremptory directions to the contrary I shall acquiesce with a good grace."⁴

¹ *Parl. Hist.* XXXIV, 672; see also a letter to Lord Carlisle quoted Lecky, III, p. 262.

² Lecky, III, p. 273.

³ Lecky, III, p. 264.

⁴ Lecky, III, pp. 265-270. Rose says (*Pitt and Napoleon: Letters and Essays*, p. 31): "Unfortunately owing to stress of weather a long delay

Fitzwilliam got no reply, but on January 28, Grenville wrote to him hinting that Beresford's dismissal was not quite consistent with his former assurances,¹ and a few days later Portland wrote him officially to the same effect.²

The Irish Parliament had met on January 22. Fitzwilliam's speech from the Throne made no mention of the Catholic question, but dwelt on the necessity of providing liberal supplies for the war, and hoped for the united strength and zeal of His Majesty's subjects of every description in the present dangerous condition of European states, assuring them of His Sovereign's most cheerful concurrence in every measure adopted for this purpose and his own cordial inclination to promote it. Grattan took advantage of the tone of this speech to push the matter of conciliation as far as possible, and said :

"The King recommends national harmony ; he bids perpetual peace to all your animosities ; he touches with the sceptre those troubled waters which have long shattered the weary bark of your country, under her various and false pilots, for ages of insane persecution and impious theology. He spreads his paternal wings over all his children—discerning with parental affection and a father's eye, in the variety of their features, the fidelity of their resemblance."

Great was the expectation aroused ; the hopes of moderate men ran high that some measure of reform might be introduced to satisfy, in part at least, the popular demands. Parliament passed loyal addresses and dutifully made provision for Ireland's share in the war.

Meanwhile, the Beresford swarm was buzzing angrily about the ears of the King. The Bishop of London was moved to look into the conscience aspect of the matter, and he solemnly advised His Majesty that to consent to emancipation would be a breach of his coronation oath.³ The King got Fitzwilliam's letters from Portland on February 5, and on the following day he wrote to Pitt expressing surprise at Fitzwilliam's conduct ; "I cannot conclude without expressing the subject is beyond the decision of any

occurred in the despatch of the mails for England, namely, from the 10th to the 23rd January, a fact which fully explains the 'astounding neglect of duty' of the Pitt ministry against which Lecky declaims" in his *History of England*, vol. VII, p. 70. Rose refers to letter Beresford to Auckland, January 19, Pitt MSS. 325.

¹ Rose, p. 32, referring to *Dropmore Papers*, vol. III, p. 13.

² Rose, p. 32.

³ *Life and Times of Grattan*, by His Son, vol. V, p. 11.

Cabinet of Ministers"; he added that it would be better to change the administration at Dublin rather than advocate so dangerous an innovation.¹ A meeting of the Cabinet was held on the 7th; on the 8th Portland wrote to Fitzwilliam to ensure the postponement of the Catholic question, and Pitt wrote to Fitzwilliam censuring him for the dismissal of Beresford and others.² Fitzwilliam boldly stuck to his guns and said that the choice lay between him and Beresford. The result was that he was recalled.³

It is, obviously, an absurdity to suppose that the appointment of Fitzwilliam and his recall were a Machiavellian piece of stage play to promote disaffection in Ireland. Even a change of front cannot be said to be satisfactorily established, though it would be intelligible enough. The Government was a Coalition Government formed to prosecute the war. The dangers and inconveniences that attend a Coalition Government in relation to domestic affairs are familiar to those who have passed through the Great War 1914-1918. The Coalition persuades itself that the coalition is vital, and that everything must be subordinated to its continuance; opportunism and expediency, accordingly, become the order of the day; postponement of problems that excite opposition from within the Cabinet or from without is a matter of course.

Lord Fitzwilliam left Dublin on March 25, 1795—

"One of the saddest days ever known in Ireland. The shops of Dublin were shut. All business was suspended. Signs of mourning were exhibited on every side. The coach of the Lord Lieutenant was drawn by some of the most respectable citizens to the waterside, and the shadow of coming calamity cast its gloom upon every countenance. It was indeed but too well justified. From that time the spirit of sullen and virulent disloyalty overspread the land, creeping, in the words of Grattan, 'like the mist at the heels of the countryman' "⁴

Lord Camden, his successor, met with a hostile reception when he arrived in Dublin on March 31. After the swearing in ceremony, the passions of the mob broke loose. Stones were flung at the carriages of the Primate and Fitzgibbon; the rabble attacked the Speaker's residence and the Custom House, and not till two of their number fell dead under a volley from the soldiers did the rioters disperse.

These were surface indications of the trouble that lay beneath.

¹ Rose, p. 32, referring to Stanhope, App. pp. xxiii-xxv.

² Rose, p. 32.

³ Rose's *Life of Pitt*, Vol. II, p. 342.

⁴ Lecky, vol. III, p. 321.

Fitzwilliam's recall cemented Catholic and Presbyterian in the ranks of the United Irish Society ; ¹ it lent enormous force to the extremists. The Catholic peasants at this time probably had no very strong views on the subject of representation by Catholic gentry in Parliament, certainly none that would make them fight for it.

But they knew what a popular Viceroy meant. It signified hope, however faint, of an amelioration of their condition ; and they knew what his disgrace and recall meant. Further, they were, to a considerable extent, controlled and kept in check by men of their own faith. These were hopelessly antagonized by the Fitzwilliam episode. Some went right over to the forces of revolution ; some ceased to exert upon the uneducated their strong influence in favour of law and order. The Irish populace were sent back to their kennels with a kick, to brood upon escape and revenge.

The origin of the Peep of Day Boys and Defenders and the growth of religious animosity in the North have been already described (p. 36). The Protestants, or Presbyterians, under the guise of zeal for law and order, were unquestionably the aggressors. Plowden² tells of a sermon at Portadown, preached by a Rev. Mr. Maunsell, a clergyman of the Established Church, so violent and inflammatory that his congregation, after the service was over, fell upon every Catholic they met ; murdered two unoffending peasants who were digging turf in a bog, and severely beat many others ; " this unprovoked atrocity of the Protestants revived and redoubled religious rancour ; the flame spread and threatened a contest of extermination." In the later stages, there is nothing to choose between the two sections in their rancour or excesses. A Protestant schoolmaster named Jackson, a most harmless and respectable individual, was brutally murdered, apparently for no other reason than that he kept a school at Forkhill near Dundalk, at which young people of all persuasions attended, and that he was one of a new and flourishing colony settled in the neighbourhood.³ There were many collisions in the County Armagh, where the Protestants were in the majority.

Conflicting parties assembled near the Diamond on September 21, 1795. The parish priest on one side and a Mr. Atkinson on the other tried to make peace. The parties were retiring when a new

¹ Confession of O'Connor, Emmet and McNevin.

² Plowden's *History of Ireland from the Union to 1810* : Introduction, p. 16.

³ Lecky, vol. III, p. 422.

party of Defenders appeared on the scene and opened hostilities. A battle royal ensued. The Catholics retired, leaving twenty or thirty dead upon the field.¹

“A terrible persecution of the Catholics immediately followed. The animosities between the lower orders of the two religions, which had long been little bridled, burst out afresh, and after the battle of the Diamond, the Protestant rabble of the county of Armagh, and of part of the adjoining counties, determined by continuous outrages to drive the Catholics from the country. Their cabins were placarded, or, as it was termed, ‘papered,’ with the words, ‘To Hell or Connaught,’ and if the occupants did not at once abandon them, they were attacked at night by an armed mob. The webs and looms of the poor Catholic weavers were cut and destroyed, every article of furniture was shattered or burnt. The houses were often set on fire, and the inmates were driven homeless into the world. The rioters met with scarcely any resistance or disturbance. Twelve or fourteen houses were sometimes wrecked in a single night. Several Catholic chapels were burnt, and the persecution, which began in the county of Armagh, soon extended over a wide area in the counties of Tyrone, Down, Antrim, and Derry.”²

These conclusions are amply supported by the evidence. A speech of Lord Gosford, delivered on December 28,³ at a meeting attended by a large number of magistrates, drew a harrowing picture of the persecutions of the Catholics; it was not challenged by any of those present. Lord Gosford said:

“It is no secret that a persecution, accompanied with all the circumstances of ferocious cruelty which have in all ages distinguished that dreadful calamity, is now raging in this country. Neither age, nor even acknowledged innocence as to the late disturbances, is sufficient to excite mercy, much less afford protection. The only crime which the wretched objects of this merciless persecution are charged with, is a crime of easy proof. It is simply a profession of the Roman Catholic faith. A lawless banditti have constituted themselves judges of this species of delinquency, and the sentence they pronounced is equally concise and terrible; it is nothing less than a confiscation of all property, and immediate banishment. It would be extremely painful, and surely unnecessary, to detail the horrors that attended the execution of so wide and tremendous a proscription, that certainly exceeds, in the comparative number of those it consigns to ruin and misery, every example that ancient and modern history can afford. For where have we heard, or in what history of human cruelties have we read, of more than half the inhabitants of a populous country de-

¹ Lecky vol. III, p. 426.

² Lecky, vol. III, p. 429.

³ Three months after the battle of the Diamond.

prived at one blow, of the means, as well as of the fruits, of their industry, and driven, in the midst of an inclement winter, to seek a shelter for themselves and their helpless families where chance may guide them? This is no exaggerated picture of the horrid scenes now acting in this country. . . . These horrors are now acting, and acting with impunity. The spirit of impartial justice (without which law is nothing better than tyranny), has for a time disappeared in this country, and the supineness of the magistracy of this country is a topic of conversation in every corner of the kingdom."

Several other persons of position added their testimony to the same effect—magistrates from Co. Down; Lord Moira; Lord Althamont, to whose estate in Connaught many of the Ulster Catholics fled for refuge.

On the other hand, Lecky concludes that the provocation was not altogether on one side. The Defender movement had ceased to be a league of mere self-defence, and had become treasonable, and "accompanied by numerous and horrible outrages."¹ One of the Down magistrates referred to says: "a general terror prevails amongst the Protestants in this neighbourhood that their throats are to be cut by the Papists, aided by the militia, and they now seem to place their salvation on the Orangemen only."

As the result of Lord Gosford's speech, the magistrates formed a committee and several measures were taken to repress the disturbances; though in some districts the grand jurors showed themselves shamefully apathetic. At the Summer Assizes in Armagh in 1796, two Orangemen were convicted of murder; but several others were acquitted in spite of the clearest evidence and strong charges of the judges for conviction.

One of the worst effects of these crimes was that the lower orders among the Catholics believed that they were winked at by the Government. There seems to be little, if any, evidence to support the charge. Modern experience should teach us how difficult it is for Government to deal effectively with secret societies, where the majority of the inhabitants are either not in sympathy with the Government or are terrorized into submission. Two examples are in point. When the shooting of policemen commenced in 1919, the British Government found themselves quite unable to cope with the situation or to bring a single offender to justice, even though they had a large army and a large, armed, and well disciplined police force in the country. So also, after the Treaty of December 21,

¹ Lecky, vol. III, p. 445.

1921, the Irish Government found themselves equally powerless when their supporters were being murdered ; and it was only when they shot prisoners in their own hands, that the murders ceased.

The general attitude of the Government seems to have been perfectly correct. Lord Camden, the Lord Lieutenant, writing to the Duke of Portland on August 6, 1796, speaks with horror and alarm of the religious feuds. A despatch from the Cabinet to Camden contains the following passage, "Moderate, soothe, conciliate these jarring spirits. We have great confidence in your judgment, firmness and discretion." In a debate on the Insurrection Bill of 1796 Colonel (afterwards General) Craddock assured the House that he had lately been sent down to that part of the country "with the most decided instructions from Government to act with equal justice to all offenders."¹ It is, however, very likely that, however correct the orders of the Government may have been, their execution was not in the same spirit. It may safely be assumed that their subordinates were, frequently enough, under the influence of strong bias or of false information. Grattan, who was not given to reckless statement, thought so at any rate, for he charged partiality in the administration of the Insurrection Act.²

Some of the Armagh magistrates certainly—and magistrates from other districts very probably—behaved very badly and were under suspicion of stirring up the Orangemen.³ One, named Green, was convicted for misuse of his office, found guilty at Armagh Assizes, sentenced to six months' imprisonment and to pay a fine of £200 ; he suffered the imprisonment, but Lord Clare remitted the fine and restored him to his office.⁴ On the other hand, the prosecutions, at Armagh Assizes and elsewhere, of offenders on both sides seem to have been conducted with rigour and impartiality. Many convictions were secured, and the body of thirty magistrates to whom Lord Gosford made his famous speech on December 28, 1796, unanimously passed a resolution "that the Roman Catholic in-

¹ Plowden's *History of Ireland since the Union*, Introduction, p. 42. Plowden goes on to make this comment on this instruction: "This marked redundancy in the orders of Government bespeaks doubt, consciousness or charge that equal and impartial justice had not been previously administered in these parts. The order would otherwise have been an insult to the officer who received it" (p. 42 n.).

² Plowden's *History of Ireland since the Union*, Introduction, p. 44.

³ *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

habitants are grievously oppressed by lawless persons unknown who attack and plunder their houses by night."

An Act of Parliament was passed for the relief of the injured Catholics of Armagh.¹

These events produced important consequences. The revolutionary movement had its origin among the Presbyterians of the North, who dreamed of a union of all classes and creeds under a Republican or other democratic form of Government. Greatly alarmed by the development of creed warfare, many now drew back. When the rebellion came, it was confined in the main to the Catholic peasants of Leinster.

But while the revolutionary movement was thus weakened in one direction, it was strengthened in another. The Southern leaders instilled it into the minds of the Leinster peasants that an Orange massacre was imminent, and that the only chance of safety lay in the United Irish Society and in the means and arms which that organization provided. This propaganda, while increasing the numbers of the United Irishmen, greatly altered the character of the movement. The confession of O'Connor, Emmet and McNevin says :

"To the Armagh persecution is the union of United Irishmen most exceedingly indebted. . . . The persons and properties of the wretched Catholics of that country were exposed to the merciless attacks of an Orange faction, which was certainly in many instances uncontrolled by justices of the peace and claimed to be in all supported by the Government. When these men found that illegal acts of magistrates were indemnified by occasional statutes² and the courts of justice shut against them by Parliamentary barriers, they began to think they had no refuge but by joining this Union. Their disposition to do so was much increased by finding the Presbyterians, especially of Belfast, step forward to expose their cause and succour their distresses. We will here remark that, once for all, what we solemnly aver, that wherever the Orange system was introduced, particularly in Catholic counties, it was uniformly observed that the number of United Irishmen increased

¹ Plowden's *History of Ireland since the Union*, Introduction, p. 55; but Plowden complains that its administration was left to the Grand Jury.

² An Indemnity Act was passed to protect the squires and yeomen who took the law into their own hands. See Rose's *Life of Pitt*, part II, p. 345. The notorious Judkin Fitzgerald, whose brutalities effectually quelled disaffection in Tipperary, escaped the legal consequences of his action by virtue of this statute. A man named Wright having been arrested, a letter was found on him which was written in French. Fitzgerald, not knowing French, presumed it was treasonable, whereas it was perfectly innocent, and had Wright flogged.

most astonishingly. The alarm which an Orange Lodge excited amongst the Catholics made them look for refuge by joining together in the United system, and as their number was always greater than that of bigoted Protestants, our harvest was tenfold. At the same time that we mention this circumstance, we must confess and deeply regret, that it excited a mutual acrimony and vindictive spirit, which was peculiarly opposed to the interest and abhorrent from the feelings of the United Irishmen, and has lately manifested itself, as we have seen, in outrages of so much horror."

The formation of the Orange Society is attributed to the Battle of the Diamond. "On that day," says Plowden,¹ "the Peep of Day Boys dropt that appellation and assumed the denomination of Orangemen and then was their first lodge formed." Plowden says that the "original object and obligation" of the Orange Society "were to exterminate the Catholics of Ireland,"² and this has been adopted, with little or no investigation, by Catholic writers ever since. These writers have reinforced their charge by reference to an alleged Orange oath.

The evidence on this point needs close scrutiny. Plowden gives it as follows :³

"It has been asserted by well-informed (though anonymous) authors that the original obligation or oath of Orangemen, was to the following effect : *I, A.B. do swear, that I will be true to King and Government ; and that I will exterminate the Catholics of Ireland, as far as in my power lies.* The frequency and earnestness with which the latter part of the oath has been acted upon by Orangemen has rendered the charge of making it too credible."

Plowden goes on then to refer to three pieces of evidence.

First, that the Secret Committee in 1798 asked O'Connor "whether Government had anything to do with the oath of extermination," and Plowden says they would hardly have addressed this question to O'Connor unless on the previous assumption that this oath existed ; "had that Committee doubted of that fact, they would have asked Mr. O'Connor whether the Orangemen had ever administered such an oath." The official report contains no such passage, but in 1802 O'Connor published a memorandum (published by P. Robinson, London) purporting to be an account of his examination. It contains certain passages which do not appear in the Government report, including the following :

¹ *History of Ireland since the Union*, Introduction, p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 54.

"Committee: Government had nothing to do with the Orange system nor their extermination?" "O'Connor: As one of the Executive" (i.e., of the United Irish Society) "it came to my knowledge that considerable sums of money were expended throughout the nation in endeavouring to extend the Orange system and that the oath of extermination was administered. . . . I find it impossible to exculpate the Government from being the parent and the protector of the sworn extirpators."

This memoir suffers from several defects; (1) it differs from the Government version published in 1798; (2) it was written from memory; (3) it is uncommonly like propaganda; (4) the form of the question is such as could only have been put by a Committee who were anxious to fasten responsibility on the Government of the alleged oath, which is extremely unlikely; (5) the statement of O'Connor is not first-hand evidence; (6) the whole circumstances of the publication of the memoir are very suspicious.

Second, Plowden relies on the evidence of one Cush, procured under the following circumstances: "Mr. Coile has been already spoken of, as the only Catholic of Armagh who had the firmness to resist and make a stand at law against the desperate depredations of the banditti. To him it is owing that the secret oath or obligation of the Orangemen came to light."¹ Plowden then tells of a plot to murder Coile; that one Bernard Cush, then quartered at Carlow, had been induced, with others, to conspire against Coile's life; but Cush had been touched with remorse and had disclosed the whole matter to a magistrate; that Coile told all this to Cooke, the Under Secretary; that Cush was sent for, and, in the presence of Cooke, deposed "on oath as he had before the county magistrate, not only that such was the form of the Orangemen's oath, which was tendered to him and which he refused to swear, but which five others concerned in the conspiracy had actually subscribed to in his presence." A remarkable story. Even if Cush's narrative be accepted in its entirety—and of course the evidence of an informer must necessarily be viewed with suspicion—it only proves that some persons who wanted Cush to murder Coile administered to him an oath and took it themselves, saying that it was the Orange oath—all of which is quite consistent with there being no such Orange oath at all.

On the other hand, we have the facts (1) that the Orange Society comprised men of position, like the Marquis of Hertford, the

¹ *History of Ireland since the Union*, Introduction, p. 58.

Marquis of Abercorn, Lord Northland, the Earl of Londonderry, Mr. Cope, Messrs. Brownlow and Richardson and other possessors of great landed estates in Ireland,¹ and it is inconceivable that persons of that class should belong to a Society which administered such an infamous oath ; (2) that a good many Presbyterians were members of the Society ; (3) that most emphatic repudiation of the existence of such an oath was made over and over again by prominent members of the Orange Society ; (4) that the Society in 1797 published a formal repudiation of the alleged oath ; (5) that the rules and regulations and real oath of the Society were published in 1800. The repudiation in 1797 is in the following terms :

“To the loyal Subjects of Ireland.

“From the various attempts that have been made to poison the public mind and slander those who have had the spirit to adhere to their king and constitution, and to maintain the laws. We, the Protestants of Dublin, assuming the name of Orangemen, feel ourselves called upon, not to vindicate our principles, for we know that our honour and loyalty bid defiance to the shafts of malevolence and disaffection, but openly to disavow these and declare to the world the objects of our constitution. We have long observed with indignation the efforts that have been made, to foment rebellion in this kingdom, by the seditious, who have formed themselves into societies, under the specious names of United Irishmen. We have seen with pain the lower orders of our fellow-subjects forced or seduced from their allegiance by the threats and machinations of traitors. And we have viewed with horror the successful exertions of miscreants to encourage a foreign enemy to invade this happy land, in hopes of rising into consequence on the downfall of their country. We therefore thought it high time to rally round the constitution and pledge ourselves to each other to maintain the laws and support our good king against all his enemies, whether rebels to men, God or their country and by so doing show to the world that there is a body of men in this island who are ready in this hour of danger to stand forward in the defence of the Grand Palladium of our liberty, the constitution of Great Britain and Ireland obtained and established by the courage and loyalty of our ancestors under the great King William.

“Fellow subjects, we are accused of being an institution founded on principles too shocking to repeat and bound together by oaths, at which human nature would shudder ; but we caution you not to be led away by such malevolent falsehoods ; for we solemnly assure you in the presence of Almighty God that the idea of injuring anyone on account of his religious opinion never entered into our hearts ; we regard every loyal subject as our friend, be his religion

¹ Plowden's *History of Ireland from the Union to 1810*, p. 66.

what it may, we have no enmity only to the enemies of our country.

"We further declare that we are ready at all times to submit ourselves to the orders of those in authority under His Majesty, and that we will cheerfully undertake any duty which they should think proper to point out for us, in case either a foreign enemy shall dare to invade our coasts, or that a domestic foe should presume to raise the standard of rebellion in our land; to these principles we are pledged and in support of them we are ready to shed the last drop of our blood. Signed by Thomas Vernon, Edward Ball, John Claudius Beresford, William Jane, Isaac de Jonquerie."

The following is the oath taken, as published with the rules and regulations in full, in 1800:

"I, A. B., do solemnly and sincerely swear of my own free will and accord that I will, to the utmost of my power, support and defend the present King, George the Third, his heirs and successors, so long as he or they support the Protestant ascendancy, the constitution and laws of these Kingdoms, and that I will ever hold sacred the name of our Glorious Deliverer, William the Third, Prince of Orange: and I do further swear, that I am not nor ever was a Roman Catholic or Papist; that I was not, am not, nor ever will be an United Irishman; and that I never took the oath of secrecy to that or any other treasonable society: and I do further swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that I will always conceal and never will reveal either part or parts of what is now to be privately communicated to me, until I shall be authorized so to do by the proper authorities of the Orange Institution, that I will neither write it, nor indite it, stamp, stain, or engrave it, nor cause it so to be done, on paper, parchment, leaf, bark, stick, stone or any other thing so that it may be known; and I do further swear, that I have not, to my knowledge or belief, been proposed and rejected in or expelled from any other Orange Lodge, and that I have become an Orangeman without fear, bribery or corruption."

Nobody can doubt but that the establishment of the Orange Society and the violence of that body have been productive of much mischief in Ireland. But it is questionable if the allegation concerning this oath—swallowed as it was by the masses in Ireland—has not done at least as much mischief in perpetuating religious discord.¹

¹ There is as much evidence that there existed in the South of Ireland peasant associations that had an oath to "wade knee deep in Protestant blood," but this evidence is far from establishing that any peasant association really cherished the idea; see p. 194. Musgrave gives an oath, stated to have been found on rebels to "burn, destroy and murder all heretics." No one who is not a blind partisan will attach the slightest importance to such flimsy pieces of evidence when weighed against the evidence on the other side and the general probabilities of the case.

In 1793, a scheme of compulsory militia service stirred¹ up parts of the country to an insurrection of sorts. Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, Leitrim, Limerick, and Clare were disturbed. Houses were burnt, and some soldiers killed; the trouble spread to Queens County, Carlow, Wexford and Kilkenny. A correspondent of Richard Burke wrote from Limerick:

"The country is in a state of complete insurrection. . . . They have no fixed object, but a spirit has been excited of general discontent and opposition. Parties of armed people go about administering oaths, in some places against the militia, in others to pay no taxes, in others to pay no tithes. The object of the insurgents in Mayo was to pay neither tithe nor tax, quit rent nor landlord's rent."²

Some degree of quiet was restored, but not till several encounters had taken place; thirty or forty insurgents were shot at Carrick, County Sligo, fourteen at Dingle, County Kerry, and thirty-six killed at Erris, County Mayo.

In 1795 there were further disturbances of the same kind in Connaught. Lord Carhampton was sent to quell it, which he did by arresting scores and illegally sending them to serve in the fleet.³

In 1797 the state of the North became very alarming. Emissaries from Belfast had stirred up the young men of Donegal and the adjoining counties. "The principal offenders," wrote a magistrate who lived in Donegal, on the borders of Derry,⁴

"are almost invariably Dissenters. Payne's *Rights of Man*, French support, immunity from revenue laws, from tithes, etc., and the overthrow of the King and our form of Government in general, seem all to have been resorted to, as principles and topics to influence their party. . . . From common and poor men I have followed up the association to comfortable farmers; from them to Dissenting ministers, not in employment." "The Dissenting elders and leaders have tried in vain to stem the torrent."⁵

"The most outrageous and systematic murders have been committed in the Counties of Down and Donegal."⁶ A letter from Pelham of

¹ Gordon's *Ireland*, vol. II, p. 337. It proposed to raise 16,000 men for internal defence, on the English plan, every man of military age on whom the lot fell being compelled to serve or find a substitute or pay a heavy fine.

² Westmoreland to Dundas, June 8, 1793.

³ An Act of Indemnity was passed to protect Carhampton and the Connaught magistrates.

⁴ February, 1797. Letter of Dr. Hamilton, afterwards murdered.

⁵ Letter of Jan. 14, 1797.

⁶ Camden to Portland, March 9, 1797.

March 3, described the secret and treasonable societies of Down, Antrim, Derry, and Donegal; constant nocturnal assemblies and drillings; stores of arms; murders of those who joined the yeomanry. No evidence could be procured; "the fear of assassination has thoroughly got possession of the minds of the people."¹

General Lake was sent to disarm the North and was given a free hand. Lake issued a proclamation enjoining surrender of arms. Having got some information from informers, he was able to arrest some of the leaders in Belfast, and to seize papers which showed the negotiations with France. A wholesale search for arms was instituted, and was carried out by the Orange Yeomanry and a Welsh regiment called the Ancient Britons. Their conduct was merciless. The lash was frequently administered; murders were committed; houses were burned. It was a successful Black and Tan régime. Lake got the arms—50,000 muskets, 22 cannon, and 70,000 pikes.² "The result was," as Froude puts it,³ "that in the part of Ireland where the populace was most dangerous, and the insurgent organization most complete, the teeth of the rebellion were drawn."

The rebellion in the South was coming to a head. A proclamation of the United Irishmen dated March 17, 1798, announced that the "organization of the capital is perfect."⁴

At length the day fixed, May 23, arrived. An intention to attack Newgate prison was frustrated by the arrest of the leaders. Skirmishes took place, at Dunboyne, Barretstown, Prosperous, Naas, Kilcullen. Proclamations were issued on May 24, by General Lake, who had succeeded Abercromby as commander in chief, by the Lord Lieutenant, and by the Lord Mayor of Dublin. It was proposed in the Irish House of Commons to put the leaders, who were in prison, to death, but Lord Castlereagh strongly opposed, and the motion was not pressed.

The French fleet got out from Toulon on May 19; the British thought that Ireland was its goal; but it sailed on its futile expedition to Egypt.

The principal military events of the rebellion may be glanced at, in order.

May 24. Successful rebel attack—concerning which the British

¹ Letter from John Rae, March 27, 1797.

² Froude, III, p. 272.

³ Froude, III, p. 273.

⁴ *Commons Secret Committee*, 1798, p. 249.

alleged treachery (see p 91 *post*)—on village of Prosperous, Co. Kildare. Four hundred rebels defeated near Baltinglass.

May 25. Garrison at Carlow repel attack by insurgents. The troops burned many houses in which the rebels took refuge, slaughtering and burning "not short of 400, while not a man was even wounded on the side of the loyalists." Sir Edward Crosbie, who was not in complicity with the rebellion, though he favoured parliamentary reform, executed.¹

May 26. Father John Murphy hoists standard of rebellion at Boolavogue, Co. Wexford. 30,000 rebels afoot in Wexford. 400 rebels defeated at Tara, Co. Meath, by a body of Fencibles and Yeomen. On this occasion the loyal troops comprised a body of Catholic yeomen cavalry, under Lord Fingal, the leading Irish Catholic layman. The Irish militia regiments, numbering 26,000, mostly Catholics, remained loyal throughout the rebellion.

May 27. Defeat of rebels at Kilthomas, Co. Wexford. Yeomen "killed about a hundred and fifty in the pursuit, and in a march of seven miles burned a hundred cabins and two Roman Catholic chapels."² Defeat of North Cork Militia by the rebels at Oulart Hill, Co. Wexford.

May 28. Capture of Enniscorthy by rebels, who encamp on Vinegar Hill, overlooking the town. British garrison retreats to Wexford.

May 29. Rebels march on Wexford and encamp on Three Rock mountain outside the town to the number of 15,000.

May 30. British garrison under Colonel Maxwell evacuate Wexford.

May 31. Surrender of 2,000 rebels to General Dundas at Knockawlin Hill, near the Curragh of Kildare.

June 1. 4,000 rebels, under Father Kearn, enter Bunclody or Newtownbarry, Co. Wexford. Garrison retreat, but return and retake possession.

June 2. Attack on large number of rebels at Gibbetrath, on the Curragh; over 200 killed—treachery alleged by rebels.

June 4. Rebels, under Father Philip Roche, defeat Colonel Walpole at Tubberneering, five miles from Gorey. Walpole's forces flee to Arklow, leaving three pieces of cannon behind.

June 5. Rebels, under Bagenal Harvey, drive troops across

¹ Gordon's *Ireland*, vol. II, p. 392.

² Gordon's *History of Ireland*, vol. II, p. 398.

New Ross bridge. Attempts to regain the town ; ten hours' battle ; New Ross retaken ; garrison lose 230, rebels over 1,000.

In this battle the rebels showed the most indomitable courage, charging right up to the mouths of the cannon ; the streets of the town of Ross were said to have been literally strewn with carcasses of the rebels.

June 7. Massacre of Scullabogue (see p. 91 *post*). Insurrection breaks out in the North. Battle near Antrim ; rebels defeated, with loss of two hundred. Gordon says :

“Assembling on Donnegar Hill, the insurgents were assured that the rest of the Northerners would not second their efforts, in consequence of intelligence received that the war in the County of Wexford was completely of a religious complexion, and that successful opposition in Ulster to the royal authority would tend to enable the Catholics of the South to effect their great object, the extermination of Protestants. In despair and disgust, these malcontents, who were mostly Protestants, relinquished all thoughts of further warfare ; and breaking, throwing away, or surrendering their weapons, dispersed to their several homes.”

June 9. Rebel attack on Arklow repulsed with loss of over 300. Battle at Saintfield, Co. Antrim ; rebels commanded by Henry Munroe, a Lisburn shopkeeper ; honours easy.

June 13. Battle at Ballynahinch, Co. Down. Defeat of rebels, who numbered 4,000. “After consultation, influenced by the same arguments which had been successfully urged to the insurgents of Antrim, they finally dispersed.”¹ At Saintfield and Ballynahinch the rebels were Protestants to a man. “The abandonment of rebellion in the northern province while the rest of the Kingdom, with a small exception, remained in a state of quiet, left the insurgents of Wexford to contend almost alone against the royal troops.”

June 17. Indecisive engagement at Kilcavan Hill.

June 20. Rebels retreat to Vinegar Hill, near Enniscorthy. Royal troops move from different quarters to encircle Hill. Rebels defeated at Horetown, seven miles west of Wexford.

June 21. Attack on Vinegar Hill by army of 13,000 men with artillery ; rebels having 20,000 almost destitute of ammunition. Rebels defeated and flee towards Wexford. Wexford, after three weeks' possession, evacuated by the rebels.

¹ Gordon's *Ireland*, vol. II, p. 421.

² *Ibid.*, p. 422.

June 24. Father John Murphy leads 15,000 men into County Kilkenny. Battle of Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny; rebels victorious.

June 26. This force defeated and put to flight at Kilcomny.

July 4. Various small engagements up to this date, gradual dispersal of rebels, attacks cease in Wexford.

July 14. A column of Wexford rebels, ultimately reduced to 1,500, after a flying march in Kildare, Meath, Louth and Dublin, were defeated near Ardee, Co. Louth, and dispersed.

This put an end to the rebellion.

Both before and during the rebellion, many acts of gross cruelty were practised on both sides; it is a futile task to try to apportion the blame. Each of the contending parties had been wrought to a fever of apprehension of what the other would do if it obtained a victory. The loyalist forces were partly regulars from British regiments, partly militia, and partly yeomanry. The British soldiers were in a strange country, amongst strange people, of whom they had had terrible accounts. The militia were Irish, and mostly Catholics, and feared punishment as traitors from a victorious rebel force. The yeomanry were mainly Protestants, who armed for fear of being murdered in their beds. On the other hand, the rebels were a mob, who expected neither clemency nor consideration, and their leaders encouraged their fears to make them stand their ground. Fear is the parent of cruelty; and all these men were full of fear. Cruelty on one side begets cruelty on the other; the process is painfully familiar to any student of history. The whole business is dreadful reading.

The rebels suffered the tortures of the pitch cap and the triangle. The former was a method of exquisite cruelty; pitch heated to boiling point was poured into a cap made of strong paper or cloth which was then jammed down on the prisoner's head; when the cooling pitch stuck to the head, the cap was pulled off, bringing with it the hair and sometimes the scalp. The triangle was the well known flogging method. The North Cork Militia¹ and the Ancient Britons, a Welsh regiment, were the worst; to this day, the name of the former is mentioned with horror in the County Wexford.

The rebels shot thirty-seven non-combatants and burned Sculla-

¹ The militia regiments were mostly Irish Catholics. Plowden says that the North Corks, owing to the exertions of Lord Kingsborough, their commander, "superabounded with Orangemen."—*History of Ireland since the Union*, vol. I, p. 100.

bogue Barn (County Wexford) with non-combatant Protestants, including women and children, inside ; the number of the burned is stated by some as a hundred and eighty-four, but is reduced by others to eighty.¹ They piked a number of non-combatants (stated by some to be thirty-seven, by others ninety), on the bridge at Wexford and threw their dead or dying bodies into the river Slaney. The rebel camp at Vinegar Hill was, according to Gordon² an orgy of drunken debauchery mixed with religious frenzy and merciless treatment of any Protestant who came that way.

Treachery, on occasions, is alleged against each side. Rose³ thus describes two events that happened within a few weeks after the outbreak. The rebels

"fooled the chief of a small detachment by a story of their intention to deliver up arms. Gaining access to the village, they surprised the soldiers in the barracks, girdled them with fire and spitted them with pikes as they jumped forth. That night of horror ended with the murder of the Protestant manufacturer whose enterprise had made their village what it was. A few days later General Ralph Dundas somewhat indiscreetly granted an armistice to a large body of Kildare rebels at Kilcullen on the promise that they would give up their arms and go home. Nevertheless, a large body of them were found in the Curragh and barred the way to General Duff. . . . Duff was informed that these rebels would be willing to lay down their arms. His men were advancing towards them when a shot or shots were fired by the rebels, whether in bravado or earnest is doubtful. The troops, taking it as another act of treachery, charged with fury and drove the mass from the plain with the loss of 200 killed. Thus, here again, events made for animosity and bloodshed. Protestants remembered the foul play at Prosperous ; the rebels swore to avenge the treachery at the Curragh" (p. 358).

Gordon—the Rev. James Gordon, Protestant Minister of Killegney, Co. Wexford—who seems to me to be impartial and wrote in 1803—gives somewhat different accounts. He describes the Prosperous affair as an ordinary surprise attack on the morning of May 24 :

¹ Gordon's *Ireland*, vol. II, p. 411. These people were being kept in custody as hostages for the safety of rebel prisoners. Those guarding them were told that the bearer of a message to the King's troops at Ross had been shot (this was true), that the prisoners of their party had been massacred at Dunlavin and Carnew by the royal troops (this may or may not be true—the parties, no doubt, believed that it was true), and that a similar scene was being enacted at Ross. This recital enraged them and so led to the atrocity, *Ibid.*

² *History of Ireland*, vol. II, p. 424.

³ *Life of Pitt*, Part II, pp. 357, 358.

"The barrack was fired, and twenty-eight of the City of Cork Militia, with their commander, Captain Swayne, perished in the flames, and by the pikes of the enemy. Nine men also of a Welsh regiment of cavalry, stiled Ancient Britons, were slaughtered in the houses where they had been billeted, and five were made prisoners. Many of the perpetrators of this atrocious butchery were, by the trembling loyalist inhabitants recognized to be the same who on the preceding day had surrendered to Captain Swayne, and in the presence of a Romish priest, had expressed the deepest contrition for having engaged in the conspiracy of the United Irish and made most solemn promises of future loyalty."¹

He puts the Gibbetrath incident as of June 2² and says that the insurgents were surrendering when one of them

"foolishly swearing that he would not deliver his gun otherwise than empty, discharged it with the muzzle upwards. The soldiers instantly, pretending to consider this as an act of hostility, fired on the unresisting multitude, who fled with the utmost precipitation, and were pursued with slaughter by a company of Fencible cavalry, denominated Lord Jocelyn's foxhunters. Above two hundred of the insurgents fell upon this occasion."

On August 22, 1798—too late for co-operation with the rebel forces—General Humbert with 1,100 French troops "intended as the vanguard of a much more formidable force"³ landed at Killala Bay. He easily disposed of a raw and probably disaffected force of Irish militia sent against him, in an engagement since known as the "Castlebar Races." Soon after, he was attacked by greatly superior British forces under the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Cornwallis, and surrendered. The principal French armament appeared on October 11 off the coast of Donegal, consisting of one ship of the line (the *Hoche*) with eight frigates and 4,000 or 5,000 troops. They were pursued by Sir John Borlase Warren and wholly defeated at Lough Swilly, the *Hoche* and six of the frigates being taken. Wolfe Tone, who was on board the *Hoche*, was taken to Dublin to await his trial, but committed suicide in prison and died on November 19. On October 27 another French squadron of three frigates, with 2,000 troops, anchored in Killala but made off to France on hearing of the approach of the English fleet.

A brig from France carrying Napper Tandy on board arrived on September 16 at the Island of Rutland, on the north-west coast

¹ *History of the Rebellion*, p. 86.

² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

³ Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 151.

of Donegal, but sheered off on learning of Humbert's surrender.

Napoleon was of opinion that he had blundered by not making Ireland his chief objective; he said to Las Cazes: "If, instead of the expedition to Egypt, I had undertaken that against Ireland, what could England have done now."¹

For a considerable time after the rebellion had been crushed, there was much disorder in the country; "various outrages and depredations, not less destructive, and infinitely more embarrassing than open insurrection." Even in Ulster houses were raided for arms and "in the other provinces the treasonable disposition exists in full force and a general insecurity prevails. The mails and travellers are frequently interrupted and robbed, the roads being infested with banditti."²

The following punishments were meted out.³ Thirty-four were sentenced to death; of these twenty-one were executed; ten were reprieved; three had their sentences disapproved or were pardoned. About seventy other prisoners received various sentences.

It was proposed to send some of the rebels to the United States, but that country would not have them,⁴ and the leading rebels "are as averse to a residence in America as Congress can be to receive them. The Directory in Kilmainham describes the tyranny of the American Government as not less grievous than their own and speak of Adams and Mr. Pitt in terms of equal respect."⁵

A decade or so after the Union, it came to be bruited that Pitt had deliberately fomented the rebellion of 1798 to enable him to carry the Union. O'Connell did not originate the legend, but he adopted it and frequently referred to it. "Neither," said he, "will I direct your attention to the frightful recollection of that avowed fact which is now part of history, that the rebellion itself was fomented and encouraged in order to facilitate the Union."⁶

¹ Rose's *Life of Pitt*, Part II, p. 364.

² Cornwallis to Portland, February 14, 1799:—Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, vol. III, p. 61.

³ Castlereagh, IV, 214.

⁴ Letter of Rufus King, U.S. Minister, to Portland, October 17, 1798.—Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 395, because "the principles and opinions of these men are dangerous, so false, so utterly inconsistent with any practicable or stable form of government," etc.—Froude, III, 537.

⁵ Castlereagh to Wickham, October 29, 1798; Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 414.

⁶ *Life and Speeches of O'Connell*, by His Son, p. 51.

He repeated the same charge in the House of Commons in 1834.¹ Nationalist Ireland has been suckled upon the tradition ; it remains to see what foundation there is for it.²

By some modern propagandists,³ the "fomenting" is stated to have consisted in deliberately sending Fitzwilliam as viceroy with an olive branch, with the intention of forthwith recalling him and so exasperating the Irish people ; and in provoking the Armagh disturbances. These contentions, however, seem to me to be framed by persons who knew that the tradition existed, who believed that it was well founded, who were ignorant of the evidence upon which the tradition rested—for, as we shall see, it does rest upon some evidence—and who were, therefore, driven to account for it by some theory, however far fetched. The theory is far fetched. The Armagh disturbances were an immediate and spontaneous result of the Battle of the Diamond ; and it is childish to attribute these local disturbances to the machinations of statesmen in Downing Street, engaged as they were in the prosecution of a great war, or to the administration in Dublin Castle, whose reputation depended upon the maintenance of quiet and order. The evidence is clear that Fitzwilliam was sent over owing to pressure from the Whigs, and there was probably a misunderstanding as to his instructions. His recall was procured by the influence of a cabal working through the King, and deriving from the exigencies of the war period and the existence of a coalition war cabinet a greatly enhanced power (see pp. 72-77).

It was not these theories that O'Connell had in his mind when, on September 18, 1810, at the Royal Exchange, Dublin, he spoke of "that avowed fact which is now part of history, that the rebellion itself was fomented and encouraged, in order to facilitate the Union."⁴

Before coming to the piece of evidence upon which O'Connell

¹ See Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 289, and in O'Connell's *Memoir of Ireland*.

² This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that "even in French writers of fair authority, we find the notions about the disturbances in the French revolution being fomented by English agents and 'loi de Pitt' repeated as there was some foundation for them beyond the idle rumour of the day."—*Lewis's Disturbances, Ireland*, p. 19.

³ Including Arthur Griffith ; see his *Resurrection of Hungary*, pp. 102, 107.

⁴ *Life and Speeches of O'Connell*, by His Son, p. 51. Yet O'Connell was himself singularly inconsistent on the subject ; for (p. 384) he avers that the British Government favoured Catholic Emancipation, to make friends with the Catholics.

founded his statement, it will be useful to pause and consider, first, the position of England in 1797-8, and, second, what steps were taken before the outbreak of the rebellion to prevent a seditious outbreak.

England had been at war with France since 1793; the war continued, with a slight intermission (1802 to 1803), till it was finally decided by the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, when England emerged, victorious, but in the last stage of misery and exhaustion. The struggle was, for England, a life and death struggle, and never did her chances of emergence without disaster seem so low as in the year or so immediately preceding the year of the rebellion. The discipline of the fleet had almost disappeared; the mutinies at Spithead and the Nore (April-May, 1797) are without parallel in the annals of the navy. The Dutch had joined the French against their ancient foe; but for the extraordinary circumstance of six weeks' continuous adverse winds (July-August, 1797) their fleet, in much superior force, would have sailed from Texel for the invasion of Ireland. The arms of France, guided by the genius of Napoleon, were everywhere triumphant upon the Continent. Even the stout heart of Pitt quailed. He was most anxious for peace; and was prepared to acknowledge Belgium to be a French province, and Holland a French vassal, to acknowledge all the French conquests in Germany and Italy, to restore to France, without compensation, all the colonial possessions which England had taken from her during the war. He sent Lord Malmesbury to negotiate terms, assuring him that "he would stifle every feeling of pride to the utmost to produce the desired result;"¹ Malmesbury went to Paris, as Burke phrased it, "upon his knees." Malmesbury's terms, humiliating as they were to England, were rejected by the French Government, which, swollen with triumph, ordered him, on September 16, 1797, to quit France within twenty-four hours.² It is true that the desperate condition was somewhat relieved by the defeat of the Dutch by Admiral Duncan in October, 1797; but nevertheless, the position of England was then and for long after, highly precarious. It is inconceivable that her statesmen, to add to their troubles, should have engineered a rebellion that required an occupation army of over 130,000 men.³

¹ Malmesbury, *Correspondence*, vol. III, p. 369. ² *Ibid.*, pp. 561-69, 576.

³ The total military forces in Ireland were: regulars, 32,281; militia, 26,654; yeomanry, 52,274. Speech of Castlereagh, February 18, 1799.—*Life and Times of Grattan*, by His Son, vol. V, p. 31.

An enumeration of the steps taken by the Government to put down sedition shows that they are of the kind usually adopted ; no lack of active measures appears.

A meeting of the United Irish Society called for December 9, 1792, to celebrate the triumph of liberty in France was proclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council and was not held. The Society of United Irishmen of Dublin was forcibly dissolved in 1794 ; that of Belfast thereafter carried on its proceedings surreptitiously. Archibald Hamilton Rowan was, on January 29, 1794, brought to trial on a charge of seditious libel, convicted and sentenced ; he escaped from prison and fled to France. Jackson, the agent of the United Irishmen in France, was convicted in May, 1794, and to escape sentence took poison from which he died. Napper Tandy forfeited his recognizance to appear at Dundalk and fled to France. Tone fled to France to avoid a prosecution. O'Connor, Bond, McNevin, and Thomas Addis Emmet, were arrested.¹ The brothers Sheares were arrested on May 21, 1798, Samuel Neilson and others on the 23rd ;² Lord Edward Fitzgerald was arrested on May 19, 1798.³

An Insurrection Act was passed in 1796 augmenting the penalties for administering unlawful oaths or solemn engagements ; and containing provisions for disarming the disaffected.⁴ The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended. Lake was sent to the North to crush and he did crush the incipient rebellion in that quarter.

Various proclamations were issued by the Lord Lieutenant and Council and by the military commander, including : (1) November 6, 1796, reciting the existence of treasonable associations in Antrim, Down, Tyrone, Londonderry, Armagh, etc. ; the proclamation warned all persons of the danger they might incur and charged them to desist from such treasonable practices ; and enjoined all justices, etc., to disperse all unlawful assemblies. (2) General Lake's proclamation from Belfast (Northern Command) March 13, 1797, enjoined all persons (excepting peace officers and military officers) to bring in and surrender all arms and ammunition.

¹ On the information of a traitor named Thomas Reynolds, a retired silk mercer, who had purchased an estate in Co. Kildare (Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 148), but were reprieved on making a full confession.

² *Ibid.* Both Sheares, McCann, Byrne and others were executed, *Ibid.*, p. 150.

³ He died in prison on June 4 as the result of wounds received in the struggle accompanying his arrest.—*Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁴ This statute was not put in force till November 14, 1796.

"Let the people seriously reflect before it is too late, on the ruin to which they are rushing; let them reflect on their present prosperity and the miseries in which they will inevitably be involved by persisting in acts of positive rebellion; let them instantly by surrendering up their arms and by restoring those traitorously taken from the King's forces, rescue themselves from the military authority; let all the loyal and well intentioned act together with energy and spirit in enforcing subordination to the laws and restoring tranquillity in their respective neighbourhoods, and they may be assured of protection and support from me,"

and he called for information as to arms. (3) Proclamation by Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council dated May 17, 1797: reciting sedition and traitorous conspiracy by United Irishmen: it commanded all arms to be surrendered: promised pardon to all persons who having entered the said societies on or before June 24, 1797, surrendered themselves and entered into recognizances to be of the peace and good behaviour for seven years—save such as had been guilty of murder, burglary, burning of houses, corn or hay, straw or turf, destroying potatoes, flax, hemp, rape or corn or hay, houghing of cattle, administering unlawful oaths, and inciting persons to commit any of the foregoing. This proclamation was signed by, amongst others, John Foster, the ablest opponent of the Union, Lord Gosford, whose courageous speech as to Orange excesses is given p. 78 *ante*, and by Lord Clonmel, as to whom see p. 99 *post*. (4) Proclamation dated June 22, 1797, referred to previous proclamation of May 17, 1797, and the promise of pardon therein contained: that many persons had surrendered accordingly; enlarged time for surrender on promise of pardon to July 24, 1797. (5) Proclamation dated March 30, 1798, by Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council, recited traitorous conspiracy had broken out into acts of open violence and rebellion; intimated that orders had been given to military for immediate suppression thereof; enjoined all loyal subjects to aid and assist. (6) Sir Ralph Abercromby's Notice of April 3, 1798: required all arms to be given up within ten days, on the assurance that no violence would be done to those who complied, or their properties; if they did not, troops were to be quartered on them; called on well disposed to give secret information; warned against "robbing and murdering, and committing other acts of violent insubordination to the laws of their country." (7) Sir Ralph Abercromby dated April 22, 1798:

"The ten days' notice being expired the people are called upon to follow the examples of the Counties of Tipperary, Kildare and King's

County and give up all their concealed arms, pikes and ammunition. The troops have already begun to act. The plans of the insurgents are discovered, their chiefs are apprehended, and in most parts of the country the disaffected have given tokens of submission and repentance. Those who immediately comply with this last and earnest request may be assured of protection. Further perseverance and obstinacy will cause the entire ruin of members and their families."

The Chief Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, on May 22, 1798, presented a message to the Irish House of Commons that he had received information that the disaffected had formed a plan for the seizure, in the course of the week, of the metropolis, of seizing the seal of Government, and those in authority within the city; that every military precaution had been taken and the designs of the rebellious would be effectually and lastingly crushed.

Even after the rebellion, namely, on July 3, 1798, a proclamation was issued by Lord Cornwallis offering pardon to all rebels who should surrender and deliver up their arms before a certain day. It is interesting to note that even during the rebellion Castlereagh advocated a comprehensive bill of pardon.¹

These proclamations and the steps taken to enforce them were not without their effect. The report of the Secret Committee of the Irish House of Commons² shows that the arms seized or surrendered were: 48,109 guns, 1,756 bayonets, 4,463 pistols, 4,183 swords, 70,630 pikes, etc.

The only piece of evidence to sustain the charge that the Government fomented the rebellion is to be found on pp. 145, 146 of the second volume of Grattan's *Memoirs*, by His Son. I give it in full:

"Shortly before his" (Lord Clonmel's) "death he sent for his nephew Dean Scott" (here there is a footnote: "Dean Scott was married to Miss Charlotte Bushe, Mr. Grattan's niece, and he communicated this statement, with the knowledge that it would be made use of in a work of this nature: but he would neither disclose the name of the person who wrote the letter, nor more of the contents than above mentioned"), "got him to examine his papers and destroy those that were useless. There were many relating to politics, that disclosed the conduct of the Irish Government at the period of the disturbances in 1798. There was one letter in particular, which fully showed their duplicity, and that they might have crushed the rebellion, but that they let it go on, on purpose to carry the Union, and that this was their design. When Lord Clonmel was dying, he stated this to Dean Scott, and made him destroy the letter; he further added, that he had gone to the Lord

¹ Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 243.

² Secret Committee p. 334.

Lieutenant, and told him, that as they knew of the proceedings of the disaffected, it was wrong to permit them to go on—that the Government, having it in their power, should crush them at once, and prevent the insurrection. He was coldly received and found that his advice was not relished. That of Lord Clare, Mr. Foster, and the Bishop of Agar had predominated, and, in consequence, he was not summoned to attend the Privy Council on business of state (his health not being good was advanced as an excuse). On ordinary affairs, however, he still received a summons.”

This evidence, of course, even if it were not capable of the most direct and absolute refutation, is of an extraordinarily flimsy character to support a charge against either the British Government or the Irish Government of such a foul conspiracy as is charged. No information is vouchsafed as to the identity of the writer of this extraordinarily important communication ; as to what his position was or means of knowledge ; whether he had a bias or not ; nor are we given the slightest explanation as to why his identity is to be shrouded in mystery. And the whole story has something curious about it. Dean Scott sees the letter ; he destroys it ; it is, on that occasion, supposed to be a tremendous secret ; yet he tells it to somebody, and the story, sometime or another, we are not told after what interval, reaches Grattan Junior. A curious business indeed.¹

Foster is charged with being in the plot with Lord Clare to let things go on, crush the rebellion and so carry the Union. Yet Foster's name is to several of the proclamations summarized above ; and he was one of the most fearless and able of the opponents of the Union.

The statement attributed to Lord Clonmel goes on to say that in consequence of his unwelcome advice he was never afterwards asked to attend the Privy Council on important business. This is untrue, and is contradicted by statements under the hand of Lord Clonmel himself. I find his name to the following proclamations dealing with the insurrectionary movement : (1) proclamation dated May 17, 1797, signed by Lord Clonmel and thirty-five other

¹ In my young days the school books contained a story called “Three Black Crows.” A tells B that X vomited three black crows and that C told him so. B, of an incredulous turn of mind, goes to C, who says the real story, as related by D, was that X had vomited two black crows. B, still unconvinced, goes to D, who says E had said that X had vomited one black crow. Finally E's version is that X had vomited something as black as a crow ! Grattan Junior is a doubtful witness—he openly advocates political assassination.

Privy Councillors warning persons to abstain from joining the United Irish Society, announcing that the military had been charged to suppress it and offering pardon to all persons returning to their allegiance. (2) A proclamation of March 30, 1798, which, after reciting that "a traitorous conspiracy existing within this kingdom, hath considerably extended itself and hath broken out into acts of open violence and rebellion" directs the officers to employ the troops with the utmost vigour for its suppression and charges loyal subjects to assist.

The evidence on the charge that the Government fomented the rebellion may be summed up as follows.

First, the charge is wildly improbable; second, the Government took many steps to crush the sedition, including the suppression of the United Irish Society, the arrest of the leaders, the issue of proclamation after proclamation to induce the people, by threats and offers of pardon to abandon the movement, the adoption of statutes and of military measures of great severity to crush it. On the other side we have a story which is refuted by contemporary documents under the hand of its supposed author.

At the same time, it is clear that the conduct of the soldiery in many parts of the country was of a kind calculated to stir up evil feeling. "Chief among the exciting causes were the repressive measures of Camden and the ~~licence~~ of the Militia and Yeomanry. So able and active a commander as General Abercromby failed to keep discipline and prevent military outrages,"¹ nor did Abercromby, who was then Commander in Chief, receive proper support in his efforts. He issued a general order on February 26, 1798, in which he said that the army were "in a state of licentiousness which must render it formidable to everyone but the enemy," and forbade officers to use military force except on the requisition of the magistrates.² The Duke of Portland thought this general order went too far and censured Abercromby, who thereupon resigned.³

Lake's severities in the North were related by the rebel leaders in the South to stimulate their followers into action. The performances of Judkin Fitzgerald and of the soldiery in many parts excited a people who thought they might as well be killed in fight as tortured or murdered without a fight.

¹ Rose's *Life of Pitt*, Part II, p. 352.

² Rose's *Life of Pitt*, Part II, p. 353.

³ *Ibid.* 254.

Gordon sums up his conclusions thus : ¹

“ Whether an insurrection would in the then existing state of the kingdom have taken place in the County of Wexford, or in case of its eruption, how much less formidable and sanguinary it would have been if no acts of severity had been committed by the soldiers, the yeomen, or their supplementary associates, without the direct authority of their superiors, or command of the magistrates, is a question which I am not able positively to answer ” ;

and he goes on in a footnote :

“ Perhaps the true state of the case is this. The people were so determined on insurrection, that it could not otherwise have been prevented than by a proper disposition of a large military force. The sending of such a force was prevented by the representations of Earl Mountmorris, and therefore the insurrection took place. In my opinion, the force which was sent, ill commanded, and, with some exceptions, ill officered, promoted the work of rebellion by previous irritation and posterior timidity.”

Thirty thousand lives were lost in the rebellion ² which left Ireland prone, prostrate and demoralized. Archbishop Troy, writing on May 27, 1798, said that the spirit of insurrection “ has already produced the most horrid effects. Assassination, murders, atrocities of every kind have been committed.” ³

So far from loosening the nation's political servitude, the rebellion tightened the chains. The peasantry were left more helpless and oppressed than before. Even the loyal amongst the Catholics were subjected to persecution at the hands of a minority that meant to have revenge for the state of alarm the rising had caused it.⁴ The cause of Catholic emancipation, or of parliamentary reform, or of tithe reform, or of land reform were in no whit advanced. The way was paved for the Union.

Worse than all, the insurrection left bitter memories ; each side remembering what it should try to forget, and forgetting what it should remember. The Catholic, whose information is derived from such absurd sources as Father Kavanagh's history,⁵ thinks only of the outrages of the North Cork militia ; to the Protestant

¹ *History of the Rebellion*, p. 105.

² *Castlereagh's Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 152.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁴ Hay gives many instances of this in the County of Wexford.

⁵ The author, the Rev. P. F. Kavanagh, was a most devout and austere Franciscan. But he was a fanatic, and—I remember the incident right well—endeavoured to promote a boycott of Protestant establishments in the town of Wexford. His little book used to be very widely read.

mind, fed upon the equally partizan pages of Musgrave; the year 1798 is a confused image of massacre and burnings by a Catholic mob. To the seeker after truth, there appears to be much to be said on both sides. The peasant was ignorant and undisciplined, and he had sore grievances; the Protestant was in a fever of alarm for his life and his property; a servile war is the worst of all wars; this was a servile war.

Ireland has had some curious revolutionary leaders, men who seem to me not to have been genuine lovers of liberty in general. Lord Edward Fitzgerald took British gold to fight for tyranny; he was a British officer and served in the war against American Independence. John Mitchel denounced the emancipation of the Jews and advocated the retention of slavery. Erskine Childers fought against the Boers and told with relish of his troops getting home with the bayonet on the bodies of the poor South African farmers. Catholic Ireland was against America in the War of Independence, and against Garibaldi in his fight for a free and united Italy. I append a note as to the leaders.

The highest praise that can be given to Daniel O'Connell is that he was a great pacifist. He gave his views freely about the rebellion, remarking that the scheme of rebellion was in itself an ill-digested, foolish scheme, entered upon without the means or the organization necessary to ensure success. As to the leaders, he went on to say, there were among them some pure, well-intentioned men, but, he added, the great mass of them were trafficking speculators, who did not care whom they victimized in the prosecution of their schemes for self-aggrandisement.¹ "He talks," said O'Connell, "of '98. Why, there were several good men engaged in the contest of '98, but alas, their struggle was one of blood and defeated in blood. The means they adopted weakened Ireland, and enabled England to carry the Union."

Note as to Leaders of the United Irish Society.²

Theobald Wolfe Tone: born in Dublin, 1763. His father was a coachmaker and his grandfather a farmer near Naas, Co. Kildare. He married in 1786; entered Trinity College, Dublin, and, in 1787, became a student of the Middle Temple, London; earned £50 a year or thereabouts writing for magazines; called to the bar in 1789;

¹ *Personal Recollections*, II, 9; Houston's *Daniel O'Connell*, p. 239

² Taken, substantially, from Cornwallis' *Correspondence*.

went the Meinster circuit and claims to have earned enough to pay his expenses; he offered himself to the British Government for employment in the South Seas as a privateer opposed to the Spaniards; and was much chagrined because the project was turned down; thereafter, "I was led by a hatred of England, so deeply rooted in my nature that it was rather an instinct than a principle";¹ wrote a pamphlet in 1791 in favour of the Catholic claims and in the following year was appointed secretary to the Catholic committee at a salary of £200 a year; helped to found the first branch of the United Irish Society in Belfast in 1791; in 1794 became involved in Jackson's treason, but owing to the intercession of Woulfe (then Attorney-General, afterwards Chief Justice Lord Kilwarden—murdered in Emmet affray in 1803) was allowed to go abroad; after some time in America went to France and had negotiations with French government as to an Irish landing; was appointed Chef de Brigade (equivalent to Colonel) and was on board one of the ships that took part, under Hoche, in the ill-fated Bantry Bay expedition (January, 1797); was afterwards with Dutch Fleet at Texel; had an interview with Bonaparte in December, 1797; was appointed Adjutant-General of the "Armée d'Angleterre"; was taken prisoner in the engagement between Sir John Borlase Warren and the French off Lough Swilly in September, 1798; was sentenced to death. He committed suicide in prison (November 12, 1799).

Tone's autobiography gives the impression of being a very honest production. He was a sincere patriot, but had the courage and honesty to own to a mixture of motives—he harps constantly on getting "some honourable station as a reward" and avers that to place his wife "in a splendid situation" is his first object²; was strongly opposed to assassination; speaking of the (wholly unfounded) suspicion that an attack on Hoche's life was contrived by England, wrote: "I should be sorry, much as I detest the English nation, to suspect them of such vile and horrible means of effectuating their purposes, as that of assassination."³

Lord Edward Fitzgerald: son of James, 1st Duke of Leinster, born 1762, died June 4, 1798; married Pamela, daughter of Madame de Genlis by Egalité, Duke of Orleans; M.P. for Athy, 1783 to 1790; then for County Kildare to 1797; he fought in the British army against the Americans in the War of Independence;⁴ was arrested May 21, 1798, in the house of Nicholas Murphy, a feather dealer in Thomas Street; the man who gave the information which led to his arrest received £1,000, but his name has never transpired; died from wounds sustained when resisting arrest.⁵

Arthur O'Connor: born 1765; his mother was sister to Lord Longueville, who brought his nephew into Parliament but renounced all connexion with him when his revolutionary principles became

¹ *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 69.

² *Ibid.*, p. 314.

³ *Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 74.

⁴ *Life of Grattan*, by His Son, vol. IV, p. 34.

⁵ *Cornwallis, Correspondence*, vol. II, p. 339 n.

public. O'Connor was tried for high treason at Maidstone, in 1798, and acquitted; was immediately arrested again; after some months' confinement, on making a confession of his guilt, he was allowed to go to France, and, entering the French service, rose to the rank of Lieutenant General, but was not employed after 1803, in which year he was to have commanded the army destined for the invasion of Ireland.¹

Edward John Lewins: an attorney in Dublin; early obliged to fly the country; settled in Paris where he died December, 1827; was agent to the United Irish Society and was included in the list of persons banished by Act of Parliament.

William James McNevin: son of a Catholic gentleman of some property, born 1763, died 1841 in America; was educated in Austria; in 1794 established himself as a physician in Dublin, where he joined the United Irishmen; was sent to Hamburg to urge prompt action; on his return became a member of the Executive Directory; was one of those who, in 1798, agreed to disclose the secrets of the conspirators; in his evidence before the Lords' Committee, stated that one Privy Councillor, and one general on the staff, besides others of lower rank, were privy to their schemes; on being released from Fort George, he went to France, where he served for a short time with the rank of Captain; thence proceeded to New York, where he spent the remainder of his life.

Rev. James O'Coigley: Catholic priest; son of a farmer; born 1762, executed June 7, 1798; educated at Paris and constantly employed as an agent between France and England; disguised himself as an officer, and went by the name of Jones; Fivey was another alias.

Oliver Bond: of a respectable family in the North of Ireland; born 1761; died September 6, 1798; married Eleanor, daughter of Henry Jackson, an ironfounder, and afterwards implicated in the rebellion; was an opulent woollen draper in Dublin, one of the very few of that class who joined the rebels, of whom he became an influential leader; as early as 1793 he had made himself conspicuous by affixing his name to a seditious address, attacking the House of Lords. For this he was fined £500 and imprisoned for six months in Newgate. Tried for high treason, and convicted July 23, 1798, but his life was spared on certain terms. He died, however before he could be removed from prison.

Henry and John Sheares: sons of an eminent merchant and banker in Cork, at one time M.P. for Clonakilty. Henry, born 1758, was for about three years in the 11th Foot; but, as well as John (born 1767) was called to the bar; they visited Paris early in the revolution, and witnessed the capture of the Bastille and the execution of Louis XVI; it was there probably that John imbibed his sceptical opinions and that both became deeply imbued with revolutionary principles; on their return to Ireland, their conduct and language excited the suspicion of Government, and it is alleged they would have been brought to trial but for the kindness of Lord Kilwarden, then Attorney-General, and

¹ Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, vol. II, p. 339 n.

that they promised to abstain in future from similar proceedings; on their release they resumed their activities; and were rearrested. Henry was taken May 21, in his own house in Baggot Street, and in his room was found the draft of a proclamation to the people of Ireland. John was arrested the same day in the house of Mr. Lawless, a surgeon. The two brothers were tried July 12 and executed July 14, 1798. The bill which regulated trials for high treason in Ireland was brought in by their father in 1766.

Cornelius Grogan: of Johnstown, co. Wexford; born 1726, executed June 28, 1798; Protestant gentleman of large property, said to be worth £8,000 a year; was an old and timid man, and on his trial before the court martial endeavoured to show that he was compelled to take a nominal lead, but had abstained from any overt act; M.P. for Enniscorthy 1783 to 1790.

Bagenal Beauchamp Harvey: born 1762, executed June 27, 1798; a Protestant gentleman of good family, with an estate of £3,000 a year; before the rebellion broke out, his language at his own table, if Sir Jonah Barrington is to be believed, was of such a nature that his arrest caused no surprise; was confined in Wexford, and when that town was taken by the rebels, May 30, he was nominated their leader; on the recapture of Wexford, he and Mr. Colclough took refuge in the Great Saltee, an island five miles from the coast. They were discovered there by a party of the Royals and taken prisoners.

John Henry Colclough: a Catholic gentleman of small property and a near relative of Sir Vesey Colclough; executed June 28, 1798.

James Napper Tandy: born 1740; died a General of Brigade in the French service, 1803; a Protestant gentleman of small property, who forced himself into notoriety by incessant agitation in Dublin; Sir Jonah Barrington says that he was ungracious in his person, neither eloquent nor argumentative, generally violent, and often erroneous, that he possessed influence without rank or capacity, and acquired celebrity without any accountable reason; he was one of the early founders of the United Irish Society, where he became acquainted with Wolfe Tone; soon after, his treasonable practices became known to the Government, and he thought it advisable to fly, first to Hamburg, then, in 1795, to America, and thence to France; having gone a second time to Hamburg he was there arrested at Sir James Crawford's demand and sent as a prisoner to Ireland; arraigned at Lifford Assizes, pleaded guilty, and was allowed to leave the country soon after. He was a disgusting drunkard,¹ and it is related of him, with other more unsavoury details, that when the French fleet, on a unit of which he was on board, was in action with the British, he squatted on the deck with a pint bottle of brandy which he emptied twice; the French officers on board calling him "*infame, imbecile, scélérat.*"

Garrett Byrne: of Ballymanus, Co. Wicklow; a Catholic gentleman of considerable estate; he and his brother, William, both joined the

¹ See Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 407.

rebels ; William, who had been a yeoman, commanded the *Ba'lymanus* rebel corps at Arklow ; he was taken, tried by court-martial and sentenced to death, and executed ; Garret Byrne ultimately surrendered to General Moore ; his life was spared on condition of perpetual exile.

Joseph Holt : son of a respectable farmer, and one of Sir J. Blaquiere's Deputy Alnagers¹ ; born 1756, died 1826. In May, 1798, he commenced his career with 500 men ; his followers at one time amounted to 1,000, but dwindled down at last, when Hackett and Doyle left him, to about 50. A reward of £300 was offered for him, and he at last surrendered, November, 1798, and gave much information. Transported to New South Wales, January 1, 1799, and returned to Dublin, April, 1814, having behaved very well during exile.

Samuel Neilson : son of a Presbyterian minister, Co. Down ; born 1761 ; died in America in 1803 ; originally a woollen draper in his native town ; abandoned his business early in 1791, when the violence of his political opinions soon led to his imprisonment in Dublin ; in the beginning of 1798 was released on bail ; afterwards connected himself with Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and became an active member of the Ulster committee ; was again arrested and arraigned but the proceedings dropped, owing to the reluctance of witnesses to come forward.

Thomas Reynolds : a silk manufacturer in business ; born 1771 ; died in Paris, 1836 ; enrolled in United Irish Society ; subsequently informed and was examined as a Crown witness in the state trials ; received a pension of £1,000 a year and became Consul at Iceland and Copenhagen respectively.

Thomas Addis Emmet : born 1764 ; died 1827 ; son of Dr. Emmet, state physician to the Lord Lieutenant ; became a barrister ; in 1797 became one of the Directory of the United Irish Society ; arrested in 1798 ; sent to Fort George in 1799 ; released June, 1802 ; went to New York and achieved success as a barrister. His younger brother, Robert Emmet, instigated the abortive rising of 1803.

¹ An alnager was an official whose duty, discharged by deputy, was to measure cloth by the ell and fix the assize.

CHAPTER III

PITT CARRIES THE UNION

Political Situation as Affected by the Rebellion—Irish Considerations in Favour of the Union—Catholics and the Union—Protestant Opposition to Union—Pitt's Move in 1799—Corruption of the Irish Parliament—The Union Act Passes—Conduct of Pitt and Castlereagh.

The Irish problem immediately after the rebellion of 1798 might baffle and dismay the ablest and boldest statesman.

The political and social structure has been already described, with its divergent and antagonistic elements—the ruling power, the patronage, the wealth, the education, the culture, mainly in an oligarchy, alien in race, differing in creed from the vast mass of the people, and looked on by that mass as interlopers ; a tyrannical and alien State Church, abusing its privileges scandalously ; the bulk of the people, Irish, Catholic and poor, illiterate and undisciplined workers on the land. Any real alteration of this situation would have required a far-reaching change in the constitution, the admission of Catholics to Parliament and the conferring of real representation of the people. Such a change would involve a transfer of all the powers of government, including the powers of dealing with land and tithes, to the Catholic peasant class. This possibly, and in the minds of the oligarchy certainly, meant confiscation of their property and abolition of the Church. Apart from their personal concern, they honestly deemed a landed aristocracy and an established church to be the pillars whereon rested the whole structure of society. In these circumstances, it was hopeless to expect that the oligarchy, contrary, according to their contention, to the real interest of the nation, would commit an act of self-extermination by transferring the power to the democracy, or even sharing it with them.

A revolution on the French model would have solved the question. The United Irish leaders were right up to a point. They saw clearly enough that nothing was to be expected from the Irish Parliament,

and that the only remedy was in bringing it to the ground. But they made several miscalculations. In the first place, with the incurable optimism of all revolutionary leaders, they over-estimated the possibilities of success. As long as England held the mastery of the sea, a foreign invasion on a large scale, without which the rebellion must fail, was out of the question ; and even if an initial success had been obtained, the reinforcements of trained troops, which was possible to the one side but impossible to the other, would have made such success of short duration. In the second place, they did not appreciate the fragile and vulnerable character of their republic if established. It would have been a constant menace to England's security. Under the pressure of a disastrous defeat by France, England might have consented to it ; but a forced consent of that kind has little durability ; some excuse would have been found for interference. At best, Ireland would at some time or another, and possibly many times, have been made the scene of bloody and protracted warfare ; almost certainly, she would have been reconquered. In the third place, it is doubtful if sufficient consideration was given by the Republicans to the effect upon Ireland herself of a successful revolution. Bearing in mind the ignorance of the great mass of the population, their sense of intolerable wrong, the racial and religious antipathies, and the unquestionable fact that the English Protestant stock had most of the capital, most of the education, and most of the business experience of the country, a successful revolution might have entailed results of a disastrous character ; the cure might have been worse than the disease. "The very victory of such insurgent yokelings is almost invariably a disaster to their own country in the first place. It is in the hour of victory that an insurgent becomes really terrible to his own side as well as to the other,"¹ though, when one says so much, the reflection comes up that perhaps a revolution, if short, sharp and decisive, might have been more merciful, and less destructive of moral values than the pull-devil pull-baker struggle, which lasted for over a century, with its concomitants of murder, arson and outrage.

The rebellion aggravated the evils of racial and religious antagonism. The Catholics were in a sorrier plight than ever ; the Protestant heel was planted still more firmly on the Catholic neck. The rebellion of 1798 "once more gave back to the Orange Protest-

¹ O'Donnell's *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, p. 318.

ants that ascendancy which they were on the point of losing";¹ the prospect of emancipation, reform, social betterment at the hands of an Irish Parliament had vanished. Hay, a reliable Catholic historian,² gives many examples of the shocking treatment meted out to guilty and innocent alike in the county of Wexford by an outraged and alarmed ascendancy.

The internal situation of Ireland was, then, highly unsatisfactory and alarming. Not less so was the country's relation to Great Britain. English statesmen had sometimes reflected that the retention of Ireland within the Empire was an unprofitable, if not an impossible task.³ However, any idea of abandoning the country must have been dismissed as soon as conceived; for Ireland was a vital strategic point, a fact fully appreciated by England's enemies, as Napoleon's observations to Las Cazes show.⁴ The alternative to an Ireland dominated by England was, at that time, an Ireland dominated by France. The relinquishment of the country, moreover, involved the sacrifice of the Anglo-Irish settlers.

The relations between the two islands for the decade immediately preceding the Union, must have been a cause of profound anxiety to English statesmen, resisting as well as they could the bid by France for a hegemony over Europe. The United Irish conspiracy had been formidable; the means to resist it inadequate. There was no unified control over the troops in Ireland. Luck had been with England—in the dissipation of Hoche's fleet in Bantry Bay, in the contrary winds that kept the Dutch fleet in Texel until Duncan readied himself to give it the *coup-de-grâce* at Camperdown, in the passivity of the South while Lake crushed the rebels in the North. There were many unpleasant memories of England's unpreparedness and the narrowness of her escape. The luck might not be on England's side always. Ireland had ever been a jumping off ground for England's enemies, whether these enemies were rebels like Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck or nations like France and Spain. The dispute over the regency question showed a disposition in the Irish Parliament to complete separation from England. The narrow protectionist theories that prevailed on both sides of the channel promised a never-ending and mutually destructive tariff

¹ Wyse's *History of Catholic Emancipation*, vol II, p. 77.

² *History of the Rebellion of 1798*.

³ See letter from the Duke of Portland to Lord Shelburne, dated May 6, 1782, cited Lecky, vol. II, p. 305.

See p. 93 *ante*.

war.¹ Pitt cannot be blamed for applying a solution whereby the defence of both islands would be consolidated and strengthened and their trade policy unified. Wyse, the Catholic historian, thought the Union was "the inevitable consequence" of the rebellion.

I shall, in the second volume of this work, discuss the principle of self-determination, its limitations and qualifications and the ethical questions that appertain thereto. But I should like to observe here that the strategic position of Ireland in relation to Great Britain does not seem to me to receive from Irishmen generally the full consideration it deserves. The position is this. Ireland is separated from England by a very narrow strip of water. Held by friendly forces, the small island is a protection to the larger island's western flank; held by enemy forces, England's position becomes almost untenable. Ireland is the key of the Atlantic. Irish partisans are in the habit of denying any importance whatever to this circumstance; they point to Belgium, and say that Belgium's strategic importance is no answer to her right to sovereign independence. There is no analogy whatever. There would be some sort of analogy if, on the western side of Ireland, there were another island comparable in size and importance to Great Britain. In that event it would not be possible for either of the large islands to claim Ireland as part of its strategic structure; it could not be said that it belonged to the one any more than to the other; the interests of each of the large islands would make for the establishment of an independent Ireland, as a buffer between the pair. A piece of iron with a magnet on one side of it is in quite a different position from a piece of iron with two magnets of equal size, on opposite sides and equidistant from it; in the one case, the attraction is always operative; in the other the attraction on one side counterbalances the attraction on the other; equilibrium is the result. But if there were two such large islands as stated in the hypothesis, Ireland would be in a pitiable condition. She would be a naval Belgium, certain to be ravaged by war in the event of armed disputes between the two larger islands. The expense of protecting herself would be a crushing burden upon her finances. The same disastrous conse-

¹ Foster, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a determined opponent of the Union, said in 1785: "Things cannot remain as they are; commercial jealousy is roused, and it will increase with two independent legislatures. Without an united interest in commerce, in a commercial empire, political union will receive many shocks, and separation of interest must threaten separation of connexion, which every honest Irishman must shudder to look at as a possible event."—R. M. Martin's *Ireland Before and After the Union*, p. 15.

quences would ensue if, taking the actual geographical position, Ireland became a republic. In case of war between the big powers, a race would ensue for her possession; no profession of neutrality would save her; she would become the centre of real war. The danger to her supplies, to the lives and limbs of her people, to her industries, her houses, her property of all kinds, would be incalculable. She has never known real war on her ports or on her soil; and, not having experienced it, she does not appreciate the immunity she has hitherto enjoyed.

De Beaumont, a very pro-Irish writer, puts the strategic aspect thus: ¹

"Ireland is a vital member of the British Empire—a gangrened member, but one without which the Empire could not exist. In truth, if any convulsion of the globe sank Ireland in the bottom of the seas, England might be strengthened by the loss,² but whilst this country (Ireland) holding the place of an arm to the body, keeps its present position in the ocean, England must assert supremacy over it. In all times Ireland has been the aim of the enemies of England; she was so in the twelfth century, for history informs us, that the use which France might make of her was one of the causes that induced the English Kings to undertake her conquest. When, in the age of the Reformation, a plan was formed by Catholic Europe for striking at Protestantism in England, it was on Ireland that Spain cast her eyes, and it was on that country that the famous Armada of Philip II. disembarked. It was to Ireland that Louis XIV sent the army destined to aid the Catholic James II, in regaining the throne occupied by the Protestant William III.* And when republican and democratic France struggled against the European coalition of which England was the soul, she could devise no surer means of success than to send an army to Ireland, and for this purpose prepared three successive expeditions in less than two years."

From the Irish point of view, a Union, on the face of it, had much to recommend it. The lessening of the chance of invasion would also lessen the chance of insurrectionary projects in support, and so make for tranquillity and progress in the country; the power and patronage would be wrested from the hands of an intolerant and

¹ *Ireland*, by Gustave de Beaumont, edited by Taylor (1839), vol. II, p. 323. De Beaumont had the foresight to advocate the establishment of a peasant proprietary in Ireland, see p. 221.

² With the latter part of this statement I cannot agree. The exchange of Ireland's agricultural produce for England's manufactured goods is at all times of great consequence to England; and in time of war, the Irish production of certain food stuffs, over and above what is necessary for her own population, is of immense and almost vital consequence to England.

interested clique and transferred to a body comparatively disinterested and, on that account, if on no other, more enlightened. Catholic Emancipation and reform would stand a better chance in the wider and freer arena. The merger of the administrative establishments should make for economy. Some of the sorest grievances of Ireland had been trade restrictions of one kind or another. Under a Union this would no longer be possible; English and world markets would be free to Irish trade.¹ The country had been in turmoil since 1782. Mob law was supreme. "Previous to the Union the tyranny of the Orange faction was found to be more tolerable than the despotism of the mob and their leaders."² "In March 1794 an armed mob broke into the House of Commons in consequence of the rejection of a bill, and James Napper Tandy, a broken shopkeeper, at the head of the 'Aggregates' engaged and took on himself to overawe Parliament and the Government."³

It is worth while to cite the testimony of some great thinkers upon this aspect of the question. Adam Smith:

"By a Union with Great Britain, Ireland would gain, besides the freedom of trade, other advantages much more important, and which would much more than compensate any increase of taxes that might accompany that Union. By the Union with England, the middling and inferior ranks of people in Scotland gained a complete deliverance from the power of an aristocracy which had always before oppressed them. By a union with Great Britain, the greater part of the people of all ranks in Ireland would gain an equally complete deliverance from a much more oppressive aristocracy; an aristocracy, not founded like that of Scotland, in the natural and respectable distinctions of birth and fortune; but in the most odious of all distinctions, those of religious and political prejudices; distinctions which, more than any other, animate both the insolence of the oppressors and the hatred and indignation of the oppressed, and which commonly render the inhabitants of the same country more hostile to one another than those of different countries ever are."⁴

¹ Cromwell effected a Union; from 1652 to 1661 no parliament sat in Ireland, whose representatives went to Westminster. In 1661 the Irish Parliament was restored. In 1703 and 1707 the Irish Parliament, in addresses to Queen Anne, had suggested a Union, but the suggestion was coldly received and no steps taken upon it.—Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 153. Lord Downshire—Union Debates—averred it was thought of in 1776, and admitted that he had been at one time favourable to it.—Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, vol. III, p. 129.

² O'Driscoll, cited Martin's *Ireland*, p. 18 n.

³ *Ireland Before and After the Union*, R. M. Martin, p. 19.

Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, bk. IV, p. 430.

Montesquieu :

" Were I an Irishman, I should certainly wish for a Union with England, and as a general lover of liberty I sincerely desire it ; and for this plain reason—that an inferior country connected with one much her superior in force, can never be certain of the permanent enjoyment of constitutional freedom, unless she has, by her representatives, a proportional share of the legislature of the superior kingdom."¹

One of the best informed writers on the subject of Ireland was the great Cavour ; in 1844, he wrote :

" As regards the civil and economic relations of the two Kingdoms, the Act of Union is irreproachable. England and Ireland are placed by it on a footing of the most absolute equality. If there were sacrifices or concession on either side, it is by England they were made, since it consented to open its colonies to Ireland, and to share the benefits of a monopoly of which it alone had the privilege ; "

and again : ²

" I must regard the Act of Union, in spite of all its defects, as an event at which humanity must rejoice ; "³

he did not think that the Union deserved all the hatred and vituperation lavished on it by O'Connell and the popular party ; ⁴ he thought that Pitt's object was noble and great ; to strengthen the edifice of British power, then exposed to terrible attacks ; and to perform an act useful to Ireland by withdrawing it from the dominion of an alien and persecuting Church.

" He wished to give to the Catholics, by means of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, complete political emancipation, which they would never have obtained from an Irish Parliament. If he did not realize these generous plans, it was because he found in the will of George III an obstacle which he had not the courage to surmount, at a time when the support of the Crown was to him indispensable in order to save the nationality of his country, threatened by the power of France."⁵

The attitude of the Catholic leaders towards the Union project is perfectly intelligible. If there was any reasonable chance of obtaining real Parliamentary representation in an Irish Parliament, they would have preferred to wait. But they saw none, and they pre-

¹ Montesquieu, June, 1754, cited by Hardy in his *Life of Charlemont*, referred to in Whiteside's *Life and Death of the Irish Parliament*, p. 114.

² *Thoughts on Ireland*, p. 24.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

ferred a Union which they hoped would be followed by emancipation, to an Irish parliament which held out no such prospect; Cornwallis's letter to Portland of January 28, 1799,¹ describes the position thus: "The Catholics, if offered equality without a Union, will probably prefer it to equality with a union, for in the latter case they must ever be content with inferiority; in the former, they would probably by degrees gain ascendancy."

They tried to bargain for terms, but they got none. Instead, they got hopes. At first, the

"leading Catholics . . . were, with some exceptions, either neutral or actual opponents—the former entertaining hopes, but not inclining to support decidedly without some encouragement from Government; the latter entirely hostile, from a persuasion that it would so strengthen the Protestant interest as to perpetuate their exclusion."²

The friendly attitude and positive intention of the Cabinet on the Emancipation question were urged on them by the Lord Lieutenant. In the end they yielded. There is no question but that nearly all the Catholic leaders, relying on the chance of emancipation in a united Parliament, supported the Union. "The great question," wrote Dr. Moylan, on July 26, 1800, Catholic Bishop of Cork, "of legislative union is, thank God, most happily decided."³ The same Bishop thought the Catholics in general were in favour of the Union.⁴ Buckingham, writing to Pitt on January 29, 1799, reported that on the estimate of Dr. Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, nine-tenths of the Irish Catholics were for the Union.⁵ Catholic petitions from the counties of Waterford, Wexford, Cork, Leitrim, Longford, Tipperary, Kilkenny, Roscommon and Kildare were presented in favour of the Union.⁶ One writer⁷ is responsible for the statement that the Catholic Archbishops of Armagh, Dublin, Cashel, Tuam; the Bishops of Meath, Kildare, Waterford, Ardfert, Ossory, Killala, Ardagh, Derry, Ferns, Elphin, Raphoe, Cork and Down signified their support. Whether this be quite correct or not, Lord Castlereagh said in the House of Commons "that he would be a base

¹ Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, vol. III, p. 54.

² Castlereagh to Pitt, January 1, 1801; Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. IV, p. 8.

³ Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. III, p. 364.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 400.

⁵ Rose's *Life of Pitt*, Part II, p. 412.

⁶ R. M. Martin's *Ireland Before and After the Union*, p. 27.

⁷ A very strong anti-Catholic partizan, Warren.—*Ireland*, p. 94.

and ungrateful man if he were not readily to acknowledge that the Catholics had materially assisted in accomplishing the measure."¹

As to the mass of Catholic peasants, they had no opinions, because they could form none. Led by an agitator, they would unite to get land or shout for the abolition of tithes; with a weapon in their hands they were prepared to fight for the same laudable objects. But one might as well ask them to expound the binomial theorem as ask them for an opinion on a political question.

The real opposition to the Union came from the Anglo-Irish Protestants.² Naturally enough, for they stood to lose much in the shape of political power and prestige. An Irish Member of Parliament was a personage in his own country; the number of Irish seats would be greatly diminished in a United Parliament; he might not be one of the lucky ones; even if he were, his proportions would shrink amazingly in the larger area. There was, too, the question of patronage; that would go by the board. Rose thinks that "the chief difficulty was with the Protestant clique which largely controlled state patronage;"³ The pocket borough was a money-making asset; it could be sold, bartered, or leased. The traders of Dublin, to whom an Irish Parliament meant business, also opposed. The Orangemen were adverse.⁴ The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland circularized the lodges not to discuss the Union. But nevertheless thirty lodges of Down and Antrim passed resolutions against it. "The generality of Orangemen were individually adverse to the Union. They foresaw in the absorption of their country's power the final extinction of that monopoly by which they had subsisted."⁵

These were the selfish considerations that made for the continuance of the *status quo*. There were others of a more creditable character. Many of the Anglo-Irish stock were, according to their lights, intensely patriotic. Of this class a number were convinced that a Union would be disastrous to Ireland's interests; they adhered to that opinion in spite of every temptation to forsake it, and eventu-

¹ *Life of Grattan*, by His Son, vol. V., p. 57.

² "The Catholics seem inclined to the Union. I suppose because the Protestants are averse."—Cooke to Castlereagh, November 9, 1798.—Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 432. "The Protestant body was divided upon the question with the disadvantage of Dublin and the Orange societies against us."—Castlereagh to Pitt, January 1, 1801.—Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. IV, p. 9.

³ *Life of Pitt*, part II, p. 423.

⁴ Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 42; vol. IV, p. 9.

⁵ Plowden, p. 139.

ally voted against the measure. At the same time, the Protestant gentry had had a great fright. There were many incidents that indicated to their guilty consciences that a peasant victory would mean their being bundled out of the country, neck and crop. Prestige and dignity are all very well, but lose their value in the vicinity of an erupting volcano. Protestant resistance to the idea was, however, stubborn; Pitt's first attempt to carry the Union failed.

He made this attempt in 1799. The Irish Parliament met on January 22, and the King's speech spoke of "some permanent adjustment which may extend the advantages enjoyed by our sister Kingdom to every part of this Island." An amendment maintaining the right of Ireland to the legislature obtained in 1782 was defeated by one vote, the numbers being 106 to 105, and the address was carried by 107 to 105. In the House of Lords the Government had a majority of 52 to 16. When, however, the report of the address came before the Commons, a motion to omit the clause relating to the intended Union was carried by 111 to 106. In England Pitt had carried his resolution in favour of the Union by 140 to 15.

Pitt's attitude to the Catholics is shown by his speech in the House of Commons:

"On the other hand, without anticipating the discussion, or the propriety of agitating the question, or saying how soon or how late it may be fit to discuss it, two propositions are indisputable; first, when the conduct of the Catholics shall be such as to make it safe for the Government to admit them to the participation of the privileges granted to those of the established religion, and when the temper of the times shall be favourable to such a measure—when these events take place, it is obvious that such a question may be agitated in an United Imperial Parliament with much greater safety than it could be in a separated legislature. In the second place, I think it certain that, even for whatever period it might be thought necessary after the union to withhold from the Catholics the enjoyment of these advantages, many of the objections which at present arise out of that situation would be removed, if the Protestant legislature were no longer separate and local, but general and imperial; and then Catholics themselves would at once feel a mitigation of the most goading and irritating of the present causes of complaint."

Pitt had to prepare the ground for his next attempt. Selfish considerations had to be countered by selfish considerations, and patriotic convictions had to be sapped if he was to obtain his majority.

That Pitt corrupted the Irish Parliament is beyond controversy, but a vast amount of absurd nonsense has been uttered about the extent of the corruption. What are the facts? The Irish borough was a very valuable asset, and it was to be abolished. Was the borough owner to be compensated? Under the Union eighty-three boroughs were abolished, and compensation amounting to about £15,000 was paid to each owner. It was a large sum, in excess of the market price, but not very extravagant, having regard to the yield of the boroughs, and the surrender of a position of great consequence. Each borough owner was paid whether he voted for the Union or against it.¹ A great number of offices were abolished, and pensions were paid to the office holders.² Thus Lord Clare, Speaker of the House of Lords and an advocate of the Union, got a pension of £3,978 a year; Foster, Speaker of the House of Commons, who opposed it, got a pension of £5,038 a year.

At the same time, there was considerable undisguised corruption. Forty-six promotions in the peerage were made; twenty ecclesiastical jobs, and twelve legal jobs were provided; twelve pensions and four titular honours were dispensed.³ Making every due allowance for the fact that some of the payments were, legitimately enough, recompense for the extinguished boroughs, and for the practice, then more extensively followed than now, of recompensing political adherents by honours, the scale of this corruption staggers modern conceptions, though Mr. Rose⁴ palliates it: "These sordid bargainings cannot be said to amount to wholesale corruption, and did not much exceed those which normally were needed to carry an important Bill through Parliament."⁵

The opponents of the Union were not behind in their attempts at bribery. A subscription list, which it was intended to bring up to £100,000, was opened for the purchase of seats. A member named Whaley, who, in 1799, had voted for the Union and had spent £4,000 on his election, voted against it on being paid £4,000 out of the fund. The funds, however, were soon exhausted, and a member who would have approved the Union was lost to the

¹ £1,260,000 was the compensation money voted by Parliament; of this, the opponents of the Union received £432,000.

² See Martin's *Ireland*, pp. 31 n.; 411-417, for a full list of sums given.

³ Rose's *Life of Pitt*, Part II, p. 429.

⁴ *Life of Pitt*, Part II, p. 429.

⁵ Rev. W. MacDonald, Professor of Maynooth College, seems to have been of pretty much the same opinion; see his *Ethical Questions of Peace and War* (1919), p. 71.

opposition in consequence.¹ "It is certain that large sums were spent in direct bribery" against the Union.²

Pitt carried the Union, but the cloud which enveloped the transaction enabled O'Connell and thousands of lesser patriots to belch lightnings of invective against it, to the accompaniment of much stupefying thunder.

The way having been paved by unsavoury negotiations, a Treaty of Union was embodied in identical bills which were presented to the British and Irish legislatures respectively. The passage of the bill through the Irish legislature was marked by excited and stormy passages, which were re-echoed outside by that embodiment of human wisdom whom Shelley so graphically described³—the Dublin mob. It passed the second reading in the Irish House of Commons on February 5, 1800, by 158 votes to 115; ⁴ in the Irish House of Lords by 75 to 26; ⁵ it passed in the British House of Commons by 236 to 30; ⁶ in the British House of Lords by 75 to 7, and received the Royal Assent on July 2, 1800, and came into operation on the first day of January, 1801.

No names are so execrated in Ireland as those of Pitt and Castlereagh. Yet the obloquy is scarcely just. The motives of Pitt in connection with the Union were neither unstatesmanlike nor dishonourable. The means he employed were unquestionably scandalous, but in forming a fair judgment upon them it must not be forgotten that the money payments were for extinguished interests; that the award of honours differs only in a degree and not in kind from the practice pursued to this day of rewarding political adherents.

Castlereagh was the first Irishman to be appointed to the post of Chief Secretary, because, as it was said, "he was so very unlike an Irishman."⁷ Upon his shoulders was cast the responsibility of arranging the details of the union. He has been held up to particular odium by a long line of Irish patriots. If we except his part in the process of corruption, there is nothing in his conduct in the transaction unbecoming an Irishman or inconsistent with genuine patriotism. He was the means of establishing in Dublin

¹ *Life of Grattan*, by His Son, vol. V, pp. 70-71.

² Castlereagh to Pitt, February 7, 1800, gives the names of persons so bribed—Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, vol. III, p. 174.

³ See p. 16 *ante*.

⁴ Lecky V, p. 370.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

⁶ Rose, part II, p. 428.

⁷ Cornwallis to Portland, November 20, 1798; Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, vol. II, p. 439.

the "Gaelic Society," having for its object the preservation of the Irish language—the society languished, however, when he left Ireland after the Union.¹ He is said at one time to have belonged to the Society of United Irishmen;² and Grattan Junior is responsible for the statements that, in 1790, he became acquainted with Samuel Neilson, editor of the Republican *Northern Star*, and that on April 16, 1792, he attended a great Whig club dinner in Belfast with Dr. Halliday, Lord Londonderry and others of that party, and drank the popular toasts, some of them those of the United Irishmen.³ Castlereagh took pledges on the hustings in 1790 to support a bill of Reform in Parliament,⁴ which pledge he fulfilled by voting for a Reform measure which was defeated in 1793.⁵ But there is nothing in his life to indicate that his abandonment of the United Irish Society (if ever he belonged to it) or his change of mind in other respects was not the result of honest conviction. His letters are worth reading. For the most part, they are of a private and confidential character; we see, therefore, the mind of the man working before our gaze. A great number of the letters deal with the union project; he ponders over the evils of Ireland and obviously hopes that the remedy will be effectual;⁶ he inquires as to Scotland's progress under the Anglo-Scotch union.⁷ He shows in every detail a regard for Ireland's interests, and a desire to have justice done to her in the proposed treaty. From 1813 onwards he warmly supported Catholic Emancipation—his attitude up to that time being explained by his respect for the King's attitude upon the question.⁸ Lord Brougham, a very bitter critic of Castlereagh, paid him this tribute, "Lord Castlereagh uniformly and strenuously set his face against the atrocities committed in Ireland" (i.e. in 1798), "and to him, more perhaps than anyone else was to be attributed the termination of the system stained with blood."

I shall consider, later, one by one, the chief provisions of the Act

¹ Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 77.

² Speech of O'Connell, *Life and Speeches of O'Connell*, by His Son, p. 178.

³ *Life of Grattan*, by His Son, vol. V, p. 169. Grattan himself twitted Castlereagh in the Union Debates on his earlier sentiments—*Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 404.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 123; but he changed his mind on the subject after the grant of the franchise to the Catholics in 1793—Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 8.

⁶ *Memoirs and Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 139.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁸ Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 61.

of Union—in its bearings upon trade, finance and so forth. It is easy to show that, considered as a business partnership deal, it was a perfectly fair bargain ; and that most of the statements about it, especially as to its financial provisions, are mere partizan political propaganda.

CHAPTER IV

THE ACT OF UNION EXPLAINED

General Conditions—New Constitution for Great Britain and Ireland—
Ireland's Representation—The Churches—Financial Clauses—Trade
Provisions—The Tariff Argument Against the Union—The Financial
Argument Against the Union.

I proceed to analyse the clauses of the Union, and from analysis certain results, indisputable as it seems to me, emerge :

(1) That at the date of the Union, the representation given to Ireland in the British House of Commons was fair and just, having regard to the standards of the time ;

(2) That later, Ireland's representation was much in excess of what she was entitled to, whatever standard be applied ;

(3) That the scheme of Ireland's taxation was just and fair ; a mistake against Ireland in the original allotment of imperial contribution being, in the circumstances that happened, of no account, for Ireland never paid it ;

(4) That the commercial provisions were just and fair and that a reasonable provision was made for the temporary protection of Ireland's industries ;

(5) That the financial provisions have not been broken by England, as frequently alleged.

Prior to the Union, the law making powers for Ireland and Great Britain were, respectively, the Irish Parliament, consisting of the King of England and the Irish Lords and Commons, and the English Parliament, consisting of the King, the British Lords and the British Commons. To a new body, the parliament of the United Kingdom, consisting of the King, Lords and Commons of both countries, was entrusted the law-making power for both islands.

In the new House of Lords of the parliament of the United Kingdom, Ireland was to be represented by thirty-two Irish peers, four spiritual and twenty-eight temporal, the latter to be selected for life by the Irish peers.

In the new House of Commons of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, Ireland was to have one hundred representatives, two for each of the thirty-two counties, two for the City of Dublin, two for the City of Cork, one for the University of Dublin (Trinity College), and one for each of the thirty-one most considerable boroughs; the members of the House numbered in all 658—England and Wales, 513; Ireland, 100; Scotland, 45.

This representation was not according to the respective populations of the various countries, which were then Ireland, 4,500,000, England and Scotland, 12,000,000.¹ The Irish representation was arrived at by a comparison of the estimated wealth of the country with the estimated wealth of Great Britain. The wealth was estimated in manner presently to be mentioned. The proportion was ascertained as two-fifteenths, which fixed the proportion of representation. The Reform Act of 1832 gave Ireland five additional representatives—one for Dublin University and four for towns whose importance had increased since the union, but other changes left the Irish representation at 103.

The Churches of England and Ireland were united into one Protestant Episcopal Church and it was provided that its continuance and preservation should be deemed and taken to be an essential and fundamental part of the Union.

The financial clauses of the Act of Union presented great difficulty; and it is obvious that much care was bestowed upon them. A calculation was made for the purpose of ascertaining what was the ratio between the wealth or resources of Ireland and the wealth or resources of Great Britain. Two methods were adopted, and a mean struck between the two. One was to compare the relative

¹ It must be remembered that in no country was representation decided by reference to population. It was decided by reference to wealth and taxation. Thus in France, even down to 1829, no man could be an elector who did not pay 300 francs of direct taxation, and no man was eligible to be a deputy unless he paid 1,000 francs of direct taxation. Wyse, vol. II, cxx. The population of France in 1820 was 32 millions, yet the number of electors was only 102,000, and there were only 22,000 people eligible for the position of deputy. *Ibid.* Wyse, writing in 1829, said that in Ireland there were 179,103 persons having tenements valued at 40s.; 6,909 having valuation of £20, and 20,360 having valuation of £50. *Ibid.*, vol. II, App. CXII. "At that time suffrage was strictly a privilege of property. Veterans of the Revolution who had borne hardships of war found themselves disfranchised at its close, while rich Tories who had sided with Great Britain were able to vote after Alexander Hamilton had restored their privileges." Mr. L. Chenery in *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1924. John Bright, in 1866, pointed out that 84 per cent. of the adult male population was unrepresented in the British Parliament.

trades of the two entities; the other was to compare the relative consumption of excisable articles. The mean between the two, which was as 2 is to 15, was taken as the relative wealth ratio.

Now, having regard to the result of this computation, it was obviously impossible to have a complete fiscal union between Great Britain and Ireland. Great Britain had a national debt of £446,000,000; Ireland's national debt was only £28,000,000. The ratio between the respective debts was, roughly, as 1 is to 15, while the estimated ratio between the respective resources was as 1 is to $7\frac{1}{2}$; in other words, Britain in proportion to its assumed resources had a much bigger debt than Ireland had in proportion to its assumed resources. Consequently, to have amalgamated the Exchequers and to have treated the two countries thenceforward as one fiscal entity for all purposes would have been a manifest injustice to Ireland.

Accordingly, some other way had to be found, and this is contained in the seventh article of the Act of Union.

The taxing power for Ireland was transferred to the United Parliament, though the Exchequers were kept separate. It was provided that Ireland should pay the interest and sinking fund on its own national debt and should also pay as its contribution to the services—civil and military—of the United Kingdom, an annual sum equal to two-fifteenths of the cost of such services.

But it was further provided, that if at any time the national debts of both countries should be paid off, or if the ratio between the respective national debts should be the same as the ratio between the respective Imperial contributions—which is another way of saying if the respective National Debts should be an equal burden upon both countries having regard to their resources—the Exchequers should be amalgamated. Thereafter, taxation upon the newly formed fiscal entity, the United Kingdom, was to be indiscriminate, subject to such exemptions and abatements in favour of Ireland and of Scotland as circumstances might appear from time to time to demand.

There were certain important trade provisions. Ireland and England were to be on the same footing in respect of trade and navigation. In all treaties with foreign powers, the subjects of Ireland were to have the same privileges as British subjects. There was a general provision for duty-free trade between the two countries, subject to certain exceptions. These exceptions were cer-

tainly not unfavourable to Ireland ; one class of them¹ was to bear a 10 per cent. ad valorem duty, on importation into either country, for twenty years. This provision was inserted in the interests of Ireland's small industries.²

Such, in brief, are the terms of the Act of Union. It removed the greatest of grievances which Ireland had before 1800, namely, the harassing restrictions upon her trade. It was these restrictions that led to the formation of the Irish Volunteers in 1782. The Union gave Ireland free access to English world markets. It gave, for twenty years, a 10 per cent. protection, to which, of course, had to be added cost of freight—to Ireland's struggling industries. If these industries could not capture and keep the Irish home market with this advantage, it was most unlikely that any form of protection would help them. Ireland could not complain of its representation in the United legislature. This was based on the ratio between the estimated resources of the countries ; a method of fixing representation absolutely in accord with the spirit of the age. Ireland has had later the benefit of this fixed representation, for in 1920 when Britain's population had grown to about 40 millions and Ireland's was, say, 5 millions, Britain's representation in the House of Commons was 565 while Ireland's was 105. It is certain that taking the entire 120 years for which the Union lasted, Ireland has nothing whatever to complain of on the score of representation, for even on a population basis she has had more than her own share of it.

The two main arguments against the Union have been (1) that Ireland's industries languished under it, owing to want of protective tariffs or of sufficient protective tariffs ; (2) that Ireland was unfairly treated under the financial provisions of the Act of Union. The former question is discussed elsewhere ; the latter question may properly be dealt with in this chapter.

It is said, first, that the provisions of the Act of Union were inherently unfair and unjust to Ireland, and, second,—and this is the gravamen of the charge—that these provisions were broken in the letter and in the spirit by the United Parliament ; or, as it is usually put, that England swindled Ireland under the Union. The conviction that Ireland was swindled under the Act of Union

¹ Apparel, wrought brass, cabinet ware, coaches and carriages, wrought copper, cotton, glass, haberdashery, hats, wrought tinware, lace, millinery, stained paper, pottery, manufactured leather, silk manufactures, stockings.

² See Castlereagh's *Memoirs*, vol. III, p. 190 *et seq.*

is all but universal in Ireland. O'Connell said: "You put your hands into the pockets of her people, and, like felons and pickpockets, you did not withdraw your hands until you left your victim, stripped of all her wealth, a bankrupt and a beggar." As late as January, 1923, Mr. J. J. O. Kelly, a well-known Irish propagandist, spoke of "an acknowledged debt of 2,500,000 dollars due by Britain to Ireland."¹

If the reader will be good enough to give a little close attention to the following pages, I hope to make the points in the controversy clear. I also hope to establish clear conclusions upon them.

Let me recall the statutory provisions.

The United Parliament was to impose the taxation upon Ireland as upon Great Britain, but the taxation was not to be indiscriminate. The taxation from Ireland was to be sufficient to meet (1) the charges for interest and sinking fund in respect of Ireland's National Debt; and (2) an Imperial contribution bearing a ratio to Great Britain's Imperial contribution of 2 to 15—that being the then ratio of the supposed relative wealth of the two islands; this ratio was to be revised every twenty years. But the Act went on to provide for a complete fiscal union in certain events, one of which happened. If both National Debts were paid off (which was the anticipated event, but which did not happen), or if the ratio which the Irish National Debt bore to the English National Debt was the same as the ratio which the Irish Imperial contribution bore to the British Imperial contribution, the Exchequers were to be amalgamated, and thereupon the taxation upon the newly formed fiscal entity was to be indiscriminate, "subject only to such particular exemptions or abatements in Ireland and in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, as circumstances may appear from time to time to demand." This contingency happened in 1816. On and after January 1, 1817, the Exchequers were amalgamated.

There are, therefore, two periods to be considered; (1) the pre-1817 period, (2) the post-1817 period.

As to the pre-1817 period, no question arises as to a breach of the Act of Union. The complaint is that the proportion which Ireland had to bear of Imperial burden (two-fifteenths) was too much. The manner in which the proportion was arrived at has been already

¹ Speech at Springfield, Mass.—*Irish World*, January, 1923. My recollection is that a speaker in the Dublin Corporation put it at thousands of millions of pounds!

explained : the ratio was the supposed ratio between the relative resources of the two countries, calculated on a comparison of trade and consumption.

Now, there is one thing perfectly clear, that the proportion of two-fifteenths was too much. The method of calculation looked just enough, but was in reality wrong in principle ; there are other matters besides trade and consumption to be considered when comparing the relative resources of two countries for taxation purposes. If, therefore, Ireland had ever paid the two-fifteenths, she would have had a legitimate cause of complaint. But, in truth, she did not. She went in debt for it, and she never paid the debt, for it was taken over in 1817 by the Imperial Exchequer, which became responsible for it. If, again, the fact that Ireland was driven into debt for this two-fifteenths materially damaged her position, she would have had a legitimate cause of complaint. But it did not. On the contrary, most curiously, she was advantaged by the miscalculation. The only reason why an amalgamation of Exchequers, with the indiscriminate taxation consequential provisions, did not take place in 1800 was, as already pointed out, that the relative National Debts of the two countries stood in the ratio of 15 to 1 while the supposed relative resources stood in the ratio of 15 to 2 or $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. If there had been a proper calculation, the relative resources would not have been estimated at $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, but at 15 to 1 at best, or, more likely, at a bigger figure. If that be so, no reason for postponing the amalgamation of the Exchequers would ever have existed : the Exchequers would have been amalgamated in 1801 and not in 1817. The advantage that Ireland was lucky enough to derive from the miscalculation lies in this—that her representation was also based on the two to fifteen ratio : if a true ratio had been arrived at, the representation would have been proportionately less.

We now come to the post-1817 period. On this, two complaints are made : (1) that indiscriminate taxation, or practically indiscriminate taxation, was inherently unjust to Ireland ; (2) that there was a scandalous breach of the Act of Union. As to (1) this is tantamount to saying that the Act of Union was a bad bargain ; (2) is a charge of a graver nature, that England broke the bargain.

The way that the Irish advocates put the first point is : The taxation of a country is the taxation of the individuals in the country ; taxation hits a poor man more heavily than a rich, for

it takes a relatively greater share of his income, whether that income be gross income, or net income, after deducting a subsistence allowance. As Ireland has a much greater proportion of poor men than Great Britain, Ireland is hit harder by taxation, which, on the face of it, is imposed equally upon all. Furthermore, taxes on spirits and tea, greatly consumed in Ireland, are very high. Some Irish advocates have laid it down that taxation should fall only on the surplus left to the individual after the cost of his subsistence has been deducted.

There are two answers. The first is, that the wit of man cannot devise any scheme of taxation to which exception cannot be taken on the score of some apparent anomaly or other. It is, I think, true enough that indirect taxation and, perhaps, direct taxation too, hit the poor man proportionately heavier than the rich. But carry this proposition far enough and see its conclusion. If a country consists mainly of poor men, it would be impossible to run the country at all unless there was the disproportion, for otherwise the rich would be taxed out of existence—a poor country requires as much to run it, and often more, than a country consisting of people who are fairly prosperous. After all, taxation must be a workable thing; it must bring the required yield; it must bring it in a fashion that is feasible, that minimizes friction and does not crush enterprise. If there was to be one fiscal entity at all, consisting of Great Britain and Ireland, then indiscriminate taxation seems unavoidable. Agricultural Scotland and agricultural England and Wales would have the same alleged grievance as agricultural Ireland.

Again, whether Ireland was advantaged or not in the post-1817 period depends on a different consideration altogether. It depends on a comparison between two figures: (1) the yield from Ireland on the indiscriminate taxation basis; and (2) the yield required if she were an independent political unit, that is to say, if she had to pay (a) the cost of running the country, *plus* (b) interest and sinking fund on her own National Debt, *plus* (c) the expenses of a separate Irish military and naval establishment. It is most curious that Irish writers quite overlook this obvious principle—that, in forming an estimate as to whether Ireland got a good bargain or a bad bargain by the Union, the only way to arrive at a conclusion is to make a comparison of, first, the actual taxation of Ireland since the Union, and second, the estimated taxation on

the basis of Ireland being a self-supporting and self-defending country. Cavour saw that this was the only plan and was convinced that, from the financial point of view, O'Connell was making a mistake in pressing for a repeal of the Union. He takes¹ the figures for 1834 and ascertains the following distribution of the produce of the imposts in the two Kingdoms :

	Great Britain.	Ireland.
Customs	£19,353,324	£1,757,143
Excise	13,061,852	1,966,183
Post	1,970,361	240,471
Stamps	6,825,679	466,170
Taxes	4,662,256	—
	<u>£45,873,472</u>	<u>£4,429,967</u>

Reckoning Ireland's wealth as about one-eleventh² of that of England, he goes on to speculate how a repeal of the Union would then operate upon Ireland financially.

He puts Britain's debt in 1836	£787,683,816
He charges to Britain exclusively her debt of £239,350,148 which she owed in 1783	239,350,148
	<u>£548,333,668</u>

Of this sum, he says, Ireland's share should be, say	60,000,000

Which would mean for interest alone	2,000,000
Ireland's Revenue was	5,000,000
	<u>£3,000,000</u>

Which would leave to Ireland for Ireland's local services, including defence	£3,000,000

and he goes on to say : A very scanty revenue for a country of eight millions of inhabitants. All the States of Europe spend in proportion to their population twice, thrice, even six times more than this. It would be wholly insufficient to enable Ireland to dispose of any military force, and to maintain the police and the magistracy on the footing on which they are at present constituted. One of the first consequences of repeal, accordingly, would be to force upon the Parliament of Dublin an increased taxation. He then remarks that a change in the distribution of the taxes would not help. Customs are nearly one-half of the resources of the State,

¹ Cavour, *On Ireland*, p. 68.

² Probably an over-estimate.

being duties on Colonial products, sugar and tea in particular. To reduce these would relieve the middle classes ; but six-sevenths of the population would find not the least benefit, for these articles do not all enter into their consumption ; with the customs, the excise forms almost the whole of the public revenue of Ireland, and nobody thinks of reducing taxes on spirits. Cavour was budgeting for a population of eight millions. His figure of £60,000,000 would not be considered by any Irishman as just to Ireland, having regard to the state of Ireland's National Debt in 1800. But the principle of his comparison is correct, and his conclusion, even making necessary adjustments in Ireland's favour, worthy of consideration.

It is scarcely possible to arrive at the exact figures showing from 1817 to 1914 (a) the cost of Irish services and (b) the yield from Irish taxation. M. G. Mulhall, writing from the Home Rule standpoint in the *Contemporary Review* (1882), estimated that the aggregate surplus in the sixty years from 1817 was £37,500,000, less by £7,500,000 lent to the Irish Board of Works and written off, leaving half a million per annum contributed yearly by Ireland towards Imperial services—this takes no account of interest on Ireland's National Debt at the time of the Union. Mr. John E. Redmond¹ was of opinion that Ireland was run at a loss from 1886 onwards, but this can scarcely be relied on. The "estimated" as distinct from the "true" revenue appears by the Treasury White Papers to show surpluses (round about £2,000,000 a year), except for 1909, 1911, 1912, 1913, when there was a deficit averaging about £1,500,000 a year. From 1914 to 1921, owing to war taxation, there was a very considerable surplus from Ireland. Without any pretensions to strict accuracy, these figures show that down to the Great War Ireland's surplus yield to the British Exchequer was small, and considerably less than a self-contained and self-defending country would have had to pay for its own army and navy. Faced with this fact, the partizan Irishman used to say, "But the sums spent on running the country were excessive ; British administration was wasteful and extravagant." This contention seems to be no longer tenable, having regard to the cost of the Free State administration.²

We now come to examine the really serious charge—that England swindled Ireland under the Act of Union. It will be remembered that the taxation, under the terms of the statute, was to be indiscriminate, "Subject only to such particular exemptions or abate-

¹ See *Annual Register*, 1912, p. 77. ² See Chapter "The Irish Free State."

ments in Ireland and in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, as circumstances may appear from time to time to demand." Certain exemptions and abatements were allowed to Ireland in pursuance of this provision. From 1817 to 1921, very large sums were raised from Great Britain from taxes not raisable from Ireland. A land tax and a beer tax payable in England were not applied to Ireland up to 1834 at any rate¹; there was for the best part of a century a much lighter scale of duties on legacies, on deeds, and on probates and letters of administration; the income-tax² was not applied to Ireland till 1853. These exemptions and abatements grew less and less; the Primrose Committee (1912) enumerated the following as not then applicable to Ireland—Land Tax, Inhabited Houses Duty, Railway Passenger Duty, and Patent Medicine Duties. Scotland had far less share in abatements and exemptions; there was a lighter tax on malt till 1822 and in 1855 Scottish taxation was equalised with that of England and Wales.

Now, the contention of Ireland is that, even after the amalgamation of the Exchequers, Ireland was in no circumstances to be taxed so as to produce a yield which would bear a greater ratio to the yield from Great Britain than the ratio which the "taxable capacity" of Ireland would bear to the "taxable capacity" of Great Britain.

The answer is that the contention is wholly untenable, for it amounts really to saying that after the amalgamation the taxation was not to be indiscriminate at all, but was to be discriminate; to be varied from time to time according as Ireland's relative capacity rose or fell. This construction is opposed to the plain language of the agreement itself, which laid down indiscriminate taxation as the groundwork of the whole scheme, subject to the provision as to abatements and exemptions. Moreover, the pre-amalgamation period contains a most specific provision for the periodic ascertainment of Ireland's taxable capacity so as to revise the amount of the Imperial contribution, while nothing similar is provided for the post-amalgamation period.³

The words "subject only to such particular exemptions or abate-

¹ Speech of Spring Rice in 1835.

² First imposed in Great Britain in 1793, repealed in 1816, reimposed in 1842.

³ Indeed, the machinery for ascertaining relative taxable capacity is expressly scrapped. This is most significant, as tending to show that after the post-amalgamation period no ascertainment, periodic or otherwise, of the relative taxable capacities was intended.

ments in , and in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, as may appear from time to time to demand " create no difficulty. While, in language as clear as can be, the fundamental principle of indiscriminate taxation is laid down, it is deemed right that Parliament should have, at its own discretion, the power to treat Ireland in a benevolent spirit and to give her such exemptions and abatements as it thought fit. This is, to be sure, slightly inconsistent with indiscriminate taxation, but fits in well enough with the main principle thereof; the measure of the discrimination was, obviously, anticipated to be small ("particular" exemptions and abatements), and was to be entirely within the discretion of the United Parliament. The provision applies to Scotland, and nobody has ever suggested that Scotland should be taxed according to its relative taxable capacity and not otherwise.

There is no injustice to Ireland in this construction. There were obvious advantages in such a bargain. Ireland's defence was no longer her own particular concern; free trade and a common fiscal policy were secured; Ireland was entitled to a representation of about one-sixth in the House of Commons. If, in exchange for these things, Ireland took her chance with England and Scotland as to the amount and incidence of taxation to be imposed by a United Parliament over the newly created fiscal entity, it was a bargain into which a prudent nation might very well enter. I now quote the statute, with the opposing constructions.

•
(a) *The Statute.*

It shall be competent for the United Kingdom Parliament to declare that all charges "shall be so defrayed indiscriminately by equal taxes imposed on the same articles in each country, and thenceforth from time to time as circumstances may require to impose and apply such taxes accordingly, subject only to such particular exemptions or abatements in Ireland, and in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, as circumstances may appear from time to time to demand. That from the period of such declaration it shall no longer be necessary to regulate the contributions of the two countries towards the future expenditure of the United Kingdom according to any specific proportion or according to any of the rules hereinbefore prescribed."

(b) *Construction No. 1.*

(*British Construction.*)

There shall be one fiscal entity, to wit, the United Kingdom.
The expenses thereof, whether local or Imperial, shall be defrayed by indiscriminate taxation over the entire entity.

In consideration of Ireland's and Scotland's backwardness and poverty, Parliament shall have power to give these countries exemptions and abatements. Such exemptions and abatements are within the discretion of Parliament, and, in measuring them, Parliament shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case, including the cost of running Ireland (or Scotland).

(c) *Construction No. 2.*

(*Irish Construction*)

There shall be one fiscal entity so far as payment of expenses, local and Imperial, of the entity are concerned.

There shall be two (*quære*, three)¹ fiscal entities so far as raising the sum to meet expenses is concerned.

The taxation of these two (*quære*, three)¹ entities shall not be indiscriminate; on the contrary, Ireland (*quære*, Scotland)¹ shall not be taxed to more than its relative taxable capacity to Great Britain (*quære*, England and Wales).¹

Parliament shall not consider all the circumstances; Parliament shall not consider the cost of running Ireland (*quære*, Scotland).¹

If the contention put forward on behalf of Ireland be accepted, then, after amalgamation, Ireland would or might have a lesser rate of taxation than that prevailing in Great Britain, even though, at the same time, the yield from Ireland should be insufficient, as it often was insufficient, to meet the running expenses of that country. Take, for example, the year 1893-4. In that year Ireland's taxation yielded £7,568,000; her outgoings for Irish local services were £5,602,000, leaving £1,966,000 for Imperial contribution. Great Britain's taxation yielded £89,286,000, her expenditure for British local services £30,618,000, leaving £58,668,000. But if construction No. 2 be applied, Ireland's taxation should be reduced to £4,640,000; being one-twentieth of Great Britain's yield. (The Financial Relations Commission found that 1 to 20 was Ireland's taxable capacity.) In other words, not alone would Ireland not pay anything towards Imperial contribution, but she would receive a subsidy from Great Britain to run the Irish establishment. Results still more startling would follow if later years were taken, when, even on the indiscriminate taxation basis, the yield from Ireland did not pay the expenses of Irish local services.

I do not think it right to conclude this chapter without a reference

¹ That is, if Scotland is to be so reckoned, as apparently it must, for the Act deals with Scotland in the same terms as Ireland.

to the Financial Relations Commission of 1896, upon whose findings the fallacious ideas prevalent in Ireland are based.

The reference to the Financial Relations Commission¹ is in the following terms :

To inquire into the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland, and their relative taxable capacity, and to report :

1. Upon what principles of comparison, and by the application of what specific standards, the relative capacity of Great Britain and Ireland to bear taxation may be most equitably determined.

2. What, so far as can be ascertained, is the true proportion, under the principles and specific standards so determined, between the taxable capacity of Great Britain and Ireland.

3. The history of the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland at and after the Legislative Union, the charge for Irish purposes on the Imperial Exchequer during that period, and the amount of Irish taxation remaining available for contribution to Imperial expenditure, also the Imperial expenditure to which it is considered equitable that Ireland should contribute."

The Commission, with practical unanimity, found as follows :

I. That Great Britain and Ireland must, for the purpose of this Inquiry, be considered as separate entities.

II. That the Act of Union imposed upon Ireland a burden which, as events showed, she was unable to bear.

III. That the increase of taxation laid upon Ireland between 1853 and 1860 was not justified by the then existing circumstances.

IV. That identity of rates of taxation does not necessarily involve equality of burden.

V. That whilst the actual tax revenue of Ireland is about one-eleventh of that of Great Britain, the relative capacity of Ireland is very much smaller and is not estimated by any of us as exceeding one-twentieth.

It will be noted that the reference to the Commission does not ask for a finding whether there was a breach of the Act of Union. Nor do the findings *supra* include any finding that there was such a breach.

But there were several separate reports, in some of which two opinions are unmistakably expressed:

(1) That there had been a formal breach of the Act of Union

¹ Consisting of the O'Connor Don (Chairman), Mr. Hugh Childers (who died before the issue of the final report, but who left a draft report, which is, in substance, adopted by the majority), Lord Farrer, Lord Welby, Sir Robert Hamilton (who also died), Sir Thomas Sutherland, Sir David Barbour, Mr. B. W. Currie, Mr. W. A. Hunter, Mr. C. E. Martin, Mr. J. E. Redmond, Mr. Thomas Sexton, Mr. H. F. Slattery, Mr. Blake and Mr. Wolff.

because Ireland had been taxed beyond its relative taxable capacity, and this was contrary to the Statute ;

(2) That there had been a breach, in spirit if not in form, because the United Parliament had not sufficiently taken into account the special circumstances of Ireland when determining the question of what " exemptions and abatements " that country should receive ; and the opinion was expressed that for the purpose of this consideration the United Parliament was not at liberty to consider whether or not the yield from Ireland was sufficient to pay Ireland's running expenses.

As to the first of these opinions, I have already summarized the arguments against it derived from the construction of the statute. But some of the members of the Commission, in support of their view, rely on contemporary statements made by the statesmen responsible for the measure. To construe a statute by reference to matters of this kind is obviously so dangerous that our courts of law will not tolerate it. But, assuming this point to be waived, let us see what the statements are.

The Report of the O'Connor Don (Chairman), Mr. J. E. Redmond, Mr. C. E. Martin, Mr. W. A. Hunter and Mr. G. W. Wolff, states (pp. 4 and 5, par. 10) :

Mr. Pitt, in announcing the project of the Legislative Union in 1799, stated that one of the objects which he looked forward to, and which he hoped might be found practicable, was " to secure that Ireland should never be taxed but in proportion as we tax ourselves." Lord Castlereagh said : " As to the futuro, it is expected that the two countries should move forward together, and unite with regard to their expenses in the measure of their relative abilities. Were our entire expenditure common, which would happen if neither Kingdom had any separate debts, or if their debts were in proportion to their ability, by no system whatever could they be made to contribute so strictly according to their means as being subject to the same taxes equally bearing on the great objects of taxation in both countries," and as this would not be fair on account of the disparity of the separate debts, he went on to say, " The great point, therefore, to be ascertained is the best criterion which can be formed of the relative means of the two countries, in order to fix the relative proportions of their contributions." Having stated the principle of the financial arrangements which he proposed, he explained that Parliament was to have the power to revise the proportionate contributions of 15 to 2, at the end of twenty years, in case they might " under different circumstances prove to be both partial and advantageous." By there being a provision for revision, Ireland has the utmost possible security that she cannot be taxed

beyond the measure of her comparative ability, and that the ratio of her contributions must ever correspond with her relative wealth and prosperity.

To all of which the fair answer is : Pitt's statement is, to say the least of it, ambiguous. Castlereagh's statement is emphatically in favour of the British construction. In effect he says : " If the debts were relatively equal, the question would solve itself, for indiscriminate taxation would be perfectly fair " ; but then, going on to speak of the condition of things which obtained till 1816, he says in effect : " As our relative debts are not equal for the present, we seek a temporary expedient, and we propose to fix the Imperial contribution by reference to taxable capacity, to be determined by periodic revision." The chairman and those other four members go on to say :

From these and other statements made at the passing of the Act of Union, it appears to us to be clear that even when indiscriminate taxation was looked forward to, it was justified and contemplated upon the express ground that it would be of such a character as to correspond to the relative taxable capacities of the two countries.

The British case is that if for this are substituted the words : " when indiscriminate taxation was looked forward to, it was justified as being fair to both countries " the statement would be correct ; both countries agreed to indiscriminate taxation as being a fair and just method of burdening the various components of the fiscal unit. •

Messrs. Sexton, Blake and Slattery, however, at p. 104 boldly say that :

Taxation of Ireland in excess of the measure defined by her relative resources violates the covenant which extinguished the Parliament of Ireland, and offends against the solemn obligation on the faith of which the Imperial Parliament secured the sole power, and accepted the duty, of administering Irish affairs.

The second of the two opinions mentioned *supra*—that is, that there was a breach in spirit, if not in form—is to the effect that, in considering the question of exemptions and abatements, Parliament should have no regard to the question whether Ireland's yield was equal to Ireland's expenses.

As to this, Mr. Childers was obviously right when he said (p. 150, par. 52) :

We consider this provision in the Act of Union to be of great and essential importance to the present inquiry, showing as it does that the claim of Ireland to special consideration in fiscal matters, as a distinct section of the United Kingdom has never been suffered to become extinct, and that it is therefore, even from a legal point of view, impossible to consider Ireland as being, fiscally, no more than a certain group of counties of the United Kingdom. This fact seems to be the foundation of the reference made to the Commission.

This, however, does not touch the point under consideration, namely, upon the basis of what considerations the Parliament should rest its conclusion. As to this, the Report by the Chairman and four others says (p. 22, par. 99) :

The division of Imperial expenditure into three parts, one for local purposes in Great Britain, one for local purposes in Ireland and one for Imperial purposes is, we must remark, a distinction of quite modern creation. It was not thought of at the time of the Act of Union. It is quite clear according to the provisions of that Act that the Imperial expenditure to which Ireland was to contribute in proportion to her resources included all civil Government expenditure, no matter in what part of the United Kingdom it took place. Nothing could be clearer than Mr. Pitt's and Lord Castlereagh's declaration on this point, and it is not denied by Sir E. Hamilton that, if the provisions of the Act of Union were still in force, Imperial expenditure should be treated as a whole and could not be split up in the way in which he suggests.

It is quite true that in the post-amalgamation period the sums payable by Ireland were merged in the United expenses (civil and military)—but this is far from saying that in considering exemptions and abatements the United Kingdom Parliament should not consider whether the granting of exemptions and abatements would not be, in effect, a subsidy towards defraying Ireland's running cost. The exemptions and abatements are to be such "as circumstances may appear from time to time to demand." Is not the cost of running Ireland—and Scotland—a circumstance? If not, why not?

The Commission were of opinion that the cost of Irish administration—even if it were competent to take such cost into account—was extravagant. Assuming that to be so, it constitutes no breach of the statute.

The administration was conducted by the machinery agreed to—namely, machinery provided by the United Parliament. But Irishmen are finding, if they have not already found, that this con-

clusion is fallacious. The cost of running all Ireland in 1913 was in the neighbourhood of twelve millions ; in 1924 the Civil cost under the Free State Government of running twenty-six counties was over £20,000,000 pounds, to say nothing of the cost of the military establishment. Even making every allowance for the diminished value of the £1¹, this shows that the administration of Ireland under the British régime was not more costly than in Irish hands.

A contention that Ireland was never to be subject to income tax is seldom, if ever, made by the advocates of the over-taxation theory. It is arguable, whereas the other contentions seem to me not to be so. But I think it is plainly unsound. The circumstance that income tax is not mentioned in the Union does not carry an implication that it should never be imposed.

For such a long dissertation upon a very dry topic an apology is due ; but it was necessary to go into the matter at length if the reader, forming his own conclusions on the statute and the various considerations suggested, is to appraise justly the censure that has been passed in this respect upon Great Britain in connexion with the Union.

¹ Roughly, £1 in 1914 was the equivalent to £1 15s. in 1924.

CHAPTER V

WHY THE UNION FAILED

That the Union failed to make itself acceptable to the majority of the Irish people as a permanent form of government conditioning their existence is now apparent to all men.

O'Connell thought that the Union would have been a success if followed by Catholic Emancipation.¹ For reasons which I shall state presently, and which depend upon moral forces rather than upon material interests, I do not agree. My view is that under no circumstances could the Union have been an enduring settlement between the nations.

The Union, however, never got a chance of being a success, even as a temporary palliative. Reforms came too late. Catholic Emancipation, which was expected to have followed hot foot, did not come till nearly thirty years after, and then as a result of a threatened revolution. The delay gave O'Connell his opportunity, and he used his astonishing mob power to create an agitation for Repeal of extraordinary depth and intensity. But had there been no O'Connell, and had the Union been quickly followed by ameliorative measures, it could not have been a permanent solution. As time went on, and the Irish Catholic grew in power and education, the human instinct for self-government would have asserted itself; a clash was inevitable; a legislative and administrative union between the two islands was, in the nature of things, impossible.

An aggregate of circumstances may lead to fusion between two different peoples, the identity of the one, for political purposes at least, being absorbed in that of the other. Such circumstances are—obvious identity of interest for strategic and economic purposes, coupled with some degree of spiritual affinity as well. The case of England and Scotland is an example; even there the union came to be accepted slowly and with difficulty; and as I write

¹ *Life and Speeches of O'Connell*, by his Son, p. 421.

there is a movement, apparently, on the increase, for some modification of it. In the case of Ireland and Great Britain, however, the identity of economic and strategic interests is not so clear. Indeed, as to the former, many Irishmen, including men of a highly educated type, have been of the opinion that fiscal separation, involving the right to impose tariffs, is essential for the well-being of Ireland. Experience will show the fallacy of this idea ; but it prevailed, and, to some extent, still prevails. But in truth, the real force always making for secession was the spiritual divergence of the peoples ; there is between them a gulf much wider and deeper than the Channel. This divergence lies partly in racial differences, and, as I think, still more in the difference in religion.

Some of the racial differences present no obstacle to a political union of the countries. The contrast between the Irishman's quick-witted intelligence, impulsiveness, indiscipline, easy good nature, emotionalism, indolence where any job not completely to his liking is concerned, with the Englishman's slower and more stolid habits of thought, speech and action, his sense of order and duty, his subordination of good nature to a sense of justice, and his bottomless common sense constitute no reason why, politically, they should not cheerfully pull together in double harness. But one Irish characteristic presents a formidable barrier. There is, in Ireland, an inordinate pride of race.

The geographical position of the island—the most Western outpost of European civilization—no doubt partly accounts for this, on the same principle that the snail, as the Hindoo proverb says, “ Sees nothing beyond its shell and believes it to be the finest palace in the universe.” Still more, perhaps, is the national vanity attributable to a past which had its glories. From the fifth to the eighth centuries, when the Roman Empire was breaking up, and the Continent of Europe was the scene of conflict and confusion, Ireland's position gave it peace. The country became a great centre of learning ; students came to its schools from abroad ; it produced and sent all over Europe some very remarkable men. St. Columbanus in Italy, St. Gall in Switzerland, St. Kilian in France, St. Livin in Belgium were pioneers of learning, civilization and Christianity. Ireland came to be known as the Island of Saints and Scholars.¹

Part of the Anti-British propaganda carried on in Ireland rests on the implication that Ireland was in a very high state of civilization when the Anglo-Normans came over. “ They came to a nation famous for its love of learning, its piety and its heroism.” Speech of Sheil, Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*,

The title was dearly bought. When the Danes attacked her shores the cowl and the ploughshare afforded a poor defence against the warlike marauders. In later times, it is no exaggeration to say that the recollection of those early days of piety and learning has been the greatest curse from which Ireland has suffered. A career, whether of an individual or a nation, which nourishes itself, solely or mainly, on the past is bound to become enfeebled and empoisoned. Ireland has lived upon the tradition. She has, with great and comforting complacency and with curious self-deception projected her superiority in ages long since past to modern times; she has regarded herself as still possessing qualities which were interred with the bones of those who really possessed them.

To whatever cause it may be traced, the adulation which Irishmen have been pouring upon their country and upon one another, is almost incredible. A stream of sickening flattery has flowed, without ceasing, from pulpit, platform and press. There is nothing in which Ireland does not excel; her share of inanimate nature itself, her scenic beauties, her resources, her mineral wealth, harbours, water power, as well as the physical, moral and intellectual qualities of the people have been held up as superior to those of any other nation on the face of the globe. Nor was this bombastic nonsense confined to any particular section of the people. It permeated all ranks; particularly prone to it was the class which loves to hear itself called the intelligentsia of the country. Ireland's national vanity has been remarked from the earliest times, by the most friendly observers.

Duvergier, writing in 1826,¹ says: "There are very few Irishmen who are not descended from two or three Kings at the very least." Sir John Cooper, writing in 1800, calls Ireland "a vain-glorious and a boasting nation; they inform you that it was flourishing in learning and civilization whilst all other nations were obscured in ignorance and barbarism."² Sir Horace Plunkett:

vol. I, p. 501; see also Cardinal Moran's *Ireland before the Anglo-Norman Invasion*. It is scarcely necessary for me to discuss this, but the reader may refer to Pope Adrian's (1155) and Pope Alexander's Bull (1172), both of which it is the present fashion to describe as forgeries; to the performances of Dermot MacMurrough as related by Giraldus Cambrensis; to Lawes' *Little England Beyond Wales*, p. 94; to the reports of Father Broët, S.J., and Father Salmeron, S.J., in 1542, to St. Ignatius Loyola on the state of Gaelic civilization outside the Pale; to Fyne Morrison to Dalton, vol. I, p. 217, etc.

¹ Wyse, II, App. LX.

² Cooper's *Letters on the Irish Nation*, p. 18.

"Nothing impressed me so much as the universal belief among my countrymen that Providence had endowed them with capacities of a high order and their country with resources of unbounded riches, but that both the capacities and the resources remained undeveloped owing to the stupidity—or worse—of British rule."¹

Mr. Kevin O'Higgins,² speaking in October, 1923, said: "We have been so stunned by the discovery that we are not better than other races that there has been a stampede from national vanity to national cynicism."

To those who have fed it upon such stuff as this, the Irish nation, staggering, fuddled and bemused by the noxious drug, has raised its statues and its monuments; those who have offered the bitter but wholesome truth have been stoned in the market place. Out of the terrible welter of crime which succeeded the Treaty of 1921, one good emerges. The nation, of necessity, is taking stock of itself; the health-giving current of thought is driving the poison from its system; vision and sanity are being restored. A time may come when Ireland will be able to make something like a real appraisal of Irish values.

This racial pride alone might possibly have prevented Irishmen from permanently entrusting their affairs to any assembly in which their influence, however great, was not predominant. A people so swollen with vanity could scarcely admit that a centralized Government at Westminster was, on balance, as advantageous to Ireland as a local body in Dublin.

But the real gulf that separates the peoples is the religious gulf. I speak as a loyal son of the Catholic Church, intellectually convinced of its truth, yielding to it the most implicit obedience, owing to it anything of good that may be in me. I am anxious to deal as tenderly as may be with the teaching and thoughts of that Communion in Ireland. But if what I write is to have any value at all, it must be a sincere effort to tell the truth, and the relation of Catholicism and its professors to political and social questions cannot be shirked. I shall have to say something, in due course, of the amazing teaching and conduct of certain Catholic ecclesiastics in reference to the "Anglo-Irish War," which was terminated by the treaty of December, 1921. For the present I am only concerned with the effect upon Anglo-Irish relations of the profound Catholicity

¹ *Ireland in the New Century*, p. 30.

² of Justice in the Irish Free State.

of the Irish people. Much of what I say will be the subject of partizan and uninformed challenge or repudiation. The views I express on any of these topics, if wrong, are, at any rate, the views of one desirous of relating, without fear, favour or affection, the results of experience and observation of a lifetime, spent almost entirely in an Irish Catholic atmosphere, and the early part of which was in close touch with the common sort of people in that country.

As between individuals, the effect, upon social intercourse and relations, of diverse religious views, firmly held, has been frequently discussed. An eminent sociologist¹ has written :

“I cannot understand how a man who is not a Roman Catholic can regard a real Roman Catholic with absolute neutrality. I do not see how a man who deliberately rejects the Roman Catholic religion can, in the eyes of those who earnestly believe it, be other than a rebel against God. Plaster them over as thick as you will, controversies of this sort go to the very core and root of life, and as long as they express the deepest convictions of men, those who really differ must be enemies to a certain extent, though they may keep their enmity within bounds. When religious differences come to be and are regarded as mere differences of opinion, it is because the controversy is really decided in the sceptical sense, though people may not like to acknowledge it formally.”²

No one will deny that religious differences frequently induce personal estrangement or hatred. The same result often follows from political differences, and indeed from any oft-repeated differences of opinion upon matters that are of real consequence. We cannot separate the man entirely from his opinions, even upon abstract subjects, for the opinions are the expression of the man. At the same time, no one will affirm that religious differences always induce personal estrangement or hatred. The feeling engendered by such differences has a very wide range. There is a vast span between the feelings of John Henry Newman and the fanaticism of an Orange mobsman of Belfast. It would be absurd to attribute to Newman personal dislike of any man on account of religious belief, though none hated error more fiercely than he, and none was less disposed to conduct religious controversy “in the sceptical sense.” But the Orangeman mobsman, who is not able to conduct religious controversy at all, and whose notions about the dogmas of

¹ Sir James Stephen, *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*, 2nd ed., p. 86.

² See to the same effect *Religious Persecution: A Study in Political Psychology*, by E. S. P. Haynes (1904).

his own creed are vague and about those of Catholicism wrong, hates the Papist because he is a Papist.

The line between bigotry, by which I mean hatred of opinion, and fanaticism, by which I mean unreasonable and oppressive conduct towards others because of opinion, is difficult to draw. Fanaticism, in all ages, including the present, is found in every rank of society. But I think modern ideas have tended to eliminate or modify it in the ranks of the educated. It still flourishes where education is backward, as the examples of Russia and Belfast show. Herd psychology, by which the educated are not so prone to be affected, no doubt aggravates it.

What Stephen had in his mind when he wrote the passage quoted, was probably not personal animosity at all; he qualifies the word "enemies" by the words "in a certain sense." If he means that between the real Catholic and the real Protestant there is, necessarily, a certain clash of interest and of policy, he is unquestionably right. The lowest common denominator of the feelings of real adherents to creed is the desire to see the world peopled by persons of one's own creed. Hence arise differences in the laws relating to marriage, questions of the control of children, state church and so on. And, further, as long as the notion prevails that the interests of a creed are promoted by the material advancement of persons belonging to that creed, real belief must have important consequences on the distribution of office and patronage. The Catholic *v.* Protestant struggle must, "plaster it over as thick as you will," resolve itself into a struggle for political supremacy or ascendancy.

These things seem to me to be obvious. But I dwell on them for two reasons. First, they are essential to an understanding of the Anglo-Irish problem. Second, they are usually denied, ignored, or slurred over by Irish writers on both sides. Indeed, Irish Catholic writers seem to think that there is something indelicate, improper or sordid in mentioning this aspect of the case. Why should an Irish Catholic be any more ashamed of wanting a Catholic ascendancy in Ireland, than an Englishman of wanting to maintain his State Church?

The considerations suggested show the practical impossibility of any country, except under the pressure of overwhelming necessity, accepting a partnership with another country of a different creed, when the result of the partnership, by reason of numbers or otherwise, is that its own individual activities will be seriously curtailed

or swamped. If, therefore, Ireland had been a purely Catholic country, her full and enduring consent would never have been won to the Union. But the obstacles were multiplied a hundred fold by reason of the fact that Ireland is not a purely Catholic country, but possesses a considerable non-Catholic population.

If we suppose an Ireland inhabited by Catholics exclusively, there would not have been the eternal discussion between the partizans of the two creeds, as to advantages of educational opportunity, distribution of patronage and so forth. The struggle for separate national existence would not have been so closely identified with a struggle to abolish a Protestant ascendancy and to substitute a Catholic ascendancy instead. In the actual circumstances, "The religion and nationality of Ireland are inseparable."¹ "The Irish mingle religion with their patriotism and patriotism with their religion."² "Sassenach designates at once the Englishman and the Protestant."³

"The Home Rule, land, and education movements, with which the Irish people are identified are in essence a struggle between a Christian and a non-Christian civilization."⁴

"Whatever be the kind of oppression under which he suffers, the Irishman is perfectly right in considering as the prime cause of all his misfortunes that fatal antagonism of religion of which Ireland, after three centuries, still continues to be the victim."⁵

The struggle "for a Christian civilization" with which must be associated a struggle for Catholic ascendancy⁶ was aggravated and embittered by the other circumstances to⁷ which reference has been made—that the landlords were Protestant and alien, that all the strongholds of power, place and privilege were in their hands, and that their comfortable position, which was deemed to be the result of sheer robbery, was maintained by the use of England's strength for England's purposes. The conclusions to which our *a priori* reasoning leads are confirmed by the facts of Irish life. For half a century and more after the Union, the most strenuous efforts were made by the Protestants, frequently helped by funds derived from England, to convert the Irish

¹ Archbishop Croke.

² Cardinal Newman.

³ Duvergier. Wyse, II, App. LXIV.

⁴ Writer in the *Nation*.

⁵ Abbé Peraud, *On Ireland*, 1862, p. 488.

⁶ Cavour, who, it must be remembered, lived and died a Catholic, saw this clearly. "After so many years of dependence and submission, the Catholic majority aspires to power and domination in its turn."—*Thoughts on Ireland* p. 2.

Catholics to their way of thinking, and the most unscrupulous methods were employed. The Catholics were asked, to quote the words of an old ballad, "to sell their souls for penny rolls and a piece of hairy bacon." When the more sensible or more indifferent Protestants gave up the attempt in despair, the proselytizing movement was carried on by a few zealots, and slight traces of it exist to this day. Each side believed the other was going to Hell with its eyes open. Nassau Senior gives an instance of a Protestant missionary entering a churchyard full of Roman Catholics—and telling them "that the souls of their fathers and mothers buried in these graves have perished through their belief in a destructive religion."¹

These proselytizing efforts fed the flames of personal animosity that existed in the lower grades of Irish society on account of religion. That such animosity has existed and still exists is, of course, incontrovertible. Belfast is the outstanding example, where ignorant men and women of different persuasions are constantly rubbing up against one another. In the South, the undoubted toleration is largely due to the circumstance that there are very few Protestants of the working classes, and therefore none of the attendant circumstances that accentuate religious hatreds. But in Senior's day, there was evidence of the persecution of Protestants in workhouses; "a Protestant among a crowd of low bigoted Catholics is like a slave in South Carolina";² and he was told that "religious enmity rages more fiercely than ever."³

Religious asperities have been softened in Southern Ireland, by education and by the transfer of local patronage to the masses of the people under the Local Government Act, 1898. A class that has triumphed and is secure in its position can afford to be tolerant. Still, the contest has gone on though it has not been conducted by the crude methods of the paving stone or bullet. It has waged mostly round patronage. The Catholic current and the Protestant current had to run in the same channel, but they never commingled; there was no intermarriage. Jealousy and friction were inevitable. Wyse remarked that "balls, dinners, dances, and dresses, like bridges and hotels, and, for aught I know rivers, were divided into Papist and Protestant."⁴ Kohl said that every Irish village or

¹ *Journals relating to Ireland*, vol. II, p. 146.

² Vol. II, p. 138.

³ Vol. II, p. 114.

⁴ *History of Catholic Emancipation*, vol. I, p. 224.

town contained its Protestant inn and its Catholic inn, its Protestant cars and stage coaches and its Catholic cars and stage coaches.¹ In process of time, especially after the passing of the Local Government Act, 1898, most of the patronage lay in Catholic hands, and went, not unnaturally, in Catholic directions. The higher positions, however, lay in the gift of the Chief Secretary. Had Ireland accepted the Union, an alternation of a Tory and Liberal (or Labour) Chief Secretary, would have given an equality of patronage in the higher ranks. But who will be satisfied with equality when, by fighting for it, he can get ascendancy? A whole loaf is better than half a loaf. Even if, contrary to human experience, the Utopian notion were to prevail that the loaf should be divided quite equally, yet the right to divide it is a privilege worth fighting for; it ensures to the person in control of the process of division the power to see that he is not damnified in the process; to be the loaf giver is itself a distinction and a mark of prestige—has it not given to the English language a word which is significant of all that is gracious and dignified.² There is nothing more unnatural in the fact that Irish Catholics should fight for ascendancy than that, of two fluids of different specific gravities, the lighter will seek the surface. There is nothing wrong or unnatural in ascendancy unless where it is artificially maintained, e.g., by minority action. The Irish Catholics have now, within the twenty-six counties, achieved their ascendancy; it is only the barest justice to say that, up to the present, it has not been abused.

In coming to the conclusion, as I most unhesitatingly do, that the main obstacle to the acceptance of the Union lay in the difference of religion between the peoples, I do not leave out of account that some of the Irish Nationalist leaders were not Catholics or that some Unionists were Catholics or that the Catholic *v.* non-Catholic aspect was never formally acknowledged as going to the root of the matter, or that most of the arguments advanced in favour of secession were usually based on purely material considerations, or that the Catholic peasant, strong in the Catholic faith as he is, was more concerned about the money payments he had to make than about religious or political theories. These things are all very true, but, like many surface indications, they are misleading.

The fact that some Irish leaders were not Catholics and some

¹ Kohl, *On Ireland*, p. 109. This is true up to the present.

² Lady = Loafgiver.

Unionists were Catholics proves nothing. Every country produces men who, either from the purest altruistic motives or from motives which include a desire to seek the easiest path to distinction, take a course different from those to whom they are, by social rank, family associations and common interests naturally attached. As to Catholic Unionists, they were so concerned for the rights of property as to be apprehensive of entrusting law-making power to a mass of people who had little respect for it; further, they may have thought—and perhaps rightly thought,—that the interests of a creed are, in the long run, not best served by promoting the wealth and material interests of its members. That the anti-Union and anti-British propaganda put religious questions in the background is true. But the amazing—I shall demonstrate it to be so—character of the anti-Union propaganda that was so greedily swallowed, is itself a most pregnant fact. It leads us to look for some deep-rooted prejudice that made the people incapable of taking a sane or intelligent view of the political situation. What prejudice is so obvious and so adequate as an explanation, as the religious one? Imagine Ireland a Protestant country. Who would have listened to Fagan's talk of Ireland's mountainous centre or its geographical position¹ or to O'Connell's ravings about the character of the people? Would the other publicists have accepted these wild inventions and disseminated them amongst their followers? Would there not, rather, have been created a strong body of educated opinion which would teach the people that, from the material point of view, the interests of the two islands were one, and that the best way to conserve these interests and strengthen the power of both nations lay in a close connection, with a common flag, and a common fiscal policy?

The facts, however, that are of biggest import in enabling us to gauge the reasons for the rejection of the Union, and that dwarf all others by comparison are that Protestant Ireland, almost to a man, accepted the Union² and that Catholic Ireland, almost to a man, rejected it, even after all material grievances had been removed.

The Catholicity of Ireland is a very wonderful thing, probably unique. The Irish Catholic has a faith that is exquisite in its

¹ See p. 185.

² At least, after it was recognized that a restoration of an Irish Parliament did not mean the restoration of a Protestant ascendancy.

simplicity ; the truth of Catholicism is as apparent to him as the chair on which he sits or the table at which he sups. I do not mean to say that he would be able to give a reasoned defence of his belief ; nor do I mean to deny that possibly many Irish Catholics would be found who have very inadequate conceptions of some of the main points of Catholic teaching,¹ but he accepts Catholicism and what it connotes, without doubt or question. His faith is so deep, and his world knowledge so small that he cannot appreciate the doubts or questionings or unbelief of others. He has not yet emerged, though no doubt he is emerging, from the belief, which was practically universal in my young days, that all non-Catholics were deliberately dooming themselves to perdition.²

The remoteness of the Irishman from the English atmosphere of discussion and thought on subjects connected with religion is as great as if he lived on another planet. Let me give some illustrations. The Irish Free State has no divorce. To Ireland the doctrine of birth control—now the subject of favour in England from a large body of publicists, including some Protestant ministers—is anathema. Upon these matters all Catholics are agreed. I now take a subject of a different complexion, upon which the Catholic Church has not pronounced. In England the theory of evolution is frequently discussed. Educated Christian laymen and ministers of religion, including, I imagine, some Catholics, are not much concerned with the question whether it is well founded or not, conceiving that it in no way conflicts with and possibly may even be accepted as a corroboration of the story of Genesis.³ In Ireland it is denounced *ex cathedra*, as it were.

The Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, which holds its meetings in October of each year, is attended by most of the Catholic bishops, by a large number of priests, and generally attracts the élite of Catholic society of the country. At its meeting in October, 1921, the speaker who delivered the inaugural address, Mr. T. M. Healy, K.C.,⁴ chose as his subject "Why the Catholic Church is hated." His address dealt piquantly with the theory of evolution.

¹ I venture to think, however, that non-Catholics, if they probed into the matter, would find the Irish Catholic extraordinarily well informed, according to his class, on the question of Catholic dogma. I never met a peasant who "worshipped" images, and I feel pretty certain that none exists.

² I make no doubt that the Orangeman believed, and, I think, still believes, the same of the Catholic.

³ I make no comment upon this attitude whatever.

⁴ Now Governor-General of the Irish Free State.

"Such teaching, he asserted, led straight to paganism, and it was because the Catholic Church says so, and says boldly, that she was hated. He would admit the many advantages of paganism. They could rob their neighbour's till, covet his wife, divorce their own. They could keep a harem. These so-called philosophers and scientists were mere bubble-blowers. There was no greater humbug than the so-called scientist of modern times. They were continually puffing one another. One fellow at Oxford lately said he had discovered the beginning of life. They could not start the hind leg of a flea. Amid great laughter, Mr. Healy said that this monkey folly was started because it struck deliberately at the existence of the human soul. And it was because these men knew that these so-called philosophies were part of the devil's apparatus that they were so continuously and assiduously propagating them, and for that reason the Church was continuously denying them, and incurring thereby the hatred of these philosophical nincompoops. The only thing he could see that this free thought gave was the right to loose living and loose thinking. They might box the compass of unbelief in any way they pleased, they might decorate it with the pretences of human liberty, but in the result it came down to nothing else than the licence to defraud one's neighbour or one's neighbour's wife. It was better that these so-called scientists should have that fact put down their throats occasionally."

These differences of thought are fundamental. They represent different civilizations. *The Nation* was right. The Irish national movement is in essence a struggle between a Catholic and non-Catholic civilization, though the issue has been much obscured by subsidiary controversies. As the growth of a Catholic civilization in Ireland has been thwarted, stunted and warped by centuries of real and a certain amount of imagined oppression, no impartial person can draw from the excesses and extravagances of the national movement any inference unfavourable either to Catholic civilization in general or Irish Catholic civilization in particular. The material for any safe inference must be collected a century hence, for it is only now that the development of Irish life according to Irish ideas commences.

As religion has acted upon the political thought of the country, so also has the political thought of the country acted upon its religion. Profoundly attached, as I believe Ireland is, to the Holy See, she can be a very rebellious child when the Holy Father checks her in her waywardness or tries to curb her in her methods of pursuing national or class interests. It is not too much to say that the Catholic Church in Ireland has always been, to some extent, a law unto itself. It was practically out of allegiance to the Pope at the

time of the Anglo-Norman invasion : it is to the English we owe Roman Catholicism. When the Pope, after mature deliberation, agreed to the veto ¹ an Irish Franciscan bearded him in the Vatican, and the Irish bishops, under the crack of the O'Connell whip, told him, more or less politely, to mind his own business—as if that was not his business. When the Pope thought that Irish bishops and priests were better fitted for adjusting spiritual relations than they were for adjusting political relations, the cloven hoof of England was seen, and the ecclesiastics doubled their political fervour. When the Pope thought that the “Plan of campaign”—a combination to withhold rents from landlords—was an immoral combination, and said so, he might have spared himself the trouble, for scarce anybody in Ireland believed or obeyed him.

This self-satisfaction and cocksureness—so comforting as to amount to a species of beatitude—has had important consequences. The outer world is a place of evil ; contact with it a source of danger. Keep the people at home if they are not to lose the faith. With the same object keep the young Catholic from entering Trinity College—even if a Catholic chapel were erected therein for the daily celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. England, being the nearest point of contact with the outside world, was the natural butt for a criticism which lost none of its sting by the unfortunate political relations between the two countries, and by the natural jealousy arising from the extraordinary growth and development of one island, while the other was drifting towards a famine. It is impossible to describe the virulence and intensity of the anti-English campaign.

England was blamed for obstructing the view, so to speak. “The general backwardness of the country,” said Miss Fanny Parnell, “shut off by England from all contact with modern ideas.” ² The politicians devoted their attention to England's cowardice, treachery and tyranny ; the moralists stressed her failings mainly from the standard of sex morality. The English people were, by turns, called Protestant or pagan, as the exigencies of the controversy demanded ; press and platform described their lascivious practices ; the country, according to these vapourings, could scarcely be credited with the possession of a single happy home. English literature and newspapers were a combination of filth and unbelief. Ireland, to remain an island of “Saints and Scholars” had to be

¹ See p. 170 *post*.

² Sheehy Skeffington's *Life of Davitt*, p. 114.

made impervious to English influences. Even Parnell's fall from chastity was due to English influence. The Lord Mayor of Dublin, speaking at the famous Leinster Hall meeting on November 20, 1890, said: "It was living in England that had caused any lapse that had occurred in Mr. Parnell. If he had lived in Ireland, he would never have been contaminated by Mrs. O'Shea."¹

England was a nation of cowardly, treacherous, and canting knaves. During the Great War, "the Irish and colonial regiments are beginning to refuse to go into action if there is an English regiment on their flanks. They can't be relied on to go over the top."² "The lack of patriotism and the cowardice of the British people have been testified again and again. John Bull pays an army to do his fighting; he prefers to be brave over the taproom fire."³ "A braggart and a cowardly nation."⁴ A District Council in Cork passed a resolution imputing to England "rapine, murder, pillage, and all the crimes that it has fallen to humanity to perpetrate against fellow creatures," and the New Ross District Council called it "the pirate Empire of the world."⁵ A person writing over his name (in Irish) to the *Irish Daily Independent* of June 22, 1923, says: "I also know that there are towns in Canada where the native-born, English-speaking Canadian refuses to associate with the hordes from England. They will not live in certain quarters of certain towns because, as they say, nobody lives there but the dirty English." As I write, I read a report of a meeting to found a Catholic library in Dublin, at which a distinguished Jesuit, voicing the antipathy I have referred to, said: "such Catholic countries as those of South America, Poland, Catholic Germany, and France, were persistently maligned by the British press"⁶—the implication of course being that the British Press was engaged in a united campaign of calumny against Catholic countries as such.⁷

I am not particularly concerned to defend the English people from these charges. It is a regrettable fact that lapses from sexual

¹ *Times*, November 21, 1890.

² Eimar O'Duffy's *Wasted Island*, p. 433. I quote from this novel, for it is a clear mirror of certain sections of Irish thought. I may say I have heard sentiments uttered similar to those here quoted.

³ Tynan's *History of the Invincibles*, p. 89.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁵ October 7, 1889, and October 20, 1889—*Annual Register*, 1889, p. 242.

⁶ Rev. Stephen Brown, S.J., *Freeman's Journal*, March 28, 1924.

⁷ I have not observed any evidence of this. And the best refutation of the statement is to be found in the fact that the English newspapers never sought to make religious capital out of the campaign of murder and outrage with which Ireland was afflicted for several years.

morality are all too frequent ; that divorces are more common and more easily obtainable than they used to be ; that unbelief and indifferentism are on the increase ; that much of the literature is insidious and risky. If it were feasible to keep all Irishmen at home and to erect round the island a rampart that would repel the waves of thought that are broadcasting themselves over the world, I should regard every effort to do so as legitimate and praiseworthy. But most people who are not fanatics will regard the one object as impossible as the other, and will conclude that the best bulwark of the faith and morals of the Irish race at home and abroad lies in an education that will result in a deep-seated and reasoned Catholic morality. However that may be, the picture drawn of England is a libellous caricature. The standard and practice of sexual morality in that country is, relatively speaking, not low ; the standard of morality in the broad sense is very high ; no nation has a higher courage, a deeper sense of right or justice, a greater respect for the thoughts and opinions of others. Splendid tributes have been paid to the English people by observers from all countries ; Emerson, the great American observer, thought the English " the best of all actual peoples." Cavour¹ wrote : " Only a few isolated men, superior to the passions of the crowd and to the popular instincts, cherish towards England the esteem and interest which may well be inspired by one of the greatest nations that have done honour to humanity." The letters of Page, the American Ambassador, are full of similar expressions. Signor Nitti spoke of England's part in the Great War : " History will one day render justice to Great Britain," and of her part in the peace, " but Great Britain has acted even more nobly since the war by showing her readiness to make the greatest concessions in the cause of peace and of the reconstruction of Europe." The Chilian Minister, on leaving England in 1924, said :

" He had experienced the warmth of British hospitality, and had learned here lessons in true liberty, in fortitude, in conscious ordered democracy, in political probity, in common sense, in moderation at the moment of triumph, and during the hour of trial, and above all in the perfect self-control which was the salient characteristic of the British race."

This testimony, to which might be added scores of others, is at least as valuable as that of the Irish District Rural Councils, which

¹ *Thoughts on Ireland*, p. 28

the Irish Free State has abolished as being unfit to be trusted even with the sweeping of the streets in their respective localities.

It may be said, that, if the religious difference between the two islands cuts so deep, there is little possibility that Ireland will remain a willing partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations. There are, to be sure, difficulties in the way. Fanatics exist in Ireland, as everywhere else ; there are firebrands who would seek to wreck the British Empire because they believe that it is the bulwark of world-Protestantism or world-indifference, and that from its ruins would arise a Catholic Church, universally acknowledged, no longer militant and suffering, but triumphant. But I conceive the number of such extremists to be few, and likely to get less. The Irish Free State has, for all practical purposes, independence. Unless the Irish people are unlike all other children of Adam, they cannot be quite blind to their own interests. They must see that their prosperity certainly, and perhaps also their liberty, depend upon England's survival among the great nations of the world. Their co-operation at first may be grudging enough, possibly will be so always ; but experience will teach them their economic dependence upon England. Education, responsibility, and the transaction of state business with England on an equal footing, will dissipate the absurd notions they have regarding that country. Even at the present time, there are signs that the process of enlightenment is in active operation.

Whether, from the material point of view, the Union was a good bargain or not for Ireland, is perhaps questionable ; but upon one thing there can be scarcely any doubt, it proved a very bad bargain for England. England took over a very backward country, poor, ignorant, riven to its core by internal dissensions, afflicted by social grievances, old-standing and of malignant type. It was a heavy responsibility, and, I suppose, having the responsibility, it is only human that she should have the blame. She was long in applying the healing salve to the running sores, and set about the task as the result of crime and anarchy. But had she no sores of her own ? Irishmen would do well to remember that the acceleration of social progress by state action has been of very recent origin indeed.

The condition of the workers in the English mines and factories was for long little better than serfdom. Up to 1819 children, as young as six, worked in factories for twelve hours a day ; the Cotton Mills Act of 1819 fixed the working age of children at nine

and their working week at seventy-two hours. The mill children were deformed by the premature and excessive toil ; they needed sleep so much that their parents at meal time " had to shake them and they have fallen asleep with the victuals in their mouths many a time." In the mines the women, nearly naked, dragged coal carts. Children of five years of age, and under, were employed as " trappers " and left for twelve hours or longer in solitary darkness by the ventilating doors. Boys of tender years were frequently taken out dead from the flues they were sent to clean. In 1847¹ an incident is told :

" The child was forced to go, for the second time, into a hot flue at Messrs. Tennants' chemical works ; he screamed and sobbed, but in vain, for the master declared ' the young devil is foxing ' ; finally he was taken out, half asphyxiated, thrown on straw, and cruelly beaten in the hope that he might be beaten back to consciousness. Soon after he died in convulsions." ²

The description given by Colonel Harvey, the United States Ambassador, in a speech in London on December 1, 1922, is worth recalling :

" Following the Napoleonic Wars there was no mere hunger, there was starvation itself, and worse. There was a long period during which women, as well as men, were chained like beasts of burden to carts, which they dragged on all-fours, and children under eight were driven to toil in the darkness of the mines from before daybreak till after sunset, and all England, in the impassioned words of William Cobbett, swarmed with ' the most miserable people that ever trod the earth, sneaking about like beggars, thin as herrings, pale as a ceiling, dragging their feet after them. Such were the terrifying days that ran into weeks and months, and fifteen long, dreadful years before a single ray of light appeared in the darkened Parliament House.' "

The memory of the " hungry forties " is a terrible memory in England to this day. The grievances of the North of Scotland were solved by wholesale evictions and emigration. Britain's democracy received but a fragmentary emancipation in 1832, when an electorate of about 3 per cent. of the population was raised to 5 per cent. ; the complete emancipation was not accomplished until the Great

¹ It was not till 1840 that an Act was passed prohibiting the climbing of chimneys by children to sweep them ; but in spite of the prohibition the practice survived for many years.

² For this passage and other descriptions of England's Industrial Life, see *Life of Lord Shaftesbury*, by J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond.

War. So far as poverty and oppression are concerned, Ireland was by no means the only pebble on the beach.

If reform came slowly in Ireland, it was thorough when it did come. When Ireland was in 1921 handed over to the Irish, the English handed over a country in which more had been done, and done successfully, for the people by state action than in any country on the face of the globe. A peaceable revolution had been practically accomplished.

For any additional security which England obtained by the Union, she has paid very dearly. For contriving it, for maintaining it, for her alleged misuse of it, she has been the subject of the most bitter criticism. Some of the criticism is, undoubtedly, justified, but a great deal of it is wholly unfounded. The famine and the subsequent depopulation of Ireland have been laid at her door, in my opinion quite unjustly. It has been stated over and over again that Ireland was overtaxed under the Union. For the reasons I have already given, this allegation seems to me unwarranted. It has been averred that protective tariffs would make Ireland a respectable manufacturing country; that Ireland has resources in her people and in her soil and position which, if and when secession was accomplished, would enable her to become a really great nation. Time will show, and experience will convince Irishmen that their country, from its size, its geographical position, its absence of minerals and of real water power, has an extremely limited future before it. It may and should be a prosperous agricultural country, with a population of five millions or something more; its destiny, in the nature of things, cannot soar much higher.

But meanwhile a torrent of abuse and calumny has flowed. England's prestige has been enormously damaged by it; during the Great War it was the great argument against her. Even to-day the legacy of Irish hate in America is so great as to be a real obstacle to the friendship between the two English-speaking peoples upon which, more than upon any other factor, the peace of the world depends. The treaty of 1921 was one of the best strokes of British policy ever achieved; if the Union was a bad bargain for England, the treaty was unquestionably a good bargain. Whether it was such a good bargain for Ireland depends upon the energy, the patriotism and the courage of the Irish people themselves.

CHAPTER VI

IRELAND 1800-1829

Summary of Events—Pitt's Failure to Carry Emancipation—Document No. 1 (Pitt's)—Document No. 2 (Cornwallis's)—Death of Clare—Emmet's Rebellion—The Emancipation Movement—Repeal Agitation—Amalgamation of the Exchequers—Assimilation of the Currencies—Social and Economic Conditions—Agrarian and Tithe Disturbances—Political Secret Societies—Faction Fighting—Mr. Justice Fletcher's Charge.

The outstanding features of Irish history from 1800 to 1829 are : (1) Pitt's ineffectual attempt to carry Catholic Emancipation in 1800-1801 ; (2) the Robert Emmet Rebellion in 1803 ; (3) the formation of successive Catholic associations, under various titles, having Catholic Emancipation as their object, culminating in the great association of 1823, which comprised all reforms in its programme ; (4) the inception of the secession or Repeal movement ; (5) the decadence of Irish small industries, but an increase of trade and commerce generally ; (6) the continued rapid growth of the population with a worsening, on the whole, of their condition ; (7) various tithe and agrarian disturbances ; (8) the amalgamation of the Exchequers in 1817 ; (9) the grant of Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

The history of the Catholic grievances has already been given (p. 48 *ante*). At the date of the Union, the following disabilities survived : (1) a Catholic was debarred from sitting in Parliament ; as members of either house had to take an oath inconsistent with the profession of the Catholic faith ; (2) a Catholic was excluded from certain positions—for example, a Catholic could not be Lord Lieutenant, Lord Chancellor, King's Counsel.

Administratively, too, the caste barrier was maintained. Plowden tells us that the Act of 1793, which made Catholics eligible for most positions, was allowed to remain a dead letter ; no Catholic was chosen into a corporation ; in many militia regiments there was not a Catholic commissioned officer, in others a very small

proportion; Catholics were excluded from the Bank of Ireland.¹ The first Catholic assistant barrister—equivalent to the modern county court judge—was not appointed till 1824.

Pitt made his effort to provide relief in 1800-1801. But the time was inopportune. There was much difference of opinion amongst those who controlled the oligarchical machine of the day. The cause excited no public enthusiasm in its favour; and a belief in abstract justice seldom produces a fierce resentment. The shoe scarcely pinched England; the suffering country was one that had been lately engaged in a French-aided rebellion; it was undesirable that discord should divide the men who were fighting French tyranny. Above all, there was the King, weak in mind and body, strong only in bigotry. Pitt failed.

On September 25, 1800, Pitt wrote to Lord Chancellor Loughborough, who was in attendance upon the King at Weymouth, asking for his presence at a Cabinet Meeting to discuss the Catholic question.² At the Cabinet meeting Pitt propounded his plan—to abolish the oaths of supremacy and abjuration and substitute a mere oath of allegiance. There was some dissent. Loughborough, a bigoted Scotch Presbyterian, certainly dissented, and the Duke of Portland and Lord Westmoreland were also hostile.³ Pitt argued strenuously in favour of his proposal; he urged that Irish Catholic opinion had been moderate and loyal in the Union debates and that the measure was necessary for the peace of Ireland and the stability of the Union connexion.⁴ Castlereagh held the same views, for he wrote to Pitt that the Catholics should receive relief, as their help had turned the wavering scale in favour of the Union.⁵ Cornwallis, the Lord Lieutenant, declared it to be his opinion that resistance to the measure would be mere madness.⁶ Even Cooke, the reactionary Under Secretary for Ireland, was of the same opinion.⁷ Apparently some measure of Cabinet agreement was achieved, for the King's Speech on January 23, 1801, included a vague passage expressing confidence that the Government would seek to improve the benefits conferred by the Act of Union.

Loughborough played his colleagues false. He drew up an

¹ *History of Ireland from the Union to 1810*, vol. III, pp. 703-8.

² *Rose's Life of Pitt*, Part II, p. 431.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

⁵ *Castlereagh's Correspondence*, vol. IV, pp. 8-12.

⁶ *Rose's Life of Pitt*, Part II, p. 435; *Castlereagh's Correspondence*, vol. III, p. 418, vol. IV, p. 13.

⁷ *Castlereagh's Correspondence*, vol. IV, pp. 17-20; *Rose*, Part II, p. 435.

elaborate opinion against the scheme, in which he tried to show that the King's assent would be a breach of his coronation oath, and it was probably through him that the King got wind of what was afoot. During a levée at St. James' Palace, on January 28, the King said in a loud voice to Dundas, "What is this that the young Lord (Castlereagh) has brought over, which they are going to throw at my head. Lord C. came over with the plan in September. . . . I shall reckon any man my personal enemy who proposes any such measure. The most Jacobinical thing I ever heard of."

On January 30, 1801, Pitt sent drafts of his proposals to Loughborough, who submitted them to the King. The following day the King asked Addington to the Palace and asked him to form a ministry. The King sent Pitt a reply to the draft expressing, in effect, his unalterable opposition. On February 3, Pitt, who had held office for seventeen years, tendered his resignation. It was accepted; and on the 5th Addington agreed to form a ministry.¹

Pitt's memory is execrated in Ireland, not only because of his part in carrying the Union, but also because, as it is charged, he gave pledges in reference to Catholic Emancipation which he did not fulfil.² But it is clear that Pitt gave no pledge at all.

He himself denied, in the most explicit terms that he had ever given a pledge;³ and this was taken for granted by many con-

¹ The following summary of Pitt's letter to the King dated January 31, 1801, is taken from Rose's *Life of Pitt*, Part II, p. 438: "Pitt has heard with deep regret of the opposition displayed by His Majesty to the proposals of Catholic Emancipation, which are approved by the majority of the Cabinet and regarded as a natural sequel to the Act of Union. The admission of Catholics and Dissenters to certain offices, and of Catholics to Parliament, now involves little or no danger to the Established Church or to the Protestant interest, as the Catholics disclaim the obnoxious tenets once held by them. A form of oath can be devised to exclude those Dissenters who may have designs against the Constitution either in Church or State. The Irish Catholic clergy may be attached to the Government by making their maintenance partly dependent on the State. These changes would adapt the Constitution to present needs. Pitt, therefore, earnestly commends the measure to the consideration of His Majesty. Meanwhile, no steps will be taken in the matter; but if, on examination, the measure should not be approved, Pitt will beg to be allowed to resign, though in such a way as to occasion the least possible difficulty. Finally, he takes the liberty of, most respectfully, but explicitly, submitting to Your Majesty the indispensable necessity of effectually discountenancing, in the whole of the interval, all attempts to make use of Your Majesty's name, or to influence the opinion of any individual on any part of the subject."

² A Mr. Ryan, a prominent member of the Catholic Association, spoke of "Stipulations made to the Catholics by the Government" (Rose's *Life of Pitt*, Part II, p. 442), and the theory has gained strength since Mr. Ryan's time.

³ Hansard, 1805, vol. IV, p. 1015.

temporary supporters of Emancipation, e.g., Lord Grenville, who explained what had taken place, in all probability quite correctly, when he said :

"It did, in the first place, excite great hopes in the Catholics of Ireland, that, by the operation of the Union, they would be relieved from their disabilities. No authorized assurance was ever given ; no promise was ever made to the Catholics, that such a measure would be the consequence of the Union ; but it is no less true, that by the arguments of those who supported the Union, by the course of reasoning, indoors and out-of-doors, hopes were given that the subject of Catholic Emancipation would be more favourably considered here than it was ever likely to be in the "Parliament of Ireland."¹

Canning, speaking in favour of Catholic Emancipation in March, 1827, stated that Pitt made no definite promise to the Catholics : "The Catholics were made to believe, and that belief was a powerful inducement to them to lend their aid towards the accomplishment of the measure (the Union) that in the Imperial Parliament the question which so nearly concerned them would be more favourably entertained." Henry Grattan, Junior, comes to the same conclusion. "It does not appear that the Ministers gave any direct pledge or made any positive promise as to the Catholic question ; but Mr. Pitt certainly led the people of Ireland to believe that, after the Union, the measure would be granted."² Striking testimony to Pitt's sincerity is given by Bishop Doyle ("J.K.L.") :

"The repeated declarations made in Parliament by the Marquis of Camden, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Castlereagh ; the documents furnished by Sir Henry Parnell, in his *History of the Penal Laws*, the Lord High Chancellor's own admission ; the avowed cause of Mr. Pitt's retirement from office ; all prove, incontestably, the favourable sentiments of that minister to our Emancipation, as well as his determination to consolidate the Union by carrying it, were not an insuperable object unhappily opposed to his views. . . . To his mind, I have no doubt, the emancipation of the Catholics appeared, as it did to those of Fox and Grattan, an act of sound and comprehending policy."³

It is further charged that Pitt was insincere in his dealing with the question in the episode of 1800-1801.

The charge does not tally with certain incidents in his career on which no doubt of his sincerity arises. In 1791, he had been at some pains to ascertain what foundation, if any, there was for the

¹ Hansard, May 10, 1805, vol. IV, p. 661.

² *Life of Henry Grattan*, by his Son, vol. V, p. 56.

³ *Essay on the Catholic Claims* (1826), p. 246.

allegation which was the mainstay of the argument against Catholic relief, namely, that adherence to Catholicism was inconsistent with good citizenship. When he had satisfied himself upon the point, he carried an English measure of partial relief. His trend of thought seems always to have been towards a broader treatment of the question of religious disabilities. Canning, in 1827, declared in the House of Commons, "there is no tribunal, however solemn, before which I am not prepared to depose to my firm belief in the sincerity of Mr. Pitt's wishes and intentions to carry it." Finally, it is impossible to infer that his conduct in 1800–1801 was an elaborate piece of play-acting, with the curtain falling upon the tragedy of his own resignation. It is true that on his recall in 1804, he became Prime Minister on the understanding that he would not bring forward the subject of Emancipation during the King's reign. But what was the alternative? He had borne the responsibility of office for seventeen years, during one of the most critical periods of English history. Was he, with his vast experience, knowledge, courage and skill to efface himself for ever? His pledge not to renew the subject is sufficiently explained by a threatened recurrence of the King's malady. That he held out hopes of Catholic Emancipation and used these hopes as a lever to help him in his Union project is quite clear; that he gave an absolute pledge that he would carry Catholic Emancipation is inconceivable, for he had not the power to redeem the pledge. He gave, in effect, a promise to do his best, and reasonable people, fairly construing his conduct in the light of all the circumstances, will conclude that he kept his word.

Nor can any breach of faith be inferred from two documents handed by Lord Cornwallis to Dr. Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, and Lord Fingal, on behalf of the Catholic party. The first of these documents emanated from Pitt,¹ and merely contains a statement of Pitt's resignation and of his support of the Catholic cause. The second is Lord Cornwallis's own document, containing his own views, for which he alone was responsible. The documents are in the following terms:

DOCUMENT No. 1 (Pitt's).

"The leading part of His Majesty's Ministers, finding insurmountable obstacles to their bringing forward measures of concession to the

¹ Speech of Lord Castlereagh, May 25, 1810, *Parliamentary Debates*.

Catholic body whilst in office, have felt it impossible to continue in administration under the inability to propose it with the circumstances necessary to carrying the measure with all its advantages; and they have retired from His Majesty's service, considering this line of conduct as most likely to contribute to its ultimate success. The Catholic body, will, therefore, see how much their future hopes must depend on strengthening their cause by good conduct; in the meantime, they will prudently consider their prospects as arising from the persons who now espouse their interests, and compare them with those which they could look to from any other quarter. They may, with confidence, rely on the zealous support of all those who retire, and of many who remain in office, when it can be given with a prospect of success. They may be assured that Mr. Pitt will do his utmost to establish their cause in the public favour and prepare the way for their finally attaining their objects; and the Catholics will feel that, as Mr. Pitt could not continue in a hopeless attempt to force it now, he must at all times repress, with the same decision as if he held an adverse opinion, any unconstitutional conduct in the Catholic body. Under these circumstances it cannot be doubted that the Catholics will take the most loyal, dutiful and patient line of conduct; that they will not suffer themselves to be led into measures which can, by any construction, give a handle to the opposers of their wishes—either to misinterpret their principles, or to raise an argument for resisting their claims; but that by their prudent and exemplary demeanour they will afford additional grounds to the growing number of their advocates to enforce their claim, on proper occasions, until their objects can be finally and advantageously attained."

There follows a note:—

"The sentiments in this paper Lord Cornwallis knew to be Mr. Pitt's, having been conveyed in a letter from Lord Castlereagh to his Lordship, which letter was previously seen and approved of by Mr. Pitt, although not expressed precisely in the terms read in the paper."

DOCUMENT No. 2 (Cornwallis's).

"The sentiments of a sincere friend to the Catholic claims. If the Catholics should now proceed to violence, or entertain any idea of obtaining their objects by convulsive measures, or forming associations with men of Jacobinical principles, they must of course lose the support and aid of those who have sacrificed their own situations in their cause, but who would, at the same time, feel it their indispensable duty to oppose everything tending to confusion. On the other hand, should the Catholics be sensible of the benefits they possess, by having so many characters of eminence pledged not to embark in the service of Government, except on the terms of the Catholic privileges being obtained, it is to be hoped that in balancing the advantages and disadvantages of their situation, they would prefer a quiet and peaceable demeanour to any line of conduct of an opposite description."

John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare, died in 1802. The bitter opponent of Catholic Emancipation and the ablest Irish advocate of the Union, he was the most heartily detested man in Ireland. Yet some of his speeches show that he felt for the oppressed tenantry; at any rate, he roundly denounced the landlords of the country.¹ The mob assembled round his house on the occasion of his funeral and loudly groaned and hissed as the corpse was brought forth, and dead cats were thrown upon his coffin.² Froude³ thus describes him :

“He was a small, delicately made man, with a handsome oval face, a bold grey eye, a manner so haughty that patriot members complained of his intolerable insolence. His father’s death left him in possession of an estate in Limerick with £7,000 a year, independent of his practice at the bar. He was the most just, as well as the most determined, of landlords; and he was loved and trusted by his tenants as profoundly as he was afterwards hated by demagogues and agitators.”

Those who are desirous of reading the good side of this nobleman should read the panegyric preached by Dr. Magee at Trinity College on the occasion of his death, which is given in the *Annual Register* 1802, p. 705. He was a competitor of Grattan’s in that college; now one, and now the other, headed the list of academic distinctions.

A crazy attempt at a rebellion marked the year 1803. The embers of the insurrectionary movement had never quite died down; and the United Irish Society kept on in some sort of fashion. Robert Emmet, a younger brother of Thomas Addis Emmet, engaged in a fresh conspiracy in which his chief agents in Dublin were an ex-secretary of the Irish Whig Club, named Dowdell, a baker named Stafford, and a bricklayer. They used to meet in a loft in Dublin, where, surrounded by fifty or sixty out-at-heels adherents, they concerted measures for the independence of Ireland through England’s overthrow.⁴ They assembled on July 23, 1803, in Thomas Street to the number of about a hundred, “most of them apparently intoxicated,” rushed towards Mass Lane where they were furnished with arms, chiefly pikes. Emmet was magnificently turned out, in a brand-new green and white uniform, a drawn sword in his hand, and a pair of pistols on each side. He ordered his followers to march on the Castle; but they refused. The leaders then disappeared, leaving the undisciplined mob to do as they would. Single yeomen

¹ See p. 29.

² Froude, II, p. 56.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

⁴ Plowden’s *History of Ireland from the Union to 1810*, vol. I, pp. 173 et seq.

and soldiers happened along unarmed, these the rioters "massacred without mercy or provocation."¹ They came upon the Chief Justice of Ireland, Lord Kilwarden, driving in a carriage from his country seat; him and two comrades in the carriage they stabbed to death but—and this is the only creditable incident in the wretched affair—they allowed a lady who was in the carriage to escape. When some troops came up, they promptly decamped; order was restored in less than an hour. In the country, a leader named Russell, acting in concert with Emmet, issued a most grandiloquent proclamation, in which he apprised the English Commander that "any outrage, contrary to the acknowledged laws of war and of morality, shall be retaliated in the severest manner," and "such Irish, as in ten days from the date of this, are found in arms against their country shall be treated as rebels, committed for trial and their properties confiscated." Fourteen men joined Russell.² There was some slight disturbance in Kildare.³ Emmet and Russell were tried and executed. So ended the Emmet Rebellion, which was deplored by an address presented on August 4, 1803, on behalf of the Irish Catholics.⁴ Grattan, who was furious at the occurrence, thus described it:

"A shocking business Sunday night. A party of (I know not what name to give the stupidity or barbarity) rose up in two of the streets of Dublin, murdered a judge, killed his nephew, in the presence of his daughter, shot a colonel, and wounded a passenger—fled and were taken. This is getting up merely to be cut down—their hanging is of little moment—but they ruin the country. I have not heard anything further, nor can I find out what instigators these wretches could have had."⁵

There is scarcely a cottage in Ireland which does not possess a picture of Emmet in the resplendent uniform aforesaid. The walls of the same cottages display an equally large picture of O'Connell, who armed himself on the occasion of the rising to put it down.

The only results which the rebellion could achieve followed—martial law and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Ireland was again the subject of a military régime with its accompaniment of inconvenience and suffering. But the nation took a prolonged

¹ Plowden's *History of Ireland from the Union to 1810*, vol. I, p. 176.

² *Ibid.*, p. 190.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁵ *Life of Grattan*, by his Son, vol. V, p. 223.

rest from rebellions. There was no other till 1848, when Smith O'Brien's meanderings in Tipperary were brought to a finish by one discharge from the guns of Irish disciplined peasants, in the uniform of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

Grattan, the protagonist of the Emancipation movement before the Union, retired from Parliament soon after the passing of that measure. He was, however, induced to enter the United Parliament in 1805, as member for the English borough of Malton, which his friend Lord Fitzwilliam controlled. He continued his efforts in support of the Catholic claims, and was, for the most part, entrusted with the presentation of the many Catholic petitions presented from Ireland. But, in Ireland itself, the Catholic cause was transferred to other hands, using methods very different from those of Grattan.

At all times, the movement attracted the support of much enlightened opinion in England, but the question was not a burning one. The preoccupation of the people with the war prevented it from receiving much attention. The fillip given to the Tories, traditionally hostile on the subject, by their success in the war, was an obstacle when the war was over, as were the serious domestic troubles which the war brought in its wake. It needed a great shock to overcome the dead weight of prejudice, fear and apathy. That shock did not come till a quarter of a century had elapsed.

For a while, the movement followed a safe and futile course. An association was formed of Catholics, highly respectable, highly loyal, some able and eloquent. They passed resolutions; framed petitions; presented them, through Grattan or, for a while, Ponsonby, to the English Parliament, which voted upon them. The divisions, indeed, showed, on the whole, a favourable tendency to the Catholic side in the Commons, even before O'Connell created his menacing mass movement; but the Lords invariably rejected all motions for relief by overwhelming majorities.

When the first Catholic association was formed in 1805, it appointed deputies to confer with Pitt. Pitt, in pursuance of his promise to the King, not alone refused to present the petition, but on being pressed said that if it were presented through any other channel he would resist it, as, in fact, he did. His connexion with the controversy was severed by his death in 1806. The attitude of English Churchmen of the day is illustrated by the speech of

the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1805 ; he declared that he would never consent to a measure by which Catholics might come to pass laws for Protestants. On the same occasion, when the Lords rejected the motion by 178 to 49, of the Irish peers, 44 voted against, and only 29 for. A Whig Government, which came into power in 1806 for a couple of years, though profuse in their protestations while out of office, did nothing for the Catholics save to increase the Maynooth grant by £4,000 to £13,000. A Bill introduced by Lord Hawke in 1806 to permit Catholics to be officers in the army and navy created a storm of opposition in England, and had to be withdrawn.

Legal persecution was resorted to for the purpose of checking the progress of the Catholic Committee, as the representative body of the Catholics then styled themselves. A Convention Act, passed by the Irish Parliament in 1793, had been aimed at assemblies purporting to have a representative character which, it was said, might overawe or usurp the functions of Parliament. The statute was put in force in 1811 against the Catholic Committee ; a meeting of that body was proclaimed. Delegates who met in defiance of the proclamation were arrested, put upon trial and triumphantly acquitted by a Dublin jury. A counter action foolishly brought against the Chief Justice who signed the warrant not alone failed but produced a legal decision that a bonâ-fide purpose of petitioning Parliament did not make such an assembly lawful. The difficulty was got over by altering the name of the Committee and by ceasing to parade the representative character of the body. The legal questions involved brought into prominence that most remarkable of Irishmen—Daniel O'Connell.

O'Connell was born at Carhen near Cahirciveen, in the County of Kerry, on August 6, 1775, so that he was twenty-five years of age at the date of the Union. His son describes him as of county gentry stock.¹ O'Connell himself, it may be assumed, rather favoured this idea, though, in an unusual access of humility, he once said, " I have no pride of ancestry, I am the son of a grazier or gentleman farmer." Mr. MacDonagh, in his fair-minded biography, states that O'Connell was of the well-to-do farming class ; that his father had, in addition to the farm, a general business house, where he manufactured salt, tanned leather, sold drapery goods and miscellaneous groceries and carried on a lucrative trade

¹*Life and Speeches of O'Connell*, by his Son, pp. 1-4.

in contraband, such as French silks, laces, rum, wines, brandies ;¹ that his father and grandfather called themselves "Connell" and not "O'Connell."² His uncle was also in business, the produce of which, a considerable fortune, ultimately came to O'Connell.

O'Connell spent his sixteenth year in a school at Cove or Queens-town kept by a Father Harrington, the first school publicly opened and held by a Catholic priest since the penal days. Thence he went to St. Omer, and afterwards to Douai, whence he returned in December, 1793. Choosing the bar as his profession, he joined one of the English Inns of Court in 1794 ; kept his terms there, as was obligatory in those days for Irish students for the bar ; and joined some of the debating clubs in the vicinity, including the famous Cogers Hall. He was called to the Irish Bar on May 19, 1798, four days before the rebellion broke out ; and became a private in a loyal regiment, the "lawyers' artillery." He spoke against the Union in January, 1800, and declared that if the choice lay between the re-enactment of the Penal Code, in its full barbarity, and the Union, the Catholics should prefer the former.³ His views on the subject were not shared by his relatives—his rich uncle Maurice and his brother John were supporters of the Union.⁴ Nor did his scheme, in his early days at least, include any notion of the common people of Ireland ruling the country, for in a private letter, written on or after a visit to his Kerry home in December, 1796, he wrote : "The Irish are not yet sufficiently enlightened to bear the sun of freedom. Freedom would soon dwindle into licentiousness ; they would rob, they would murder." He married in 1802. In 1803, on the occasion of the Emmet riot, he served in the "lawyers' infantry." His rise in his profession was phenomenally rapid. In 1798 he had three briefs with fees of £1 2s. 9d. each ; in 1799 he earned £60 ; in 1800, £420 ; in 1801, £367, 8s. 6d. ; in 1802, £522 ; in 1804, £775 ; in 1805, £840 ; in 1806, £1,077 ; in 1807, £2,163 ; in 1808, £2,598.

It was O'Connell who made the Catholic Emancipation movement the great mass movement it ultimately became. Prior to the acknowledgment of his supremacy and the adoption of his methods the movement was represented, in effect, by a futile debating society⁵ whose labours consisted partly in passing resolutions of loyalty

¹ MacDonagh's *Life of O'Connell*, pp. 2, 5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³ MacDonagh's *Life of O'Connell*, p. 40.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵ Wyse describes it in 1814 as a "discreditable debating club."

and partly in sending fruitless petitions to the British Parliament. O'Connell created a vast and well equipped political army, officered by the priests, and comprising almost every adult Catholic in Ireland within its ranks.

He poured enthusiasm and fury into the nation, and brought it to the verge of a revolution before which the opposition gave way. But it would be a mistake to suppose that the control of the movement passed suddenly or quickly into his hands. On the contrary, for long his demagogic methods were looked upon askance. On the occasion, in 1813, of his defence of John Magee,¹ his speech which was not a defence of his client at all, but a ferocious attack upon the administration,² was censured by many Catholics as tending to exacerbate religious differences and injure the cause of Catholic Emancipation. There were several able men in the Association, notably Sheil, whose cultured speeches are far more worthy of perusal than the exuberant utterances of O'Connell.

The first great filip to O'Connell's influence was the veto controversy; it made him the darling of the populace. Later, by linking up the demand for Catholic relief with a movement for redress of every conceivable grievance, he created a constitutional movement as formidable as any in history, with himself in sole and unchallenged control.

The veto controversy deserves a little attention, not because of the intrinsic merits of the issue involved, but because of the light it throws on the relations between Rome and Ireland and the relations between the higher Catholic ecclesiastics on the one hand, and the younger clergy and the proletariat on the other. At this period, interference by Governments, whether Catholic or not, with Catholic episcopal appointments within the territory over which

¹ Editor of the *Evening Post*, who was charged with libelling the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Richmond.

² Sir Robert Peel, who was in Court, thus described it in a letter to the Lord Lieutenant: "O'Connell spoke four hours completely, but intentionally, abandoning the cause of his client—I have no doubt with his client's consent—taking that opportunity of uttering a libel, even more atrocious than that which he proposed to defend, upon the Government and the administration of justice in Ireland. His abuse of the Attorney General was more scurrilous and vulgar than was ever permitted within the walls of a court of justice. He insulted the jury individually and collectively, accused the Chief Justice of corruption and prejudice against his client, and avowed himself a traitor, if not to Ireland, at least to the British Empire."—MacDonagh's *Life of O'Connell*, p. 61. Magee's second counsel did his best to minimize the adverse effect of O'Connell's speech. It is not as clear as Peel supposed that Magee was sacrificed with his own consent.

the Government had control was, practically speaking, universal. In every Catholic state, with the exception of the Roman territory itself, it was the Government nominated to the prelacy; and the Governments also claimed to inspect and license all rescripts emanating from Rome.¹ Prussia was the only Protestant state that permitted bishops, and there the appointment lay, substantially, with the Crown; in Prussia and the other Protestant states the appointment even of priests was, for all practical purposes, in the Crown.² Bishop Milner, who was the agent, in England, of the Irish bishops, wrote to a parish priest, "there is perhaps no civilized country in which the Government does not interfere in the appointment of prelates, and it is judged that there is no country in which this interference is so necessary as in Ireland."³

Up to 1880 there were laws in Germany making it penal for a priest to be appointed without the sanction of the Government officials, and in consequence 601 Catholic parishes were entirely without curates and 584 with only half the number requisite for the wants of their inhabitants.⁴

In 1799, as we will remember, (see p. 56 *ante*) the bishops had agreed to a state veto on the appointment of Irish Catholic bishops.

The imposition of a veto was now again mooted. The suggestion came from those who were friends of the Catholic cause, and who believed that much opposition—begotten of the divided allegiance theory—would disappear if the veto were agreed to. As to this, O'Connell may have been right when he said, long afterwards, "I always said that when they came to emancipate, they would not care a bulrush about those vetoistical arrangements which so many paltry Catholics from time to time pressed on me as being useful to emancipation."⁵ On the other hand, it would be a sanguine Englishman who would conclude that the existence of a veto would copper fasten the candidate elect in allegiance—we have seen in our own time a president of Maynooth College, a host who entertained in that place of learning British Royalty with all due deference and submission, and hung out the Royal Standard on the College

¹ Speech of Sir J. Cox Hipplesley, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1813, vol. III, p. 10.

² *Parliamentary Debates*, 1813. In Russia the Greek Church Emperor appointed the Roman Catholic bishop.

³ Speech of Hipplesley, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1813, p. 11.

⁴ Speech of Herr Windthorst in Prussian Parliament, January 26, 1881, *A. R.*, p. 250.

⁵ Letter to Sugrue, March, 1829—MacDonagh's *Life of O'Connell*, p. 180.

metamorphosed soon afterwards into a red-hot Irish Republican. One of the ironies, too, of the situation was that while the hubbub about the veto was at its highest, the Duke of Wellington was quietly installing his nominee, Dr. Curtis, in the Catholic primatial see of Armagh.

Be all that as it may, in 1808, Lord Fingal, the leading Irish Catholic peer suggested a meeting between Ponsonby, an earnest advocate of the Catholic claims in Parliament, and Dr. Milner, the English agent of the Irish Catholic bishops. The meeting took place, and Milner gave a memorandum to Ponsonby :

"First, the Catholic prelates of Ireland are willing to give a direct negative power to His Majesty's Government with regard to the nomination of their titular bishoprics. Dr. M. has not had an opportunity yet of consulting with the Catholic prelates of Ireland on the important subject of the Catholic presentations, but he has every reason to believe that they will cheerfully subscribe to the plan traced out in the first page of this note."¹

That this proposal was acceptable to most of the educated lay Catholics of the day, as it was to Grattan, is beyond question;² that the bishops, if left to themselves and given to understand that the clause would really smooth the way to Catholic relief, would have swallowed it is highly probable. O'Connell, however, stormed at the proposal, and carried the younger clergy and the populace with him. Dr. Milner protested against the unauthorized use of his name. The petition in favour of Emancipation having been rejected, in May, by an overwhelming majority,³ the Irish prelates, in September, formally protested against the veto, three survivors of those who had agreed to the proposal in 1799, dissenting. Forty thousand laymen signed an address of thanks to the hierarchy. "The great mass of the people unequivocally pronounced against the proposition; and the bishops had directed or followed (it is not quite clear which) the opinion and decision of the people."⁴

So the matter rested till 1814, when the proposal emanated from an unexpected quarter. The Pope was at this time in Fontainebleau, a prisoner of Napoleon. In his absence Monsignor Quarantotti was "Vice Prefect of Rome," with, apparently, all the

¹ Plowden's *History of Ireland from the Union to 1810*, vol. II, pp. 651-52.

² MacDonagh's *Life of O'Connell*, p. 85; and Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. I, p. 71.

³ In the Commons, 128 for, 281 against; in the Lords, 74 for, 181 against.

⁴ Wyse's *History of Catholic Emancipation*, vol. 1, p. 172.

powers of the Pope save that of appointing to vacant sees. Quarantotti wrote a rescript to the effect that the veto should be agreed to. Whereupon Quarantotti was referred to in the popular journals as a mere understrapper of the propaganda. The clergy assembled and protested against the rescript: "They denied, first, the authority of Quarantotti; and, even admitting his authority as the Pope's vicar, they denied His Holiness had any power, without the consent of the Irish hierarchy, to change the discipline of the Irish Church."¹ The prelates, more cautious, sent Dr. Murray, coadjutor Archbishop of Dublin, and Dr. Milner² to Rome. The discussion went on for the next couple of years with great fierceness. In 1814, the Catholic aristocracy severed their connexion with the Emancipation movement.³ O'Connell made the most of the political opportunity which the crisis afforded him; he laid down the Catholic claim as one for unqualified and unfettered emancipation. The episode greatly enhanced his authority; he came to be looked on as the real leader of the agitation.⁴

The Pope, upon his release, deputed Cardinal Gonsalvi to recall the rescript as having been issued without due deliberation and in the absence of His Holiness and the College of Cardinals; totti's wounded feelings were assuaged by his appointment a Cardinal. The rescript was referred in Rome to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and the result was communicated on April 26, 1815, by Cardinal Lita to Dr. Poynter, Vicar Apostolic of London. Rome condemned one of the securities, vesting in the Crown the right to examine Papal Rescripts and other documents sent from Rome to the United Kingdom; but with respect to the veto, the Pope authorized a statement that he had no hesitation in agreeing to submit the names of candidates for vacant dioceses to the Crown for approval.⁵

But the Papal policy was caviare to the general. The butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker, not to speak of the hind on the land and the potboy in the public-house, quivered with zeal for

¹ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. I, p. 121.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁴ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, p. 136.

⁵ MacDonagh's *Life of O'Connell*, p. 91. The Pope's letter, from Genoa, of April 26, 1815, ran thus: "In quibus mos est candidatos sanctæ sedi commendandos designare, eorum notulam exhibeant Regiis Ministeriis, ut gubernium si quis invisus aut suspectus sit eum statim indicet ut expungatur ita tamen ut sufficiens numerus supersit ex quo Sanctitas Sua eligere potest." — "*Catholics*" *Speech by Foster*, 2009, p. 23.

the independence of the Church. The newly fledged curate scented danger; a schism was possible. The bishops bowed to the storm and declared against the veto; O'Connell excelled himself in vitriolic zeal; the star of Daniel rose till it became a noonday sun, from which all political wisdom beamed till the eclipse of Clontarf in 1843.

In the following year O'Connell prepared an address to the Pope on the subject of the veto. It was extensively signed; and a friar named Richard Hayes was commissioned to present it to the Pope. The Wexford monastery from which this gentleman emerged to educate the Holy See had made no speciality of the arts of diplomacy. Father Hayes mistook his surroundings when he went to Rome; he was soon sent off about his business, for insolence to the Pope. His Holiness, in a letter to the Irish Catholics in 1818, stated that Father Hayes' conduct was insupportable, and that under all the circumstances he treated him with leniency, by merely dismissing him, instead of consigning him to the Castle of St. Angelo. The Pope replied to the bishops adhering to his opinion. But the matter dropped.

The veto controversy gave the cause of Emancipation a set back, for it brought disunion into the ranks. The nobility, gentry and merchants amongst the Catholics were in favour of the veto;¹ the masses were hostile. The Catholic Association met but seldom and got into debt. The end of the war with France—which afforded to successive Governments some excuse for inaction on a highly controversial topic—held no hopes, for the Tory party, hostile to all reform, had the prestige of having brought the war to a successful conclusion.² Fagan summarizes the position accurately when he says: "If we survey the political transactions of our country from 1815 to 1823, when the great and regularly organized Catholic Association was established, we will find no green spot on which to rest the weary eye; all was desert and dreariness."³

O'Connell now took the step which was to prove decisive in the Emancipation struggle. He had come to the conclusion that nothing was to be gained by these interminable resolutions and petitionings of Parliament. A Bill might be introduced; it might

¹ Letter of O'Connell, cited Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. I, p. 232.

² Cavour's *Thoughts on Ireland*, p. 32.

³ *Life of O'Connell*, vol. I, p. 228.

pass the House of Commons ; but it was certain to be rejected by the House of Lords. Something had to be done to stagger that august assembly. His plan was to make the Irish nation march as one man to victory. But he knew the Irish peasantry, if any man ever did. He knew that they would make no move, much less any sacrifice, unless they saw, as the price of it, some prospect of immediate betterment of their condition ; he used to say, " Agitation is impossible in Ireland when butter is selling at one and sixpence the pound."¹ Emancipation made no appeal to them ; they were too ignorant to see the leverage it would afford for the redress of their wrongs. Accordingly, O'Connell determined to enlarge the objects of the Association so as to attract the masses of the people. The Association which he formed in 1823 had as its object the redress of all grievances. It " no longer confined itself merely to petitioning for Emancipation. In the prevailing temper of society, this by itself would have been an useless pursuit. Its objects were numerous, its views comprehensive ; the multiform grievances by which the country was afflicted came under its cognizance. Every positive abuse was subject to its scrutiny. Orange domination was resisted ; the Evangelical mania was exposed ; the tithe system denounced ; the insolence of religious ascendancy, the evils of land jobbing held up to reprobation."²

The next essential was to provide an organization which could reach the people and instil into their minds the glorious possibilities of the new departure. O'Connell accordingly framed a scheme to make every priest in Ireland an active agent and officer of the Association. For better or worse, the Irish priest was introduced into the political arena, and in it he has been a prominent figure ever since. The rules of the new Association provided for the admission of members paying a guinea a year and associates paying one penny a month ; with the priests as the collecting agents. Thus the " Catholic Rent " came into existence. " It was the day by day contribution which made it valuable. The Catholic peasant was taught by it to think daily on his grievances."³ Dr. Doyle, the ablest prelate the Catholic Church in Ireland has produced, gave the Association his support ; the other prelates, including Dr. Murray, the Archbishop of Dublin, followed. The movement

¹ MacDonagh's *Life of O'Connell*, p. 108.

² Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, p. 298.

³ Wyse's *Hist. of Catholic Emancipation*, vol. I, p. 210.

took hold of the country ; the repeal Rent soon amounted to £600 to £900 a week. In 1825, the Association was "in a most commanding position" ; the rent brought in £1,000 to £1,200 a week ; it "took cognizance of every grievance, political and social, which afflicted the country. Every man who was offered injury received from it protection. The utmost interest was taken in its proceedings. It was emphatically the representative of Ireland ; it almost resembled a native Parliament. Lords Clanricarde, Fitzwilliam, Fingal, Clonamy, Gormanstown and a host of other peers became members of it" ; it kept the country tranquil.¹

The Ministry were much alarmed at these proceedings. The Duke of Wellington wrote to Peel on November 3, 1824 :

"If we cannot get rid of the Catholic Association we must look to civil war in Ireland sooner or later. Although all concerns of that kind are matters of risk and doubt, I should think there could be none of the military result. But should we be better situated afterwards ? I think not ; we should find the same enemies blasting the prosperity of the country and ready to take advantage of the weakness of this country at any moment to do us all the harm in their power."

George IV was furious. "The sentiments of the King upon Catholic Emancipation are those of his revered and excellent father ; from these sentiments the King never can and never will deviate."²

In 1825, O'Connell was prosecuted for sedition, the charge being founded on a speech in which he said that "if Ireland were driven mad by persecution, he hoped she would find, like South America, another Bolivar." The Grand Jury threw out the bills, as the newspaper reporters who were called to prove the speech affected not to be able to swear to the language.

The intensity and danger of this great popular movement, however, had their effect in Parliament. A committee was appointed by the House of Commons to draft a Catholic Relief Bill. O'Connell was asked by Sir Francis Burdett and Plunkett, who were prominent amongst the advocates of Catholic claims, to assist in framing the Bill. They suggested that the 40s. freehold franchise should be abolished, and that the Catholic clergy should be paid by the state. O'Connell favoured the abolition of the 40s.

¹ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. I, pp. 335-336. See also, Wyse, vol. I, pp. 205-210.

² King's letter to Peel of November 19, 1824.

franchise. He thought a tenant of that class, which comprised some 100,000 tenants, was a mere instrument in the hands of his landlord, and that a £10 leasehold franchise would be preferable, as introducing a more independent class of voters.¹

O'Connell at this time also favoured State payment of the Catholic clergy. His evidence upon this point before a Committee of the House of Commons appointed in 1825 was volunteered and was very remarkable. He said that it was "dangerous that the priests should be so much under the influence of very low people, as they necessarily are when all their relatives are in the very lowest stage of society";² and he states that the higher clergy were of the same opinion.³ This opinion was shared by many educated Catholics of the day,⁴ but at a later date, 1835, O'Connell did not "hesitate one moment to say that the Catholic clergy would be essentially injured by a State provision."⁵

There was a terrific furore in Exeter Hall at the notion of O'Connell drafting the Bill; an explanation was given that he had not been officially commissioned.

In Ireland the "wings" of the measure—as the suggested clauses as to the forty shilling franchise and the payment of clergy were called—excited great opposition. A demagogue named Lawless said that they had been sold for a silk gown for O'Connell; the mass of the people, prone to follow any extreme leader, supported Lawless.

It was in these circumstances that a Bill to confer Emancipation came before the British Parliament. The first reading passed the House of Commons by a majority of thirteen; the second reading by 268 to 241, a majority of 27. The "wings" were made the subject of separate measures and also passed the House of Commons.

¹ O'Connell afterwards—in January, 1838—gave an explanation that he did "consent to the abolition of the 40s. freeholders who held their lands at a rack rent, or who were tenants in common, but I never consented to the abolition of those who were similarly situated to the 40s. freeholders of England." Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. I, p. 381. The explanation was a lame one, for there were few, if any, so similarly circumstanced. He also averred that in 1829, previous to the passage of the bill, he drew up a petition that the 40s. freehold franchise should be left untouched. *Ibid.*, p. 382.

² *Evidence before Commons Committee* (1825), pp. 81, 82, 120, 125, noted Nassau Senior, vol. I, pp. 65, 86: see also Fagan, vol. I, p. 382.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Fagan, for example, writing in 1847, says: "How can the people pay—8,000,000—of whom 2,300,000 are in a state of destitution, 400,000 accustomed to live on the potato."—Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. I, p. 382.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 387. "It would take £1,000,000 a year to give them anything like a decent provision—a sum not likely to be parted with by John Bull."—*Ibid.*, p. 391.

In the House of Lords, the Duke of York presented a petition from the Dean and Chapter of the Chapel Royal at Windsor protesting against any further Catholic relief; he added a bitter speech on his own account and wept while delivering it. Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister, in a speech described by Sir Robert Peel as one of the most violent he ever delivered, also opposed the Bill; it was rejected by the Lords by 178 to 130.

The Act of 1825, called the *Algerine Act*, by virtue of which the Catholic Association was made unlawful, was of a very stringent character. It prohibited any meeting or association from assembling for redress of grievances of any kind in Church or State, or for petitioning on political subjects, or for the prosecution or defence of civil causes, or for the alteration of matters established by law, in Church or State, or for the continuance of the Association sittings by adjournment beyond fourteen days; It excepted, however, any association for the purpose of public or private charity. O'Connell evaded the statute by forming a new association for the purpose of public or private charity and such other purposes as are not prohibited by the Statute of 6 Geo. IV, c. 4. In 1826, O'Connell, bowing to the popular opinion, abandoned the "wings."

To combat the prejudices that still existed, the Catholic bishops of Ireland published on January 5, 1826, a declaration respecting Catholic teaching on various matters. It dealt exhaustively with (1) the relation of the Church to the State; (2) the allegation that Catholics are not allowed to read the Scriptures; (3) Catholic teaching as to miracles and as to (4) the alleged "worship" of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints; (5) images; (6) the ten Commandments; (7) relations with heretics; it was only the heresy which is "a wilful and obstinate opposition to revealed truth" which excludes from the Kingdom of God; (8) The Eucharist; (9) and (10) confession; (11) the allegation that Catholics believe that persons can be murdered or destroyed because they are heretics and that no faith is to be kept with heretics; (12) they referred to their oath to bear true allegiance; they declared that they did not believe the Pope or any other foreign potentate had or ought to have temporal or civil jurisdiction within the realm; (13) they disclaimed any claim, on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland, to forfeited lands or to subvert the present Church establishment for the purpose of substituting a Catholic establishment in its stead;

(14) they offered to give, when required by the competent authority, authentic and true information upon all subjects connected with the doctrine and discipline of the Church.

In 1828, O'Connell made his supreme effort, which was destined to be successful. In trumpet tones he called for simultaneous mass meetings to be held all over the country: "Slaves, slaves, you are seven millions, know your own strength; appreciate your power; it is no longer fitting that a handful of men should lord it over you. . . . Call for freedom and call for it as your right, above all, let seven millions call for it together." The nation responded with enthusiasm. Two thousand simultaneous meetings were held on Sunday, January 13, 1828; the numbers that attended were enormous, though the estimate put by Fagan¹ of 5,000,000 is obviously a wild exaggeration. It was the greatest constitutional movement in history and excited great attention abroad, in France, Germany, Italy and America; many foreign publicists came to Ireland to study so interesting a situation. The Irish Protestants up to this time had been, for the most part, either neutral or hostile; the more thoughtful of them now awakened to a sense of a possible catastrophe. A Protestant declaration in favour of Emancipation was now signed by two dukes, seven marquises, twenty-seven earls, eleven viscounts, twenty-two barons, two counts, twenty-two baronets, fifty-two members of Parliament and upwards of two thousand of the gentry—"all of whom were personally interested in the condition of Ireland,"²—and mass meetings of Protestants held in the Rotunda, Dublin, passed resolutions in favour of Emancipation and established a society called the "Society of Friends of Civil and Religious Freedom."

This great exhibition of the strength of the Irish Catholic movement synchronized with the manifestation of a more enlightened public opinion in England on the subject of the civil rights of persons outside the Established Church. Nine-tenths of the press were favourable. The city of Bristol, a former hotbed of intolerance, had, a few years before, adopted a petition in favour of relief; the great middle-class opinion was more favourable and more active. The Test and Corporation Acts (of 13th and 25th Charles II) which excluded Dissenters from offices of trust and power and from Corporations, unless they took the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church were repealed in 1828 by substantial majorities,

¹ *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 537.

² Wyse, II, p. 10.

on the motion of Lord John Russell.¹ O'Connell supported the concession, although Dissenters, as a class, were stubbornly opposed to concessions to the Catholics. Some of the leaders of the Irish Dissenters repudiated O'Connell's advocacy and even declared that rather than that the Catholics should be emancipated, they would gladly continue to endure their own wrongs. A motion in favour of the Catholics, brought forward in the Commons by Burdett, in the Lords by Lord Lansdowne, was carried by a majority of six in the lower, but beaten by a majority of forty in the upper house.

The acceptance by Vesey Fitzgerald, member of Parliament for Clare, of a ministerial appointment created a vacancy in the representation of that county, and led to the famous Clare election. Fitzgerald, who was personally popular and had supported Catholic Emancipation, offered himself for re-election. O'Connell proceeded to contest the constituency. It required some courage on the part of a tenant farmer in those days of open voting to brave the fury of his landlord, but the men of Clare rose to the occasion. O'Connell was declared elected by 2,057 votes to 982. The Irish tenant had ceased to be a political serf to his landlord; "the vast importance of the Clare election lay in this—the instrument of defence and supremacy had been converted into a weapon fatal to the landlord";² it was "a revolution in the electoral system of Ireland—the transfer of political power, so far as it was connected with representation, from one party to another."³

It must not be supposed that O'Connell's whirlwind campaign had the support of all who were believers in the object for which he struggled. "O'Connell . . . finds himself so much opposed by some of the most respectable of the bishops and by many of the lower clergy also, that he is quite wild," wrote Anglesea, the Lord Lieutenant, to Peel on June 23, 1828. A letter from a bishop from Maynooth states that a charge against Vesey Fitzgerald of being an enemy to Maynooth was wholly unjustified, and deprecated any opposition to him,⁴ but Dr. Doyle ("J.K.L.") was a warm supporter of the O'Connell policy;⁵ and, at any rate, "the bishops, many of whom are acting with much moderation, discretion and goodwill, have much less influence than I expected."⁶

¹ In practice, many Dissenters did act in these offices, and it was usual to pass an annual Indemnity Bill to protect them from the penal consequences.

² Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 105.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴ Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 131.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁶ Anglesea to Peel, June 30, 1828, Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 136.

Ireland was in a frenzy that seemed likely to lead to civil war. The North was in a blaze, and the Orangemen everywhere formed Brunswickian clubs, with the avowed object of resisting, by all and every means, the grant of Emancipation. At one of these meetings, Ellis, a Master in Chancery, declared that 400,000 Orangemen were ready to take the field against it. The *Dublin Evening Mail* of November 14, 1828, contained twenty columns of Brunswick resolutions. In Limerick five hundred new members were added to the clubs in one day; all the lower class Protestants joined; none but a few isolated individuals retained any good feelings towards the Catholics. The Northern peasantry were scarcely less warlike in their feelings than their ancestors who served in Cromwell's army, but were manageable by the gentlemen who had placed themselves at their head.¹

But the end of the weary struggle was at hand. The opposition crumpled up suddenly and unexpectedly. Dr. Curtis was now Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland; he was on very friendly terms with the Government and with Wellington, who was now Prime Minister.² Wellington wrote on December 11, 1828, to Dr. Curtis, expressing his anxiety to see the Catholic question settled; but his opinion was that the question should be left in abeyance for some time. Dr. Curtis sent the letter to the Marquis of Anglesea, the Lord Lieutenant, who wrote that he did not agree that the question should be left in abeyance, and he recommended that all constitutional means should be employed to push it on. Anglesea's letter, though marked "private and confidential," was, through some means or other, published; Anglesea was recalled, receiving a great ovation from the populace on his departure on January 19, 1829.

The British Cabinet had to face the issue, and make a decision upon it one way or another; the choice lay between revolution and concession. They decided upon concession. Peel explains his reasons for his change of front in a memorandum submitted by him

¹ Foster to Vesey Fitzgerald, November 14, 1828.—Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 265.

² Curtis, whilst rector of the Irish College at Salamanca, had given valuable information to Wellington during the Peninsula War; for this he had received a pension from the British Government; and it was upon the recommendation of Lord Castlereagh, then Foreign Secretary, he had been appointed to the see of Armagh, at a time when Ireland was seething with excitement over the Pope's action in reference to the veto.—MacDonagh's *Life of O'Connell*, p. 169.

on January 12, 1829, to the Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington :

“ Since the year 1807 there have been five Parliaments—a general election having taken place in each of the following years—1807, 1812, 1818, 1820 and 1826. In the course of each of these five Parliaments, with one exception, the House of Commons has come to a decision in favour of a consideration of the Catholic Question. The exception was in the case of the House of Commons elected in 1818; but that house negatived the consideration by a majority of only two voices, the numbers being, 243 against, and 241 for consideration. . . . The House of Commons elected in 1820 twice sent up the Bills to the Lords, removing the disabilities of the Roman Catholics. . . . The present House of Commons decided in the year 1827 against the question by a majority of four voices, the numbers being 276 to 272, but in the last session of Parliament the decision was in favour of the question by a majority of 272 to 266. . . . Though I have not the slightest apprehension of the result of civil commotion—though I believe it could be put down at once—yet I think the necessity of being constantly prepared for it while the Government is divided and the two Houses of Parliament are divided on the Catholic question, is a much worse evil than its actual occurrence,”¹

to which Wellington replied on January 17, “ I entirely concur with the sentiments and opinions in this paper.”

The King's Speech read on February 5, 1829, outlined two measures on the subject : the one to suppress the Catholic Association ; the other to grant relief to the Catholics. O'Connell went to London ; Birmingham gave him an enthusiastic reception en route ; whilst at Crewe his carriage had to force its way through an angry and hostile mob.

On February 10 the Bill was introduced to suppress the Catholic Association, which, however, anticipated the passing of the measure by dissolving itself.

The English bigots stormed heaven and earth. Peel, who sat for Oxford University, sought re-election on the issue. The forces of reaction were too strong in that seat of learning ; he was beaten by 755 to 609. He was, however, returned unopposed for Westbury, in Wiltshire. On March 3, he gave notice that two days later he would call the attention of the House to the question of the removal of Catholic disabilities. The following morning the King summoned his ministers. His mind seems to have been in a tumult of rage and apprehension ; he declared he would not agree. The Ministry resigned ; he accepted their resignation in a tearful mood, kissing

¹ Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. I, pp. 288-293.

them on their taking leave ; the same evening he bowed to the inevitable and sent word to Wellington that he would agree.

Peel introduced the Bill on March 5. It proposed to abolish the oath of supremacy and the declaration against transubstantiation required from a member before taking his seat ; it substituted an oath of allegiance and an abjuration of certain injurious tenets which Catholics might possibly hold, but which they had always said they did not hold. All offices were thrown open to Catholics save the positions of Regent, Lord Chancellor of either country, Viceroy of Ireland, and Commander in Chief. Catholic members of a Corporation were forbidden to appear in a Catholic chapel in their regalia of office ; priests were forbidden to wear their robes or vestments outside their places of worship ; Jesuits and monastic orders were to be registered ; and if they came into the United Kingdom, were to be banished ; bequests to religious orders were declared invalid ; Catholic ecclesiastics were denied the right to assume the title of Archbishop, Bishop or Dean. The Bill passed the Commons by 348 to 160. In the Lords Dr. Howley, Archbishop of Canterbury, moved, and Dr. Beresford, the Irish Primate, seconded the rejection of the Bill, which had the support of only one bishop—Dr. Lloyd of Oxford. Wellington used the argument of civil war to carry the measure :

“ There is nothing which destroys property and demoralizes character to the degree which civil war does. By it the hand of man is raised against his neighbour, against his brother, and against his father ; the servant betrays his master and the whole becomes a scene of confusion and devastation.”

The Lords passed the measure by 147 to 79. On the signing of the Bill, the King behaved like a child ; weeping, raging and protesting, but his assent was duly signified and the Bill became law.

At the same time a Bill was passed which abolished the forty shilling freehold franchise ; and enacted instead an occupation franchise of a valuation of £10 and upwards. Wyse remarks upon this : “ The constituency is likely for some time to remain in the hands of the gentry and clergy, with a slight sprinkling of the more comfortable farmers.”¹ But if this was an evil, it was not an unmixed evil ; the forty shilling suffrage had led to much division of land into holdings which were too small to be economic ; any step that tended to check the process was in the right direction.

¹ *History of Catholic Emancipation*, vol. II, p. 107.

Justice that is long delayed loses its relish. Had Emancipation been granted immediately after the Union, the effects upon the relations of the two countries would have been most happy ; but, as it was, the concession evoked neither affection nor gratitude. Moreover, the methods to which Ireland was obliged to resort to obtain its due, were disastrous. Threat of violence had succeeded where reason had failed. The precedent was a pernicious one ; it pointed to violence as the natural path to reform. The lesson was not lost upon the Irish people ; we shall see its effects, at intervals, until secession was finally accomplished.

The fury of the Orange party in Ireland knew no bounds ; but as the Orangeman got up, morning after morning, without finding either his throat cut or his weekly wages reduced, or his method of life altered in any way whatsoever, he gradually cooled down to his ordinary level of hate for his Catholic neighbours.

O'Connell presented himself at the House of Commons to take his seat for Clare. The Speaker, however, ruled that, as the Emancipation Act was not retrospective, it was necessary that he should take the old oaths. O'Connell, who probably anticipated such a ruling, refused ; he resigned his seat ; offered himself for re-election for Clare and was returned without a contest.

Notwithstanding the delay in Emancipation, " the Catholics had increased, greatly increased within the last thirty years in number, in wealth, and in intelligence."¹ In 1825, the personnel of the Catholic Church was 1,000 parish priests, 1,000 curates, four archbishops, twenty-two bishops, and thirty deans, with 2,105 places of worship.²

Peel gave the credit of the success of Catholic Emancipation to Grattan, Fox, Plunkett, and Canning. Grattan, however, did not live to see the triumph of the cause to which he had devoted so much of his life. He is the very perfect knight of Irish history. He was born in 1746, his father being Recorder of Dublin, and he was himself called to the Irish Bar in 1775, but did not practise. He originally entered Parliament in 1775, as member for the borough of Charlemont, and later sat for the City of Dublin. He was half a century ahead of the class to which he belonged in tolerance and

¹ Speech of Sir R. Peel, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1829, vol. XXX, p. 1278 ; he refers to the tendency of Protestants to leave the country—25,000 Protestants had left it in the preceding year.

² Nassau Senior, vol. I, pp. 78, 81. This does not differ greatly from the estimate in 1800—see Castlereagh, IV, p. 100.

political vision ; for twenty years in the Irish Parliament and fifteen years in the Imperial Parliament he fought the forces of oppression and bigotry. In all the contests in which he was engaged—for Irish independence, for Emancipation, for reform, against tithe—he showed the qualities of a noble and chivalrous mind. He had the gifts of lofty eloquence and intellectual honesty. He did not allow himself to be swayed by popular clamour ; he was in favour of the veto because he thought it was right ; he upbraided O'Connell for his outrageous and violent language. His independence cost him the leadership of the Catholic party in Parliament in 1815, when the presentation of the usual petition was taken from him and entrusted to Sir Henry Parnell—in 1816 Grattan was again given the task. Though he strenuously opposed the Union, he seems to have been desirous of working it and making the best of it. When, in 1817, the citizens of Dublin pressed Grattan to demand a repeal of the window tax, he refused ; for this, in the election of 1818, he was attacked by a mob and received a blow of a wooden stave in the face which caused a considerable effusion of blood—he used to say, in connexion with this incident : “ Like Actæon, I am devoured by my own hounds.” But neither this incident nor the wane of his popularity soured his temper or deflected his zeal ; almost the last act of his life was the attempt, in May, 1820, to rise from the bed on which he lay dying, to take part in a debate in Parliament on the Catholic question.

It is given to few to soar high above the prejudices of race, class, and creed, and take a bold and far reaching view of human action, and its ultimate effect upon the community. Grattan was one of the few. Such men are a priceless asset to the people, of infinitely more value than a thousand demagogues, however successful ; they make for the enlightenment, the inspiration, and the true happiness of the nation. But the gift of such vision and courage is often fatal to its possessor. Grattan was usually in a minority ; and his soul must have been wrung when he saw the ideals for which he struggled trampled in the dust.

Eloquent testimony was paid in the House of Commons and elsewhere to Grattan's character and worth. The Earl of Mornington styled Grattan “ the most upright and temperate demagogue that ever appeared in any country.” Sir James Mackintosh :¹

¹ *Parl. Deb.*, June 14, 1823.

"He was the sole person in the history of modern oratory, of whom it could be said, that he had arrived at the first class of eloquence in two parliaments, differing from each other in their opinions, tastes, habits and prejudices—as much, possibly, as any two assemblies of different nations. . . . The purity of his private life was equal to the brightness of his public glory. *Vita innocentissimus, ingenio florentissimus; proposito sanctissimus.*"

Lord Castlereagh :

"No talents had ever asserted greater supremacy over a popular assembly than his had done. . . . The rare endowments and extraordinary talents of that distinguished and lamented individual whose virtues he was persuaded would long live in the memory of the British nation."

But still more eloquent is this :

"No Government ever dismayed him—the world could not bribe him—he thought only of Ireland—lived for no other object—dedicated to her his beautiful fancy, his elegant wit, his manly courage, and all the splendour of his astonishing eloquence. He was so born and so gifted that poetry, forensic skill, elegant literature, and all the brightest attainments of human genius were within his reach : but he thought the noblest occupation of a man was to make other men happy and free ; and in that straight line he went on for fifty years, without one side look, without one yielding thought, without one motive in his heart which he might not have laid open in the view of God and man ; "¹

Even Froude lays a reluctant wreath upon his tomb—"Alone of Irish patriots he was incorruptible."²

The Union, launched upon the muddy waters of corruption, was rapidly borne into a sea of troubles.

It is easy to show, and I shall show that Ireland prospered after the Union ; that her trade, commerce, and even her manufacturing industries increased. But a change was taking place in the country which, while it brought wealth to some, brought poverty and distress to others.

The smaller industries were gradually being wiped out by the competition of the English manufacturing towns, whose output increased amazingly. Where an Irish industry was killed, the fact stuck in the minds of a public who were too ignorant to distinguish between sequence and consequence, or to see that while England was progressing naturally and advantageously in manufacture,

¹ Peter Plymley's *Ireland and England*, p. 173 ; the author was Sidney Smith, Canon of St. Paul's.

² Froude, II, p. 198.

Ireland was, also naturally and advantageously, developing its agricultural production and export.

There were other circumstances that tended to the creation of an atmosphere unfavourable to the Union. The Imperial contribution of two-fifteenths fixed by the Act of Union¹ was altogether in excess of Ireland's capacity; her national debt rose up by leaps and bounds. Splendid hopes had been held out of the attraction of English capital and a spurt in industry by reason of the closer connexion between the two islands. There was no influx of capital. On the contrary, the business community of Dublin felt the loss of the spending classes whose attendance for a great part of the year in the capital city was required by their Parliamentary duties.

"Dublin has naturally suffered most by the Union of Ireland with England. To the end of the last century, when Ireland still had her own Parliament, Dublin was the customary residence of 271 spiritual and temporal peers and of 300 members of the House of Commons. In 1820 only 34 peers, 13 baronets, and 5 members of the House of Commons resided in Dublin."²

The support given to the Union by the educated Catholics was, in effect, contingent upon its being followed up by a grant of Emancipation. The favourable opportunity was lost; there was a feeling that the Catholics had been sold in the transaction. The memories of the oppression of the Irish Parliament grew dim; generations were to arise who knew nothing, and were taught nothing, of the last Irish Parliament save its glories. When we add to these factors the grievances of the landworkers—the tithes, the exactions of the landlords, the insecurity of tenure, the pressure of the population upon the land—and the disturbances which these grievances constantly produced, it is not difficult to believe that propaganda against the Union, however far fetched, was likely to fall upon congenial soil.

Nevertheless, we have to marvel at the nature of the propaganda. Facts were placed upon their head. Even the geographical position and features of the country were distorted out of all recognition. The remoteness of Ireland from the continent of Europe was hailed as a factor of enormous advantage. The mountains of the country, which are situated round the edge of the island—for Ireland is shaped like a saucer—were, for the nonce, removed and planted in the centre. Vast resources of minerals and water power were conjured up by the patriot leaders. The people were

* ¹ See p. 122 *ante*.

Kohl's *Ireland*, p. 167.

endowed with every conceivable virtue. Nothing was too absurd to ladle out to a gullible and ignorant public. The gist of it all was that the Union was an artful device whereby jealous England took care that a smaller island should not be a great manufacturing competitor, a destiny for which her resources as well as the energy, stability, and industry of her people so well fitted her.

Such statements need strict proof. Mr. William Fagan was himself a Member of Parliament for the enlightened constituency of Cork. He wrote a two volume history of O'Connell, which is a readable and interesting work. He may, therefore, be taken as a fair sample of the educated Repealer of his day. Writing in 1843, he said :—

“ When it is considered what Ireland now is, and what she might have been if left to her own resources, few can avoid feeling the most heartfelt sorrow at the fate which subjected her to the mercy of British legislation. What is she now ? A depressed and impoverished province exhibiting all the plague spots of an old country, without any of its accumulated resources—with all the weakness of a young nation, without its elasticity or growth. Without commerce, without manufactures—with empty harbours—with rivers flowing idly to the sea—with a fruitful soil sending forth its rich abundance for the benefit of another land—with two millions and a half of people plunged in destitution—here she is, a producer of labour for England and her colonies, a feeder of cattle for England's consumption, a grower of corn for England's use and a retailer of manufactures for England's advantage. . . . Ireland's physical and geographical condition is superior to that of England—Ireland is of an oval shape and the interior of the country is mountainous. The consequences of these two circumstances are, that no portion of the soil is more than fifty miles from the sea ; that there are noble rivers and tributary streams running in every direction to the ocean ; that there are harbours all round her coast, at distances one from the other of not more than thirty miles ; that there is more mill power in one of her rivers than in all the steam engines of England—and finally, that she is placed in advance of the nations of Europe, as the natural emporium for the commerce of the old and new world.”¹

O'Connell said—“ Who, I ask, is to blame if we are poor, and cannot clothe and feed ourselves better than we do ! . . . Who has destroyed our manufactures and our industries ? Who has prevented the development of that intellectual culture, in which we were once so far in advance of all the rest of Europe ? Who has hitherto prevented us from assuming that rank among the nations of the world, to which our natural resources and the talents given us by God^{ſc} justly entitle us ? The Saxons. The English. Despotie England is to blame.”²

¹ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, pp. 2, 3.

² Kohl, p. 148.

It will be convenient if I say a word here as to the actual facts. Ireland has no iron, no copper, no precious metals—that is to say, in a form that would pay to take them out of the bowels of the earth. Coal, anthracite in quality, is found in Ireland in seams nowhere exceeding two feet in thickness; anybody who knows anything of the subject will appreciate that the working of coal mines of that class is sheer waste of time and money; ¹ the shovelling of dung on to the land, if not so exciting, would be a much more healthy and lucrative occupation.²

Shorn of all real aids to industrial development, upon what was Ireland to reckon to enable her to compete with the neighbouring island, having coal and iron in abundance? Is it to the superior industry of the people? Even if Ireland could boast of that quality in abundance, it would not be a sufficient make-weight when placed in the balance against the sister island's advantages. But the testimony of every observer is that the Irish, at home at all events, are certainly not above the normal, so far as industry is concerned. That is putting it very mildly, for the general consensus of the opinions of disinterested observers is that the Irish people have an easy-going philosophy; are light hearted; fond of amusements; averse from long and sustained exertion; with little notion of the value of time. Various reasons are ascribed—religion, race, climate, domination by an alien government. “The fact is, I fear, that we Gaels have not the business turn of mind, and do not build factories even now anywhere; on the banks of Hudson or Mississippi any more than on Suir or Liffey. We never built them—never were a commercial people.”³ Whatever be the reason, one thing I conceive to be certain, that the Irish people would never have been willing to endure the horrible slavery that went to the making of

¹ “Enough has been said to assure the reader that the popular notions as to the vast mineral wealth of Ireland, or her hidden coal fields, waiting only for development, are myths unworthy of a serious and reflective age.”—Coyne's *Ireland, Industrial and Agricultural* (1902), p. 26.

² To the above remarks one possible exception must be made. Coal is to be found in the neighbourhood of Lough Neagh, and it is stated that, as the result of the pluck and energy of a Belfast business man, it has been proved to be in such quantity and thickness as to give promise of a moderate success. This remains to be established; previous attempts in the neighbourhood made by British companies to exploit the coal fields there resulted in considerable loss. This coalfield is in the Co. Tyrone, one of the Ulster six counties, and its working is under the British régime there, owing nothing whatever to Government assistance.

³ *Some Ethical Questions of Peace and War* (1914), by the Rev. Dr. Walter MacDonald, Professor of Maynooth College.

England in the first half of the nineteenth century. To pretend that, with the aid of tariffs, Ireland's small industries, many if not most of them, situated considerable distances from the eastern seaboard, and consequently handicapped by dear coal and dear transport, could have competed with England's great manufactures, is childish folly. It is quite true that on the eastern seaboard certain industries have grown up and flourished to an astonishing degree; but in these cases, the disadvantages are minimized by the locality, and in most of them certain factors are present of a favouring character.¹ It is also true that a big capitalist like Mr. Ford, applying his vast experience, his up-to-date methods, and his almost unlimited resources to making motor cars and lorries in Cork can make the undertaking profitable; but that is quite a different proposition from Mr. Ford starting from scratch in the lethargic atmosphere of Southern Ireland.

Ireland has one tremendous advantage, its proximity to the best market in the world for agricultural produce. This it sends—not by way of a gift as Fagan seems to imply—but in exchange for English products; upon England's greatness and purchasing power depends Ireland's prosperity.

As already pointed out the Act of Union provided for a 10 per cent. protective tariff for Ireland till 1820, and there was the cost of transport as well.² Ireland's small industries were bound to meet the same fate as many of a similar class, though better circumstanced, in the south and west of England, which went down before the mass production of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

One of the ablest economic thinkers Ireland has produced³ sums up the position admirably when he says:

¹ Guinness's brewery, and the distilleries can command the best of raw materials for their trades. In Belfast, there is the advantage of a ship-building that gives employment for men and a linen industry that gives employment to women; the combination enabled these industries to be put upon their feet; low wages were paid, for all the members of the working man's household, male and female, were in employment.

² Some Irish manufacturers, when these protective duties were about to cease, appealed for a renewal of them, and they so far prevailed on the British Parliament—always anxious, according to every Irish propagandist, from O'Connell down, to ruin Irish manufactures—to pass an Act renewing the 10 per cent. duties till 1825 and providing for a gradual extinction to be finally accomplished in 1840. A commission, however, was set up in 1823 and recommended the abolition of the duties forthwith—a *McCurse* obviously in the interests of both countries. Accordingly, the duties ceased altogether in 1824. See O'Brien, p. 429. In 1826, the British and Irish Customs were amalgamated. See Miss Murray, p. 345.

³ W. P. Coyne, *Ireland, Agricultural and Industrial*, p. 26.

"It is possible, after all, that a ploughshare and a spade made of imported iron, and a home-bred peasant to guide them, may yet prove the best means of utilizing the mineral wealth of Ireland, which ages of denudation have taught us to look for in the soil."

The first step towards the formation of a Repeal Association was taken at a meeting of citizens of Dublin on September 18, 1810, the High Sheriff in the chair. Resolutions in favour of Repeal were adopted and a permanent committee appointed. The reasons for the movement were thus stated by a Mr. Hutton, who proposed the resolution :

"This wretched measure has prevented our manufacturers from having a fair competition in the world market. . . . Sir, we have now had the experience of ten years, since the passing of the Act of Union, and, let me ask, had the Irish manufacturers had a fair competition in the English markets? Have the manufacturers of Ireland been protected and encouraged, and have those in Dublin flourished, as we were promised?"

O'Connell delivered a speech at this meeting which "was much admired and relished by his countrymen."¹ It seems to have been, in great part, a mixture of that hyperbole and calumny for which he was afterwards so severely censured by Grattan. He spoke of the ten years which had elapsed since the Union as "a melancholy period in which Ireland saw her artificers starved—her tradesmen begging—her merchants become bankrupts—her gentry banished—her nobility degraded";² of "the frightful recollection of that avowed fact which is now part of history, that the rebellion itself was fomented and encouraged in order to facilitate the Union";³ and much more to the same effect.

In the beginning, however, the Repeal movement was confined to Dublin and some of the towns which were feeling the effects of the industrial competition. Agricultural Ireland, prospering, in a fashion, as long as the war with Napoleon lasted, was inert on the subject. Moreover, first things had to come first. Catholic Emancipation was a more obvious and a more easily attainable reform. It absorbed, up to 1829, all the energies of O'Connell and the country; it was not till it was got out of the way that a national Repeal movement was possible. Meanwhile, the Repeal Associa-

¹ Plowden's *History of Ireland from the Union to 1810*, vol. III, p. 896 n.

² *Life of O'Connell*, by his Son, vol. I, p. 48.

³ *Life of O'Connell*, by his Son, vol. I, p. 51; as to the charge of fomenting and encouraging the rebellion, see p. 98 *ante*.

tion, by false history and false economics, helped to pave the way for the mighty movement that collapsed with O'Connell's death in 1847.

It will be remembered that the scheme of the financial clauses was: that Ireland should have a separate purse; and that she should be taxed, at Westminster, to produce a sinking fund and interest on her own debt, *plus* two-fifteenths of the cost of Imperial services, civil and military. The yield from Ireland from the taxation imposed upon her at Westminster was wholly inadequate to meet these charges. She was, at this period, immune from Income Tax, while Great Britain during the war was subject to an Income Tax which went up to 2s. in the £; her yield from Customs and Excise was really very small; and, unless her Customs and Excise duties were raised to an impossible figure, by no possibility could her budget have been made to balance. Her National Debt, accordingly, increased every year.¹ The contingency provided for by the Act of Union under which the Exchequers were to be amalgamated soon happened.²

In 1817, the proportion which Ireland's National Debt of that year bore to England's National Debt of that year was, roughly, in the same proportion as Ireland's imperial contribution bore to the entire of the imperial charges (as 2 is to 15). Accordingly, the condition precedent to an amalgamation of the Exchequers had arrived; and by a resolution of the Imperial Parliament the Exchequers were amalgamated. Thenceforward, subject to such exemptions as the United Parliament granted, Ireland was taxed as if she had been a county in England. Some of these exemptions were very important. Income Tax was not imposed on Ireland till 1853; but the exemptions tended to become smaller, and when the Union was dissolved in 1921 they were practically negligible.

Up to 1827 Ireland had a currency of its own; the rate of exchange was always in favour of the English £. In 1821 the currencies were assimilated. This was an obvious advantage to both countries, but especially to Ireland. It has, however, been one of the arguments against the Union that Ireland was deprived of its own currency.

¹ As pointed out, p. 126 *ante*, Ireland was in no way disadvantaged by this; for she never paid it; it was merged in Britain's National Debt.

² As to Ireland's financial condition in the period 1800-1817, see *Parliamentary Debates*, May 20, 1816; Speech of Vesey Fitzgerald, Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, and *Parliamentary Debates*, 1815, vol. III, App. CXVIII. Ireland's National Debt on January 5, 1815, was £127 millions.

In 1804, owing to the war, payment in specie was abolished both in Great Britain and Ireland. The Irish bankers, including those of the Government bank, the Bank of Ireland, are said to have been "plain and limited traders";¹ they proceeded to multiply currency. It looked an easy way of getting something for nothing; the twelve banks increased to seventy; £5,000,000 in cash and paper soared to £20,000,000; silver disappeared; private banks issued notes for such small sums as 18*d.*, 2*s.* 6*d.*, and the like; the exchange fell and soon was 20 per cent. below that of England.² Later in 1820 there was much distress and misery caused by the failure of many of the banks. Eleven stopped payment in the South of Ireland, only three remained solvent in the neighbourhood of Cork.³

The social and economic evils from which the Irish peasantry suffered at the time of the Union and which have been already fully described (Chapter I) were unaffected by the Union.

"The Union, however, only affected the surface of the Irish community; the undercurrents of society still flowed in their former directions. To the peer or landlord, who lost his place in Parliament; to the barrister who found his profession inconsistent with a seat in an English House of Commons; to the various persons who were concerned in the management of parliamentary majorities, the distribution of places, and the exercise of ministerial influence; the loss of (what was termed) national independence must have produced a mighty change; but to the Munster or Connaught peasant, who still was forced to pay rent and tithe to the same person, at the same rates, and under the same laws, the change was only nominal, and scarcely had more influence on his conditions than the contemporaneous transfer of the French Sovereignty from the Directory to the First Consul."⁴

Tillage got a great fillip from the war, for England, particularly in the post-Union period, was largely cut off from supplies of cereals from abroad. Ireland had been fed by imported corn during the middle of the eighteenth century. During the war she not only fed herself but supplied England with £2,000,000 worth of corn and another £1,000,000 to supply the English Expeditionary Forces and to feed foreign nations.⁵

¹ *Annual Register*, 1804. ² *Ibid.*, 1804, p. 150. ³ *Ibid.*, 1820, p. 91.

⁴ Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 39.

⁵ Grattan; *Parliamentary Debates*, 1815; *Life of Grattan*, by his Son, vol. V, p. 510. But curiously, Grattan thought the export of raw materials and cattle a disadvantage; "bad and injurious exports" he called them.—*Life of Grattan*, by his Son, vol. V, p. 508. Kohl gives the following figures: Irish grain exports to Great Britain, in 1802, 461,000 quarters; ~1808, 656,000

Partly by reason of the increased demand, and partly by reason of the inflation of the currency the price of agricultural produce rose to twice or thrice its former level,¹ and farmers with holdings of a reasonable size flourished as long as the war lasted. So did the landlords, who piled on the rents and doubled or trebled their rent rolls, and altered their scale of living to suit the happier circumstances in which they found themselves. But the lean times came with the conclusion of the war; the foreigner drove the Irish producer out of the English markets;² adjustment to expansion is easy, to retrenchment difficult; the tenant wanted reduction in his rent; the landlord's bloated establishments could not afford it; there was a bitter struggle. In 1826 wholesale evictions were resorted to in many parts of the country, and a "No Rent" fund started to indemnify the sufferers. The embarrassed circumstances of the future generations of many Irish landlords may be attributed to the improvident extravagance induced by the increase in their rent rolls during the Napoleonic War.³

In 1815 some relief was given to the Irish and British agriculturist by a measure which practically prohibited the importation of foreign corn unless the price of wheat and oats was very high. The Anglo-Irish controversy teems with complaints of the damage to Ireland's manufactures by reason of the non-existence of a tariff against England's manufactured goods or by reason of the insufficiency of the tariff that existed to 1824. But no Irish writer condescends to notice that the preference given by England to home-grown agricultural products, continued down to 1846, when Peel repealed the Corn Laws, was of enormous advantage to Ireland, or would have been of enormous advantage had the population been kept in check, and had minute subdivision not more than counteracted the effect of the bonus to Irish agriculture.

But while the Irish agricultural output, reacting to the stimulus of the war, as well as to the growing demands of the rapidly developing industrial population of the adjoining island, showed a largely

quarters; 1818, 1,200,000 quarters; 1825, 2,000,000 quarters.—Kohl, *On Ireland* (1844), p. 117. In 1837, 3,000,000 quarters; in 1838, 3,474,000 quarters.—*Ibid.*

¹ *Ireland*, Gustavo de Beaumont, edited by Taylor (1839), vol. II, p. 202.

² See Speech of Grattan, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1815, *Lives of Grattan*, by his Son, vol. V, pp. 510-11. "It is utterly impossible to describe the depression which fell on the agricultural interest in the South of Ireland between 1815 and 1826."—Butt, *The Irish People and the Irish Land*, p. 89.

³ See De Beaumont's *Ireland*, vol. II, p. 202.

increased output, the condition of the landworkers, as a whole, was not improved. The increase of population more than kept pace with the increase of production. The very great distress of the lower classes very general throughout Ireland was attributed by reliable witnesses before various Parliamentary Committees to the increase of population and the fall in the price of produce after the war.¹ A terrible account was given of the state of the peasantry in Limerick: having a quarter of an acre of ground: living in wretched hovels, on potatoes and salt; bog sedge for bedding; sleeping promiscuously without distinction of sex; ill clad; never in the possession of any money.² What was said of Limerick could truly be said of many other parts. The description, however, applies solely to the small cottier holder and labourer who swarmed everywhere; the holder of any fair-sized farm was probably able to eke out a decent livelihood for his family and himself, and had some reasonable measure of prosperity as long as the war kept up the prices of his produce.

An attempt to check the evils of subdivision of holdings was made in 1827 when an Act was passed³ to make void all sub-lettings made without consent of the landlord. To this most useful piece of legislation O'Connell offered a stout resistance.

For many a long day after the Union, Ireland was full of explosive elements. Scarcely a year passed without many of the southern counties being convulsed with agitation and outrage in one form or another. For the most part, the disturbances had neither a political nor a religious tinge. There were many secret societies. The Thrashers, for example, went in for the regulation of tithes and dues chiefly, but to some extent for general reforms, such as wage and rent reform. In speaking of the various gangs who infested the country at this period, the Most Rev. Dr. Kelly, Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, said, "They generally complain of tithes, taxes, grand jury cess, vestry cesses, the payment of the Catholic clergy, the high price of land; all these things together."⁴ To the same effect is the evidence of the Most Rev. Dr. Murray, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. "They have often been directed against the dues paid to

¹ *Evidence before Commons Committee and Lords Committee, 1824*, cited Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, pp. 58-62.

² *Evidence of Major Willcocks, Inspector of Police in Munster, before the Commons Committee, 1824*, cited Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 64.

³ 7 George IV, c. 29, replaced by 2 William IV, c. 17.

⁴ *Evidence before Commons Committee, 1825*, p. 259, cited Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 74.

the Catholic clergy as well as against the tithes paid to the Protestant clergy." ¹ In Westmeath a regular scale of dues to priests was settled, and if any man exceeded it, he was "carded," his naked back was scored with iron spikes fitted into a board which served as a handle.²

The Thrasher disturbances in 1806 were almost as formidable as an insurrection.

"The entire province of Connaught, with the exception of one county and two counties in the north-west circuit (Longford and Cavan) were overrun by insurgents so formidable that the King's Judges upon a special commission could not move through the country, except under a military escort; so formidable that the sentence of the law could not be executed in one particular county town till a general officer had marched from a distant quarter, at the head of a strong force, to support the civil power."³

The Insurrection Act of 1796 had to be renewed, but intimidation and outrage continued and broke out into open violence at various intervals.

In 1811 and 1812, Tipperary, Waterford, Kilkenny, Limerick, Westmeath, Roscommon, and King's County were the theatre of sanguinary tumults. In 1815 a great part of Tipperary, considerable portions of King's County and Westmeath and all Limerick were placed under the Insurrection Act. Tipperary and Limerick were in a dreadful state till 1818. Galway was disturbed in 1820; and Limerick again in 1821.

The elements composing these secret societies were the small cottiers and farm labourers with a sprinkling of discontented farmers. It was not likely that the occupier of anything that could, in reason, be called "a farm" would lend himself to a movement fraught with danger to all who had anything that could be termed property. Lawless gangs, by threats, intimidation and outrage, impressed the lower orders into the service. "If a desperate gang formed themselves in any county in Ireland, the rest of the poorer people are either ready or are compelled to join them, and it runs like wildfire through the county, if it is not checked in the first

¹ *Evidence before Commons Committee, 1825, p. 237, noted Lewis's Disturbances in Ireland, p. 146.*

² *Commons Committee, 1824, p. 118, cited Lewis's Disturbances in Ireland, p. 146.*

³ *Charge of Chief Justice Bushe at Maryborough, Special Commission, 1806, cited Lewis's Disturbances in Ireland, p. 40.*

instance, to an extent that becomes alarming.”¹ The priests denounced the peasants’ societies, but to little purpose.

Besides the societies which owed their origin to a desire to possess land or to get rid of burdens arising out of the occupation of land—“trade unions,” as they have been called, “for the protection of the Irish peasantry,”² there were powerful secret societies of a political and religious hue. To the Defenders, whose origin and history prior to the Union have been already described, succeeded the Ribbonmen, whose power lay chiefly in the North.³ “Ribbonism has doubtless much more the character of an armed and well-organized association, with religious and political objects, than the local and irregular combinations of the South and West.”⁴

O’Connell, in his evidence before the House of Commons Committee in 1825⁵ could not say when the Ribbon Association began, but that it was a continuation of the Defender system. Ribbon system and Orangeism “act on each other; the existence of Ribbonism makes it necessary for one perhaps to become an Orangeman, and the existence of Orangeism has certainly created many Ribbonmen.” O’Connell attributed a great deal of the brawls and fights to Orange insolence: but says that in fairs, etc., “a riot is easily excited, and the Ribbonmen are equally willing to commence it with the Orangemen.”⁶ Ribbonism was not confined to Ireland. Ribbonism spread to Glasgow and Liverpool, in opposition to the Orangemen settled in those cities.⁷

There is evidence that the Ribbonmen in some parts took an oath of extermination against the Orangemen. The evidence is at least as strong as the evidence that the Orangemen took an oath of extermination against the Papist. If the phraseology attributed to some Ribbonmen was ever used by them at all, it seems to me to amount to mere bombast and to be no more worthy of serious attention than the evidence as to the Orangemen’s oath. A Mr. Hugh Boyd Wray examined before the House of Commons Committee in 1832⁸ states that he got from a Ribbonman a copy of the oath, which was in the following terms. “Never spare, but persevere and wade knee deep in Orange blood.” A Mr. Miles O’Reilly and a Mr. Cassidy refer to having seen an oath of the “Whitefeet”

¹ *Evidence before Commons Committee, 1832, No. 29, cited Lewis’s Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 63; see also Lewis, p. 201.

² *Lewis’s Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 99.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁸ No. 3998, cited *Lewis’s Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 165.

with the same phraseology.¹ Colonel Verner in his evidence before the Committee on Orange Lodges² gives the oath as follows, "I will wade knee deep in Orangemen's blood." Bishop Doyle, on the other hand—this testimony is of the highest value—said that the Ribbonmen's oath was not of the character described by a Mr. Bennet.³ The Bishop goes on :

"I leave out of calculation those mobs, whether Catholic or Protestant, who are led, not by reason but by passion and which can always be excited to espouse either what is right or what is wrong, until education will have enlightened their minds, and rendered them capable of discerning between truth and error, between justice and injustice."⁴

The evidence of Catholic clergymen⁵ is to the same effect as that of the Bishop, and we may dismiss this allegation against the Ribbonmen as decisively as that against the Orange Society in reference to the alleged Orange oath.

As between these contending factions, the fair conclusion seems to be that the Orangemen were originally the aggressors and were always insolent and domineering in their attitude towards their poorer and more defenceless Catholic neighbours. Crime beget crime ; each party feared the other ; each party conceived itself to be acting in self-defence. The impartial testimony of Mr. Justice Fletcher (cited p. 196 *post*) puts the chief blame on the shoulders of the Orangemen.

Matters were complicated enough by outrages which had some definite object in view ; but there were disturbances which had none. Faction fighting is a relic of the old Irish system of clan-ship.⁶ The factions arose from the most absurdly trivial causes, such as a dispute between children playing marbles in which their elders intervened ;⁷ another was about a right of burial ; some were about nothing at all. The contending parties met, often in considerable numbers, and battered each other with sticks and stones. The Major Wilcocks already mentioned speaks of seeing 500 or 600 or perhaps 1,000 men, that is, counting both sides,

¹ *House of Commons Committee*, 1832, Nos. 5834, 5981-82, cited Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 165.

² No. 228, cited Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 168.

³ *Essay on the Catholic Claims* (1826), p. 198.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁵ Cited Lewis, p. 168.

⁶ *Evidence of Mr. Justice Day*, cited Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 279.

⁷ See Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 289.

engaged in faction fighting.¹ The police used to remain discreetly absent on these occasions, deeming it a prudent policy to let the parties vent their fury on each other rather than on the police or military; the suppression of faction fighting was one of the tasks to which Under-Secretary Drummond afterwards set himself. Tipperary and adjoining counties were chiefly the scene of these fights. The factions took various appellations—Shanavists and Caravats, Caffees and Ruskavallas,² the Dingens and Dawsons; the Bootashees and Tubbers; the Cumminses and Darigs.³

The condition of affairs was described by Mr. Justice Fletcher in his charge to the Wexford Grand Jury at the summer assizes of 1814.⁴ The Judge describes

“a magistracy over active in some instances and quite supine in others. This circumstance has materially affected the administration of the laws in Ireland. In this respect, I have found that those societies called Orange Societies have produced most mischievous effects, and particularly in the North of Ireland. They poison the very fountains of justice; and even some magistrates, under their influence, have, in too many instances, violated their duty and their oaths.”

After condemning all secret societies he goes on:

“of this I am certain, that so long as those associations are permitted to act in the lawless manner they do, there will be no tranquillity in this country, and particularly in the North of Ireland. There, those disturbers of the public peace, who assume the name of Orange yeomen, frequent the fairs and markets, with arms in their hands, under the pretence of self-defence or of protecting the public-peace, but with the lurking view of inviting the attacks from the Ribbonmen, confident that, armed as they are, they must overcome defenceless opponents, and put them down. Murders have been repeatedly perpetrated upon such occasions; and though legal prosecutions have ensued, yet such have been the baneful consequences of those factious associations, that, under their influence, petty juries have declined, upon some occasions, to do their duty. . . . That moderate pittance which the high rents leave to the poor peasantry, the large county assessments nearly take from them. . . . Roads are frequently planned and made, not for the general advantage of the country, but to suit the particular views

¹ *House of Lords Committee*, 1824, p. 106, cited Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 282.

² *Evidence of Father Costello, P.P. of Abington, County Limerick, before Commons Committee*, 1825, pp. 418-19, cited Lewis's *Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 286; he gives the numbers as varying from 300 to 600.

³ Some were fancy names, others had a real signification. Darig = red; Ruskavalla = name of a district; Dingens = name of a hill (Lewis, p. 288).

⁴ *Life of O'Connell*, by his Son, vol. II, p. 158.

of a neighbouring landholder, at the public expense. Such abuses shake the very foundation of the law : they ought to be checked. . . . Superadded to these mischiefs are the permanent and occasional absentee landlords, residing in another country, not known to their tenantry but by their agents, who extract the uttermost penny of the value of the lands. If a lease happens to fall in, they sell the farm by public auction to the highest bidder. No gratitude for past services, no preference of the fair offer ; no predilection for the ancient tenantry, be they ever so deserving ; but if the highest price be not acceded to, the depopulation of an entire tract of country ensues.

“What, then, is the wretched peasant to do ? Chased from the spot where he had first drawn his breath, where he had first seen the light of heaven, incapable of procuring any other means of existence, vexed with those exactions I have enumerated, and harassed by the payment of tithes, can we be surprised that a peasant of unenlightened mind, of uneducated habits, should rush upon the perpetration of crimes, followed by the punishment of the rope and the gibbet ? Nothing, as the peasantry imagine, remains for them, thus harassed and thus destitute, but with strong hand to deter the stranger from intruding upon their farms ; and to extort from the weakness and terror of their landlords (from whose gratitude or good feelings they have ailed to win it) a kind of preference for their ancient tenantry.”

He then goes on to refer to fraud and speculation in county presentment code ; to abuses in connexion with affidavits and oaths ; to pressure put on tenantry who “must poll for the great undertaker, who has purchased them by his jobs,” and this is frequently done with little regard to conscience or duty, or real value of the alleged freehold.

CHAPTER VII

IRELAND, 1829-1840

The Repeal Movement—Reform of Primary Education—Reform Acts—
The Tithe Question—The Drummond Administration.

No man had fought so strenuously against the Union as Grattan, or brought to the contest such a powerful equipment of eloquence, character, and trained intelligence ; but, before his death, he came to see that it was a tolerable bargain, that any attempt to undo the bond would involve Ireland in a struggle, long, bitter, demoralizing, and perhaps disastrous ; his last counsel to his country was to let things be.¹ A similar conclusion was arrived at by Cavour, whose views on Ireland reveal an intimate knowledge of the condition of affairs in the country, as well as an intense sympathy with her real grievances.

“ Europe, in general, has applauded the conduct of O’Connell, and has seemingly agreed with him in believing that the legislative independence of Ireland is the only effective remedy for the evils of that country. Is this opinion well-founded ? I am far from so thinking. On the contrary I regard this notion as erroneous and as fatal to the improvement of the condition of the Irish people. In my opinion, O’Connell could not adopt a course more to be deplored. Instead of encouraging him to persist in it, the duty of all those who have at heart the interest of Ireland is to exhort him to retrace his steps, and to resume, along with the liberal British party, the work of progressive reform which he has already carried so far onward.”²

The responsibility for Ireland’s choice lay with O’Connell. He was at the height of his power ; the darling of the nation ; the “ Liberator ” who had found his people serfs, and made them free men. His will was law.

¹ “ Although it was well known that Grattan was no friend to the Union at the time it took place, yet almost his last breath was exhausted in the expression of a fervent wish that the Union might never be disturbed.”—Speech of Wilberforce in the House of Commons, June 14, 1820, on the occasion of Grattan’s death.

² *Thoughts on Ireland*, p. 48.

Gladstone once said that O'Connell could believe anything he wished. A terrific condemnation is wrapped up in the euphemism. Self-deception is perhaps the most dangerous, as it is undeniably the most common form of self-indulgence. The robust intelligence must ever be on its guard against it; all moral sense goes by the board if this mental self-abuse is allowed free rein. Certainly O'Connell must have yielded himself fully to it when he decided upon a campaign for Repeal. The difficulties in the way were enormous. The propertied and privileged classes, who still controlled Parliament, were bitterly hostile. There was the genuine fear for Imperial safety. There was the opinion, not entirely groundless, that interference with the Union would mean a substitution for the Protestant ascendancy, who had at any rate a respect for law and property, a Catholic ascendancy who had none, rabble controlled in all likelihood. "Why," said O'Connell on the occasion of the dedication of a church in County Kildare, "if the Parliament were sitting in Dublin and your representatives doing wrong, you could take your short sticks in your hands some fine morning and go up and tell them to vote honestly and rightly."¹ What would be the fate of the Irish gentry and of the propertied classes if they were handed over to the tender mercies of an Irish Parliament elected by peasants who looked upon the landlords as enemies and thieves, and who would unhesitatingly obey advice to use their staves to compel "honest and right" voting?

Such reasoning as this, no doubt, operated upon the minds of the members of the House of Commons in 1834, when it pledged itself by a majority of 485 (523 to 38) to maintain the Union; the Lords passed the same resolution unanimously. How did O'Connell propose to get over these astounding figures? By force? He deprecated it. By show of force such as had brought the Emancipation question to a climax? What a gamble to take with the fate of a nation. Not even a well-considered gamble, for the Emancipation precedent was wholly misleading. Apart from any Irish agitation, the growth of English public opinion in favour of political equality for all creeds was steady, and, for the period, rapid. Most of the press and all the enlightened opinion of England were in favour of Emancipation on its merits. It was different with the Union. The Englishman regarded it as a contract by which Ireland

¹ *Annual Register*, 1834, p. 29.

was bound, and to escape from which no adequate reason was adduced. To his mind the injustice was not in perpetuating the Union but in demanding its repeal. His own interests were vitally concerned in its continuance. O'Connell himself, when examined as a witness in 1823, before a House of Commons Committee, had stated that on the settlement of the Catholic claim to Emancipation, the great body of the people would be perfectly contented with the Union and that a dissolution of it was alluded to in public assemblies merely for the purpose of rhetorical excitement.¹

Certain considerations must have powerfully, if unconsciously, influenced O'Connell's mind in coming to his decision to agitate for repeal. The vision of a College Green Parliament, with himself its creator and central figure, must have been extraordinarily attractive. He had quaffed the nectar of popular applause, and must have known that the commonplace pursuit of constructive work under the Union would be likely not to enhance his fame, but to destroy it.² At any rate, he took his decision to end the Union, not to mend it, shutting his eyes to the fact that the bar to repeal included not only all the Irish political obstacles—the fears for the State Church and for the landed gentry—but the English great obstacle as well, the fear for Imperial safety.

The social and economic condition of the country contained every element for the production of a national agitation. The country was subject to the exactions of a hated Church and a hated aristocracy. A third of the population were on the line which separates starvation from subsistence. No change could be for the worse. The nation was ready to believe anything that fell from O'Connell's lips. When he pointed to repeal as the remedy, to repeal it looked for deliverance from its woes.

In the Emancipation movement O'Connell had a noble object. In the repeal movement—though honest Irishmen might differ about it—his object was one to appeal to the chivalrous instinct in mankind that takes sides with persons and peoples who complain of oppression. O'Connell's methods of controversy were wholly unworthy of those great themes. They are very instructive; no

¹ Sir R. Peel's speech in a Union Debate in 1834. *Annual Register*, 1834, p. 31.

² As Thayer puts it,—“The wise Moses never displayed a greater wisdom than when he died in Moab; had he lived to enter Canaan and to conduct the ordinary business of government, men might have doubted whether he had, indeed, once seen God face to face.”—*Life of O'Connor*, I, p. 443.

nation that was not singularly backward and ill-informed would have stomached them for a moment. They were a compound of false history, false economics, gross flattery of his countrymen, gross abuse of those who differed from him, gross vilification of the English people, bluff, intimidation and stagecraft. He invented the lie that "Cardinal Gonsalvi, the Italian, either betrayed or sold our Church to the British Minister at Vienna for eleven thousand guineas, right glad, I presume, to have so good a thing to sell as the religion of Ireland." He taught his people that the exchange of Irish agricultural products for English manufactured goods "by no means proved the existence of a profitable trade." He told them that they were "the finest peasantry in the world," "the bravest, most virtuous, most religious race the sun of God ever shone upon."

"The Irish are the finest people on the face of God's earth. Yes! I say you are the most moral, the most temperate, the most orderly, the most religious people in the world. Yes! I say you exceed in religion, in morality, in temperance any nation under the sun." "Yes, among the nations of the earth Ireland stands number one in the physical strength of her sons and in the beauty and purity of her daughters. . . . Nature herself has written her characters with the finest beauty in the verdant plains that lie before us. Let any man here run round the horizon with his eye, and tell me if Nature ever produced anything so green and so lovely, so undulating, so teeming with production. The richest harvests that any land can produce are those reaped in Ireland, and then hers are the sweetest meadows, the greenest fields, the loftiest mountains, the purest streams, the noblest rivers, and the most capacious harbours, while the water power is equal to turning the machinery of the whole world."

He spoke of Monsignor Quarantotti, the author of the famous rescript on the veto, as that "odious, stupid, Quarantotti." On the occasion of a somewhat childish quarrel with the Press, he said that "neither God nor nature ever intended those who are now on the Irish Press to be competent to discharge such duties as they undertook." He called Lord Kenyon an "animal"; Lord Grey a "wretched old man" imbued with a "childish hatred and maniac contempt of the people of Ireland"; "the insane dotard." "I would be glad to see the face of the man, or rather of the beast, who would dare to say he thought the Union wise or good—for the being who could say so must be devoid of all the feelings that distinguish humanity." He stigmatized those who did not join

the repeal movement as "creeping, crawling, cowardly creatures." He spoke of Disraeli:

"He is a disgrace to his species . . . a miscreant of his abominable, foul and atrocious nature. . . . He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died upon the Cross, whose name I verily believe, must have been Disraeli. For aught I know, the present Disraeli is descended from him, and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the Cross."¹

He called Wellington a "stunted corporal," the "chance victor of Waterloo," Lyndhurst a "lying miscreant," "a contumelious

¹ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 390-91. O'Connell on this occasion had great provocation. Disraeli had referred to him as an incendiary and a traitor, "and denounced the Whigs for having grasped his bloody hand" (MacDonagh, p. 249). Nor was *The Times* of the day behindhand in its vituperation (*Ibid.*, p. 255). It spoke of O'Connell as "the big beggarman," "the loquacious mendicant," to which O'Connell retorted by likening *The Times* to a "tawdry female who with rouged cheeks and in faded silks takes the air in the Strand by gaslight." Its issue of November 26, 1835, contains the following gem:

Scum condemned of Irish bog,
Ruffian, coward, demagogue,
Boundless liar, base detractor,
Nurse of murders, treason's factor.
Of pope and priest the crouching slave
While thy lips of freedom rave,
Of England's fame the viprous hater
Yet wanting courage for a traitor,
Ireland's peasants feed thy purse,
Still thou art her bane and curse.
Tho' thou livest, an empire's scorn,
Lift on high thy brazen horn,
Every dog shall have his day,
This is thine of brutish sway,
Mounted on a premier's back,
Lash the Ministerial pack,
At thy nod they hold their places,
Crack their sinews, grind their faces.
Tho' thy hand had stabbed their mother,
They would fawn and call thee brother.
By their leave pursue thy calling,
Rend thy patriot lungs with bawling,
Spout thy filth, effuse thy slime,
Slander is in thee no crime.
Safe from challenge, safe from law,
What can curb thy callous jaw,
Who could sue a convict liar?
On a poltroon who would fire?
Thou may'st walk in open light,
None will kick thee, none can fight,
Then grant the monster leave to roam,
Let him slaver out his foam;
Only give him length of string,
He'll contrive himself to swing.

IRELAND, 1829-1840

cur," Sir Henry Hardinge a "one-armed ruffian," Brougham "the greatest miscreant that ever breathed." He used to interrupt speakers in the House of Commons by loud and prolonged yawns and would not allow Sharman Crawford, who was in general a supporter of his, to criticize his policy in some minor detail or to address a meeting, yelling out "What do you want here, Sharman my boy?" "What is it you are after, Crawford my man?" He said that Thomas Campbell Foster had been kicked out of his parlour by Dean O'Shaughnessy of Ennis. The story was an invention; and the Dean contradicted it, whereupon O'Connell neither apologised for nor withdrew his statement, but said Foster ought to have been kicked out—whereat his audience roared. He said that "so dishonest and besotted a people as the English never lived." "As to English stupidity it has really become proverbial." That nineteen out of twenty Englishwomen had children before their marriage.¹ He said "that England had reduced mankind to servitude; that it is the very nature of England to subdue and make slaves of all nations, whether adjacent or remote, that have it not in their power to resist her." He told his people in 1833 that they would get repeal before June twelve months and repeated bluff of a similar character over and over again. One of his Press organs in 1831, referred to Anti-Union addresses thus:

"Some wretches whose trade is adulation—whose creed, suberviency—whose God, their money—whose altar, the desk—whose temple, the counting-house—and whose country, self—have been going about for some days, kidnapping the unwary into a requisition for a meeting of the chamber of commerce, to adopt a congratulatory address to the Marquis of Anglesey. Slaves, base, degraded slaves, beware of what you do. We know your names—we will keep close watch upon you—and now we forewarn you, Protestant bankers, you recreant Catholic barristers (not lawyers) and cotton spinners, and pauper dealers that if you persevere in this course, we shall put a brand upon you, that when you walk upon the streets, despised, abhorred and shunned, the very dogs themselves shall bark and flee your contact."

On the occasion of the appointment of Sugden, an Englishman, as Irish Lord Chancellor, O'Connell referred thus to any barrister who

¹ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, 406, 526; when brought to book about this he said he merely repeated what a Protestant clergyman had said. Let me give Fagan's account of it in his own words—"But it soon came out that this statement was made by an English Protestant clergyman, and that Mr. O'Connell, in one of his speeches, we believe against poor laws, quoted the observations of the clergyman" (vol. II, p. 406).

would not protest: "Let the boys hoot after them as they sneak to the courts; let the women spit upon them at Ormonde Market, as they go along, and let them thus, covered with the slime and filth of their country, crouch before their English Chancellor." On the occasion of the general election of 1835, O'Connell said that a death's head and cross bones should be painted on the door of every elector who did not vote for the repeal candidate for Kerry, and "whoever shall support him" (the Unionist candidate for New Ross) "his shop shall be deserted; no man shall pass his threshold; put up his name as a traitor to Ireland; let no man deal with him; let no woman speak to him; let the children laugh him to scorn." He received an address in 1831 from the "juvenile patriots of Dublin who came to present it decorated with orange and green scarves and rosettes. Some of the boys who moved and seconded the resolution were not more than eight or nine years of age, and the oldest did not exceed fifteen."¹ At a meeting described by Kohl, the German observer,² the author says: "Most of O'Connell's friends were arrayed in rags," though the repeal papers called it "very respectably attended. The whole assembly, on the contrary, bore an appearance such as would have been presented in France and Germany only after the lowest strata of society had been thrown to the surface by the agitation of a political hurricane." A boy of eight was brought up to present £4, being the contribution of the lad and his playmates to O'Connell's coffers. "O'Connell solemnly took off his hat to the boy, shook him by the hand, and proclaimed his name loudly to the applause of the assembly."³ O'Connell wept when speaking of a deceased friend of his, a former judge, on which Kohl remarks, "C'est impossible, mais je l'ai vu." He had a cap of green velvet, with gold edging, in the form of an old Milesian crown, presented to him at a meeting at Mullaghmast, and afterwards always wore it in public.

By these and the like means O'Connell played upon the emotions of his countrymen. They laughed with him; wept with him; went into ecstasies with him. They worshipped him; on placards he was referred to as the "Immortal O'Connell." The Union was the cause of all their misfortunes; repeal would relieve them from their miseries. He was the first king in that reign of subjectivism, which

¹ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 100. A vast audience, 6,000 or 8,000, came together to witness this performance (*Ibid.*, p. 99).

² Kohl's *Ireland* (1844), p. 145.

³ Kohl's *Ireland*, p. 150.

has been so disastrous to the morals of the people. He brought them to believe eventually that the base, bloody, and brutal Saxon was responsible for the vagaries of their uncertain climate. O'Gorman Mahon, one of O'Connell's lieutenants, speaking in the House of Commons, said :

"Did honourable members imagine that they could prevent the unfortunate men who were five feet under the snow from thinking that they could better their condition by a repeal of the Union ? It might be said that England had not caused the snow, but the people had the snow on them, and they thought that their connection with England had reduced them to the state in which they now were."¹

O'Connell preached abstention from violence, but every second word he uttered tended to violence. Finally, he brought Ireland to the verge of a rebellion, and then shrank from the logical consequences of the situation he had created.

Had O'Connell's patriotism been less selfish and more enlightened, the condition of the country would have afforded ample fields for the exercise of his organizing genius. The question of education was of first importance, for ignorance was at the bottom of much of the social evils of the country. A great portion of the community was illiterate. Even in the art of making their livelihood, the great agricultural masses were hopelessly deficient ; their social habits were those of a primitive civilization. The influence of an educated man, having the trust and confidence of the people, would, directly and indirectly, have been of incalculable advantage materially as well as morally. But the only education to which O'Connell thought it worth while to direct his attention was the education in agitation, based upon false premises and bolstered up by false hopes. The great scheme of Primary Education, established in 1831, owed little, if anything, to influence, pressure or suggestion from him. Next in importance, in a country where there was an unduly large proportion of destitute poor, was the question of a poor law. The quality of O'Connell's statesmanship may be gauged by his attitude on this great question. He was opposed to poor law on principle ; he said that a poor law was

"hostile to the best interests of Ireland and contrary to the principles of revealed religion ; poor laws tended to contract that voluntary local charity which was the only beneficial source of poor relief and

¹ *Annual Register*, 1831, p. 322.

which was the keystone of Christianity ; they were therefore neither more nor less than a practical system of infidelity, and as such ought to be scouted by every man who like himself was deeply impressed with the truths of religion."¹

On another occasion he said that the poor laws were formed on the principle that "the people ought to rely upon the pockets of their more wealthy neighbours instead of their own exertions."² This, in a country where the poor were counted by the million, the starving poor by the hundred-thousand ! The landlord and tenant question was next in order of importance. The rental of the country was well over £10,000,000 per annum. The agitation that led to Catholic Emancipation, and Catholic Emancipation itself made the landlords chary of giving leases, for the lease made the tenant politically free—he could vote in the open as he liked without fear of eviction. The result was that the main body of the tenantry, holding from year to year, were liable to have their rents raised at the landlord's will or to be ejected at his caprice. Yet this great question had a minor place in O'Connell's thoughts ; his speeches scarcely contain a mention of it ; none of his programmes until 1840 have a syllable about it. On the tithe question O'Connell was quite sound ; but the grievance, though it was a most convenient handle for the agitator, because it was such an obvious grievance, was really a minor one ; the tithe over Ireland amounted only to £600,000 a year. At any rate, had O'Connell advised a persistence in the passive resistance to the system which was shown for some time, there can be but little doubt that a remedy would have been found much sooner.

The policy of non co-operation, adopted by O'Connell and followed by all the political leaders since, is quite intelligible and, from one point of view, defensible. It was feared that if Irishmen took part in administering their own country, the demand for secession would be weakened. At the same time, it is open to question whether a policy of co-operation would not have been, even from the secessionists' point of view, worth the risk. Ireland would undoubtedly have been spared much misery. In O'Connell's time, had Irishmen applied their talents to the great problem of over-population instead of adopting a hopeless Repeal agitation, it is possible that the disaster of the famine would have been averted. As a matter of fact, a post in the ministry was more than once offered

¹ *Annual Register*, 1832, p. 250.

² MacDonagh, [^]p. 277.

to O'Connell.¹ Later on we shall see offers refused by other Irishmen of the position of Irish Chief Secretary. The acceptance of office would be, so it was said, a recognition of the Act of Union ; but to take part in the United Parliament and to vote therein on matters exclusively relating to England or Wales or Scotland was not.

It was the Protestant business men of Dublin who had in 1810 started the repeal movement. They wanted back the custom of the lords and commoners who, with their retinues, lived in Dublin more or less, but especially during the sessions of Parliament. But that was the time of a Protestant ascendancy Parliament. The vision of a return to these good old days had been fading before the passing of Catholic Emancipation and entirely vanished with it. Repeal would mean a Parliament composed—horrible thought—of Papists, of common people ; the patriotic business men changed their minds, turned their coats and became bitter Unionists. The landlord class, too, was aware of its danger from an Irish Catholic Parliament. Lord Glengall unbosomed himself of his apprehensions at a great Orange meeting in Dublin in 1837, “and if they did not win the battle they were fighting, under the banners of the club, the days during which they could hold their Protestant estates were numbered.” That Ark of the Covenant, the Irish Church, was in peril ; so was all the patronage by which the Protestant Ascendancy was buttressed up. Catholic Emancipation drove the final wedge between Catholic and Protestant on the repeal issue. Thenceforward, with rare exceptions, the Catholics were in favour of separation, to a greater or less degree, the Protestants in favour of the Union. This tendency was strengthened by the introduction of the priests into politics, and by the tactics used by O'Connell to win Emancipation and to forward repeal. His bombast and violence alarmed and disgusted ; Grattan felt called upon publicly to rebuke him ; the ways of the demagogue estranged people who had something to lose.²

In every sphere the influence of the priest had greatly increased since the Union. About the middle of the eighteenth century that

¹ By Lord Anglesey in 1830, see MacDonagh, p. 215 ; again in 1831, “I could be Attorney-General in one hour,” O'Connell wrote (*Ibid.*, p. 223). He was offered the position of Master of the Rolls in 1835 (*Ibid.*, p. 244), and the same position or that of Chief Baron of the Exchequer about the same time (*Ibid.*, p. 264).

² Latouche, a Dublin banker of popular sympathies, openly declared in 1835, that as a protest against the intimidation used by O'Connell he would support the Conservative candidate.—*Annual Register*, 1835, p. 16.

influence was at a very low ebb. It increased as the result of the rebellion of 1798, when priests and people, innocent and guilty alike, were confounded in the persecutions that followed.¹ But even for a decade or two at least after the Union, there is evidence to show that, among the undisciplined sections at least, the priest was held in no very high esteem. The peasant associations took it upon themselves to prescribe his dues, and intimidations and violence were the sanctions invoked, if the limits set were not observed.

Such a thing would be inconceivable a quarter of a century later, when universal respect and reverence were accorded to the clergy. This increase of prestige was due to the growth of education, secular and religious, but no doubt, partly to the community of interest and of action in connection with the grievances of the day. The rejection of the so-called "Reformation" was, as I believe, a rejection on the merits, but it was the more decisive because the "Reformation" was English in origin and adopted by the Anglo-Irish who had despoiled the people of their lands. So also, when the quickening of the national intelligence made it fully conscious of the persecution of their faith, of the iniquities of the tithe and landlord system, the combination of priests and people against the tyranny added enormously to the influence of the priests, including, one may infer, even their influence in the spiritual domain.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the priests originated any of the great popular movements in Ireland. The Catholic Emancipation movement was, both before and after the Union, mainly a laymen's movement; the priests did not become very prominently associated with it till the formation by O'Connell of his great association in 1823. The tithe movement sprang from the people; the Bishops of the Union date failed to see any injustice in the tithe system.² The land movement, the University Education movement, the language movement, the various movements for political secession from Great Britain, owed their inception rather to laymen than to ecclesiastics. But while the priest inaugurated none of the popular movements, it is none the less true to say that, from the time of Catholic Emancipation onwards, he conspicuously concerned himself with all the political and social questions of the day. Is any justification needed for him? His interference in the Emancipation question was inevit-

¹ See p. 34 *ante*.

² See p. 68 *ante*.

able. The bar was a religious bar; the fight was, in essence, one for religious freedom, for inequality is a form of servitude. Similar observations apply to the tithe question. As to other questions, some justification is to be found in the circumstance that in most parishes or districts the priest was the only person with claim to education who had any sympathy for the people. It was almost impossible for him to keep aloof; even when he shrank from the local leadership, the position was sometimes forced upon him by the popular will.

No man can say that the conduct of the priest in Irish political affairs has been in all respects wise or even becoming. His environment and education were, to the last degree, unlikely to give him a broad, comprehensive or unbiassed view of human affairs. Formerly the Irish priest had been entirely educated abroad—at Paris, Louvain, Salamanca or Rome. The anxiety of all British Governments to befriend and endow Maynooth College was due to a desire on their part to keep the priest at home, uncontaminated by the spirit which the French Revolution had diffused over the continent of Europe. They thought that a continental education would make the priests rebels, whereas a Maynooth education would make them loyal. There was never a more shortsighted policy. An Irish ecclesiastic was scarcely likely to be enamoured of theories which brought the Church to the ground in France. Life abroad should convince any man of intelligence that Ireland had no monopoly of social or political grievances. The education afforded by travel is one of the most broadening influences upon the mind and character. On the other hand, the life of the home-raised priest was narrowing to the last degree. On the farm where he was reared, his mind was moulded by the prejudices and outlook of his class. Thence, through the diocesan seminary, he went to Maynooth, where the real formative influences, so far as social and political affairs were concerned, were derived from association with those reared in circumstances similar to his own. The professors, even when they had the knowledge of political or social problems, had neither time nor inclination to depart from the curriculum of the College. Social, economic or political education under these conditions could not reach any passable standard. Nor was the horizon likely to be broadened on the priest's ordination. His lot thenceforward was cast for the most part amongst a rural community into which no literature, save the Nationalist newspaper—itsself a terrible product

—penetrated, and which included no person of the smallest pretence to education. A man, fitted neither by station nor by training, nor by experience nor by impartial judgment became the political and social guide for the locality. He imbibed the crudest theories from his daily paper, and passed them on, unfiltered, or perhaps with some added crudity of his own making, to the rustic neighbourhood. When the Great War came, he read of self-determination without having the power or ability to sift the doctrine or to discern the limits of its application. He talked about protection, an Irish currency, Ireland's mineral and water power, without the faintest knowledge on the subjects, or even the intellectual curiosity to make real inquiry into them. Occasionally the spirit moved him to express himself in print, as when—a glaring example showing the unfitness of the ordinary ecclesiastic for affairs—a professor of Maynooth in 1922 boldly enunciated the doctrine that the Irish Free State should pass a law limiting the rate of interest within its territory to two per cent!

In two matters in particular was the priests' teaching of serious political and economic consequence. In the interest of sexual morality, they rather favoured early marriages; in the interest of the faith, they opposed emigration. They thereby accentuated the most pressing of Ireland's social evils—over-population. They have been much criticized for these doctrines, and it is almost universally assumed by Protestant writers that their motives were those of personal gain. This, however, is a libel on the Irish priesthood. The priests have often been guilty of gross errors of judgment, and of faults which deserve a stronger word, but selfish where their people are concerned they unquestionably are not. There is, in my opinion, no more doubt of the sincerity of their motives and intentions than of those of Hannah Moore when she preached submission to the ills of the industrial revolution, on the ground that the things of the next world were the only things that mattered, while those of this world mattered not at all. But where I conceive the priests are open to just criticism is that the social evils to which their teaching so largely contributed they laid at the door of the British Government.

The priest denounced crime, and denounced it sincerely. But his denunciation was often coupled with gibes at landlords or at the Government. In its right place the political part of the pronouncement would have been quite defensible, but in its context it nullified

the denunciation and inflamed the people. It is difficult to say whether the denunciations of crime did more to repress crime, or the denunciation of England and landlordism did more to foster it. Until 1916, however, violence was, almost without exception, denounced by the clergy. Even after 1916, the great majority denounced it, and still more the abominable methods it assumed. On a small minority rests the responsibility for the campaign of political assassination and for the moral landslide which their attempted justification brought in its train.

But, whether the political priest was right or wrong in his interference, and whether his teaching was right or wrong, he was a terrible bugbear to the Irish Protestant, who was deeply alarmed by the innovation. Home Rule would mean Rome Rule! Here and there, there was some evidence of intimidation, and the altar was unquestionably used for political purposes.¹ There was this palliation of the offence, that the landlords openly bullied their tenants at the polls. The nearest approach to a free choice was by setting up one intimidation as an offset against the other. But the system was not attractive to the Protestant mind, and the repeal issue took every day a deeper religious tinge.

Especially was this so in the North. The United Irish movement, started by republican doctrinaires of the North, had made considerable headway there up to 1798. The rebellion of that year killed the Northern Republican movement. The Northern United Irishmen were out for a new political order, the Southern rather for a new social order, with a levelling of property rights. The excesses of the peasant rebellion were a revelation; the warfare looked something like a religious war; the Northern Presbyterian was surprised and startled and shrank back. When the Union came, he was too shrewd to swallow the economic sophistries by which the repeal cause was buttressed up. He was flourishing; the country supplied the flax and the towns and country turned the flax into linen. There was not the same acrimony between landlord and tenant, nor even between tithe payer and tithe proctor. The current of Ulster public opinion set in from the first in favour of the Union. O'Connell, his attitudes, his methods, his followers, so far from stemming it, swelled its volume and quickened its flow. The North regarded O'Connell as

¹ This was so in connexion with the Waterford Election¹ and the Clare Election. In Northern Ireland, the Churches of all persuasions have been so used to this day.

a dangerous and bigoted Catholic demagogue, into whose hands the interests of themselves, their children, their religion or their business could not with safety be entrusted. An "Ulster question" would probably have arisen anyhow; O'Connell and his clerical following made it inevitable. O'Connell's occasional wooing of the Orangemen—for a time he used to wear on his breast orange and green favours, and he drank the toast of the "glorious, pious, and immortal memory" of William III—cut no ice. He paid only one visit to Belfast; he came by night and disappeared in the early morning; Liszt, when visiting Belfast, was mistaken for him and mobbed.

Whether O'Connell's agitation for repeal was timely or not, one thing is certain, he had no wish for a total separation from England. He made constant references to the "golden link of the Crown," and was ever most effusive in asseverations of loyalty to the Sovereign, as, for instance, when he received George IV on his accession visit to Ireland in 1821, and when he presented Queen Victoria with an address on the birth of an heir to the throne. And while, in the main, his programme was repeal and nothing but repeal, at times he seemed to have contemplated something in the nature of a federal settlement. In 1832, he issued a pronouncement in these terms:

"The Irish have been accused of wishing to have a separate legislature, and to be divided entirely from England. Nothing, however, can be more untrue than this. We are too acute not to be aware of the advantages which result, particularly to ourselves, from our Union¹ with England. We only want a Parliament to do our private business, leaving the national business to a national assembly. Each of the twenty-four states in North America has its separate legislature for the despatch of local business while the general business is confided to a National Assembly, and why should not this example hold good in the case of Ireland?"

He explains this by saying that what he wanted was a federal scheme under which each Parliament, so far as its own domestic affairs were concerned, should have control—private bills, commerce, agriculture and judicial system—while the Imperial Parliament was to have control over all national concerns, peace, war, colonies, foreign relations and other matters by which all the inhabitants of the two islands would be affected, Ireland to have a quota in the Imperial Parliament.

¹ For the word "Union" he afterwards substituted "Connexion."

On January 1, 1830, O'Connell commenced his annual letter to the Press, outlining his policy. He called upon the Irish Protestants to support a domestic Parliament, telling them that they need not fear Catholic domination, as the greatest toleration existed in Catholic countries. He enumerated a great number of reforms, including repeal of the Subletting Act; repeal or modification of the vestry cess, reform of the Grand Jury system, amendment of the law of libel, reform of corporations, abolition of tithes, reform of judicial system; suffrage for all males over twenty-one, voting by ballot; biennial Parliaments, tax on absentees, opposition to poor law. There is no mention of the land question. In 1831 he founded an association called the "Irish Volunteers for the Repeal of the Union." This was suppressed by order of the Lord Lieutenant under the Algerine Act, as also was a perfectly innocuous society called the "Society of Friends of Ireland" whose aims were repeal, certain minor reforms and the discouragement of secret societies. To avoid the proclamation, O'Connell started his "Repeal Breakfasts" at which strong speeches were made denouncing the Union.

The First Anti-Repeal Association, under the presidency of the Duke of Leinster, was established, and declared that the agitation for repeal was injurious "by diminishing that public confidence in Ireland's tranquillity without which it is vain to expect that capital or enterprise can largely or beneficially be directed to the cultivation of her resources, and the profitable employment of her people." The names of Catholic priests were to be found, it is said, to requisitions calling anti-Union meetings.¹ The High Church Orange party in a distinct document declared their determination to uphold the Union. We trace here the growth of Protestant and business opinion against repeal; anti-repeal addresses were signed "by almost every respectable name of the Irish bar," by the Dublin bankers and merchants and traders "expressing their detestation of the spirit of lawless turbulence which had gone abroad, generated by popular delusions."²

O'Connell's public breakfasts, called ostensibly for charitable purposes, were likewise suppressed as was also an association entitled a "General Association for Ireland" to prevent illegal meetings and protect the exercise of the sacred right of petitioning. The action of the Government in suppressing these associations and in endeavouring to prevent the exercise of free speech seems to us

¹ *Annual Register*, 1830, p. 148.

² *Ibid.*

to-day as despotic as it was fatuous. But such interference did not strike publicists of the period in the same way. Kohl writes in 1843 (when the O'Connell movement was at its zenith) :

"It is one of the most remarkable characteristics of the British Constitution and of the national character, and one not sufficiently estimated by foreigners, that a course of agitation so nearly approaching to insurrection can be tolerated without any serious mischief following. . . . I will not stop to ask whether a man like O'Connell could, either in France or Germany, have run the career he has run, without passing through a prison or under a guillotine, but even in the freest republics of Greece or Rome we meet with no example of a man assuming with impunity and for a lengthened period, a position of such uncompromising hostility against the great aristocracy of the state as O'Connell has assumed against the aristocracy of England and Ireland."¹

Even O'Connell's great legal ingenuity could see no way of evading the Algerine Act. He advocated a rush on the banks for gold and a boycott of excisable articles. But the banks restricted credit, the landlords and business men stood firm ; the run was over in ten days. O'Connell himself seems to have forsworn alcohol, tea and coffee ; but the patriotism of his followers could not rise to this sublime height ; he was alone in his self-denying ordinance.

In January, 1831, O'Connell, with some of his principal supporters, was arrested, and after a preliminary investigation before a Dublin magistrate, was charged at Green Street Court House, Dublin, with a breach of the Algerine Act, the breach alleged being one of O'Connell's "breakfasts." There were certain legal points involved in the proceedings. O'Connell pleaded guilty—in order as he said to avoid the disturbances which would follow upon a conviction—subject to the legal questions being argued before the King's Bench. The Act expired before the argument could come on ; it was then held that no punishment could be awarded ; and O'Connell was discharged. The proceedings are important by reason of certain informal negotiations that passed between O'Connell and the Government, in the course of which O'Connell's son, Maurice, wrote to tell a Mr. Bennett, who acted as a go-between, that his father considered repeal as a means to an end, and that "if the same measures of justice to Ireland were granted by the Imperial Parliament as would emanate from a domestic legislature, the repeal question would not be pressed, and that O'Connell would use his influence with the

¹ Kohl, *On Ireland*, p. 145.

people to give the Government a trial.¹ The *Annual Register* says that O'Connell admitted the letter was dictated by himself.²

O'Connell, betimes, seems to have been apprehensive of the growing split between the Catholics and non-Catholics and he made some efforts to close up the ranks. In a letter of January 1, 1832, he called for a Union between Catholics and Orangemen, Whitefeet and Blackfeet, Blackhens and Magpies, Shanavests and Caravats, Terryalts and Rockafellers.³ In September of the same year at a Dublin Corporation luncheon, he joined the Orangemen in drinking their toast, the "glorious, pious and immortal memory" of William of Orange. In a letter addressed specifically to the Irish Protestants on January 1, 1834, he endeavoured to show them that they need have no fear, as the Irish House of Commons would be essentially Protestant. The contrast between this and his affected zeal for manhood suffrage can only be accounted for by the theory that he was prepared to try the experiment of manhood suffrage on the English dog, reserving to democratic Ireland the blessings of a more restricted franchise. In spite of these efforts to win the Protestants, Fagan has sorrowfully to admit that O'Connell's attack on Protestant ascendancy had been so couched as to prevent confidence in him.⁴

But if O'Connell lost ground in one direction, he gained it in another. In the elections that followed the Reform Act of 1832 the national sentiment for repeal "had lighted up into intense enthusiasm"; repealers were elected for most of the constituencies, O'Connell himself being returned for Dublin. In January, 1833, an association of Irish Volunteers to promote the cause of repeal was established. The Irish repeal members of Parliament, calling themselves a National Council, assembled in Dublin.

The new British reformed Parliament—which owed its reform to the Irish vote—proceeded to show its gratitude by a Coercion Act for Ireland, which was carried by 363 to 84. The provisions were, as usual, drastic; to proclaim districts within which martial law and curfew should operate, and meetings could not be held; practical suspension of Habeas Corpus Act, powers of entry into and search of dwelling-houses.

A flirtation between O'Connell and the Duke of Wellington's

¹ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 95.

² *Annual Register*, 1831, p. 319.

³ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 123; these were the names of some of the factions that enlivened the dulness of country life in these times.

⁴ *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 280.

ministry in 1833 led to an offer of ministerial office to O'Connell, who gave his reasons for declining :

"without taking office, I shall be able to get, first, a number of bad magistrates removed ; secondly the yeomanry disarmed ; thirdly tithes abolished ; fourthly the establishment of the Protestant Church reduced in every parish where the overwhelming majority are Catholic or dissenters ; fifthly, I shall have offices filled with Liberals, to the exclusion of Orangeists. These are great things, and instead of soliciting some of them, as I should do if I were in office, I will command them when out of office. Add to these, the redress of Corporation abuses, and you will see the prospects advance for the Irish people."

Relations were broken off the following year, when Littleton, the Chief Secretary, charged O'Connell with a breach of confidence in disclosing certain negotiations that had passed between them.

In 1834, O'Connell, in the House of Commons, moved for a Select Committee

"to inquire into and report on the means by which the dissolution of the Parliament of Ireland was effected ; on the effects of that measure upon Ireland, and upon the labourers in husbandry and the operatives in manufacture, and on the probable consequences of continuing the legislative union between both countries."

In his speech he relied on (1) the miseries of the people up to 1778, when the penal laws were relaxed, (2) the prosperity which, as he said, followed legislative independence, (3) the allegation that the rebellion was fomented in order to bring about the Union ; the bribery and corruption accompanying the Union ; (4) that Ireland was entitled to additional representation in the House of Commons, (5) comparison between the prosperity of the island in the period 1782-1800 and the period 1800-1834, (6) the number of Coercion Acts passed since the Union ; 1800-1805, Insurrection Act and Martial Law ; 1807-1810, Insurrection Act ; 1814-1818, Insurrection Act ; 1825-1828, Algerine Act ; 1829-1833, Algerine Act, and lastly Coercion Act. Spring Rice in his reply pointed out that in the days of the Independent Parliament, Ireland had been on the verge of a war with Portugal ; that she had then been dependent for corn on foreign imports, whereas now she was a self-supporting and exporting country ; that her trade was then subject to and now free from vexatious restrictions ; that her banking system had immensely improved, that the public credit had been supported, that there had been improvements in the laws relating to tithes ;

that a great educational scheme had been established. Emerson Tennant, member for Belfast, said "that during the last thirty years the prosperity of Ireland had been unprecedented; her shipping had been doubled, her exports and imports proportionately increased, her cotton trade created." An amendment recording the determination of the House to maintain unimpaired and undisturbed the legislative Union was carried by 523 to 38. Apparently nothing daunted, O'Connell at the General Election of 1835, took as his watchword "Repeal, sink or swim; never die. I am for repeal." He had a following of forty-four members, but as we shall see, during the friendly administration which followed, and which lasted to 1840, O'Connell allowed the repeal movement to remain in abeyance.

It had long been the ambition of English and Anglo-Irish statesmen and zealots to Protestantize Ireland. To this end had been passed such statutes as 7 William III, c. 4 and 8 Anne c. 38, which forbade Catholics to teach school, or to send their children abroad for education. With the same object active educational action had also been taken. In 1733 the Charter Schools "for the education of the Popish and other poor natives" were established by private subscription; they got several State grants; in 1769 there were fifty-two schools and five nurseries. On a visitation of them, by Mr. Howard in 1769, they appeared to have 1,400 pupils; his report showed a dreadful condition of things; in Longford, for example, "twelve sickly boys almost naked." There was no real attempt at improvement till 1801; but even in 1824, when there were thirty-four schools with 2,143 children, besides some day scholars, the condition of these schools was very bad.¹ In 1792 was established an "Association for discountenancing vice and promoting religion." It was likewise started by private subscription but also got some State aid; in 1819 there were 119 schools with 8,828 scholars, of whom 4,460 were Protestants, 4,368 Catholics.² In 1806 a London Hibernian Society was formed which controlled, in 1825, 653 schools, with 61,383 scholars; it flourished mainly in Ulster.³ These schools were, almost avowedly, proselytizing in character, and Catholic children avoided them. Up to about 1817 "Roman Catholic children continued to remain in most instances without any other

¹ *First Report of Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, 1825, pp. 5-30.

² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

instruction than such as they could obtain in that ordinary class of country pay schools, generally known in Ireland by the name of "Hedge Schools."¹

Public opinion had moved a long way from the Statute of William when the Kildare St. schools were established. The attempts to proselytize the Irish Papist had been a complete failure; he was more Papist than ever; to quote from memory the grandiose language of a school book in use in my youth, "The faith had survived, notwithstanding the terrors of persecution and the blandishments of proselytism." Thinking people recognized that some other principle of educating the Irish poor should be substituted. Accordingly, about 1812, a committee of gentlemen of various religious persuasions started a scheme of schools in which the Scriptures should be read, without note or comment and no other religious instruction given. Grants were given by Parliament in 1814; two model schools were established in Kildare Street in 1817; they undertook to train masters and supply books. The schools were well spoken of and originally received the support of the Catholic Archbishops, Doctor Troy and Doctor Curtis, and of many priests. But proselytizing attempts were made in some of the schools; the Catholic clergy took alarm; it was conceived that the reading of the Scriptures without note or comment was not a sufficient (and was therefore an improper) method of inculcating dogma; strong Catholic hostility was developed.

In 1824, the position stood thus. The Kildare Place Society, the London Hibernian Society, the Association for "Discountenancing Vice, the Erasmus Smith Foundation, the Baptist Society, the Charter Schools, and certain other similar institutions, had 2,119 schools, attended by 131,105 pupils. Certain Catholic schools—day schools, convent schools, and Christian Brothers schools—had 422 schools, with 46,119 pupils. There were 322 schools maintained by individuals, with 13,686 pupils. The largest number of pupils, 394,732, attended the "pay schools," which numbered 9,352. The "pay schools" were in most cases the old Catholic Hedge Schools.² There were in all 11,823 of such schools, with 560,549 pupils—numbers which reflect great credit not alone upon the

¹ *First Report of Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, 1825, p. 37.

² Of which John O'Hagan, afterwards a Judge, wrote:

"Still crouching 'neath the sheltering hedge,
Or stretched on mountain fern,
The teacher and his pupils met feloniously to learn."

people, but upon the priests and others in authority over them.

It was in these circumstances that the Catholic prelates presented their petition to Parliament.

"In the Roman Catholic Church the literary and religious instruction of youth are universally combined, and no system of education which separates them can be acceptable to the members of her communion. Roman Catholics have ever considered the reading of the Sacred Scriptures by children as an inadequate means of imparting to them religious instruction."

The petition complains that former State grants have been made to trustees who gave aid only to schools wherein the Sacred Scriptures without note or comment were read by the children so that Catholics were excluded from the grants. The injustice of this complaint was proved before the Education Commission and accordingly a scheme of National Education was framed to meet the difficulty.

The scheme, for which Chief Secretary Stanley was responsible, was introduced and passed in 1831. It formed a National (unpaid) Education Board, consisting originally of seven members,¹ three of whom were Protestants, two were Catholics, one was a Presbyterian and one was a Unitarian. An annual sum of £30,000 was withdrawn from the Kildare Place Society and the Society for Discountenancing Vice and transferred to the new authority. The general idea of the scheme was to have separate religious and combined literary and moral instruction ; but it has been best described as a denominational system with a conscience clause.

It is unnecessary to do more than to indicate the chief points of the scheme, which have varied, though not in essentials, from time to time. Any person could apply to have a school placed under the Board. The site and not less than one third of the expense of any school receiving a building grant must be locally contributed. The person who so applied was usually the clergyman and became the patron or manager of the school, with power to employ and dismiss the teachers. The schools were subject to inspection by inspectors appointed by the Board. The Board had powers to dismiss and suspend, but not to appoint the teachers. In Stanley's time, one or two weekdays were set aside for religious instruction ; later certain hours were prescribed.

The Board eventually consisted of one half Catholic members, one

¹ Afterwards twenty.

half non-Catholic. In practice, every school was a denominational school. The clergyman was the manager, the teacher was of his persuasion, the pupils were of the same persuasion, though occasionally no doubt there might be a very small sprinkling of other persuasions. Training schools for teachers were also established.

The National Education Scheme stood the test of time. If the composite Board have had differences they were always amicably composed. The managerial system, on the whole, worked well, and certainly better than any alternative system suggested would have worked. The system of inspection was thorough and efficient. The system was undoubtedly open to the objection that it is a bureaucracy, and a religious bureaucracy, in which democratic lay thought has little or no influence. But anyone who knows the actual facts of the Irish situation, the inflexible attitude of the Catholic Church in relation to education, and the difficulty, in most parts of Ireland, of finding a local Board fit to take care of the educational interests of the district, will be forced to the conclusion that the system, built upon compromises, was the best that could be devised. Many observers have borne testimony to this effect. Fagan says :

"The system is thriving admirably ; and we may safely assert that almost every child in Ireland is being educated. The books used are admirable in every respect ; the masters employed well trained to the profession ; and the Inspectors, whose duty it is to visit the schools, most carefully selected after the most rigid examination. The system is one of the greatest benefits bestowed upon the people."¹

Cavour² referred to the system as the "establishment of a vast system of popular education on a wide and popular basis," and "infinitely superior to the English primary schools, and I doubt that there are in Europe any that equal them." In 1843 there were 2,721 schools attended by 319,793 children.³ In 1920 there were 7898 schools attended by 670,645 pupils, and the annual grant had been greatly increased. The percentage of illiterates in 1831 was 53 per cent. ; in 1911 was 12 per cent.

There was bitter Protestant opposition in Ireland.

"Protestant owners refused sites, and then complained that schools were built on the only available spots—the yards of chapels. The

¹ *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 117.

² *Cavour, On Ireland*, p. 58.

³ *Nassau Senior*, vol. I, p. 113.

Protestant tenants who ventured to assist the national schools were threatened by their landlords, the Protestant clergy were discountenanced by the bishops, and the Protestant parishioners were rebuked by the clergy; and their landlords, bishops, and clergy proclaimed that the combined system had failed for that the Protestants refused to support it."¹

The Christian Brothers had already started their schools. In 1802 Edmund Rice, of Waterford, submitted a plan of an organization to Pope Pius VI, who encouraged him to proceed with it—it was approved and confirmed by a Bull of Pope Pius VII in 1820. It was to consist of a brotherhood of laymen, taking a vow of poverty, of chastity, of obedience to the Superior, and to teach children gratuitously; the brothers might be released from their vows by the Pope or by their Bishop. In 1825 there were about 40 Brothers in Ireland, having a few schools, at which children attending paid (if they could) 1d. a week.² In 1921 there were about 24,000 children receiving education at the Christian Brothers schools, 18,000 in primary classes and 6,000 in intermediate classes.

As to the Irish language,

"It has been estimated that the number of Irish who employ the ancient language of the country is not less than 500,000, and that at least a million more, although they have some understanding of English and can employ it for the ordinary purposes of traffic make use of their native tongue on all other occasions as the natural vehicle of their thoughts."³

But the language was losing ground; Kohl in 1844 met an old woman near Edgeworthstown who said that in her youth (about fifty years before) few people in the centre of Ireland spoke or understood anything but Irish; now there were few that could bless themselves in Irish.⁴ The people did not want to learn Irish. Kohl found that in the western parts of Scotland, in Ireland, and in Wales, people were referred to with contempt who could not speak English; all endeavoured to learn it, as without it they were quite helpless the moment they left their native hills.⁵ He failed to find in Kerry or elsewhere any trace of classic learning save in the case of two students who had been originally destined for the Church. He saw a Hedge school in Kerry, a clay cabin, roofed with

¹ Nassau Senior, vol. I, p. 116.

² *Report of Commission of Education Enquiry*, 1825, p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁴ Kohl, *On Ireland*, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

sods, without a window, without chairs ; the students brought turf as payment for the tuition.¹ "In Ireland," Kohl further says, "it is supposed that only one-third of the population are able to speak Irish, and this calculation, many think, is rather over than under the truth."²

The year 1832 marks one of the stages in the march of English liberty. Great Britain had hitherto been ruled by an oligarchy dependent upon the rotten borough system. In face of a formidable English agitation the Reform Bill of 1832 was brought in ; it passed the House of Commons by the Irish vote, for the majority of British members were against it.³ It passed its first and second reading in the House of Lords but, a fatal amendment having been carried in Committee, Lord Grey, the Prime Minister, asked for the appointment of new Peers. On the King's refusal Grey resigned. The public excitement was intense. At a vast meeting at Birmingham the project of marching on London was discussed ; a revolution seemed imminent ; Wellington tried to form a Ministry but failed. The King was obliged to recall Grey ; and the Bill was carried ; but the King and Queen were publicly hissed. The effect of the statute was to increase the electorate of Great Britain from 200,000 to 350,000.

An Irish Reform Act followed. It gave the franchise to (1) persons entitled to a freehold of £10 clear annual value, provided they occupied the same, (2) persons entitled to a £20 freehold, whether they occupied the same or not, (3) persons entitled to a lease for a term of years not less than 14 years of premises of £20 value, whether they occupied the same or not, (4) persons entitled to a sublease for a term of not less than 14 years if premises of £20

¹ It is not without interest to note that Kohl found a regular trade in eagles carried on at the time of his visit to Kerry. The last Irish wolf was shot in McGillicuddys Reeks in 1700—the last in Scotland was shot in 1680 ; there were no wolves in England since 1300. "Perhaps the extinction of these fierce animals may serve as a standard to measure the progress of civilization in those countries."

² Kohl, *On Wales*, p. 64.

³ Alison (*History of Europe*, vol. IV, p. 217) remarks : "To us who know that by the aid of the Irish members, and their aid alone, even after the franchise had been raised from forty shillings to ten pounds, the great democratic change in the British Constitution of 1832 was carried these speculations"—i.e. it had been anticipated that the Union would augment the power of the Crown—"as to the ultimate consequences of the Union are singular monuments of the difficulty which even the greatest intellects experience in prognosticating the consequences of any considerable change in the form of Government."

value, provided they occupied the same. Of these* (1) and (2) were already in existence; (3) and (4) were new franchises. The electorate was increased from 26,000—to which the abolition of the 40s. freeholders in 1829 (numbering 200,000) had reduced it—to 30,000, but the change, such as it was, secured to the Catholics the majority in most of the electoral bodies. The Act gave Ireland five new representatives, one for Dublin University, and four for towns whose importance had increased. At the ensuing General Election forty-five members were returned pledged to repeal.

Nothing is so wearisome and so exasperating as the course of the reform and ultimately of the abolition of the tithe system in Ireland. Looking at the tithe system from the standpoint of the ordinary Englishman of the day, there was nothing unjust in it. Ireland and England were one. An Established Church was of the essence of the Constitution; indeed the Act of Union had specifically declared that the State Church was to remain inviolate. The English Dissenter had to pay tithes, though he did not love the parson. The same idea was prevalent in Ireland some thirty years before; Catholic bishops saw nothing unnatural or wrong in it. The peasant objected to it, but he objected to priests' dues as well; his objection to the tithe, at first, was rather to the amount and the manner of its collection.

But acquiescence with conditions often proceeds from a recognition of inability to escape from them; and the increase of the Catholics in numbers, wealth and intelligence brought to the question a new spirit which Emancipation and a growing national consciousness strengthened and vivified. Why should they be called upon to pay tithes at all? No doubt, the actual burden—£600,000 a year—was only a small fraction of the country's produce, but it was an unjust claim; worse, it was a badge of servitude; "a galling cause," as Fagan puts it.¹

The figures show what a pampered body the Irish Church was. The population of Ireland was 7,943,940, consisting of 6,427,712 Catholics, 852,064 members of the Established Church, 642,356 Presbyterians, 21,808 other Protestant Dissenters. There were 1,385 benefices, 41 of which contained no member of the Established Church at all, and a great number contained very few.²

¹ *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 74.

² *Annual Register*, 1835. *Public Documents*, pp. 322 et seq. *First Report of Commissioners of Public Instruction, Ireland.*

The other figures were : 99 benefices contained not more than 20 members of the Established Church ; 124 benefices contained more than 20 but less than 50 members of the Established Church ; 160 benefices contained more than 50, but less than 100 ; 221 benefices contained more than 100 but less than 200 ; 286 benefices contained more than 200 but less than 500 ; 209 benefices contained more than 500 but less than 1,000 ; 139 benefices contained more than 1,000 but less than 2,000 ; 91 benefices contained more than 2,000 but less than 5,000 ; 12 benefices contained more than 5,000.

In England twenty-six prelates ministered to 6,000,000 members of the Church of England ; in Ireland there were eighteen prelates ministering to 800,000 out of a population of 7,000,000 ; in England, several bishops had only £2,000 or £3,000 a year while no Irish bishop received less than £4,000 a year, and some £15,000. Besides the £600,000 a year in tithes, the Church had large temporalities as well, 600,000 acres of profitable land, bringing the total annual income up to £1,200,000 per year ; while the Catholic clergy had no State provision at all.

The fight about tithes had been, more or less, confined to the peasants ; now Catholic Ireland took up the question as one man. The patriot bishop of Kildare, Dr. Doyle, whose letters, under the *nom-de-plume* of J.K.L. are masterpieces of reasoning and nervous English, boldly took the stand that the whole system was an immoral tyranny, and the country adopted his view. In 1832 Catholics of position, including several magistrates, took their stand upon platforms and advised the people not to pay. The magistrates were dismissed from their office ; the speakers were prosecuted ; the coercion increased the spirit of resistance.¹

The various tinkerings with the problem made things no better ; indeed, in some respects they made them worse. A statute of 1832 transferred the collection to the Government, which had the task of distraining the produce or seizing the body of the defaulters for the Crown debt. This only made matters worse, for it brought the people into more direct conflict with the armed Crown forces. Both before and after this statute there were many terrible affrays. At Newtownbarry in January, 1831, eighteen peasants in resisting

¹ Fagan's *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 120. But Gavan Duffy states " the anti-tithe agitation was abandoned after passive resistance had rendered the collection of tithes impossible."—*Four Years of Irish History*, p. 397.

the yeomanry were shot dead or died of their wounds. At Carrickshock, Co. Kilkenny, November, 1831, a party of peasants, armed with scythes, spades and pitchforks, surprised the police in a lane; eighteen policemen and one process server were killed and several other policemen were wounded. At Rathcormac, Co. Cork, an attempt to extort tithes from a poor widow resulted in seventeen casualties. Meanwhile goods seized could not be sold, and associations were formed like the Kilkenny hurlers, ostensibly meeting to play the game of hurling, but really to destroy the goods distrained. The jails were filled with tithe debtors; the cost of collection was twice the amount collected. The legislature had to provide sums for the relief of the clergy.

The various statutory enactments, such as they were, were passed with the greatest difficulty. The Church in both countries was up in arms against any change whatsoever. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of London and Exeter opposed even the establishment of a commission to inquire into the subject. The Irish prelates presented an address to the King in the same sense, and his Majesty went out of his way to assure them of his determination to maintain the Church. A motion by a private member in the House of Commons in 1834 split the Cabinet, and some of them resigned. Several reforms that passed the Commons, though of no very drastic character, were thrown out by the Lords.

The general idea of the statutes of the period was to substitute for the tithe of the produce an annual sum, variable with the price of corn, payable, not by the occupier, but by his landlord, who had the right to pass on the burden to the tenant and collect it as he would rent. An Act of 1824 enabled this commutation to be done by agreement. Stanley's Tithe Composition Act of 1832 gave compulsory powers and established machinery for the purpose, but the valuations under that Act were stated to be excessive, and the tenants objected to pay. A Tithe Commutation Act of 1838 commuted the tithe, and reduced it by one-fourth. When introduced, the Bill had a provision for appropriating to general Irish purposes a surplus to be obtained by reducing the Irish Church establishment. This provision, which had wrecked previous like measures in 1834 and 1835, owing to opposition in the Lords from the same cause, had to be dropped out of the Act of 1838. But the statute of 1838 killed the tithe agitation. By merging the tithe in the rent, the fight between tithe payer and proctor was deter-

mined ; thenceforward the question was part and parcel of the bigger question—how much should the landlord receive from the tenant for the hire of the land ?

A Church Temporalities Act was, with O'Connell's concurrence, passed in 1833 reducing the numbers and cost of the Irish Church establishment, and abolishing the Vestry Cess. It is remarkable in this, that it introduced the system of State-aided land purchase, enabling tenants holding under Bishops' leases, by agreement with the lessors, to purchase their holdings.

In 1835, the Whigs took office. The British parties were evenly divided, and the Irish vote dominated the situation. A meeting took place between O'Connell and some of the Whig leaders at Lord Lichfield's house, from which the tribe of journalists who, then, as now, dog the footsteps of the big men in a crisis, evolved the "Lichfield House Compact." O'Connell denied that there was any compact at all. But there was, if no treaty, an *entente*, for O'Connell radically altered his policy as long as the Whigs remained in power.

He slowed down the Repeal movement, and almost reversed the engines altogether.

In 1836 he went so far as to obtain from the Repeal party in Dublin and throughout the provinces, permission to abandon repeal if justice was obtained, putting the question specifically to several meetings and getting an affirmative answer ; he said he would coalesce with the Government ; his language at this time was most remarkable :

"Your paper union we care not for—your parchment union we care not for, give us a union of prosperity, and the rights of justice and of benefits, for to such a union we are ready to concede—place us on an equality with yourselves and then talk to me of a union, for then will I offer you, in the name of the Irish people, not to talk of repeal. The people of Ireland are ready to become portion of the Empire, provided they be made so in reality and not in name alone ; they are ready to become a kind of West Britons, if made so in benefits and justice ; but if not, we are Irishmen again."

The Government, too, were to have a chance. O'Connell's friendliness to it is shown by the appointment of his son Morgan to the position of Registrar of Deeds and of his son Charles to that of stipendiary magistrate.¹

¹ Fagan, vol. II, pp. 310–320. Fagan, however, says that O'Connell had asked for the Registrarship not for his son but for another. *Ibid.*

The experiment of allowing the Government to govern the country, instead of making government impossible, has been occasionally tried by Irish political leaders—the Bryce and Birrell régimes are examples. It has sometimes been attended by satisfactory results. On the occasion of which we are now speaking, it produced the most popular of British administrations—that of Thomas Drummond. I have no wish to decry the fame of that remarkable and enlightened man when I say that his success was due as much to the O'Connell acquiescence in his policy as to that policy itself. Administration of a country with public opinion behind the administrator is a comparatively easy matter.

Dublin Castle was still in the ascendancy grip. The descendants of those whose forefathers had bartered their country's independence for security's sake, had seen to it that they had their pound of flesh. Although most of the legal barriers against Catholics had been removed as far back as 1793, the caste barrier remained; the Catholic Irish were looked on as an inferior order of beings and treated accordingly. The galling thing about it was that there was an actual inferiority, for the Catholics had not had the opportunities or the traditions of their Protestant competitors; their trained and educated men were comparatively few. There was not a single Catholic on the High Court Bench or in any of the major administrative offices. The scales were weighted against the mere Irish, whether the question was one of a job or the prevention or punishment of a row between Papist and Orangeman. The mass of the people looked to the machinery of the law as intended not for their shield, but for their oppression.

Thomas Drummond, a Scotsman, youngish as administrators go, first tried the policy that afterwards came to be known as "Killing Home Rule by Kindness." He set himself out to gain the confidence and affection of the masses of the people and to win them to the side of law and order. It was said that he favoured the Catholics. Possibly he did. There was a dangerous and vicious ascendancy, a product of iniquitous laws and administrative action. A levelling up process was necessary unless the *status quo* was to be maintained. A strict impartiality, however essential in the actual administration of justice, may in the exercise of administrative discretion, properly yield to the necessity for protecting the weak against the strong. But Drummond was as strong as any man could be for the enforcement of the law and suppression of

crime. He created a very perfect instrument for the purpose ; the administrative machine which he left behind him was as efficient as could be devised. If statecraft is justified by results, Drummond's was ; he got the best elements of the Irish people on his side ; he created trust and confidence where there had been none before. To kill the repeal movement was beyond his powers, or those of any other man ; but he scotched it. The agitation was allowed to drop during his term of office.

Drummond, who was born in Edinburgh in 1797, commenced his career as an officer in the Royal Engineers, and was responsible for some useful and interesting discoveries. His work had brought him to Ireland in connexion with the preparation of the ordnance survey ; and he was very familiar with the conditions of the country when, after a year spent as secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was appointed in 1835 Irish Under Secretary, with Lord Morpeth (afterwards the Earl of Carlisle) as Chief Secretary, and Lord Mulgrave (afterwards Lord Normanby) as Lord Lieutenant. His energy, industry and zeal were unbounded. He never spared himself, either in the planning of reforms or in the detail work necessary for their execution. His feeble frame was unequal to the strain he put upon it ; and he practically died from overwork. "If ever a man died for his country," wrote Lord Spencer, "he did so." He had lofty conceptions of his duty to Ireland, and his dying wish, which was carried out, was that he should be buried in Ireland, "the land of my adoption." His courage and firmness in dealing with the ascendancy party in Ireland created for him, as might be expected, a host of enemies. A Royal Commission (the Roden Commission) in 1839 was, in substance, set up to investigate charges against the Irish administration of having shown partiality to the Catholics and undue severity to the Orangemen. He achieved many practical reforms ; but he did more, he convinced the Irish people, for the first time, that justice was to be expected from Dublin Castle.

One of Ireland's greatest curses at the time was the existence of two secret societies—the Orangemen and the Ribbonmen ; the Orangemen were secret and armed ; the Ribbonmen secret and unarmed.

A mere knowledge of the activities of the Orange order in Ireland to-day gives no conception of its magnitude in Drummond's time. It is to-day formidable enough ; but it is confined

to a few counties in the north-eastern corner of Ireland. Down to the Drummond administration, it had ramifications everywhere; its strength was so great that it had serious designs of changing the succession to the Throne. It was rampant and outrageous everywhere; Drummond dealt it a blow from which it never recovered.

McLennan says¹ that the proportions assumed by Orangeism in 1835-1836 had become exceedingly alarming; there were 1,500 lodges (with secret oaths and pass words), affiliated with one another under the direction of a Grand Lodge, whose head was the Duke of Cumberland. In 1836, Mr. Hume stated on authority, which was incontrovertible, that there were 200,000 armed Orangemen in Ireland and that they were accustomed to meet in armies of 10,000, 20,000, and even 30,000 at a time; that these demonstrations tended to breaches of the peace, and that the law could not be administered till they were put down. Owing to a suspicion of an Orange plot called the Fairman plot (after Colonel Fairman, who was the head of it) to change the succession to the throne, a resolution was passed in the House of Commons that an address should be presented to the King urging the dissolution of the Orange organization, and the removal from public trusts and employment of all who countenanced it. The address was presented and acted upon; Orangeism was dissolved in 1836 or, rather, it was resolved into lodges no longer affiliated. The Orange processions and armed demonstrations, however, still continued. They came on as certainly as July arrived and were as certainly followed by riots and outrages. "About the nature and objects of Orangeism there was no dispute. It was the phalanx of the ascendancy, ready at any moment to reassert their domination by force of arms."²

Drummond in his evidence before the Roden Commission in 1839 thus describes Ribbonmen:

"With regard to the members of the society, I think in some instances they may have had in view political or religious changes; but in the greater number they appear to have had no defined object beyond that of standing by one another, as it is called, for mutual defence at fairs, or assisting in the redress of real or supposed wrongs. That, I think, is the general notion of the members of the society, but with regard to the promoters of it, there is less difficulty in coming to a conclusion as to their objects. They are almost all publicans—publicans of a very

¹ *Memoir of Drummond*, pp. 258-259.

² McLennan's *Memoir*, pp. 260, 261, 264]

low class and a very bad character. . . . Their object is manifestly to keep up a delusion among the ignorant and to conceal their real motive, which is nothing more nor less than to raise money. . . . They are denounced publicly and constantly by the Roman Catholic clergy, and continuously, fearlessly and powerfully, assailed by the very man (O'Connell) whose elevation they profess to have in view."

The faction fighting, described on p. 195 *ante*, continued on a large scale, and, until Drummond effected a reform of the police, was unchecked and connived at.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Drummond administration was the establishment of very efficient police forces. There were two police forces in Ireland, one for Dublin and the other for the country. The Dublin force in 1835 consisted of a small number of day police and a considerable number of watchmen, decrepit, worn-out old men, of whom a Dublin magistrate said it would not do to show them in daylight—"they will excite too much the ridicule of the people that there would be a risk of their very appearance creating a disturbance."¹ The police force in the country was originally wholly inadequate in number, of a thoroughly mongrel character, combining with their official position their ordinary occupations—gatekeeper, gamekeeper, woodranger and the like; they had no uniform, were under no supervision, subject to little discipline or control. The original statute of 1787 expressly provided that the members of this force should be Protestant, and the appointments were vested in the Grand Juries. When Drummond commenced his reforms the force was predominantly Protestant. There was some improvement by virtue of a statute of 1822, 3 George IV, c. 103; but still the force, which under that Act numbered 5,321, was quite inadequate to the needs of the country. There was no co-ordination or central authority. They had different rules and regulations in each province.²

Drummond created a force for Dublin of which he was able to say in 1839, "it is impossible to have a more efficient police force than there is now in Dublin."³ For the country he created a force consisting of an inspector general, two deputy inspectors general,

¹ Drummond's evidence before the Roden Commission—McLennan's *Memoir of Thomas Drummond*, p. 267.

² Curtis's *History of the Irish Police*, pp. 10, 11, 14.

³ Evidence before the Roden Commission—McLennan's *Memoir of Drummond*, p. 267.

four county inspectors, thirty-five inspectors, 217 chief constables, 260 head constables, 1,350 constables and 8,000 sub-constables. The forces were full-time men, quickly became predominantly Catholic; in 1869, three-fourths were Catholics¹ of sturdy peasant stock, superb physique, decent education and excellent discipline. The ranks of officers were recruited by open competition, the promotions being with the Lord Lieutenant. The officers and men were properly uniformed; the men armed with carbines; the officers with swords and revolvers. Barracks were provided, mostly in the towns and villages. The force was a magnificent agency for the prevention and detection of crime and the suppression of disorder. Stipendiary magistrates were appointed; "grossly," wrote Drummond, "have the local magistrates abused their power."²

Prompt and decisive steps were taken to enforce law and order. Faction fights were rigorously suppressed; as likewise were Orange processions. The whole of the prosecuting and magisterial agencies were remodelled and invigorated. The Crown took upon itself the prosecution of offences at Quarter Sessions, Sessional Crown Solicitors being appointed for the purpose; Crown prosecutions, formerly almost confined to cases of an insurrectionary or seditious character, were extended. The immediate effects were a diminution in aggravated crime, an increase of committals in proportion to offences, an increase of convictions in proportion to committals.

The improvement that resulted, however, was slow; the diseased condition of the body politic could not be cured all at once. There were many causes in the growing distress of the population that tended to aggravate the criminal tendencies of the country. In 1844, Kohl observes:

"To be disturbed is the regular and habitual condition of this unfortunate country, riots, party fights, murders from revenge are more or less the order of the day; it is a state of things we have no idea of, in which a whole population is engaged in a general conspiracy and at every moment prepared for rebellion."³

The steps taken to enforce law and order were accompanied by others that showed a genuine desire to win the respect of the people and to enlist them on the side of Government. The practice, which had hitherto prevailed, of setting aside Catholics from sitting on

¹ Curtis's *History of the Irish Police*, p. 41.

² McLennan's *Memoir of Drummond*, p. 275.

³ Kohl, *On Ireland*, p. 82.

juries was abandoned. Orangemen who held Government offices were dismissed; where an appointment which required executive sanction was proposed to be given to an Orangeman, it was refused. A Northern magistrate, Colonel Verner, who at a festive gathering gave the toast, "The Battle of the Diamond," was promptly dismissed from the commission of the peace. A letter dated May 22, 1838, from Drummond to the magistrates of the County Tipperary is a splendid statement of the responsibilities cast upon those in high position; "property has its duties as well as its rights." Catholics were promoted; Wise and Sheil were made ministers; O'Loghlin, Woulfe, Ball and Pigot were made law officers during this administration, and afterwards were promoted to the judicial bench. When the Royal Dublin Society blackballed Dr. Murray, the talented, pious and inoffensive Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Lord Morpeth intimated that the Government would withdraw the annual grant to the society unless the insult was atoned for.

Drummond tried, but unsuccessfully, to have railways built in Ireland with State capital or credit. The only railway in the country was the six mile line between Kingstown and Dublin, then in course of construction.

A Poor Law Act was passed in 1838. Under it, Ireland was divided into 130 Unions, with an average population of 62,884, managed by boards consisting partly of elected and partly of ex-officio guardians subject to a central authority in Dublin. One hundred and thirty workhouses were provided by means of an Imperial loan of £1,000,000. The statute provided that a rate should be struck and levied according to the poor law valuation of each holding in the Union. Where the annual value of the tenement was £4 or under the landlord was to pay the entire rate; above that figure, he was to pay one half, the occupier paying the other half; this measure was "the first example of a law passed in the sole interest of the Catholic masses and of a sacrifice in their favour imposed upon the Protestant landowners."¹ The Poor Law Act was amended in 1847 when out-door relief was authorized in the case of destitute and disabled persons and widows having two or more legitimate children dependent upon them; but no person could be relieved indoor or outdoor who had more than a quarter of an acre of land.

A scheme suggested by Poulett Scrope and supported by many Irish politicians was to employ the poor on works of public utility and charge the expense either to Irish landlords or to the State. This Senior shows to be impracticable. Assume the employment of 2,500,000 at an average cost of maintenance and clothing of 1s. 9d. per head per week or £4 11s. per year; the total would be £11,375,000 on works such as piers, harbours, bridges and public buildings, bringing in no immediate return. The cost would be prohibitive. Austria, with 37,000,000 inhabitants and 250,000 square miles of territory, was crushed by the expense of a standing army of 400,000; Prussia, with 107,000 square miles of territory and 15,000,000 of the most industrious people on the Continent, maintained with difficulty an army of less than 130,000 men; Scrope's proposal was to throw on the State the support of a standing army far in excess of all the military forces of Europe.¹

A glance at the development of the poor law in England is not out of place. Nassau Senior² traces its history. The labourers were praedial slaves from the Statute of Labourers in 1349 to the Statute of Elizabeth passed in 1597; under which, if they left their parishes, they were whipped, branded and chained; if they stayed where they were, no fund was set apart for their maintenance. They passed through various stages of lessened misery, but even in 1834 their condition was terrible. The labourer would get perhaps 3d. a day from his employer and 1s. 9d. a day from the parish; or he might be billeted on a farmer who would be required to pay him 2s. 6d. a week if single, 4s. if married without children, and 1s. 6d. a head for each child, "such was the condition of the labouring population in many thousands of English parishes."

There were, in Ireland, seventy-one municipal corporations, of which between forty and fifty had been constituted by James I expressly in the interests of Protestantism. The population of these municipalities was 900,000 of whom only 13,000 were electors. In these communities plunder and peculation were systematized,³ the interests of the public were sacrificed to the interests of the few; though nominally open to Catholics, there were only 200 Catholic electors. They were, in effect, a Protestant monopoly having

¹ Nassau Senior, vol. I, pp. 150, 151.

² Vol. I, pp. 143-146.

³ A leaseholder of Corporation lands offered £15,000 for a renewal of the lease and was refused. He sold his interest (two and a half years outstanding) for £2,500 to the borough patron, who got a lease for nothing. The lands were worth £1,500 a year.—*Annual Register*, 1836, p. 22.

nearly 4,000 offices to bestow, and having the control of the administration of justice in certain cases, the management of prisons and in some instances the power of creating parliamentary electors.

A Bill to reform them passed the House of Commons in 1835, but was beaten in the Lords; the same result happened in 1836, 1837, 1838, 1839; in 1840, a measure passed both Houses and became law. By virtue of this statute the franchise was conferred on occupiers of £10 rateable value, the power and patronage of the corporations in Ireland being thus transferred to popular hands. The old Tory Corporation of Dublin was transformed; the first election under the new system returned forty-seven Repealers and Whigs to thirteen Tories.¹ O'Connell was elected Lord Mayor of Dublin, the first Catholic Lord Mayor. He attended Mass on Sunday in State; but he took off his robes of office before entering the church—this melodramatic proceeding was intended as a protest against an absurd clause in the Emancipation Act that no Catholic member of a corporation should attend Divine Service in his official robes. He ceased to be Lord Mayor in 1842.² O'Connell suggested that every alternate Lord Mayor should be chosen from the Protestants; this practice was carried out for a while but was afterwards abandoned.³

The Irish Act was altered in its passage through the Lords, and in its final form was not nearly so liberal a measure as the corresponding English measure; whereas in England every ratepayer became a burgess, in Ireland the franchise was limited to ratepayers having a £10 valuation. In Dublin, too, the appointment of the Recorder, Sheriffs, Magistrates, and the control of the police were vested in the Government, but though these points were made a grievance at the time, it is questionable if, having regard to the history of the Dublin and other corporations, many Irishmen to-day will be hardy enough to maintain that the restrictions were unwise.

¹ MacDonagh, p. 291.

² Gavan Duffy's *Young Ireland*, p. 187.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

CHAPTER VIII

IRELAND, 1840-1848

Repeal Movement Continued—Young Ireland Movement—Young Ireland v. Old Ireland—Social and Economic Conditions—The Famine—Emigration—The Rebellion of 1848—Total Abstinence Movement—Grand Jury System—Improvement Loans—Irish Charitable Trusts—Maynooth College—University Education—Sums Advanced to Ireland 1800-1847.

On the fall of the friendly Government in 1840, O'Connell restarted the Repeal movement. He adopted the same organization as in the Emancipation movement. His new "National Loyal Repeal Association" comprised associates contributing 1s. a year, and members contributing £1 a year.

The programme of the new Association comprised every conceivable object that could attract the multitude: tithe abolition, fixity of tenure, manhood suffrage, abolition of property qualification for members of Parliament, triennial Parliaments, reform of electoral districts.

The historians of the Young Ireland movement, for the purposes of justifying that movement and of exaggerating its importance, lay great stress upon the fact that O'Connell's new movement was slow in getting under weigh. The repeal rent, for a while, was small; "the people continued apathetic and the middle class stood aside and in private made a jest of O'Connell's 'reconstructed Parliament'."¹ The previous General Election had sent forty Repealers to Parliament; that of 1841 had not sent a dozen; O'Connell himself was beaten in Dublin, and his son in Carlow; the Protestants had been completely estranged.

All this is true enough, and natural enough. The Drummond régime had been distinctly soothing to the moderate elements amongst O'Connell's followers. With the more advanced, O'Connell had lost in prestige. He had posed as a great tribune at whose blast the Union ramparts would fall; the last few years had seen him

¹ Gavagan Duffy's *Young Ireland*, pp. 34-36, 37.

little better than a camp follower of the Government in office ; his son had got a Government job ; he had trafficked in Irish seats.¹ He had insisted, contrary to responsible protests, on having the Repeal funds put in his own name. He had estranged many of the priests by his support of the Tithe Bill—which, though reducing the tithes by 25 per cent. and changing them into a rent charge, allowed the landlord to add the charge to the rent and thus pass on the burden to the tenant.

But, after a while, the movement grew in strength. The O'Connell programme was a drag net—devised by an astute and sagacious man of affairs—to rake in all classes of the people, particularly those who desired relief from money payments arising out of the occupation of land. The inclusion, for the first time, of a claim for security of tenure was a master stroke. The non-agricultural portion of the community were enticed by the usual propaganda. The old fallacies about tariffs and water power were trotted out ; pamphlets were issued broadcast containing the most fantastic statements about Ireland's economic possibilities. Great stress was laid upon the alleged under representation of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament. It is to these material considerations, rather than to the high-flown appeals of the Young Irelanders, that the nation responded in the great movement of 1843.

One turns with relief, however, from O'Connell's bluff, dishonesty, vulgarity, and insolence to the party which was formed in 1841, and which brought a new spirit into the Irish National movement.

The Young Irelanders were of a type that every movement that claims to be patriotic produces in more or less abundance—young men of a high degree of intellect, much book knowledge, but with no knowledge of affairs or of human nature. Living in the atmosphere of idealism, they cannot imagine that the most of mankind are stern realists. They sometimes achieve noble ends in a noble way. More frequently they start movements whose forces they can neither fathom nor control, with disastrous results to their country and to the very ideals from which the movement sprang.

¹ There was a very nasty incident in 1835. He had, in effect, sold the seat for Carlow to a cockney confectioner named Raphael for £1,000, and when later there was a dispute as to the terms, O'Connell, to keep the confectioner's mouth shut, intimated he could get him a baronetcy.—See the correspondence in *Annual Register Chronicle*, 1835, p. 147 ; and see *A. R.* 1836, p. 182. There was, however, no suggestion that the proceeds of the sale went into O'Connell's own pocket.

The Young Irelanders kept their idealism pure and undefiled; they were a noble failure. Their successors, the Sinn Feiners, who allowed their movement to drift into a campaign of political assassination, are an inglorious success.

The Young Irelanders moved and thought and acted on a different plane from O'Connell and his followers. They idealized Ireland, regarding it as something apart from its people, their defects, their woes, their poverty, their rent, their tithes. They dreamt of an Ireland as she ought to be,

"Great, glorious and free,
First flower of the earth, first gem of the sea."
(Moore.)

The honour and dignity of the nation required the status of an independent sovereignty, an army, a navy, a flag, a language of its own. They resented the introduction of any object save independence; good Irishmen might differ upon such questions as land reform or tithes or manhood suffrage, but all good Irishmen should be agreed as to the secession issue; intrusion of extraneous objects weakened the movement, impaired its purity, lessened its national character, tended to make it a class and sectarian movement. O'Connell's methods would "transform a national movement into a sectarian one,"¹ "the Protestants were alienated by harangues which were as much out of place in a Repeal movement as in a Chamber of Commerce."² They hoped to capture the landlords and the rest of the Anglo-Irish garrison, and to impress them into the cause of National independence. They believed it possible to instil their own lofty principles into the souls of the common people of the country, and to rouse in the nation an ardour which no British Government could withstand. While not scorning arguments derived from Ireland's material grievances, their main appeal was to the dignity and self-respect of the nation. They detested O'Connell's vulgarity and openly upbraided him with it.³ Davis wrote to *The Nation*: "The Irish people will never be led to act the manly part which liberty requires of them by being told that the Duke, that gallant soldier and most able general, is a screaming coward, and doting corporal."⁴ They preached self-reliance and

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³ Gavan Duffy speaks of O'Connell's "language of insufferable coarseness."

⁴ *The Nation*, No. 34, Gavan Duffy's *Young Ireland*, p. 170.

self-respect; "the first and the hardest thing," said Gavan Duffy,¹ "was to revive self-reliance and self-respect. Rigid discipline and careful training could alone make the young men of Ireland able to win freedom and worthy to enjoy it."² They stressed the necessity of maintaining a distinct national individuality; "Ireland must aim to be Irish, not Anglo-Irish."³

Their newly established weekly, *The Nation*, was a remarkable product. The first number appeared on October 15, 1842; its motto was, "to create and foster public opinion and make it racy of the soil," borrowing the language of Woulfe in reply to Sir Robert Peel when the latter asked what good would corporations do to a country so poor as Ireland. The editor was Charles Gavan Duffy, son of a Catholic shopkeeper in Monaghan, formerly sub-editor of the *Dublin Morning Register*, assisted by Thomas Davis, a Protestant, and John Blake Dillon, a Catholic, both young barristers. *The Nation* poured forth a stream of patriotic prose and verse, calculated and intended to fire the youth of Ireland with love of Ireland and hatred of her oppressor.⁴ The Young Ireland group magnified all the delusions with which Ireland is afflicted. They held that at the time of the English Invasion, "Ireland was the school of the West, the great habitation of sanctity and learning."⁵ They suffered from all the usual childish notions about Ireland's possibilities should the vampire grip of England be withdrawn—mineral resources, water power, and so forth—"Neither the limited territory and population nor the history of Ireland forbade her to hope for a great career."⁶ They dreamed of a day when the voice of Ireland would be heard among the concert of the Great Powers. They persuaded themselves that talk about toleration would bring the Protestant minority into line with them, while the Protestant minority saw that their lands, their privileges, their ascendancy

¹ *Young Ireland*, p. 152.

² *Ibid.*, p. 158.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴ The poet Moore, though not of the Young Ireland group, was in sympathy with them. Kohl attributes great importance to Moore's anti-English verse such as

"But onward the green banner rearing;
Go, flesh every sword to the hilt!
On our side is virtue and Erin,
On theirs is the Saxon and guilt";

and says "Moore indeed may be the worse agitator of the two"; "Thomas Moore, Father Mathew, and Daniel O'Connell, form the great triumvirate that preside over every moral movement in Ireland."—Kohl, *On Ireland*, p. 132.

⁵ Quotations from *The Nation*—Gavan Duffy's *Young Ireland*, p. 153.

⁶ Gavan Duffy's *Young Ireland*, p. 152.

would be swept away if power was given to a population one-half of whom were on the border-line of starvation and three-fourths of whom regarded the Anglo-Irish as having no claim to be in the country at all. They were the best specimens of a type that Ireland produces in marvellous abundance, a type that ignores actual facts, that talks well and writes well on a basis of invented facts, that conjures a tasteful and solid looking structure out of no better materials than its own imaginings. They were the precursors of the Sinn Féin movement of later times, but their crudities were not so obvious; and there was this vast difference in their methods, they believed that only righteous men by righteous deeds could make Ireland a nation once again. Macaulay was much struck by the energy and beauty of *The Nation*, and entreated the editor "to consider whether genius be worthily employed in inflaming natural animosity between two countries which, from physical causes such as no political revolution can remove, must always be either blessings or curses to each other."¹

Gavan Duffy is obviously wrong when he suggests that the Young Irelanders were the backbone of the revived Repeal movement.² The new spirit no doubt appealed to many young men, the students of law, of medicine, in the Universities, possibly in Maynooth College; it attracted some Protestants to its ranks,³ but when all is said and done O'Connell's methods, with all their defects, suited the mass of the people better than the idealism of *The Nation*; his personality and platform were the biggest factors in the production of the gigantic movement of 1843.

The zenith of the Repeal movement was reached in 1843. If it had been slow in re-starting it now achieved a terrific momentum; the Repeal rent shot up to £600 a week; the membership of the association was broadened so as to admit any man who was in favour of Repeal, whatever his views were about other questions. John Mitchel, a very remarkable man, joined; so did many of the Catholic bishops, who had hitherto held aloof.⁴ William IV's enunciation of the doctrine of self-determination, "It is the undoubted right of every people to manage their own affairs," gave

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Young Ireland*, p. 286.

² *Young Ireland*, pp. 34, 36, 37.

³ Among the leaders of the movement were John Blake Dillon, Charles Gavan Duffy and Clarence Mangan, who were Catholics; Thomas Davis, Gray and O'Neil Daunt, who were Protestants (*Ibid.*, pp. 45-48).

⁴ But Dr. Murray, Archbishop of Dublin, disclaimed connexion with the movement. (*Ibid.*) Some others were at least neutral. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

as much joy to the Young Irelanders as President Wilson's did to the Sinn Feiners during the Great War. Arbitration courts were set up to which litigants were exhorted to go instead of to the ordinary courts. A Council of Three Hundred was formed as the framework of an Irish Parliament.

The era of monster meetings all over Ireland now commenced ; and Peel in Parliament declared that all the resources of Government would be used to prevent the dismemberment of the Empire. The Arms Act was renewed ; several justices of the peace were dismissed for having taken part in Repeal meetings ; O'Connell replied to Peel in a speech at Dublin :

" I belong to a nation of eight millions, and there is besides a million of Irishmen in England. If Sir Robert Peel has the audacity to cause a contest to take place between the two countries, we will put him in the wrong, for we will begin no rebellion ; but I tell him from this place that he dare not begin that strife against Ireland."

At a meeting at Mullingar, he assumed a like defiant tone, and Dr. Higgins, Catholic Bishop of Ardagh, in effect said that they would resist to the scaffold.¹ A few days later O'Connell was very specific :

" If others invade us, that is not civil war ; and I promise them that there is not a Wellingtonian of them all who would less shrink from that contest than I, if they will enforce it upon us. We are ready to keep the ground of the constitution as long as they will permit us to do so, but should they throw us from that ground then *Vas Victis* between the contending parties."

O'Connell hurled at the Government the " Mallow Defiance " on June 11, 1843 : " The time is coming when we must be doing. You may have the alternative to live as slaves or die as freemen."

O'Connell in a speech at Tara, called this year " the Repeal Year " : " When on January 2 I ventured to call it the repeal year, every person laughed at me, are they laughing now ? It is our turn to laugh at present. Before twelve months more, the Parliament will be in College Green ; " and he pretended to believe that a Parliament could be legally set up without any statutory repeal of the Union : " the Queen has only to issue the writs to revive the Irish Parliament."

Assistance was sought abroad. In America every busybody who was anxious to advertise himself was requisitioned ; an Irishman

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Young Ireland*, p. 245.

named Gray, practising at the American bar, was deputed to collect funds. A meeting in New York, addressed by prominent people like Governor Seward, Governor Cass, and Horace Greeley, passed a resolution that if England put down the Irish national agitation by force she should do so "with the assured loss of Canada by American Arms." But this melodramatic declaration, translated into action, amounted to the transmission of some small sums like 5,000 and 2,000 dollars to the Repeal Association. The amenities of international relations were enhanced by the U.S.A. President (Robert Tyler) announcing himself as "The decided friend of Repeal. On this great question I am no halfway man."¹ At a dinner in Paris, ostensibly given to celebrate the taking of the Bastille, but in effect to express sympathy with the Irish movement, many violent speeches were made; and Ledru Rollin said that in the event of a struggle France would be ready to support an oppressed people. In a correspondence between Rollin and O'Connell, the latter said that the Repealers sought no foreign alliance but, that if aggression commenced help would be necessary and welcome.

At this juncture some responsible men, apprehensive of a conflict, sought for a *via media*; amongst them was Sharman Crawford, who propounded a federal scheme, but it met with little or no support. The monster meetings continued to be held weekly or even bi-weekly. O'Connell's stage thunder was louder than ever. At a great meeting at Tara, at which 500,000 are stated to have been present, he said, "If the Russians or the Scotch, aye, or the English were to assail us against the constitution and the law they know little of me who think that I would be amongst the last who would stand up for Ireland." At a meeting at Roscommon on August 20, 1843; "Rejoice, for the day star of Irish liberty is already on the horizon, and the full noon of Freedom shall beam round your native land."

The huge bluff was soon to be called; and the weakness of O'Connell's hand exposed. A meeting, which in numbers was to surpass all other meetings, was called for Sunday, October 5, 1843. A place of meeting was selected to fire the martial and patriotic ardour of O'Connell's followers. Clontarf was the scene of an Irish King's victory over the Danes, in 1014.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 319. Five years later Horace Greeley and John MacKean acted on a directory formed in New York for the purpose of sending men and arms to Ireland.—Gavan Duffy's *Young Ireland*, p. 319.

The Irish Government had 35,000 troops at its command. The barracks had been loopholed; forts and Martello towers had been put in readiness; warships were on the sea. A semi-official press statement was issued on Friday, October 3, stating that the Government would proclaim the meeting. On the following day, Saturday, a proclamation was issued specifically forbidding the holding of the Clontarf meeting and enjoining magistrates and peace officers to disperse it. A meeting of the committee of the Repeal Association was hastily summoned. At O'Connell's instance, submission was decreed, and frantic efforts were made to prevent the expected delegates from coming to the meeting place. Placards were posted up in all the approaches to the city, and confidential agents were sent in every direction to warn the people. These measures were successful. Conquer Hill, Clontarf, was an unoccupied field when the Government troops took possession of it; there was no enemy to face the commander of the forces and the Lord Lieutenant when they visited the ground.

It is very likely that, outside the Young Ireland group and their immediate following, very few had taken O'Connell's loud talk about forcible resistance at its face value. On any other assumption, it is impossible to account for the fact that this miserable end to the rhodomontade did not shake the country's confidence in O'Connell. At the next meeting of the association the attendance was described as "immense."¹ At this meeting, O'Connell's ever-fertile brain brought forth a new scheme; simultaneous parochial meetings were to be held, which it would be a physical impossibility to put down. He also outlined the formation of a company, with shares of £100 each, by whose operations the interest and debts and mortgages would be paid and spent in Ireland instead of in England. But on further reflection, he seems to have concluded that this new company would not bring the British Empire to financial chaos; so he never mentioned it again.

A great State prosecution was now launched against the heads of the Repeal movement; O'Connell, his son John, Ray, Steele, Barrett, John Gray (of *The Freeman*), Gavan Duffy (of *The Nation*), and two priests, were impleaded. The charge, stripped of the infinity of legal verbiage in which it was clothed, was one of sedition. O'Connell was, if possible, more buoyant than before: "Give him but six months of perfect peace and he would offer his head

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Young Ireland*, p. 374.

on the block if at the end of that time there was not a Parliament in College Green." State prosecutions in Ireland always have had the result of bringing adherents to the policy of the men in the dock. This brought, amongst others, one very notable recruit—Smith O'Brien, a Protestant gentleman of position, ability, character, a Member of Parliament, who had up to this been a Whig Anti-Repealer; he now joined the Repeal Association; a few years later he headed what is the most pathetic as well as the most harmless attempt at rebellion in all history. The circulation of *The Nation* jumped to 10,000; the Young Ireland writers make the grossly exaggerated claim that it was actually read by nearly 250,000 persons.

After much preliminary sparring between the lawyers, the trial commenced on January 15, 1844, before a bench of four Protestant judges and a jury of twelve Protestants, any Catholic on the panel who was called being ordered to "stand by" by the Crown. There was a brilliant bar on both sides. O'Connell defended himself in a speech justifying his policy; his effort on this occasion has been highly praised in some quarters. All the traversers were convicted.

There was a motion for a new trial on various technical points. Before it came off O'Connell went to London and got ovations from the Opposition in the House of Commons and at meetings in London, Birmingham, and Manchester. In a debate on the question, however, the Government had substantial majorities in both houses—99 in the Commons, 97 in the Lords. The motion for the new trial was unsuccessful save as to one of the priests. O'Connell was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment; to pay a fine of £2,000 and to give bail, himself in £5,000, and a surety in £5,000 for good behaviour for seven years. The others received lesser sentences.

A writ of error which was brought to test the validity of the proceedings did not operate as a stay of execution. O'Connell and the others, amidst the tears of the populace, went to Richmond penitentiary to undergo their sentence. With the consent of the Dublin Corporation, who had control of the prison, the Governor and Deputy Governor of the prison turned out of their quarters to make room for their distinguished guests, who "found themselves established in a pleasant country house, situated in the midst of extensive grounds, bright with fair women and the gambols of

children, and furnished with abundant means, either for study or amusement."¹ O'Connell proceeded to hold a royal levée inside the prison walls. The prisoners were allowed to have their own servants; presents of fish, game, wine and flowers poured in; everybody who was anybody, or who wanted to be thought anybody, called and was lavishly entertained. The table was "never set for less than thirty persons;"² the guests included political associates as well as personal friends; it was a pleasant seclusion in which fun and wit and serious political talk alternated.

"O'Connell was a genial and attentive host; full of anecdote and badinage while the ladies remained, and ready when they withdrew for serious political conference or the pleasant carte and tierce of friendly controversy."³

The Catholic bishops framed a form of prayer for public use, beseeching God that grace might be granted to O'Connell to bear his trials with resignation. The people, as they thought of Dan's huge form on a narrow plank bed in a gloomy cell, prayed without ceasing. O'Connell bore up marvellously, so much so that in the opinion of one of his biographers, the "Richmond picnic," as it was called, had undoubtedly the effect of prolonging his life.⁴

The unexpected success of the writ of error brought this interesting episode to an end. By a majority of three to two the House of Lords set aside the proceedings, Lord Denman declaring that if such practices in reference to the empanelling of the jury were allowed to continue, trial by jury would become "a mockery, a delusion and a snare." The mass of the Irish people saw in the decision a miracle from God; more mundane folk thought it a triumph of common sense.

The greatest of strategists have temporary lapses. On his discharge from prison, O'Connell took the nearest cab, and drove quietly home to the bosom of his family. It was a tragic error, for his stage managers had other views as to the manner of his liberation. Providentially it was not too late to retrieve it. He was kept overnight and in the early morning was bundled back into the cab, and driven, most happily unnoticed, to the jail, where he begged to be taken in. To get into a jail is as difficult for most people as it is to get out when once in. But the circumstances were

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Young Ireland*, p. 491.

² *Ibid.*, p. 494.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

⁴ MacDonagh, 353.

unprecedented. O'Connell might be a future dispenser of Irish patronage; the Governor of the jail graciously acceded to the request. O'Connell sat down in the Governor's most comfortable armchair; in such durance vile he awaited his release at the hands of the people. The people came, six miles of them, with bands and banners. When all was ready, the bolts were drawn, the gates flung open, and O'Connell appeared, burly, majestic, clad in his green Milesian crown-like cap.

The mob sprang at him. Like gulls that dive upon a fleshy morsel, myriads of hands clove the air and sought his spacious palm. The laggards, less lucky or less deserving, were content to touch the hem of his garment. He was in some peril of suffocation from the ardour of his admirers. But, disengaging himself, he looked up. Did terror come upon him and blanch his cheeks? Was this a scaffold? Had an angry people found him out? Not so. There was naught but joy in the open countenances that faced him or in the shouts that came from lusty throats. It was a triumphal chariot that had been drawn up to the prison walls by six dappled grey steeds that danced with delight. And what a chariot! Marvel of improvisation. It was built in three tiers or platforms. The topmost tier had a throne, gorgeous and roomy, for the popular deity. His brawny arms seized, and with care and delicacy of touch—for he was no mean weight—they hoisted him, with aid of ladders, to his lofty perch, flanking him at that giddy height with his son Daniel Junior on one side and his chaplain on the other. On the middle platform, in solitary grandeur, was placed a grey-beard harper to beguile the time by patriotic tunes. The stability of the structure was ensured by the presence on the lowest platform of a pyramid of the grandchildren of O'Connell, apparelled in green velvet tunics and caps with white plumes. Slowly rolled the Juggernaut-like contrivance towards the city. Huzzas rent the air; the harp's sweet strains rose and fell. Tom Steele's carriage came next, Tom holding with difficulty an enormous green bough cut from the slopes of Tara. The next carriage contained the attorney who had, for a consideration, piloted the case through the House of Lords; he brandished in his hand the voluminous indictment which the infamous Crown lawyers had spent such toilsome nights in preparing. There followed carriage after carriage of people with less pretensions to share in the moving spectacle, which attracted not less than 200,000 persons. At one point in the journey there

was a pause, and a hush came upon the multitude. Slowly and deliberately O'Connell raised his hand; the index finger pointed to College Green. A mighty cheer went up; the incident was passed back to those of the six-mile procession who could not see the sublime gesture, so that they, too, might cheer in turn. So they brought him home. With infinite tenderness and solemnity, the mighty receptacle was decanted of its precious content—Dan, Dan Junior, the priest, the harper, the numerous units of the O'Connell tribe. There was as much pleased surprise in the grins of his servants as if they had not seen the master for ages. This is the story of the deliverance of the amazing liberator by his amazing people.

The intertwining of religion with politics which is so marked a feature of Irish movements is well illustrated by an incident which happened the following Sunday. The question was a purely secular one and Archbishop Murray could scarcely be called a Repealer at all. Yet O'Connell's release by the House of Lords was celebrated in Dublin by a solemn High Mass and Te Deum, at which Archbishop Murray presided, and at which Father Miley, the preacher, declared that O'Connell had been released by the intervention of the Blessed Virgin.

O'Connell had much sympathy in this absurd prosecution from men who disliked himself, his policy and his methods. Belfast had, for more than a generation, held aloof from every national organization. Now a number of persons of position in that city, including some who, were hostile to repeal, assembled and voted resolutions of sympathy with O'Connell. The English Catholics protested against the manner in which the trial was conducted. The Repeal movement itself got a fresh impetus; the Repeal rent exceeded in amount anything received during the flush of the monster meetings. O'Connell explained his backdown at Clontarf by saying: "No human revolution is worth the effusion of one single drop of blood. Human blood is no cement for the temple of human liberty."

There were soon signs of divergence of opinion between O'Connell and the Young Irelanders. Gavan Duffy puts it thus: ¹ "From the day he left Richmond prison the leader of the people never took a step that was not in its design or in its result a step backwards." If O'Connell had not seen obstacles to Repeal before, he saw them

¹ *Young Ireland*, p. 533.

now ; he seems to have flirted with the federal idea, which though it found some support in Belfast, and even with *The Times*, languished.

On the other hand, the Young Irelanders were showing signs of swinging towards the left. The writers in *The Nation* became each day more and more critical of O'Connell and his priestly organizers ; they openly scoffed at the inclusion in the category of miracles of the House of Lords' decision on the writ of error. This irreverent treatment of so sacred a subject, and their general tendency to free criticism and free thought in politics brought them under suspicion. The O'Connell organ, *The Pilot*, called the writers in *The Nation* "secret enemies of the Church and the Liberator."

O'Connell now started a hare in reference to the Catholic Hierarchy ; he declared that the Government were seeking to get control of the Bishops. For this statement, he adduced no evidence ; and the Lord Lieutenant wrote a letter to Archbishop Murray denying it. Rome now thought that the Irish clergy had gone too far in political affairs. A letter was received from the prefect of the propaganda by the Primate, Archbishop Crolly, that "it appeared by newspapers brought under the notice of the Holy See that speeches were made to the people at meetings and banquets and even in churches by certain of the priesthood and by some of the bishops which did not show them to be solely intent (as they ought to be) on the salvation of souls and strangers to the strife of political paths and temporal engrossments ;" and the Primate was directed to counsel ecclesiastics, especially those holding the episcopal office, whom he perceived in any degree wandering from these precepts. Which Papal precepts have been habitually and openly flouted ever since.

The impetus given to the O'Connell party by O'Connell's imprisonment and vindication by the House of Lords soon exhausted itself. The Repeal movement sagged and collapsed ; in 1845 the Repeal rent scarcely reached a tenth part of the amount received twelve months before, though O'Connell continued to hold occasional meetings and banquets in the country, averring that with sixty-five members he could carry Repeal, and restore the Parliament to College Green. The disappointment about the land led to much agrarian crime.

As long as the constitutional movement led by O'Connell seemed to have the germ of success, the Young Irelanders supported it,

though some of its teaching went sorely against their grain. They now took a line of their own and proceeded to exhort the people to armed rebellion. But O'Connell, spending much of his life among the peasants, or fighting their cases in the law courts, a man of affairs and great practical sagacity, gauged his people better. He knew that they would scarcely agitate for, much less fight for, such a mere abstraction as the Young Ireland writers held out. The attempt at rebellion in 1848 shows how hopelessly ignorant the Young Irelanders were of the mentality of the people they essayed to lead. Meanwhile, *The Nation* renewed its efforts to rouse the people; Denis Florence MacCarthy and Clarence Mangan redoubled their writings for it; there were some recruits—Thomas Francis Meagher, John Mitchel, Thomas D'Arcy McGee.¹ They were all men of fine intellectual quality, Mitchel being an exceptionally interesting personality. He was now thirty years of age, the son of a Unitarian minister, practising as a solicitor in Banbridge. He left his profession to join the ranks of writers for *The Nation*. He seems to have been consumed with hatred for England, which he vented in publications that are masterpieces of English prose. *The Nation* must have occasionally trodden upon the corns of the Catholic ecclesiastics; we find a letter written by Father Power referring to it as "The Godless Nation."

Hitherto, there had been no open clash between the Young Irelanders and the Old Irelanders, the friction confining itself to journalistic tilts between *The Pilot*, which was the O'Connellite organ, and *The Nation*. But events were so shaping themselves that a conflict was unavoidable.

In July, 1846, the Conservative Government of Sir Robert Peel resigned, and was succeeded by Lord John Russell's Whig Ministry. O'Connell, probably despairing of his project of repeal, entered into a sort of alliance with the Whigs. He said that if Lord John Russell would repeal the Corn Laws, hold committees on Irish railways in Dublin, advance money to construct railways, improve the condition of the land tenure, and restore the magistrates who had been dismissed by Peel, he would become so popular that O'Connell himself would have to transfer his green cap to him. A meeting of Whigs at Lord John Russell's residence in Chesham Place was attended by O'Connell and his son John. A correspondent

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 6. Thomas Davis, the poet, had died in September, 1845, at the age of 31.

of the *Dublin Evening Mail*, who purported to report the proceedings, attributed to O'Connell a declaration that "all he wanted was a real Union, the same laws and franchise in the two countries." Four Irishmen sitting for Irish constituencies accepted office—Sheil, Wyse, More O'Ferrall and Sir William Somerville. O'Connell was charged with having personally interfered in an appointment to the substantial office of Master in Chancery, to such effect that an appointment already made was cancelled and the post given to a connexion of O'Connell's. While O'Connell professed to want Repealers for all seats, he nevertheless allowed Sheil to be re-elected for Dungarvan. This gave great offence to the Young Irelanders, already made restive by the signs of O'Connell's weakening on the Repeal demand. They attended a meeting at Conciliation Hall, the head-quarters of the Repeal Association, and roundly denounced the Dungarvan incident. Meanwhile, Mitchel had been preaching physical force in *The Nation*; and in one article he described a method of making railways impassable. O'Connell visited *The Nation* office and protested against the doctrine; but the incitements to physical force and guerilla warfare continuing, a meeting at Conciliation Hall passed a resolution of denunciation. Another meeting was held to test the issue and the Young Irelanders only saved themselves from expulsion by walking out.

That the country had no sympathy whatever with the Young Irelanders was immediately made manifest. It "rallied round the Repeal Association triumphantly. The weekly Repeal rent, which had long averaged about £100, shot up to £400 the first week after the secession, and £330 the second week."¹ Neither the young men nor the old men of Ireland were to be rushed off their feet by the high-sounding phrases of *The Nation*. The forces of ecclesiasticism, scenting danger to the Church, helped to complete the débâcle of the Young Irelanders. Dr. Higgins, Bishop of Meath, whose brave words in 1843 went as close as possible to an open advocacy of an immediate rebellion, now wrote:

"We have no physical force men in this diocese, neither have we, thank God, any schoolboy philosophers, false and sanguinary repealers, or Voltairean newspapers. All our exertions for the restoration of Ireland's independence are based on the sacred and immutable principles of true Christian morality, and we pity the folly and abhor the wickedness of any man who would rest his patriotism on other grounds.

* ¹ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 245.

The Nation is the most dangerous publication that ever appeared in Ireland."

It seemed to him and to his clergy and their flocks to tend to the direct overthrow of Catholic Faith and morals.

The Young Irelanders, dissatisfied with O'Connell's wishy-washy policy, published a "Remonstrance" which received the signature of seventy-four Repeal wardens out of one hundred and twenty in the metropolis. The deputation which went with it to Conciliation Hall were refused admittance; and when a messenger was sent with it, it was flung out into the gutter. Gavan Duffy's comment is: "From that hour the fate of Conciliation Hall was sealed. Thenceforth the Repeal rent barely paid the weekly expenses."¹ But the suggested inference that it was the rejection of the Remonstrance that sealed the fate of Conciliation Hall is probably erroneous; the nation was in the throes of a great crisis,² and had no thoughts for much else, while the failure of O'Connell in his Repeal policy, now fully appreciated, was bound to damp the ardour of followers whom he had mesmerized into the belief that he was invincible. Attempts to bring the Young Irelanders and the Old Irelanders together failed. The Young Irelanders determined to strike more boldly out on their own account, and on January 13, 1847, they founded "The Irish Confederation." The contrast between the O'Connellite party—partly sectarian, partly rent and tithe abolitionists, and last of all genuine Repealers,—and the Young Ireland group is well shown by a letter from John Mitchel in *The Nation* dated January 23, 1847:

"Young Ireland, or the Irish party, or those whom the *Daily News* calls physical force men, are of no single school of politics; there are among them Conservatives, moderate Reformers, levelling Democrats; and they do not, as a body, consider the ruin of the landed gentry to be the best remedy or any remedy at all for Irish ills."

If there is any fact established by Irish history, it is this—that the driving force behind all the movements for self-government was the desire to get rid of the landlord garrison in Ireland. Mitchel fell into the same mistake as most doctrinaires do—he attributed to the people the same ideas which he had himself; his conceptions seemed to him so eminently just, reasonable and logical that he was incapable of thinking that all members of the same community would not share them.

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 306.

² The famine.

O'Connell was taken suddenly ill in February, 1847, and was ordered abroad for his health. He left for Rome on March 6, 1847, he reached Genoa on May 5, where his illness took an alarming turn, and he died in that city on May 15. He directed that his heart should be buried in Rome and his body in the Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin. His directions were carried out; his heart was enclosed in a casket which is still in the Chapel of St. Agatha, Irish College, Rome. The funeral in Dublin was a "great and solemn spectacle."¹ On the other hand, Dr. Maunsell, in his diary, observes: "O'Connell's funeral. The exhibition was a very poor one, poor especially in the article of grief, which none, great or small, seemed to feel in the slightest degree."

What is to be our estimate of O'Connell and his achievements?

In private life he was a queer mixture. He was intensely religious, and passionately attached to his wife and family. A letter written by him to one of his daughters who was afflicted by doubts about the Faith might have been penned by a wise and saintly archbishop. But "*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*," as Hazlitt reminds us, "is not the language of hypocrisy, but of human nature." He was a man of strong animal passions, and seems to have indulged them somewhat promiscuously. *The Times* charged him with the parentage of "broods" of illegitimate children in Dublin and Kerry. A story, published in London by a Miss Courtenay, is unpleasant reading. We may safely discount much of it, but the residue that must be accepted goes to show that O'Connell was not prepared to act with much generosity to one partner in his amours.

The impression left on my mind by the conflicting evidence as to O'Connell in his character of landlord is that he was about the average landlord of his class—as to two-thirds of his estate he was a middleman. Not that he was a severe or unkind landlord, but he was careless, slovenly and negligent; he spent no money on that part of his estate which was agricultural—allowed subdivision to proceed without check, took no steps to improve the material condition or the education of his people. In a word, he had the main faults that have been, most justly, laid at the door of landlordism in Ireland. Thomas Campbell Foster, the Commissioner appointed by *The Times*, reported:

¹ Gavan_Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 408.

"I have been all over England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and I declare to you solemnly that in no part of the United Kingdom is such neglected wretchedness—such filth, such squalor, such misery of every kind—to be seen as I saw that day in Mr. O'Connell's estate, in the presence of Mr. Maurice O'Connell";¹

and he gave the following account of Derrynane:²

"Not a pane of glass in the parish; not a window of any kind in half the cottages; some had a hole in the wall for light, with a board to stop it up. In not one in a dozen was there a chair to sit upon or anything in the cottage beyond an iron pot and a rude bedstead with straw on it, and not always that; in many the smoke was coming out of the doorway, for there were no chimneys. On the estate of Daniel O'Connell are to be found the most wretched tenants that are to be seen in Ireland; there was a frightful state of overpopulation on his estate, which brought in £3,000 a year."³

In December, 1846, Howard Russell, the famous correspondent of *The Times*, was sent over and corroborated Foster's account. On the other hand, W. E. Forster, writing to his father on September 27, 1846, said:

"I have made a great deal of inquiry in all quarters respecting his tenantry, and I am convinced that the impression made by the reports in *The Times* is most unfair and untrue. I should say he is decidedly the best landlord in his district, but owing to his having allowed ejected tenants from other properties to squat on his estate at nominal rents there are, of course, some wretched cabins."

O'Connell's success as an advocate was extraordinary; in 1814, he earned £3,808, his later income is stated to have reached £8,000, a figure reached by no other man at the Irish Bar, before or since. He was eloquent, powerful, ingenious, unscrupulous, full of tricks as a monkey. If irrelevant appeals to the emotions served his purpose, then he was irrelevant and emotional; he outraged every canon of propriety and decency, browbeat, insulted and domineered over his judges; he could by turns bully or coax an Irish jury to do his will in almost all cases. He had neither the time nor the taste to become a scientific lawyer, but he had a curious insight that showed him the flaws in his opponent's case; he bragged

¹ *Campbell Foster in Ireland*, p. 529.

² *Ibid.*, p. 395.

³ O'Connell, through his son Maurice, attempted a reply to all this; but his reply was no reply at all. The charge was in respect of the agricultural estate of Derrynane Beg. Maurice O'Connell replied by pointing to the fact that O'Connell had spent £4,000 on a church in the village of Cahirciveen.—See letter to *The Times*.

that he could run a coach and four through any Act of Parliament. He was capable of writing a deliberately dishonest opinion, for there is no other hypothesis upon which the opinion he furnished in reference to a dispute in which he was the protagonist on the one side and Archbishop Murray upon the other can be explained. Even after the grant of Emancipation George IV refused to make him a King's Counsel. O'Connell afterwards refused the position, but in William IV's reign a special patent of precedence was offered to and accepted by him.

If O'Connell sacrificed a big income at the Bar, he got a bigger income from the pennies of the poor. The first year after Emancipation, the O'Connell tribute reached the enormous figure of £50,000 ; in the five years from 1829 to 1834 he received £91,800 ; his average, from the time he became a paid agitator, is stated to have been £13,000 a year. The collection of this tribute was on the most businesslike lines ; a paid agent was employed for the purpose, receiving a commission from O'Connell on the proceeds. In spite of this large revenue and the property he received upon his uncle's death, he was chronically hard up. He was under the expense of three establishments, in Kerry, London and Dublin, where he displayed his hospitality on a lavish scale. No doubt, too, much of the money that went into his pockets was absorbed by the expenses of the agitation or by contributions to all and sundry who asked for them. The conclusion, however, is inevitable that O'Connell had a sharp sense of what was to his own interest ; his son and other connections received Government jobs.

His personal courage cannot seriously be called in question ; he faced d'Esterre with calmness and intrepidity in 1814. The death of d'Esterre made a profound impression upon him, and, after he had accepted a challenge from Peel, he formed a resolution to give or accept no challenge, for he deemed duelling contrary to the moral law. He was not responsible for, and openly disclaimed the circumstances which prevented, the meeting with Peel.¹ But if a man chooses to hedge himself in by a conscientious objection of that kind, he should be doubly upon his guard to give no reason for offence to any man. O'Connell felt no scruples on the subject ; his speeches teem with vulgar and unprovoked abuse of his opponents, and with attacks upon their honour, public and private. Some challenges made to O'Connell were taken up by his son, but

¹ His wife lodged information, as the result of which he was arrested.

this altruistic championship did not meet and could not meet the case ; the rôle of a public insulter of man cannot be justified by the possession of a progeny ready and willing to fight when the giver of the insult declines. O'Connell in 1825 apologized to Peel for the insult of 1815, but when taunted with this, he said the apology was given to propitiate Peel on the Catholic question. On which Peel acidly remarked : " I had given him credit for having made the tardy reparation purely from a conscientious feeling that it was due."

On a platform, O'Connell was supreme—a demagogue of demagogues—a genius admirably suited to an emotional, excitable and gullible people. His figure was commanding, tall and broad ; his huge head—a hat of his would go down on other men's shoulders—was surmounted by coal-black wavy hair ; he had a fine brow, a mobile countenance, a large, impressive and sparkling eye. His voice was tremendous and resonant. He knew every twist and turn of the Irish peasant's mind ; he could appeal in turn to his sense of injustice, his emotion, his religion, his superstition, and his greed. He swayed his audiences at will. He had tremendous industry. For twenty-five years of his life he rose soon after 4 a.m., and had a genius for organization. He saw that it was necessary to go right down to the minds and hearts of the populace ; he saw that in the priesthood of Ireland there lay a great instrument ; in every parish he thus created at least one zealous, unselfish, unpaid agitator, of some education and enormous local influence ; O'Connell blended temporal and eternal fears and hopes in the making of his great movement.

O'Connell's *Memoirs of Ireland*, published in 1843, is poor trash. His biographer, Mr. MacDonagh, calls it " absurdly chaotic and incoherent." *The Times* said it was a combination of " drivelling intellectual imbecility with the most diabolical wickedness."

Public men must be judged in the main by their public achievements, and in measuring the achievements the price paid for them must not be forgotten. So judged, O'Connell seems to me, on balance, to have injured rather than served the country that he undoubtedly loved with all the passion of an undisciplined and exuberant nature.

O'Connell's great achievement was Catholic Emancipation in 1829. The position before 1829 was that Catholics were ineligible for Parliament and for certain positions—a Catholic, for example, could not be a King's Counsel or a judge. The repeal of these

disabilities, no doubt, meant the removal of a badge of servitude. But it was of little advantage to the Irish peasantry that a few Catholics were eligible for jobs which in fact they rarely got ; or that they could vote for a Catholic candidate for Parliament when the landlord or his representative, in those days of open voting, stood by to see that, under pain of eviction, no vote should be cast for a Catholic who was not of the harmless sort. It is true that in the Clare and other elections the tenants braved their landlords' anger, but, broadly speaking, it was not possible, until the passing of the Ballot Act, to have an Irish representation at Westminster which would adequately voice the real grievances of the people.

Moreover, it cannot be forgotten that, even before O'Connell had assumed the Irish leadership, the tide of English public opinion was flowing strongly in favour of Emancipation. The bigotry of George III and George IV was always the obstacle. In no event could Catholic relief have been delayed after the ascent to the throne of Queen Victoria. The highest claim that can be made for O'Connell is that he antedated Emancipation by a decade. In Grattan's opinion, O'Connell postdated it ; for Grattan thought that the concession of the veto—which in truth would have made no difference whatever—would have brought the problem to a solution. The view I submit is that the advantages to Ireland from O'Connell's whirlwind emancipation campaign have been immensely overrated.

O'Connell's lack of statemanship is clear from his choice of objective after he had won the fight for Emancipation. A movement for repeal was utterly unseasonable ; "nor time nor place did then adhere." English public opinion saw no reason to disturb the Union, which it looked upon as a bargain, entered into by both countries for the benefit of both countries. O'Connell seems to have reasoned upon the analogy of the Emancipation movement ; but there was no real analogy. Enlightened English opinion was in favour of Emancipation ; scarcely any English opinion, enlightened or unenlightened, was in favour of repeal. Emancipation involved no disturbance of commercial relations, and no danger to Empire interests ; repeal meant a severance of one commercial unit into two, and in English opinion involved an Empire menace as well. How did O'Connell hope to work a revolution of English sentiment ? By force ? He deprecated it. By reason ? It was a hopeless task.

While O'Connell was ploughing the sands of repeal, the condition

of agricultural Ireland afforded every scope for his mighty organizing and agitating genius. He could have worked wonders had he applied his energies to the landlord and tenant problem. In truth, it had but a very minor place in his thoughts. The still greater problem of over-population he intensified and aggravated. He opposed poor laws in any shape or form, on the ground that if the poor were state aided, there would be nobody to bestow charity upon, and consequently a precious means of saving rich men's souls would be lost. His opposition to provisions against sub-letting and his general attitude on emigration were some of the main contributing causes of the famine. O'Connell, by calling for state-aided emigration, could have produced a different Ireland and, incidentally, a different America.

A great amount of latitude may be allowed to a popular agitator voicing a national demand. But O'Connell's language and methods, examples of which I have already given, went beyond all limits, while its excesses served no useful purpose. He was not even consistent in his venomous attacks upon the English people; for occasionally he fawned upon them. In 1819, in a letter to the Press, he speaks of seven centuries of oppression as already forgiven—the "English name, which we seldom pronounced with complacency, begins to sound sweetly in the ears of our children." This of the nation of whom he had said, "so dishonest and besotted a people as the English never lived." His flattery of the bigoted George III was disgusting. "If ever a monarch existed, abounding in every great and good qualification, calculated to make a people happy, that monarch was George III." He presented a laurel crown to George IV at Kingstown when that monarch arrived in 1821, and his enemies said that he knelt in the waters of the harbour to make his obeisance. Yet throughout his career he hated and despised, or affected to hate and despise, the English people, and taught his people to do likewise.

His flattery of his own countrymen and his childish illusions as to Ireland's resources were the worst features of his propaganda. Whatever success he had was purchased at a terrific cost. He debauched the Irish people, morally and mentally; much of their dishonesty and humbug is due to his successful example. The poet Moore was demonstrably right when he said, "O'Connell and his ragamuffins have brought a tarnish on Irish patriotism which it will never recover." The Young Irelanders were of the same

opinion. Gavan Duffy says "this fault" (lying) "had an evil influence on the people, who loved and imitated him." For the rest, O'Connell lashed the people into impotent fury. While he constantly condemned violence—"he who commits a crime gives strength to the enemy"—his language could not but create violence; he gave little constructive thought to the welfare of his country.

O'Connell did as much for England as he did for Ireland. It was through his support that the Parliamentary Reform and Municipal Reform Acts were passed, and he thundered at the House of Lords in a fashion that made him a welcome speaker at Liberal meetings in Great Britain, where in 1835 he had something like a triumphal tour. His portrait is conspicuous amongst those of the great English reformers in the Reform Club, London, which he helped to found.

The estimates of O'Connell differ greatly. Some of them are absurdly extravagant. He certainly was not "the greatest man that this or any other country ever produced," nor was he "the greatest controversialist of his age and much superior to Cobbett or Junius" as one of his biographers would have us believe.¹ Balzac named Napoleon, O'Connell and Cuvier, as the greatest men of the century; he called O'Connell "the incarnation of a people." A "great man manqué" was a description given to him by a writer in *The Nation*. Peel described him as "an eloquent and vulgar speaker." Dickens, writing in 1843, said of him, "O'Connell's speeches are the old thing: fretty, boastful, frothy, waspish at the voices in the crowd, and all that; but with no true greatness," and speaks of him as "beleaguered with vanity always." Gladstone referred to him as the "greatest popular leader the world has ever seen."

Henry Grattan thus described him:

"Examine their leader, Mr. O'Connell—he assumes a right to direct the Catholics of Ireland, he advises, he harangues, and he excites; he does not attempt to allay the passions of a warm and jealous people. Full of inflammatory matter, his declamations breathed everything but harmony; venting against Great Britain the most disgusting calumny, falsehoods, and treachery, equalled only by his impudence; describing Great Britain as the most stupid, the most dishonest, and the most besotted nation that ever existed, that Ireland could not confide in the

¹ Fagan, vol. II, p. 238.

promises of England, etc. Without discrimination, he pronounced all Protestants 'bigots.' When he advocated the grievances of the Catholic body he omitted the greatest grievance—himself. A man that could make the speeches he has made, utter the sentiments he has uttered, abuse the characters he has abused, praise the characters that he has praised, violate the promises that he has violated, propose such votes and such censures as he has proposed—can have little regard for private honour or for public character; he cannot comprehend the spirit of liberty, and he is not fitted to receive it. He betrays such a scattered understanding and barbarous mind, that if he got liberty he would immediately lose it. Almost unsuited for the British Constitution, and almost ignorant of the bonds of civil society; of such a mould and such a disposition, as to be incapable of accomplishing any rational object, his declamations to the lower orders are full of extravagance, wildness, and ambiguity and set afloat the bad passions of the people, make them restless in disposition, and impatient in action. He leaves a vacuum in the meaning of his harangue, to be filled up by the elevated imagination of a warm-hearted and sensitive people. It is the part of a bad man to make use of grievances as instruments of power, and render them the means of discontent without a single honest attempt at redress. He knows, or at least he ought to know, that this conduct is of such a nature as must always tend to confusion in bad ministers and strengthen their authority; it seduces people into mischief not intended, and, after exciting them to folly, it abandons them through fear. It may lead them to rise against an exciseman or titheman, to burn a hayrick or murder a farmer, but it will never teach them to redress grievances, or to bring the offending minister to the scaffold. . . . His speaking is extravagant diction—a vulgar boast, a swaggering sentence, affected bombast, and ludicrous composition. His liberty is not liberal, his politics are not reason, his reading is not learning, his learning is not knowledge; his rhetoric is a gaudy hyperbole, garnished with faded flowers, such as a drabbed girl would pick up in Covent Garden, stuck in with the taste of a kitchen maid. He makes politics a trade, to serve his desperate and interested purpose. This man can bring forth nothing good; in abortion he is the most fertile; the womb of his mind is of such sinful mould that it can never produce anything that is not deformed. He never succeeded in any project except the loss of your question. He barks and barks, and even when the filthy slaverer has exhausted its poison, and returns to its kennel, it there still barks and howls within unseen. No administration but would injure their reputation by advancing such a character."

Montalembert's opinion of him was :

"He is only a demagogue; he is no such thing as a great orator. He is windy and declamatory, his arguments have no conviction, his imagination has no charm, no freshness; his style is harsh, abrupt and incoherent; the more I see of him, the more I listen to him, the more

I am confirmed in my first opinion, that he is not stamped with the seal of genius or of true greatness. But he defends the worthiest of causes ; he has neither a formidable adversary nor a formidable rival ; he has a magnificent part to play, and circumstances will stand to him as they have done to so many others in the place of genius."

Nassau Senior describes him :

"He has a vivid imagination, ready invention, great energy of mind and body, great industry, great practice. Intellectually, he wants comprehensiveness of mind, patience in the investigation of truth, and consequently knowledge. Morally, he wants honesty, in its two senses of veracity, and the performance of promises. He has an intense desire of power, and intense selfishness. His merits and defects unite to make him a perfect mob orator. Until Catholic Emancipation was carried, his defects were concealed. His own interests and that of Ireland coincided, and he addressed unrefined audiences. But in the House of Commons he failed. His dishonesty, ignorance and utter want of taste, moral and intellectual, render him, of all great speakers, the least agreeable to a British audience."

This is John Mitchel's famous description of O'Connell :

"At the head of that open and legal agitation was a man of giant proportions in body and in mind ; with no profound learning, not even indeed in his own profession of law, but with a vast and varied knowledge of human nature in all its strength, and especially in all its weakness ; with a voice like thunder and earthquake, yet musical and soft at will, as the song of birds ; with a genius and fancy tempestuous, playful, cloudy, fiery, mournful, merry, lofty and mean by turns, as the mood was on him—a humour, broad, bacchant, riant, genial and jovial ; with profound and spontaneous national feeling, and superhuman and subterhuman passions ; yet withal, a boundless fund of masterly affectation and consummate histrionism—hating and loving heartily, outrageous in his merriment and passionate in his lamentation. He had the power to make other men hate or love, laugh or weep, at his good pleasure—inasmuch that Daniel O'Connell, by virtue of being more entirely Irish, carrying to a more extravagant pitch all Irish strength and passion and weakness than other Irishmen, led and swayed his people by a kind of divine or else diabolic right. He led them, as I believe, all wrong for forty years. He was a lawyer, and never could come to the point of denying and defying all British law. He was a Catholic, sincere and devout, and would not see that the Church had ever been the enemy of Irish freedom. He was an aristocrat by position and by taste, and the name of a republic was odious to him. Moreover, his success as a Catholic agitator ruined both him and his country. By mere agitation, by harmless exhibition of numerical force, by imposing demonstrations (which are fatal nonsense) and by eternally half unsheathing a visionary sword, which friends and foes

alike knew to be a phantom, he had, as he believed, coerced the British Government to pass a Relief Bill and admit Catholics to Parliament and some offices. Poor old Dan! Wonderful, mighty, jovial and mean old man, with silver tongue and smile of witchery and heart of melting ruth—lying tongue, smile of treachery, heart of unfathomable fraud. What a royal yet vulgar soul, with the keen eye and potent sweep of a generous eagle of Cairn Tual—with the base servility of a hound and the cold cruelty of a spider. Think of his speech for John Magee, the most powerful forensic achievement since Demosthenes, and think of the gorgeous and gossamer theory of moral and peaceful agitation, the most astounding organum of public swindling since first man bethought him of obtaining money under false pretences. And after one has thought of all this and more, what can a man say? What but pray that Irish earth may lie light on O'Connell's breast and that the good God, who knew how to create so wondrous a creature, may have mercy on his soul."

The Irish people dearly love a funeral, but most of all the funeral of a political hero. A chance is presented for an orgy of emotion, felt to be creditable alike to living and dead. The mourner thinks that he has contributed, and by his presence is contributing, something to the grandeur of the mourned; the thought raises a glow of self-satisfaction, the enjoyment of which is heightened by the melancholy character of the occasion, for the pleasures of melancholy are nowhere so much appreciated as in Ireland. O'Connell's funeral was a superb pageant. Revenge on the Young Irelanders who were charged with having "murdered the liberator" was a natural vent for the laudable patriotic compound with which the heart of the great Dublin mob was charged. Young Ireland meetings were everywhere attacked with bludgeons and stones. A Confederate meeting in Belfast was overmastered by the O'Connellites, who passed a vote of confidence in John O'Connell.

Meanwhile, Smith O'Brien persisted in his attempts to win the Irish landed gentry to his side; his opinion was "they are thoroughly disgusted with England's management of Irish concerns, but are afraid of the ultra democratic and ultra Catholic tendencies of a portion of the Repeal party." The policy succeeded in winning from the class it appealed to an occasional pat on the back, but nothing more. The landlord class were too wary to trust their interests to an Irish peasant Parliament. Of the two parties, they preferred Smith O'Brien's to O'Connell's; the former, at any rate, had no foundation of class or sectarian prejudice; it may be also that they conceived that O'Brien's party had not, while O'Connell's

had within it the germ of success. In truth, the Young Irelanders were in a bad case. Richard O'Gorman, one of their chiefs, writing to Smith O'Brien, said :

"We have now been for months setting our principles before the Irish people. They have denied us their support. We have been abandoned by all except the Dublin Remonstrants and a few men here and there in the provinces. At the General Election of 1847, not a single Confederate was elected or as much as induced to become a candidate."

They raised a cry against the place-hunting candidates and carpet-baggers whom Conciliation Hall foisted upon the constituencies. The O'Connellites maintained that a pledge against office was unnecessary, but, this attitude notwithstanding, nearly twenty Members of Parliament accepted places for themselves and more than twenty habitually begged places for others. Wallis, censor to *The Nation*, wrote : "You have a people at the lowest ebb of mental and bodily atrophy" ; and, after charging the Young Irelanders with putting no energy into the job of rousing the people to a fight for independence, prosperity, and power, went on to say :

"God says, Good Celts, and quasi Celts and demi-semi-quavering incarnations that ye are, of every species of cowardice but personal, you have for 3,000 years the finest country and the finest position on this glorious planet of mine."

Which, analysed, merely means that the plain men and women of Ireland had no stomach at all for the Young Ireland teaching, and were exercising the right of free men not to be bullied, coerced, cajoled or sung into swallowing it. Thomas D'Arcy M'Ghee, having brought back from an English town where he lived, a conception of the business people of that country utterly unlike anything that had been formed by any Irishman on the popular side theretofore, was also very uncomplimentary to his fellow-countrymen. After praising the Englishman's business habits, simplicity, steadfastness, and infinite patience, he wrote :

"What a lesson to our idle educated young men who are choking the professions and losing themselves in action. We have many things to learn from the English, but most especially their manner of conducting business. A thousand such Irishmen, with English training, as I met in my short tour would, if transplanted here, do things for Ireland which the 80,000 volunteers, if they rose again from the dead, would not accomplish."

Had M'Ghee been alive seventy years later and had he expressed these sentiments, he would have been ostracized as a West Briton by the Irish Irelanders of the period.

A really able thinker now attached himself to *The Nation* group— isolated, original, and intense ; he knew more of the character of the people, of their thoughts, emotions and passions than all the visionaries of the Young Ireland party put together. Unlike all, or nearly all, the scribes of *The Nation*, he had been brought up on the land and had lived amongst the peasant population up to the time of his entrance into the political arena. His father was a Queen's County farmer, who had been foremost in the tithe passive resistance movement. The son, Fintan Lalor, was thrown much upon himself, and his faculties of observation and perception were quickened by personal defects. He was deaf, near-sighted, ungainly and deformed. He had an uncanny vision into the facts and realities of Irish life and almost into the future. What can be more truly prophetic than this epistle addressed to the Irish landlords ?

“ Ireland is yours for ages yet, on condition that you will be Irishmen—in name, in faith, in fact. Refuse it, and you commit yourselves, in the position of paupers, to the mercy of English ministers and English members ; you throw your existence on English support, which England may soon find too costly to afford ; you lie at the feet of events ; you lie in the way of a people ; and the movement of events and the march of a people shall be over you.”

He recognized quite clearly that it was idle to talk to the Irish people about Repeal. Purely political objects always left them cold ; it was necessary to hitch the Repeal movement to something that had real motive power, and that was the land. He wrote as follows :

“ The only martial population Ireland possessed, the small farmers and farm labourers, would never wield a weapon in favour of Repeal. They were quite sick of what was called bloodless agitation, which was not bloodless to them. To secure Repeal in the only form in which it could be carried, Independence, there was but one way, to link it, like a railway carriage to the engine, to some other question strong enough to carry both itself and Repeal.”

As a practical step he suggested a No Rent conspiracy. Again Lalor wrote :

“ My object is to repeal the conquest—not any part or portion, but the whole and entire conquest of seven hundred years—a thing much more easily done than to repeal the Union. That the absolute (allo-

dial) ownership of the lands of Ireland is vested of right in the people of Ireland, that they, and none but they, are the first landowners and lords paramount, as well as the law-makers of this island—that all titles to lands are invalid not conferred or confirmed by them—and that no man has a right to hold one foot of Irish soil otherwise than by grant of tenancy and fee from them, and under such conditions as they may annex of suit and fealty, etc.; these are my principles. To such landowners as could be brought to recognize this right of the Irish people, and to swear allegiance to this island queen, I would grant new titles. Those who might refuse should cease to be landowners or quit this land and their lands be vested in the occupying tenants. You throw away the Elections too, for on no other argument than mine will you get a frieze coat to vote for you.”

Mitchel seems to have been attracted by Lalor's main idea, but he knew as little of the South of Ireland¹ as the South knew of him.² He wanted a strike against poor rate instead of against rent, though what he conceived he would effect by the starvation of the poor is difficult even to guess. Smith O'Brien, however, hoped against hope that he would get the landlords upon his side, and was opposed to anything that would tend to prevent or delay a conversion of which no sign had been given or, in the nature of things, could be expected. Gavan Duffy had a plan which only shows how raw and immature was his intellect at that period. He proposed to capture all the institutions and representative bodies in the country—the corporation, grand juries, boards of guardians, town commissioners; that the Members of Parliament should behave at Westminster so as to secure expulsion. Thereupon, an Irish Parliament should be established and any authority resisting it should be treated as in rebellion against the power, people and distinct kingdom of Ireland. This lovely paper plan ignored all the essential facts—that the Young Irelanders had no real following at all, “we had won the intelligent artisans, but certainly not the peasantry;”³ that the sinews of war would still be with the British Government, for all Irish taxation then consisted of Customs and Excise duties; that no scheme of the kind is feasible unless there is naked force to support it. Lalor's was the only possible plan, but it required for its execution a stronger and more commanding personality than he was able to supply. O'Connell could prob-

¹ Gavan Duffy describes him as hopelessly ignorant of conditions in the South (*Four Years of Irish History*, p. 493).

² “The people of Munster,” said Meagher, “knew as little of Mitchel as of Mahomet” (*Ibid.*, p. 494).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

ably have effected a thorough land reform had he lent his genius to a campaign such as outlined by Lalor ; but Lalor was not an O'Connell, nor was O'Connell a Lalor. Lalor's attempt to put his scheme into practice was a fiasco. He called a meeting of farmers at Holy Cross, Co. Tipperary ; it was poorly attended and only drew from the immediate locality. He was a bad and petulant speaker and made a very poor impression, and his movement was stillborn.

Mitchel, who was assistant editor of *The Nation*, now left it because Ga'van Duffy would not agree to his advocating in that organ a strike against poor rate. He started the *United Ireland*, in which he took up an attitude that in some respects showed him to be totally unversed in even the elementary principles of liberty ; he defended negro slavery and denounced the emancipation of the Jews as an unpardonable sin. The Duffy plan of action was accepted at a meeting of Confederates, but it was never tried, either because, when looked at from close quarters it appeared impracticable, or because events in France directed the Young Ireland mind into another channel. But we must turn from the dreams and disputes and preparations of the Young Irelanders to matters of more stern moment to the common folk of the country.

The outstanding event of the nineteenth century Irish history is the famine. But, before we examine it, we must consider the social and economic conditions of Ireland at the time it took place.

If O'Connell and the Repealers were right, a country which produced or was capable of producing " sufficient for the support of sixteen millions " was in the last stages of decay. " The manufactures which before the Union flourished in very many of our cities and towns, have been annihilated in most, and continued only in a few, and with diminished productiveness." ¹ Yet, if there is any fact clear in Irish history, it is that the country progressed and flourished—subject to one appalling and self-inflicted evil which no change of Government could affect, the over-rapid increase of the poorest of the land workers.

It is true that small industries were being swamped, as they were being swamped in England. They had felt the strain even before the Union. In the days of the boasted Irish independent Parliament, 1782–1800, no less than twenty-four petitions were presented from various parts of the country from various manufacturers, including those in the woollen, silk, cotton and hosiery industries, that their

¹ Manifesto of O'Connell, September 13, 1843.

trade was being ruined. A great number of interesting figures, comparing the pre-Union period to the post-Union period, are collected in R. Montgomery Martin's *Ireland Before and After the Union*, published in 1843. The writer was a Unionist, and nobody need accept his inferences. But his figures, taken from official sources, are incontrovertible. He takes such figures as tonnage belonging to Irish ports, tonnage entering or leaving Irish ports, tonnage of ships built in Ireland, exports and imports, consumption of exciseable articles and so on. In an endeavour to show that, under the independent Irish Parliament, Ireland was decaying, he divides the period 1790-1800 into two periods of five years each, and shows a substantial decrease in the later five years period. This decrease, however, may possibly be accounted for by the disturbed condition of Ireland at the time.¹ His comparison with the post-Union period is, however, of real value. A substantial, and, in some respects, a great increase is shown. Thus, the tonnage entering Irish ports was 622,013 in 1790, 642,477 in 1800, 1,944,285 in 1841, and the intermediate figures show the gradual increase that indicates settled and stable progress.² The tonnage of vessels cleared from the port of Dublin had increased from 294,750 tons in 1789, and 273,726 tons in 1800, to 601,481 tons in 1839 ; ³ in Belfast from 67,855 in 1800 to 264,377 in 1833. In 1800, the exports and imports of Ireland were £10 millions, in 1835 £32 millions, in 1840, £40 millions.⁴ The Excise revenue, which was £475,000 in 1800, had increased to upwards of £2 millions in 1843.⁵ Big factories were in the making. In the South, the brewing and distilling industries flourished ; in the North, the linen and cotton manufactures. As to taxation, Martin points out that the yield of Irish taxation in 1843 was £4,392,101, or about 10s. per head of the population, lower than that of any nine European countries with which he compares it.⁶

The evidence from other sources, too, is overwhelming that, whilst the small peasant class were undoubtedly sinking deeper and

¹ Martin, pp. 43, *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁶ These countries are : France—population, 34,000,000 ; taxation, £40,000,000 ; per head, £1 3s. 6d. ; Spain—12,000,000 ; £10,000,000 ; 16s. 8d. ; Papal States—2,700,000 ; £3,000,000 ; £1 2s. 2d. ; Holland—2,800,000 ; £5,000,000 ; £1 15s. 8d. ; Belgium—4,200,000 ; £4,000,000 ; 19s. ; Egypt—2,000,000 ; £3,000,000 ; £1 10s. ; Greece—600,000 ; £2,500,000 ; £2 15s. 6d. ; Hanover—1,800,000 ; £1,300,000 ; 14s. 5d. ; Saxony, 1,600,000 ; £1,110,000 ; 13s. 9d., p. 232.

deeper in the rut of misery, the aggregate wealth of the country was increasing. There were signs of progress everywhere. "The commerce of the country was increasing, its agriculture improving, the value of the land rising."¹ "The various processes to which agricultural produce is subject had been gradually extended and improved. Grinding, malting, brewing and distilling had made great progress."² "There was evidence of increased wealth everywhere, especially in the towns."³ Kohl (1844) says: "The trade of Limerick, like that of most Irish cities, has increased in an astonishing degree. The exports have trebled since 1820."⁴

"The question whether Ireland is an improving country must be answered in many respects in the affirmative. The external appearance of the towns seems to have improved everywhere within the last twenty years; the roads, canals and other means of transport are every day becoming better; agriculture and arboriculture are followed with more intelligence, as you may convince yourselves while passing along the highway. The increase of schools is extraordinary, and so is the diminution of crime. Party spirit, particularly in religious matters, appears also to have lost much of its former asperity. One giant evil, however, remains, namely, the poverty of the masses, and, amid all the other improvements, the evil remains undiminished, nay appears even to be on the increase."⁵

"In 1802, the export of grain to England from all Ireland amounted to 461,000 quarters, and remained nearly at this point till 1808, when it reached 656,000 quarters. There was a slow increase till 1818, when the amount was 1,200,000 quarters. In 1825 it was 2,000,000, in 1837 3,000,000, and in 1838 it reached its maximum or 3,474,000 quarters. Since then there has been a falling off, but the amount is still upwards of two million, chiefly oats."⁶

There was a thriving linen manufacture and linen trade; and a growing cotton trade; Kohl mentions twenty-one great cotton and linen yarn factories, some of which employed two thousand hands; and speaks of seven newspapers, published in Belfast, all more or less Liberal in politics and all hostile to the Tories and the Church of England.⁷

"Formerly, the flax was hand spun and woven; the Messrs. Marshall of Leeds, and other English houses, by the invention of spinning machinery, and by great enterprise, drove the Irish spinners out of the market, and the flax trade for a long time languished and deteriorated

¹ McLennan's *Memoir of Drummond*, p. 342.

² Report of Railway Commission (*Ibid.*, p. 359).

³ Nicholls Report, *Annual Register*, 1837, p. 62.

⁶ Kohl, *On Ireland*, p. 141.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁵ P. 39.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

in Ireland. At length the Messrs. Mulholland of Belfast, and Messrs. Murland of Castlewellan, erected flax spinning mills, and were enabled to rival and compete with the English spinners successfully, and the linen trade in Ireland rapidly sprang up again to prosperity. In 1821, Messrs. Mulholland was the only flax spinning mill in Belfast. No sooner was it seen to prosper, than by the enterprise of the people, mills were erected on every side, and there are now in Belfast twenty-eight flax and tow spinning mills and several new ones building, and there are in Ireland sixty-two flax and tow spinning mills, all of which, with the exception of seven, are in the north-east counties of Ulster." ¹

Such as they were, the manufacturing industries in the south of Ireland were hampered, to an extraordinary degree, by the conduct of the labouring classes. Whatever excuse the evils of landlordism, tithes, pressure of the population on the land may afford for the spirit that prevailed in the country, it is difficult to find any for the insubordination and turbulence that prevailed amongst the fairly well-paid artizans and mechanics of the towns. All observers are agreed as to the existence of this spirit, and as to its effect on the manufacturing industries of the country. It is not merely that they were discontented; their methods were savage, and unintelligent into the bargain.

O'Connell, in the House of Commons in 1838, said that there was no tyranny equal to that which was exercised by the trade unionists of Dublin. He spoke bitterly of the ferocious attacks upon workmen in Dublin and elsewhere, in pursuance of combinations of one sort or another. He instanced the destruction, from this cause, of a cotton printers' manufacture in Belfast,² of an important manufacture in Bandon, which spent £12,000 a year in wages; he said that wages to the amount of £500,000 a year were lost to Dublin;³ that it paid better to go to Glasgow, and wait a couple of days there for a suit of clothes than to buy it in Dublin; that four shipbuilding firms had been established in Dublin; but that they were run out of it;⁴ that

"Within the last two or three years thirty-seven persons have been burned with vitriol, so as to lose their eyesight; and in Dublin there is not a day in which some such crime is not committed. On January

¹ Campbell Foster, p. 567.

² Of general anarchy or recurring trouble amongst the workmen of Belfast there is no evidence. They had one very serious commotion—on the grand scale—in 1906, when Mr. Birrell was Chief Secretary, but when that was composed they went on quietly with their work.

³ *Annual Register*, 1838, p. 207.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

4 a man was dreadfully beaten, only because, not belonging to the combination, he could not give the sign of recognition. On the 11th a man and his wife were violently beaten merely because the man was not a combinator. Some of those who have not murdered with their own hands, have paid three shillings a week out of their wages for the hire of 'assassins.' " ¹

The evidence of witnesses before the Silk Weaving Commission testified to vitriol being thrown into the places of business and to the departure of the employers to England owing to the anarchical conduct of the men.² Nassau Senior says :

"To prevent the use of machinery, to force the materials of labour to be imported in the least finished state, to prohibit piece work, to equalize the wages of the skilful and the ignorant, of the diligent and the idle, of the strong and the weak, and generally to force the manufacturer to employ his capital and the mechanist and chemist his knowledge and talents, only under the dictation of his shortsighted and rapacious workmen—such are the objects of the combined workpeople who now govern every town in Ireland in which any manufacturing capital still lingers. The means are those used in the country—torture, mutilation and murder." ³

Senior goes on :

"It is thus that not merely is the introduction of capital prevented, but the capital formerly existing and employed in many of the towns of Ireland has been driven away. It is thus that ship-building, once a flourishing trade in Dublin, has been utterly destroyed ; it is thus that bargemen have rendered the canals almost useless." ⁴

"Ireland," says one of the witnesses in the Poor Law Inquiry, "is the dearest country in the world for labour. Every description of artisan demands at least one-third more than in England ; there is even a combination among the common porters on the quay, who would rather starve than work under the regulated price. Bribery has no effect on my men, and if I remonstrate they stop directly." ⁵

Mr. Murray, an architect and builder, for thirty-seven years at the head of his profession in Dublin, gave evidence before the Commons Committee on Combinations in 1838. He had been severely beaten himself. He had been obliged, for two years, to carry arms. One of his men had been beaten to death in broad daylight in a crowded street ; another had been shot. At three different times his workmen had been attacked, beaten and maimed in his own yard. At

¹ Nassau Senior, vol. I, p. 40.

² Vol. I, p. 39.

³ *Irish Poor Law Inquiry*, App. C, pp. 2, 35 ; Senior, p. 40.

⁴ Martin, p. 84.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

other times they had been waylaid and injured on their way to him, and his whole establishment had been maliciously set fire to and burned down. He concluded by saying that he was going to leave Ireland, for he did not want to rear up his boys in Ireland.¹ Campbell Foster, writing in 1846 :

"It is a remarkable fact that there is scarcely a trade which has prospered in Ireland, save that of brewers and distillers. Almost every other trade has been ruined by combinations. One brewer and one distiller with a few unskilled labourers are sufficient for a brewery or distillery, and there can, therefore, be no combination of skilled workmen against them."

For instance, James Fagan, timber merchant, erected sawmills ; his head sawyer, Hanlon, was murdered in open day in one of the most populous streets of Dublin. He tried to start a graving dock ; his men struck, and he imported Scotsmen as ship carpenters. Some of the Scotsmen were working at a ship's side, on a stage suspended by ropes ; the combiners cut the ropes ; the workmen were precipitated into the water. A Dublin magistrate treated this murderous performance as a trivial matter, and merely bound the perpetrators over to keep the peace. Folds, a printer, erected steam presses. Just as he had commenced to succeed, his men combined against him, and began to dictate terms to him ; he procured English and Scottish printers ; his establishment was maliciously burnt down. Merchants in Cork erected sugar refining works and got over six Englishmen to superintend the erection of the machinery. A mob assembled and drove the Englishmen out.² Insane hostility has always been displayed to the importation of English mechanics or artificers. Slieveardagh Collieries had to be shut down owing to a manager being shot. Strangman of Waterford, who started a Coast Fishing Company, had to bring in an Englishman to instruct the natives ; for that and other absurd reasons his nets were destroyed ; and his lobsters taken out of his pots.³ In 1842 an enterprising merchant at Cork erected a steam engine for sawing timber ; a few nights afterwards a quantity of vitriol was thrown in his face.⁴ Waterford glass-making was killed by a strike in 1850.

But perhaps the most trenchant condemnation of Irish turbulence

¹ *Minutes of Evidence, House of Commons Committee on Combinations in 1838, Questions 5882-5883 ;* quoted Nassau Senior, vol. I, p. 41.

² Martin, p. 72.

³ Campbell Foster, p. 600.

⁴ Martin, p. 72.

came from one of the greatest, as he was incomparably the most fearless, friend the Irish people ever had.

"The weavers," said Bishop Doyle, "were the cause of their own misfortunes, for as soon as they discovered that a manufacturer had obtained a contract for making blankets, or that there was a demand for goods, they immediately struck and would not work unless for very high wages; hence the manufacturers were unable to enter into contracts lest they should be disappointed, or that too high wages would be expected from them, and the consequence was that the manufactures went down altogether."¹

And then, turning to the rural population, said:

"What are the sources of your evils? A disregard of yourselves, springing out of your own worthlessness, your own idleness, your own drunkenness, your own want of energy and industry in improving your own condition. These are your vices, the fruits of long and grinding oppression, the almost hereditary vices of the Irish people. Your situation never can or will improve until unceasing industry succeeds to idleness, until obedience to the laws of self-respect becomes the character of the Irish people. Till then, you may complain of oppression, but it will not cease; you may rail against the law, but it will always persecute you; you may hate the magistrate, but he will always have his foot upon your necks. You complain of rack rents and tithes and want of employment, and of the ejection of poor tenants. You complain of all these and you complain of them most justly. But no power on earth can at once remedy these evils. The Government and legislature are endeavouring to heal them; but time is necessary for the accomplishment of so great, so good and so difficult a work. More, however, depends on you than on the will of Kings, or on the acts of a Parliament. All the laws that ever were enacted would not render an idle or a vicious people rich or happy. And, if men become sober and industrious, abstaining from evil, and doing good, each in the state of life or calling wherein Providence has placed him, such a people almost without any aid from law or Government would enjoy comfort and happiness."²

Ireland produced only one Bishop Doyle. It has produced thousands of men, of all callings and conditions, who have demoralized the people by telling them that they were the greatest and noblest people under the sun, and that if they were not absolutely perfect, it was all the fault of alien Government. In no country in the world, at any stage of history, has there existed such a deep and widespread conspiracy to apply Couéism to public affairs as has

¹ Martin, p. 71.

² App. to *Lords Report on Tithes* (1832), vol. II, p. 52; quoted Nassau Senior, vol. I, p. 52.

existed in Ireland since the Union. The great achievement of self-government is the destruction of the reign of deception, and the opening of the national vision to truth.

Having regard to its output, Irish skilled labour in the South always has been, and still is, the most costly commodity of its kind in the world. Soon after the Union, a section of the workmen in the woollen trade were paid at a rate bringing in 9s. and 10s. a day, while the same class of labour in England cost £1 to £1 5s. a week.¹ The evidence given before a Free State Reconstruction Committee in 1923, over which I presided, was that the building of a certain type of labourer's cottage cost in England £300, in Belfast £400, and in the Irish Free State £600.

The same insane hostility to improvement that came from outside was even displayed in the educational sphere. John Henry Newman came to Ireland in 1855, prepared to devote the rest of his life to Irish higher education. A gentleman named Maurice Leyne, a nephew of O'Connell, said: "We have the English brought over by Strongbow; the English brought over by Cromwell and the English brought over by William—now we are going to have the English brought over by Lucas."² Newman abandoned the attempt. Even his zeal and genius could not penetrate the dense mass of "Irish Ireland" prejudice and ignorance. To the Irishman of the truly patriotic sort, there is no more heartrending reading than Newman's *University Sketches*, in which he tells of his hopes and ambitions for the new Catholic Athens of Europe.

Let us turn our attention to the condition of the land workers.

The view sometimes taken of this period, that the tithes were the main cause of discontent, seems to me erroneous. Even before the Tithe Commutation Act, a burden of £600,000 a year, payable by a population of eight millions or thereabouts, was not heavy, from the pecuniary point of view. The people had other and graver causes for discontent; but the tithe was such an obvious injustice that it was the natural spearhead of any agitation for betterment.

The land question was in a curious phase. There was much bitter feeling, for the system enabled the landlord to increase the rents at will. The landowners who, as long as they possessed the political souls of their tenants, had been willing enough to grant leases, refused

¹ Martin, p. 71.

² This was a reference to Newman, who, as was alleged, was brought over through the agency of Lucas, Editor of *The Tablet*.—Gavan Duffy's *Life in Two Hemispheres*, p. 28.

to do so when the tenants, once and for all, had shown that they were freemen. A tenant's improvements were, in effect, confiscated by an increase of rent. Behind it all was the notion, vague perhaps, but ever present, that the landlord was a robber and a foreign intruder.

But opinion in Ireland as well as in England was far from the stage when the curtailment of the landlord's rights came to be looked upon as right, just and essential, and still further from the stage when it was seen that the only hope of peace lay in the abolition of the landlord system altogether.

The development of the social structure largely consists of the periodic sacrifice, whole or partial, of some sections of it for the benefit of the community as a whole. In England, at this period, the big people controlled political action; they were the high priests, but not the victims of the sacrificial rite. In the country, the cottier and smallholder were immolated in the interests of corn production on the large scale. A long series of English Enclosure Acts from 1760 to 1840 cleared the small producer as an independent unit from off the face of the land. He was forced to become a paid labourer, or to find a living in the rapidly growing factories of the towns. The process was marked by terrible suffering and much injustice; but, so paramount were the needs of the nation for more food, and so deep the sense of subordination amongst the masses, that the change produced little sense of grievance and comparatively little violence or resistance. On the other hand, while the legislature was invoked freely for the extinction of the small man of the countryside, the policy of the towns was one of *laissez-faire*. Hands off the growing factories; England's industrial prosperity had its roots amongst scenes of misery and suffering that baffle description.

It is scarcely to be wondered at, therefore, that there were few in England who thought of invading the sacred rights of the Irish landlords. To a Frenchman is, I think, due the credit of being the first to recognize the solution of the Irish land problem. Gustave de Beaumont, writing in 1839, advocated a system of compulsory land purchase.¹ But he was a voice in the wilderness. In Ireland, too, where one might expect that ideas might have been struck from the anvil of stern necessity, the politicians of the day were singularly lacking in the perception that a drastic remedy was called for. O'Connell's plan of reform in 1830, voluminous as it was—it con-

¹ De Beaumont's *Ireland* (1839), p. 228. John Stuart Mill and John Bright were the first Englishmen who favoured purchasing out the landlords.

tained sixteen principal points and some subsidiary ones—has no reference whatever to land reform. It was much later, in 1840, and as subsidiary to his Repeal movement, that security of tenure received a mention. One Irish thinker—he whom O'Connell insolently muzzled—had concrete thoughts upon the subject. Sharman Crawford was one of the first who fought for “tenant right,” involving security of tenure and the right to the tenant to sell his interest in the holding. But in the main, it is clear that at this period the belief was general, that land was like other kinds of property, the subject of absolute dominion. The land question was a source of discontent, rather than a grievance. The peasant might think to better himself by the bullet, but scarcely by legislative action.

But, while tithes were a great grievance and rent was a great burden, the main cause of the sufferings of the people can be traced to their own social habits.

Amongst the countless facts of which a knowledge is essential to human happiness is that more than a quart will not go into a quart bottle. This elementary proposition is accepted by most people, in most countries, without much apparent difficulty. But not in Ireland. At this period—and the same may be said of much later periods—the people had wrought themselves or been wrought into a mental perversity under the influence of which they deemed that a benign Providence had reversed or dispensed all the laws of nature and reason in Ireland's favour. Cairn Tual¹ was higher than Everest; ² the mountains were in the centre; ³ there was incredible water power; the people, sunk for the most part in poverty and ignorance, marrying females almost before they reached the age of puberty, engaging in deadly faction fights for no earthly reason, fond of drink, indolent, undisciplined and turbulent, throwing vitriol upon their employers or upon one another, were “the finest people on the face of God's earth—the most moral, the most temperate, the most orderly, the most religious people in the world, exceeding in religion, in morality, in temperance any nation under the sun.”⁴

¹ The highest mountain in Ireland. It is in the County of Kerry and is about 3,300 feet high.

² “Here are the loftiest mountains.”—Speech of O'Connell at Mullaghmast, October 1, 1843.

³ See quotation from Fagan's *Life*, p. 185 *ante*. In truth they are the rim of the saucer.

⁴ Speech of O'Connell at Mullaghmast, October 1, 1843.

In particular, things had been so ordained that, in Ireland, not merely one quart or two quarts or three quarts, but any number of quarts could be safely and adequately stowed away in the one quart bottle. So that babies could be multiplied at will and still find room, for they had no space dimension; if they were provided with stomachs at all, that did not matter; God who sent them would provide the food. Poor suffering morsels of humanity! What a holocaust of victims the teaching of the day provided for the altar of sacrifice to Irish publicists' thoughtlessness and ignorance.

The blame for the famine has been laid at the door of the British Government. The charge has everywhere been accepted as true. It has been further charged that, when the famine came, the English Government and the English nation took no real steps to alleviate it. That charge, too, has been universally accepted. Are these charges true or false?

In what I have just written, and what I am about to write, are to be found my reasons for thinking that both charges are false.

What caused the famine? The country was an agricultural country of very limited area. The pretence is made that it could have been, under its own government, a manufacturing country. It had no mineral resources. The phantom of water power still afflicts the Irish mind. Whatever may be thought of water power development at the present stage of the world's history, it is obvious that it was out of the question then. The harnessing of a vast mass of fluid, and the utilization of the force of gravity that acts upon it, to produce and store and convey energy in the form of electricity are very modern ideas. In the early days of the nineteenth century, water power meant the water wheel, which, as it revolved, produced energy upon a very limited scale without any method of storing or conveying it. The use of water power in England had disappeared with the invention of the steam engine, driven by energy produced from coal. America in those days produced its energy not from Niagara, but from coal. As to protection, that policy had been in force in Ireland for twenty years, and had not saved Ireland's small industries. No protection policy could have saved the small Irish industry in face of the competition of the English industrial revolution.

But, whether I am right or wrong in thinking that Ireland had not the necessary potentialities of a manufacturing country, in actual fact, it was, as it is, an agricultural country. Now, a small

agricultural country, which chooses to multiply its population, is faced with two alternatives—emigration or starvation. The choice is inexorable. I make bold to say this. If any Irish statesman could have been found, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, big enough, honest enough and courageous enough to get the Irish people to grasp and act upon this fundamental proposition, he would have conferred a greater boon upon the nation than all the Irish statesmen, agitators, warriors, writers, and insurrectionaries from the time of Brian Boru down to the present day. For the cause of nine-tenths of the terrible sufferings which the people endured, culminating in the famine, was that they multiplied very rapidly and would not be allowed to emigrate.

During O'Connell's time, and indeed during all the period of the British régime since the Union, there were two conflicting domestic policies with regard to the small landowner—the Irish policy and the British policy.

The priesthood favoured early marriages. The Irish publicists favoured sub-letting. Early marriages and sub-letting, combined, made for an over-rapid increase of population. Given an unlimited power to sub-let, and in the course of a few generations—and the generations followed one another with extraordinary rapidity in Ireland—a fair-sized holding disappeared, and its place was taken by a large number of specks on the earth's surface, each insufficient to provide subsistence for one person, much less for two and their progeny. The Irish policy, again, was opposed to emigration. Emigration was a crime against the nation. From Kerry to Antrim, the rocks, the stones, the lakes, the rivers, the bogs, the very sods of turf shrieked to Heaven for vengeance against it or against any Irishman who advocated it. On the other hand, the British policy was opposed to sub-letting. An Act was passed, to the accompaniment of a howl from O'Connell in 1826, making all sub-letting without the landlord's consent illegal. It was probably inefficacious, for they would divide and sub-let, whether legally or not. It was repealed in 1832.¹ The British Government always favoured emigration, and many of the later statutes contain provisions for state-aided emigration. Given real Irish statesmanship, I can vision an emigration very different from that which commenced from Southern

¹The Land Act of 1881 also contained provisions against sub-letting, as also did the Land Purchase Acts. These salutary restrictions were always opposed by the Irish Members of Parliament.

Ireland about 1830. The unfortunate outcasts, ill equipped for the battle of life in the cities, were dumped down in New York or other big centres, to fend for themselves as best they could, and to become the prey of every social and political harpy. It was the refinement of cruelty. All the while, great stretches of land in the States and in the Colonies hungered for development. Here was a noble field for the activities of O'Connell and the Irish bishops. To co-operate with the British Government, to point out to them that emigration to virgin soil was the proper destiny of Ireland's overplus agricultural population, to provide the necessary spiritual and material guides for the uneducated emigrant, to ask the Government for the necessary funds was an obvious duty. By this means you would have had emigration of the kind Gladstone spoke of when introducing his Land Bill in 1881—"well regulated emigration—emigration of communities, carrying with them their local organization and traditions and domestic ties."¹

Every leader of Irish opinion adopted the fatuous policy of keeping the starving population at home, and of encouraging them to breed. Every step was taken by Irishmen to bring about, none to ward off the inevitable famine. The trade of an agitator was too exciting, too absorbing, and too lucrative to leave any time to O'Connell for real thought about Ireland's problems.

But emigration was at all times and in all forms anathema. The bishops, in their pastoral of 1883, cursed Gladstone's schemes with bell, book, and candle. One colony of Irish emigrants did find their way to the land of Minnesota, and J. H. Tuke,² who saw them there in 1882, speaks in the highest terms of them; hardy, disciplined, prosperous, and happy.

What was the alternative? In spite of O'Connell and the publicists, no more than the quart would go into the quart bottle. Emigration eventually did proceed. The poor Irish, left in the great seaports of the U.S.A. were "festered and degraded," to use the language of American observers to Tuke when he was studying the problem. In October, 1855, a priest named Father Mullen wrote to the Press a letter giving an appalling account of the effect of their conditions on the faith and morals of the Irish emigrants. Archbishop Hughes of New York, no doubt, challenged the letter as

¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, 1881, vol. 260, p. 920.

² *Contemporary Review*, 1882, vol. 41, p. 712. He does not say whether they came from Northern Ireland or Southern Ireland.

containing exaggerated statements, but admitted that lapses from religion were numerous.¹ But no testimony is required on such an obvious point. The fate of many of these poor folk, young men and young women, with the tempters from the saloon—and from worse—at their elbows, was inevitable.

Let me quote the evidence of a Galway witness before the Poor Law Commission in 1840.

“If I had a blanket to cover her, I would marry the woman I liked ; and if I could get potatoes enough to put into my children’s mouths, I would be as happy and content as any man and think myself as well off as my Lord Dunlo.”

The Poor Law Commissioners reported in 1840 :

“The Galway labourers usually marry at from eighteen to twenty-one ; in Leitrim, from sixteen to twenty-two ; in Mayo and Sligo usually under twenty years of age. In the county of Dublin at twenty-six ; in Kilkenny at from twenty to twenty-five ; in King’s County at from seventeen to twenty ; in Louth, from twenty-five to thirty ; in Meath from twenty to twenty-five ; in Queen’s County they marry at twenty-six ; in Wicklow from twenty-three to twenty-eight, and in Kerry from eighteen to twenty-two.”

The Rev. Father Fitzmaurice, parish priest of Templemore, Co. Kerry, deposed before the same Commission :

“I have married girls of twelve to thirteen, and at this moment there is a married woman in Templemore who has just had a child before the age of fourteen ! A woman in the parish of Killarney had two children before the age of fifteen !”

W. E. Forster, sent over during the famine on behalf of the Quakers, reported :

“The families here are something fearful. The farmer frequently marries his daughter at twelve or thirteen, for fear of accidents, and the peasantry marry nearly as soon. Girls are mothers generally at sixteen. Charles O’Connell told me of a tenant of his who had two children, not twins, before she was sixteen. On the other hand, the standard of chastity is far higher than with us and illegitimate children rare.”

In the face of this, O’Connell’s Repeal Association in their manifesto of September 13, 1843, proclaimed that “one great proof of increasing prosperity is found in the due augmentation of the people ; while the most decisive evidence of human misery is found in the

¹ See Gavan Duffy’s *Life in Two Hemispheres*, p. 126.

fact of a retrograding population." The doctrine could have only one result.

A comparison of the population density of Ireland with other countries in 1841 gives the following results : England and Wales, 272 persons per square mile ; Scotland, 86 ; Ireland, 251 ; United States of America, 14 ; Austria, 138 ; Bavaria, 145 ; Bohemia, 203 ; Denmark, 93 ; France, 161 ; Greece, 61 ; Hanover, 125 ; Naples and Sicily, 190 ; Norway, 9 ; Papal States, 158 ; Portugal, 97 ; Prussia, 138 ; Russia in Europe, 26 ; Sardinia, 16 ; Spain, 67 ; Sweden, 17 ; Switzerland, 143 ; Turkey in Europe, 20 ; Turkey in Asia, 20 ; Wurtemberg, 203. And it is to be noted that this dense Irish population was not spread evenly. For example, O'Connell's county, Kerry, had 416 persons to the square mile of arable land. If we deduct one-third of the area for lakes, rivers, mountains and bog, the density all over was about 400 per square mile. The population in 1841 was 8,175,124. The extent to which division upon division of land had proceeded in 1841 may be gauged from the following table, taken from Kane's *Industrial Resources of Ireland*.

	Farms from 1 to 3 acres.	Farms from 5 to 15 acres.	Farms from 15 to 30 acres.	Above 30 acres.	Total.
Leinster . . .	49,152	45,595	20,584	17,889	132,220
Munster . . .	57,028	61,320	27,481	16,557	162,386
Ulster . . .	100,817	98,992	25,099	9,591	234,499
Connaught . .	99,918	45,221	5,790	4,275	155,204
	306,915	251,127	78,954	48,312	685,309

Nassau Senior makes a comparison of the condition of England in 1831 with that of Ireland in 1841 :

	Acreage.	Cultivated.	Arable and Garden Crops.	Meadow and Pasture.	Number of Agricultural Families.
England (1831) .	32,342,460	25,632,000	10,252,600	15,379,400	761,348
Ireland (1841) .	20,808,271	13,464,300	5,238,575	—	974,188

so that, in Ireland, more than a fourth more families were employed in cultivating about half the extent of cultivated land. While, if

the figures for the provinces of Munster and Connaught are taken, there was not more than three acres and a rood to an agricultural family; there were more than four times as many agricultural families to a hundred acres under crop as in England.¹

The same authority goes on to say :

"In 1831 the agricultural population of England in proportion to the land under cultivation and to the capital employed on it was in excess. It was the time when agricultural labourers were driven from farm to farm as roundsmen, were sold by auction at twopence per head per day, were harnessed on the road to gravel carts, were sent ten miles to carry a barley straw and bring back a wheat straw, were imprisoned in the gravel pit or kept standing morning after morning in the parish pound. It was the time when farmers could not safely use machinery, when labour rates were sanctioned by law. When Wilmot Horton, lecturing on redundant population and emigration, was as vehemently denounced as it now is for Ireland. What then, is to be done with an agricultural population more than four times as excessive in proportion to the demand for its labour, as one which itself was excessive? How are we to remedy a disproportion between cultivators and cultivated land, the greatest that has ever pervaded a civilized country?"²

The tendency to subdivide holdings³ had continued as long as the Napoleonic war lasted. Corn was at a high price, sometimes almost at a famine price; it paid the landowner to let a small holding at a comparatively big rent; it paid the cottier to take it. But the inevitable slump followed the war. A tendency arose to consolidate holdings, whether for pasture or tillage purposes; much land that had been devoted to tillage went back to pasture, in spite of the preference given to Irish-grown corn in the English markets up to 1846. The process of consolidation accentuated the difficulties of the population* problem.

In these conditions it would be impossible to expect a high standard of character in the miserable land workers. The character and standard of knowledge are recorded in reliable testimony.

Their indolence and ignorance admit of no manner of doubt, however open to controversy the causes may be. The Irishman, according to Senior,

"who under supervision at least works hard in Great Britain or in the United States of America in his own country is indolent. All who have

¹ Senior, vol. I, p. 263.

² Nassau Senior, vol. I, p. 264.

³ Kohl instances County Tipperary—out of 3,400 holdings there were 280 of less than one acre and 1,056 of more than one acre but less than five.—Kohl's *Ireland*, p. 10.

compared the habits of the hired artisans, or of the agricultural labourers in Ireland, with those of similar classes in England and Scotland admit the inferiority in industry of the former. The indolence of the great mass of the people, the occupiers of land, is obvious even to the passing traveller. Even in Ulster—the province in which, as we have already remarked, the peculiarities of the Irish character were least exhibited—not only are the cabins and even the farmhouses deformed (within and without) by accumulations of filth which the least exertion would remove, but the land itself is suffered to waste a great portion of its productive power. We have ourselves seen field after field in which the weeds covered as much space as the crops. From the time that his crops are sown and planted until they are reaped the peasant and his family are cowering over the fire or smoking or lounging before the door—when an hour or two a day employed in weeding their potatoes or oats or flax would perhaps increase the produce by one-third.”¹

“They are naturally an indolent people and do not like any innovation.”²

Kohl thought³

“that the main root of Irish misery is to be sought in the indolence, levity, extravagance and want of energy of the national character.” The farmers “are ignorant of the proper rotation of crops, of the preservation and use of manure, in short of the means by which the land, for which they are ready to sacrifice their neighbours’ lives and to risk their own, is to be made productive. Their manufactures, such as they are, are rude and imperfect; and the Irish labourer, whether peasant or artisan, who emigrates to Great Britain, never possesses skill sufficient to raise him above the lowest rank in his trade.” In Kilrush district “the mode of scratching the land does not deserve the name of cultivation. Their attempts are inferior to what I have seen among North American Indians.”⁴

Griffith,⁵ examined before the Commission on Valuation, was of opinion that, “under a good system of farming, the farmers in Ireland might not only pay much higher rents, but live much better than they did; the people, if they exerted themselves could pay the rents extremely well, but they did not.”⁶ “The farmers of this county (Waterford) know no more of a proper rotation of crops than they do about the rotation of the planetary system.”⁷ Drummond

¹ Nassau Senior, vol. I, p. 46.

² *Evidence of Rev. Dennis Mahoney before Land Commission, Part II, p. 917, quoted Foster, p. 393.*

³ Kohl, *On Ireland*, p. 49.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ The Government valuer who gave his name to “Griffiths valuation,” a general valuation of land made in 1851.

⁶ Question 78, 102, Foster’s *Letters on Ireland*, p. 144.

⁷ *Evidence of Mr. Barron, Land Commission Enquiry, Part III, p. 446, cited Foster, p. 469.*

accepted the finding of the Poor Law Commission that the average produce of the soil was not much above one-half the average produce in England, whilst the number of labourers employed in agriculture was, in proportion to the quantity of land under cultivation more than double, namely as five to two ; thus, ten labourers in Ireland raised only the same quantity of produce that two labourers raised in England and this produce, too, was generally of an inferior quality.¹ Nicholl summed up the condition of affairs thus :

“Ireland is now suffering under a circle of evils producing and reproducing each other—want of capital produces want of employment—want of employment, turbulence and misery—turbulence and misery, insecurity—insecurity prevents the introduction and accumulation of capital, and so on. Until this circle is broken, the evil must continue, and probably augment.”²

Of the extraordinarily large leaven of poverty and wretchedness, the West had more than its share. There, the inhabitants were decidedly inferior in condition and appearance ; their food consisted of the potato alone, without meal, or in most cases without milk ; their cabins were wretched hovels ; their beds straw ; the wages were not more than 6d. a day ; poverty and misery deprived them of all energy ; labour brought no adequate return ; and every motive to exertion was destroyed. Agriculture was in the rudest and lowest state ; the substantial farmer employing labourers, and cultivating his land according to the improved modes of modern husbandry, was rarely to be found amongst them.³ The South and Midlands were little better ; poor habitations, food consisting of potatoes and milk without meal ; wages low, but the peasantry robust, active and athletic, capable of great exertion, inured to great privations ; ignorant, but eager for instruction ; readily trained under judicious management to habits of order and steady industry.⁴ The Northerner was better lodged, clothed and fed than the others ; wages of labour higher, food consisting chiefly of meal, potatoes, and milk,

“a frugal, industrious, and intelligent race, inhabiting a district for the most part inferior in natural fertility to the southern portion of Ireland but cultivating it better, and paying higher rents in proportion to the quality of the land notwithstanding the higher rate of wages.”⁵

¹ McLennan's *Memoir*, p. 356.

² See McLennan, p. 308.

³ Report of Railway Commission, written by Drummond ; McLennan's *Memoir*, p. 356.

⁴ McLennan's *Memoir*, p. 356.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

"The system of agriculture which prevails in the counties of Derry, Antrim, and Down and other Northern Counties is so superior to that which prevails in the west as to amount to full 50 per cent. difference in the value of the land."¹

The extent of the poverty may be gathered from Nicholl's report for the Poor Law Commission of 1838 :

"There were 2,385,000 persons in Ireland insufficiently provided with the common necessities of life and requiring relief for thirty weeks in the year, owing to want of work, and the wives of many others are obliged to beg systematically, while mendicancy is the sole resource of the aged and impotent."

Foster noticed a tremendous difference between the standard of living on the eastern seaboard and the rest of the country.

"In the west I never saw a woman below the rank of a lady or in town below that of a shopkeeper's wife, who wore stockings and shoes. In the county of Wexford I have not seen any woman not decently clad with stockings and shoes"²

and he contrasts the same county of Wexford with the inland town of Tipperary, "with its fine land and low rents where dirt and disorder and bad cultivation and savage brutality reign triumphant"; the soil of Wexford being "poor, thin soil, a kind of sandy loam; highly rented; but the rents were paid and the farmhouses comfortable."³

Nearly three and a half millions of the people lived in mud cabins, badly thatched with straw, having each but one room, and often without either a window or a chimney.⁴ In Kerry the percentage of such habitations was 66 per cent. of the total dwellings.⁵

The distressing conditions of the rural parts were reflected in the disorders of the country. There was much murder and other crime, and intimidation was rampant. "Men bear things and do things contrary to their inclination for fear of offending persons or of becoming unpopular, or of being threatened to be shot."⁶ The Land Commissioners of 1844 say (p. 42) :

"In Tipperary, for a long time past, and in some other counties more recently, there has prevailed a system of lawless violence, which has led in numerous instances to the perpetration of cold-blooded murders. These are generally acts of revenge for some supposed injury inflicted

¹ *Evidence of Griffith before Valuation Commission*, p. 59.

² *Letters on Ireland*, p. 472.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

⁴ *Commission Report*, 1841.

⁵ Godkin's *Land War*, p. 289.

⁶ Campbell Foster.

upon the party who commits or instigates the commission of the outrage. But the notions entertained of injury in such cases are regulated by a standard fixed by the will of the most lawless and unprincipled members of the community. If a tenant is removed, even after repeated warnings, from land which he has neglected or misused, he is looked upon in the districts to which we are now referring as an injured man, and the decree too often goes out for vengeance upon the landlord or the agent, and upon the man who succeeds to the farm ; and at times a large numerical proportion of the neighbourhood look with indifference upon the most atrocious acts of violence, and, by screening the criminal, abet and encourage the crime. Murders are perpetrated at noon-day on a public highway, and whilst the assassin coolly retires, the people look on, and evince no horror at the bloody deed. The whole nature of Christian men appears in such cases to be changed and the one absorbing feeling as to the possession of land stifles all others, and extinguishes the plainest principles of humanity."

Speaking of sympathy with crime, Campbell Foster¹ says :

"Many farmers well to do are engaged in them. They have for their object a system of terrorism, which shall set the law and the rights of individuals at defiance, and they are directly fostered and increased by the Repeal agitation which is going on. I have it on undoubted authority, and from numerous parties, that the expectation of the small farmer is that if he gets repeal he will secure the possession of his land without acknowledgment or rent to anybody. Under this impression a code of terrorism is encouraged which resists not only ejection from land, and the payment of arrears of rent ; but which forbids the turning away of a servant, resists the payment of debts ; prevents the giving of evidence and punishes the assertion of every right with the threat of violence or death, which is almost invariably carried out."

He gives examples : (1) Evictions of tenant for non-payment of rents ; incoming tenant had to work land under police protection ; (2) tenant named Hooley sold his plot of half an acre for £20 ; the purchaser was threatened by Hooley's brother ; (3) shots discharged at the home of a steward who had dismissed a ploughman ; (4) a local doctor who was manager of a local loan fund board, dreadfully beaten either because he refused a loan or enforced payment ; (5) Poor Law clerk threatened if he did not do as he was required in reference to his duty as clerk ; (6) steward murdered because he was the means of dismissing lazy workmen, and Aubrey de Vere spoke of a farmer who was threatened by armed men if he did not kill his calves, for the poor required milk ; if a farm had employment for

¹ *Letters on Ireland*, p. 347.

fifty men and a hundred were looking for it, they prevented the others working, so that they should not have employment either. The *Journal des Débats*¹ remarked :

“What in that country renders the repression of crime almost impossible is the passive complicity of a part of the population. In Ireland the murderer is frequently considered as the victim and is regarded as a martyr ; he executes his vengeance in the open day on the public road and sometimes withdraws without a pursuit. Of what avail are laws against morals which absolve even assassination ? Railroads are voted for the country and it is wished to extract British capital. But how do the Irish receive the introduction of railroads ? What use do they intend to make of them ? Do they wish to use them for the development of their commerce and to operate by the union of distance one of customers and interests ? No, they simply calculate on converting them into an arm against England in case of a contest.”

The *Journal* gives quotations from *The Nation*, and stigmatizes them as “barbarous folly.”

But, while Ireland's political guides taught the people that they had a monopoly of distress and grievances, the fact was that other countries would have been as bad had there existed the same reckless increase of population and aversion from emigration. Martin (p. 130) cites :

“So great is the emigration from the Highlands this season (June, 1831) that the passengers are forced to go to England and Ireland to procure conveyances to transport them across the Atlantic. There are one or two districts in the Highlands that already present a gloomy and desolate appearance ; and ere the emigration season is over, it is calculated that in many cases tracts of land, ten miles in extent, will be tenantless ! The system of rack-renting has been carried to such an extent by the Highland lairds that their tenants, that hardy race of men, are reluctantly compelled to expatriate themselves from the land of their fathers. Young persons go to provide a home for their parents, or parents to join their families who are settled in America, but by far the great part go upon chance, declaring that they can be no worse.”²

“In a great proportion of Scotland, where the poor laws are not carried into effect, miseries similar to that which pervaded Ireland exist. All the Highlands are in this state.”³ “Many of the Scotch poor are so neglected by landlords and their men of business as to be driven out into other parts of the kingdom as common beggars. Swarms of common beggars from all quarters infest the northern country and raise contributions far exceeding what would support the district

¹ December, 1845, quoted *Times*, December 8, 1845.

² *Glasgow Chronicle*, June, 1831.

³ Nimmo. Evidence in 1824.

poor.”¹ “It would puzzle any man, even those who are intimate with the condition and habits of the Highland peasantry, to say in what manner a great proportion of them subsist. When the potato fails from mildew or frost, the unhappy natives are reduced to the extremity of want; the luxury of butchers’ meat is so rare as not to deserve classification in this place; the state of the Scotch islanders is such that should a fish be found mangled by gulls, or even in the incipient stage of putrefaction, it is joyfully seized upon, seaweed and shellfish are eaten by them; and at a moderate estimate one-sixth of their food consists of these miserable scrapings.”²

And Newenham, giving evidence before the Poor Law Inquiry of 1830, said that the poorer classes of the Irish were better off than those of the same class in France and Italy.³

In 1846, the gaunt spectre of famine was stalking towards the land.

There had been visitations before. The year 1741 was called *Bliadhain an air* or year of slaughter.⁴ According to Wyse this famine carried off 400,000 persons.⁵ It is not unworthy of mention that the Irish Parliament of that day made neither grant nor loan to assuage the distress, though it passed a statute 15 George II, c. 8 “for the effectual securing of the payment of rents and preventing fraud by tenants.” There was a partial famine in 1822. On that occasion the British Parliament voted over £300,000 towards public works to provide employment; a meeting in London, at which the Archbishop of Canterbury attended, raised £311,081, of which £44,177 was raised in Ireland. There was distress in 1835, 1836, 1839; to relieve which sums were raised by Parliamentary vote or by appeal to the British charitable public.

The condition of the potato-fed peasantry has been already described. The potato is a precarious crop, and the famine of 1822 had been caused by its failure in certain districts. It was now to be attacked by a new enemy—the disease called the blight, which in the course of a few days can turn an abundant harvest into a mass of rotten vegetation.⁶ The blight first appeared in North America in

¹ Brewster’s *Encyclopædia*, 1830.

² *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, No. 7.

³ Part III, p. 357, cited Martin, p. 116.

⁴ Trevelyan’s *Irish Crisis*, p. 11.

⁵ *History of Catholic Emancipation*, vol. I, p. 30.

⁶ Father Mathew, travelling from Cork to Dublin on July 27, 1846, saw the potato plant blooming everywhere “in all the luxuriance of an abundant harvest”; returning on August 3, it was a “waste of putrefying vegetation. In many places the wretched people were seated on the fences of their decaying gardens, wringing their hands and wailing bitterly the destruction that had left them foodless” (Trevelyan, p. 39).

1844; it made its way to Europe in 1845, attacking Belgium, Hungary, Germany, Holland, and the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom felt its worst effects, scarcely a district escaping. Its ravages continued in 1846 and 1847.

The relief of a nation suddenly deprived of its food supplies and without the means of substituting others is a stupendous task. It requires constructive genius, colossal organization and heavy financial aid. No one can say that the measures taken were adequate, but it is merely silly and stupid anti-British propaganda to suggest that the Government and the British public were not fully alive to their responsibilities and determined, as far as humanly possible, to shoulder them.

On the first appearance of the disease in 1845, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the subject. The Government purchased £100,000 worth of Indian corn for the purpose of porridge. The people at first had a strong prejudice against "Peel's brimstone" as it was called, there being an old superstition that it had the effect of turning those who ate it black. A system of public works was established; chiefly connected with the making of roads. Nearly 100,000 men were employed. The early crop escaped in 1845, and the attack was only partial.

In 1846, the blight took place earlier and was of a much more sweeping kind, and greater exertions were necessary. The system of public works was renewed. Some idea of the character of the organization required may be had from the facts that the Board of Works had 5,000 separate works to superintend; they employed fifteen thousand officers,¹ they had to deal with an average of 800 letters a day.² In October an average of 114,000 persons were employed, the number rose to 285,000 in November; 440,000 in December; 570,000 in January, 1847; and 734,000 in March, 1847.³ The employment of this 734,000 cost £1,050,772 per month, and meant the relief of three million persons, taking an average of four persons to the family of each person employed. Relief

¹ Senior, vol. II, p. 4.

² On January 4 there were 3,104 letters to be attended to; February 15, 4,900; April 19, 4,340; May 17, 6,033. An official of the Board of Works, writing to a friend, observed: "I hope never to see such a winter and spring again. I can truly say, in looking back upon it, even now, that it appears to me, not a succession of weeks and days, but one long continuous day, with occasional intervals of nightmare sleep. Rest one could never have, night nor day, when one felt that in every minute lost a score of men might die."—Trevelyan's *Irish Crisis*, p. 49.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

committees were appointed all over the country, and Indian corn was distributed. A drawback to the relief works became manifest. The prospect of the "Queen's pay" drew the people from their agricultural pursuits; further, the wages often went into the pockets of those who were by no means the worst off, and who in many cases had some method of livelihood, leaving the most destitute and helpless unrelieved. Accordingly, the relief works were gradually reduced and a more extensive system of direct feeding of the people established instead. The taste for maize grew; there were imported into Ireland in the first six months of 1847, 2,849,508 quarters, worth, at the current prices, £8,764,943.¹ The Lord Lieutenant was able to report with truth, that "the Irish market was freer, cheaper and better supplied than that of any country where distress prevailed and where those measures of interference and restriction had been unwisely adopted which were successfully resisted here."² The best brains in the English public service were put on the job. The young gentlemen of the Young Ireland Party, without business training or experience of any kind whatsoever, thought the right thing to do was to prohibit the export of any corn from Ireland, which at that time exported 2,000,000 quarters annually to Great Britain and imported 500,000 quarters.³ What damage may be done to a country by ill-digested schemes of this sort is proved by an incident in earlier Irish history.

"In the month of February, 1776, Government laid an embargo by proclamation on the export of provisions from Ireland. In consequence of this, the distress of the country greatly increased, her linen trade declined, her provision trade was stopped, thousands of artisans were unemployed in Dublin, and the complaints were general throughout the kingdom."⁴

The figures above given are the best answer to the Young Ireland plan. The scheme of enabling the country, without any dislocation of trade or wrench of the economic fabric, to import a food, cheap, sustaining and not unpalatable, in great abundance was obviously preferable. The people were able to pay for the Indian corn out of their wages. Relief committees were established, with statutory authority, consisting of magistrates, clergymen of all denominations, and the largest ratepayers, in each electoral division. In July,

¹ Trevelyan, p. 73.

² Trevelyan, p. 73.

³ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 44.

⁴ *Life of Grattan*, by his Son, vol. I, p. 283.

1847, out of the 2,049 electoral divisions into which Ireland was then divided, 1,826 were brought under the operation of the Act; and 3,020,712 persons received separate rations, of whom 2,265,534 were adults and 755,178 were children.¹ Cooking utensils and grinding mills were provided for a people whose ignorant and primitive ideas were not the least obstacle to any relief scheme. By these means was the famine stayed.

Private charity was also invoked. The Queen proclaimed a day of fast and prayer (March 24, 1847) which was rigorously observed. Subscription lists were opened. British citizens from the ends of the earth sent their contributions, from India, Mexico, and the backwoods of Canada. A list initiated by the Queen brought in £171,533, another under the auspices of the British Association totalled £263,251, making a total of £434,748, of which Ireland got five-sixths and Scotland, which was also suffering, got the remaining sixth. There were many thousands of other smaller channels through which subscriptions were sent.² The total sum raised by British charities was £1,100,000.³ It was a common practice for ladies in England to have parishes assigned to them in Ireland, and each lady did all she could. The self-denial necessary to support this charitable drain was carried to such an extent at Brighton and elsewhere that the confectioners and tradespeople complained that they suffered severely in their business. But the bounty of the U.S.A. transcended everything. The supplies sent across the Atlantic "were on a scale unparalleled in the history of the world."⁴ The entire amount advanced by the British Government in relief of the famine was £7,132,268, of which £3,377,529, was a free grant, and the remainder was a loan, which was remitted in 1853 when Ireland became subject to Income Tax.⁵

From January 13, 1847, to November 1, of the same year, 278,005 persons landed at Liverpool from Ireland; of these 122,981 sailed from that port to foreign countries. The remainder stayed, to form the nucleus of the large Irish population in Liverpool. The city of Liverpool received with great kindness the unfortunate outcasts, many of whom were suffering from fever and other diseases. Thirteen relief stations were put up; twenty-four additional relieving officers were appointed; the district medical officers were

¹ Trevelyan, pp. 84, 88.

² Trevelyan, p. 116.

³ Godkins' *Land War*, p. 249.

⁴ Godkins' *Land War*, p. 299.

⁵ O'Brien's *Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine*, 257.

increased from six to twenty-one. Nineteen relieving officers caught the fever and died. The influx of poor Irish by way of Glasgow and many other British ports was very large.¹ In self-defence the city of Boston, U.S.A., was obliged to pass laws restricting immigration.²

But, in spite of Government and private aid, the sufferings of the people were terrible. Mr. W. E. Forster³ describes the people in Westport as

“sauntering to and fro, with hopeless air, and hunger-struck look, a mob of starved almost naked women round the poorhouse clamouring for soup-tickets, our inn, the headquarters of the road engineer and pay clerks were beset by a crowd of beggars for work” ;

and, speaking of another district,

“some of the women and children we saw on the road were abject cases of poverty and almost naked. The few rags they had on were with the greatest difficulty held together, and in a few weeks, as they are utterly unable to provide themselves with fresh clothes unless they be given them, they must become absolutely naked”⁴

There were many deaths from starvation : in 1842, 187 ; in 1845, 516 ; in 1846, 2,041 ; in 1847, 6,058 ; in 1848, and 1849, together, 9,395 ; in 1850, more than in 1846 ; in the first quarter of 1851, 652 ; total from 1841-1851, 21,770.⁵ There were also many deaths from fever and other disease. The total mortality for the five years ending in 1851 from all causes in Ireland was close on a million.⁶

During the famine years, 30,000 ejectments were served, but O’Connell bore testimony to the forbearance of the landlord class as a whole. “As a general rule no one can find fault with the conduct of the Irish landlords since the awful calamity came upon us.”⁷

It would be too heartless to say that the famine was a blessing in disguise ; yet some beneficial results flowed from it. It checked the tendency to over rapid increase in the population ; it stimulated emigration ; it taught the people not to place too much reliance on

¹ Trevelyan, p. 130.

² Trevelyan’s *Irish Crisis*, p. 143.

³ Afterwards Irish Chief Secretary.

⁴ Gavan Duffy’s *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 431.

⁵ *Census of Ireland*, 1851.—O’Brien, p. 243. Prior to 1841 the average of deaths from starvation was in Ireland about sixty, in England about a hundred.

⁶ 985,366, *Census*, p. 246. O’Brien, 246.

⁷ Speech at Conciliation Hall, January 11, 1847. Gavan Duffy’s *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 278.

the precarious potato ; it encouraged the production of cereals ; it marked the beginning of the era of prosperity and progress which, with some interruptions, has marked Ireland's course ever since.

John O'Connell was candid enough and courageous enough to pay tribute to the efforts of the Government to afford relief.¹

" In the year in which we write, the year 1846, we have nearly the same state of affairs as in 1822, with the difference, that the Government did wisely and timely step in this year, and do what the Government of the former period threw upon the benevolence of private individuals to do, namely to supply to the starving millions of Ireland and prevent the depopulation of the land by the cruel death of starvation. For doing this, for so promptly and efficaciously stepping in to remove or lighten the terrible effects of the calamity with which it has pleased Providence for its own inscrutable purposes, to visit this afflicted land, Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues in office have received deserved commendation, and those who have recently succeeded them in the administration of affairs are showing a most laudable anxiety to carry out the plans of relief they found so active and successfully at work."

But the Young Ireland Party put the blame for the famine on the Government. " Was any price," Gavan Duffy asked, " too high to pay for the chance of deliverance from a dominion which permitted or inflicted horrors like these ? " The Irish people believed this and added to it something of their own imagining ; to this day the general belief in Ireland, and amongst the Irish in America, is that England and the English people looked callously on while the adjoining island suffered the pangs of starvation. Ignorance of all the essential facts relating to the famine is one of the causes that account for the terrible legacy of hatred of England which survives to this day, and which is expressed by Tynan in his *History of the Invincibles* ² thus :

" There was no famine in 1846-7, but an artificial famine. The failure of a single esculent—the potato—this could not be called famine in a land that produced enough corn and cattle in either of these years to feed more than twenty millions of people ; but this corn and cattle had to be shipped to England to feed their British foes, while the Irish people died like rotten sheep by the wayside."

In the eight years from 1847 to 1854, no less than 1,600,000 persons emigrated, the greater part of them to the United States, where they found employment in occupations that rank lowest in that country :

¹ *Life of O'Connell*, vol. II, p. 361.

² P. 205.

EMIGRATION FIGURES 1845-1867.¹

Year.	Total from U.K.	Irish.
1845	93,501	52,189
1846	129,851	72,478
1847	258,270	144,157
1848	248,089	138,474
1849	299,498	167,169
1850	280,849	156,760
1851	335,966	187,324
1852	368,764	205,831
1853	329,937	205,269
1854	323,429	159,415
1855	176,807	86,824
1856	176,554	80,269
1857	212,875	94,787
1858	113,972	49,573
1859	120,432	62,841
1860	128,469	77,746
1861	91,770	48,437
1862	121,214	59,579
1863	223,758	129,765
1864	208,900	118,187
1865	209,801	103,788
1866	204,882	102,980
1867	195,953	92,785

A marked tendency to increase in the size of farms was one of the results of the famine.

TABLE SHOWING SIZE OF HOLDINGS.²

	1841	1851
Not exceeding 1 acre	134,314	37,728
Exceeding 1 but not 5	310,436	88,083
„ 5 „ 15	252,799	191,854
„ 15 „ 30	79,342	141,311
30	48,625	149,090

While the famine was approaching the Young Irelanders were heading towards rebellion. To the ears of the writers of *The Nation* the French Revolution of 1848 “sounded like a message from

¹ Nassau Senior, vol. I, p. 281.

² O'Brien, p. 59.

Heaven.”¹ *The Nation* thought (and the reasoning is difficult to follow, for England was at peace with France and with the world) that “Ireland’s opportunity—thank God and France—has come at last.”² Mitchel, in the *United Irishman*, was as outspoken as any Crown prosecutor wishing for evidence against him could desire.; he repeated Wolfe Tone’s motto,

“Our Independence must be had at all hazards. If the men of property will not support us, they must fall; we can support ourselves by the aid of that numerous and respectable class of the community, the men of no property.”

While *The Nation* would have been content with an Irish Parliament, a native Privy Council, an Irish flag and a National Guard, Mitchel was for nothing short of a Republic; he threw caution to the winds; he had no definite plans, but boldly announced his intention of taking the field and dared the Government to do its worst.

The Government took steps to counter a rising; 12,000 soldiers were stationed in Dublin; all the public buildings were occupied. The Northern Orangemen and the Southern Loyalists armed themselves.

The confederates met and sent a message of congratulation to the new Government of France. Lamartine’s reply was to the effect that France could not interfere in the internal affairs of the British Empire. The Government had a copy of the reply posted on all the police stations in Ireland. This was depressing; but the susceptibility to thrills of the physical force men was again to be tested. A revolution in Wurtemberg, and the possibility of a Chartist rising in England opportunely presented themselves. The effect of the former is described as “electric”;³ but Wurtemberg in travail, as the events showed, was no help to insurgents in Tipperary. The Chartist situation was quietly handled; the proclamation of and the precautionary measures against an intended great procession to Westminster easily disposed of that business.

O’Brien and Meagher were prosecuted for sedition; but were saved by disagreement of the respective juries. Mitchel, who was tried on May 21, 1848, was not so fortunate; he was found guilty. and sentenced to twenty years’ transportation. Gavan Duffy pays a tribute to the manner of his treatment on board the ship which

¹ Gavan Duffy’s *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 535.

² *The Nation*, cited *ibid.*, p. 537.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 556.

³ Gavan Duffy’s *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 576.

brought him to Van Diemen's Land; he was allowed to take his meals at the Commander's table. The measure of support he had in the country may be gauged by comparing the sum of £1,700 subscribed for his wife and family, with the sums subscribed to the O'Connell movement.

About to engage the power of England, the confederates now thought it high time to organize for the purpose; an attractive form of enlistment in a National Guard issued from their printer's hands. The Government promptly proclaimed the National Guard and a proposed Council of Three Hundred. Gavan Duffy states that Dublin City and County had thirty clubs numbering from two hundred to five hundred members; Cork had eleven clubs; County Tipperary ten; County Wexford four; Ennis one. But there were no supplies, little or no arms or ammunition, and no money. The Government had 50,000 troops, with all the appliances and organization of war, at their disposal. Further, the Government had, at its back, the majority of the nation which had no wish to be stampeded into a disastrous rebellion. Before his conviction, Mitchel had gone to Limerick to rouse that county; he had to take refuge from an angry mob, who stoned the room where he lay, and burnt him in effigy. When a Bill to strengthen the Treason Felony Act, by bringing incitements to treason within the statute, was before the House of Commons, some of the Repealers voted for it; a meeting of Irish peers and members of Parliament, including John O'Connell and the O'Gorman Mahon, placed their services at the disposal of the Crown in the event of a rising.

Gavan Duffy explains the want of preparation up to this time: "Mitchel had all along derided preparation, and O'Brien could not make up his mind to abandon hope, of support from the gentry."¹ Emissaries were now sent to the United States and to France. A new Directory or Council was appointed—Smith O'Brien, Meagher, Gavan Duffy, John Dillon, Richard O'Gorman and John Martin. Martin published the *Irish Felon*, successor to the *United Irishman*, and of it Fintan Lalor became the leading spirit and stamped his policy on the journal. Lalor "thought the gentry were irreconcilable and ought to be expelled from the country."² Duffy himself seems to have come round to Lalor's view:

"If a revolution had prospered one of the first acts of a successful general would probably have been to suspend the payment of rent and

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 607. ² *Ibid.*, p. 613.

order the people to take possession of the land and fight hard to keep it ; " ¹ the landlords " scarce hope to remain as annuitants without political influence or authority in a country which they might have led and ruled." ²

In July, 1848, Duffy, O'Doherty, Doheny, Williams, and Meagher were arrested and lodged in Newgate, a prison under the control of the Dublin Corporation. They were treated with great liberality and consideration. They were allowed to see everybody ; the conferences of the Confederation were in effect held in Newgate from that time forth. Martin and Duffy wrote as usual for their respective journals. Even allowing for a certain amount of exaggeration on the part of Gavan Duffy, some progress seems to have been made in the enrolment of persons in the Confederate clubs ; he puts the number of clubs at 150, numbering 50,000 men.³ A large meeting was held by Meagher and Doheny on the slopes of Slievenamon, a hill near Clonmel in Tipperary. Gavan Duffy says that 50,000 people were at the meeting.⁴ The *Annual Register* puts the number at 10,000 to 15,000.⁵ Meagher told them that as all the property had originally belonged to the people, a division of it would only be a resumption of their own property to the people.⁶ O'Brien's career in the South and South-West was a " continuous triumph " ; " he found that the pulse of the country beat passionately for action." ⁷ How much of this was froth, and how much solid substance, we shall see presently. To a Government proclamation enjoining the people to give up arms, Martin and Duffy replied by articles exhorting the people to keep them.

Certain discussions that went on show the leaders in a lamentable state of vacillation ; apparently waiting for something to turn up. But unless the movement was to fizzle out, without having signalized its entry into the world with anything better than loud talk, something had to be done. The council of the Confederates met—Dillon, Meagher, McGhee and P. J. Smyth being present—and resolved upon a rising.

The story of the attempt is related in Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History* (pp. 641–700) and, having regard to the authorship, we may assume that the spirit of the narrative is as favourable as can be imagined.

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 620.

² *Ibid.*, p. 621.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 632.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 634.

⁵ *Annual Register*, 1848, p. 101.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 634.

Not Don Quixote, in his tawdry apparel, in his flaming ardour for the betterment of a bad, bold world, presents a spectacle more sorry, more pathetic, more tragic, more out of relation to human affairs, passions and emotions, and withal, more chivalrous and gallant than that presented by Smith O'Brien and his comrades when they went forth to stir up the peasantry of Ireland to a conflict with the might of the British Empire. The plan of campaign was Dillon's—to seize Kilkenny, call the people to arms, throw up defence works, and from the old historic seat of Government, proclaim the independence of Ireland. Dillon and others went by the Wexford coach to Loughlinstown, Co. Carlow, where they met O'Brien; and with him travelled to Enniscorthy. A public meeting in that town was held; O'Brien announced the rising; "the people were greatly moved"; "when the popular leaders left for Kilkenny a large procession on foot and on horseback accompanied them and left them with passionate prayers for their success;"¹ but of material help they seem to have got none. They made a diversion on their way to Graiguenamanagh to get a blessing from General Cloney, of 1798 fame. At Graiguenamanagh "a procession of stout boatmen and peasants was immediately formed to escort O'Brien into Kilkenny;" but they were met by Dr. Cane, a gentleman who seems to have had some common sense. He warned them that the Kilkenny garrison had been strengthened, and they were persuaded that if Kilkenny alone rose they would be defeated. Accordingly, it was decided to draw the County Tipperary. They reached Callan, where their coming was anticipated, and that dull town, which never before had had such a lark, turned out to meet them.

"A band, bonfires, green boughs, and all the ordinary evidences of popular favour awaited them. They held a hasty meeting and warned the people to be ready for a speedy summons to fight for Ireland. Many of the Royal Irish Hussars, who were stationed in the town, attended the meeting, and it was noted that they were among the most delighted of the audience."²

If it were not irreverent to say so in relation to so sacred a theme, one might be tempted to suggest that those Hussars had more sense of humour than the chronicler of the events; for the enthusiasm produced no recruits.

On then to Carrick. "A memorable spectacle awaited them.

¹ Gayan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 647. ² *Ibid.*, p. 642.

Their coming had been announced, and the whole population was abroad, wild with excitement." ¹ A council of war was held, and stock taken. In the vicinity there were 300 rifles and muskets, a good many pikes, possibly 3,000 men ; but at Pilltown there were 1,200 British soldiers, with two howitzers and two field pieces, and Waterford and Clonmel close by to send reinforcements. Carrick was abandoned ; and they trudged to Cashel of the Kings. But here a great disappointment awaited them.

"Instead of sentinels and watchfires, columns of sturdy peasants carts laden with provisions, flaming smithies where strong men were hammering iron and steel into serviceable weapons and all the picturesque incidents of peasant war which their eager fancy had painted, Cashel was like a city of the dead." ²

But shouting and flagwaving never won a war. The Young Irelanders were so far generals without an army ; so they left the towns and went in search of the more martially patriotic rustics of the countryside. At Killenaule a couple of hundred peasants "showed great readiness to fight," but were damped in their ardour by being told just to hold themselves in readiness.³ On to Mullinahone, where the local smith said he was "killed" trying to hammer out pikeheads enough for the numberless stout arms that itched for them ; Kickham, who was present, says there were "6,000 men armed with fowling pieces, impromptu pikes and pitchforks." ⁴ Drill was necessary to make them ready to meet the British army, so drilled they were during the night ; in the morning they went off to breakfast and never came back. O'Brien walked into the police barrack ; the door of it was open ; a jovial, big policeman—here I quote from Kickham—⁵ "put his head out of the upper window and said, 'Yerrah ! Sure, the time isn't come yet to surrender our arms. D'ye wait till the right time comes.' " O'Brien went off ; when his back was turned the policemen—treacherous fellows—walked quietly to another station, taking their arms with them. Off to Ballingarry, on the way to which they were met by 500 men, at whose head they marched into the village. The priests told the five hundred they were going to their doom ; 450 of them saw that the advice was good and went off to finish digging the potatoes ; poor O'Brien sat down on a bank, and tears of shame and mortification ran down his cheeks.⁶ According

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 649. ² *Ibid.*, p. 658.
³ *Ibid.*, p. 658. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 661. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 661. ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 663.

to McManus, who was present, the force had dwindled to a dozen on Wednesday, July 26; apparently O'Brien had sent some to forage for provisions, but like the dove from the ark, having found safety, they never returned. On Thursday morning, by ringing chapel bells, they got some 150 together; drilled them; marched them to Mullinahone. On the parish priest's advice, one-third of the number left; thence to Slievenamon, the scene of the 50,000 or so meeting already spoken of. "Where were the singing multitudes now," poor Gavan Duffy asks.¹ Desertions occurred by the way; there was not a score left when Slievenamon was reached; and these were dismissed.²

There was an incident at Killenaule, where O'Brien and his comrades next found themselves, which for a while promised some excitement. Some barricades had been put up; a party of British cavalry approached. There were thirty insurgent peasants with one rifle, two muskets, some pikes and pitchforks, and a crowd of women and children. The troops demanded to pass. They were asked to give an assurance that they were not out for O'Brien's capture. As they had never heard of the great man before, and must have been fairly puzzled by the whole performance, they had no hesitation in giving the required assurance. They were allowed through, quite politely, but one at a time. The people cheered the troops. McManus comments on the episode: "Thus ended the affair at Killenaule. It may be sneered at as a paltry business but, all the circumstances considered, it was, in fact, an act of reckless bravery."³ Mitchel afterwards blamed Dillon for not having commenced the "war" at Killenaule, but Gavan Duffy says "to attack a troop of dragoons with one rifle and two muskets was scarcely an enterprise which commended itself to a man of Dillon's brains and judgment." Gavan Duffy goes on to say, "The news of this trifling success had such an effect on the people that they began to stream into the village."

A consultation was held, at which several alternative plans were discussed: (1) to wait for harvest time, remaining in hiding meanwhile; (2) to form a National Government, offering farms rent free to every man who would fight, seizing everything necessary, and paying therefor by drafts on the said Government; (3) to raise other districts, O'Brien remaining at Killenaule. The last was

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 663. ² *Ibid.*, p. 666.

³ Quoted Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 666.

agreed to. Dillon, with some others, went to Temple-dorney. There lived a Father Kenyon, who some years before had been most forward in the movement. He refused them aid, shelter or advice. The unsympathetic creature would not even allow them to go through the performance of ringing the chapel bell for recruits.

The movement collapsed with what is known as the fight of Widow McCormack's cabbage garden. Some forty of the Royal Irish Constabulary were approaching the village of Ballingarry. Hearing that the rebels were in the village, they ensconced themselves in a small two-storeyed house on one of the roads commanding the village. The rebels, who had about twenty guns and pistols and as many pikes and pitchforks, approached the house through the adjoining cabbage garden. One or two volleys from the police, and the peasants fled, leaving some dead and wounded behind; Smith O'Brien's "rebellion" was over.

Attempts in other directions were also futile. A scheme to assemble at Blanchardstown and thence march to Navan and Trim, where the garrisons were reported friendly, resulted in sixteen men turning up at the rendezvous, whereupon the project was abandoned. O'Gorman and two local attorneys made a sort of a show at Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick; they seized the mails; but the little band dispersed on hearing the news from Ballingarry. McGhee had been deputed to seize a ship at Glasgow with the aid of the Irish in that city. No ship was seized; McGhee made his way to Sligo, where he tried to raise the people, but failed.

The comment of one of the leaders writing to Gavan Duffy was just:

"The people did not want to fight; they were dissatisfied, but not stirred by that noble rage which impels men to face great odds and prefer even death to a life of misery and degradation. . . . Moreover, they were very ignorant on the subject of politics. The horizon of their thoughts was bounded by the parish in which they lived, or at best, by the county, and an Irish Nation was a phrase to which no real meaning was attached";

and Smith O'Brien himself wrote: "The people preferred to die of starvation at home, or to flee as voluntary exiles to other lands, rather than to fight for their lives and liberties."

The *Morning Chronicle* (London) paid a fine tribute to the gallantry of the Confederates.

"The confederates ran a career, brief indeed, but not undistinguished by the display of talent, eloquence, vigour, and determination of no common order. It fell because its tone was pitched too high for 'chronic agitation,' and because in the Irish people, there was nothing like the material for a successful rebellion against British power. But at least it fell with a crash; its champions did their very best to carry all their professed designs into execution, and were themselves the first, if not the only, victims of their treasonable rashness. They were most criminal, and most foolish, but they were neither mean, nor false, nor cowardly. To do them justice, we will say that the world saw no shrinking in their ranks; there was not a single conspicuous man among the Young Ireland Party, who did not deliberately set his life upon the cast and throw for a successful revolution or the gallows."¹

The leaders were tried. O'Brien, Meagher, MacManus, Martin and O'Doherty were convicted and sentenced to death, but reprieved and sent to Van Diemen's Land. Gavan Duffy was tried four times, the jury disagreeing each time; whereupon the prosecution was abandoned. O'Gorman escaped to America and became a judge of the Superior Court of New York. There was an amnesty in 1854. Dillon went to America and later, in 1866, returned and became a Member of the British House of Commons representing an Irish constituency. Smith and Martin also became Members of Parliament; the former was one of the most eloquent men in the House of Commons. Meagher fought for the North in the war of the American Secession; he became Acting Governor of Montana. Mitchel followed the profession of journalism in America and devoted his pen to abuse of England, advocacy of negro slavery, and praise of Louis Napoleon. McGhee went to Canada, where he achieved distinction. "He came back to Ireland and pampered the pride of her enemies by repudiating his early career. His resistance to a Fenian invasion of a country where Irishmen were generously received and fairly treated was not an offence but a merit. . . . And the end of his career was that he was foully murdered, doubtless by some scoundrel of his own race."²

Gavan Duffy restarted *The Nation*, but on entirely different lines. It became definitely anti-revolutionary; and, instead, advocated the cause of land reform. He entered Parliament in 1852, but being impatient of the slow methods of that assembly, he went to Australia where he became a state Prime Minister.

¹ Gavan Duffy's *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 643 n.

² *Ibid.*, p. 776.

A Tenant League was formed, of which Gavan Duffy afterwards—in 1882—remarked :

“ The movement which then commenced and movements which were its legitimate successors, have since disestablished the landlords and the Church, and made aristocratic dictation and Protestant ascendancy as obsolete as the Brehon Laws.”

An insurrection under the auspices of Fintan Lalor was attempted on September 16, 1849. A few men under the leadership of one Brennan attacked a police barrack at Cappoquin ; they were repulsed and dispersed.

Comparable in magnitude to the O’Connell Repeal movement, is the Total Abstinence movement inaugurated by Theobald Mathew on April 10, 1838. Father Mathew was born in 1790, near Cashel, Co. Tipperary, and was of Welsh gentle stock. His ancestors had settled in Ireland in 1637, and he was closely connected with the Earl of Llandaff. He became a Franciscan Capuchin, and when provincial of that order in Cork, was much struck by the evils resulting from alcoholic excesses in Ireland. The idea of total abstinence, however, seems to have been suggested to him by the Cork Quakers, who had themselves founded a “ teetotal ” or Total Abstinence Society, on the lines of the first society of the kind founded in 1832 at Preston, Lancashire. Father Mathew’s great influence with the poor, derived from his great love of them, combined with a most attractive personality¹ and considerable eloquence, made him specially suited for the great mission he now undertook.

He administered the first total abstinence pledge on April 10, 1838, and thereafter held frequent meetings in the chapels and open air. Some of his first “ cases ” were remarkable successes ; confirmed drunkards were reformed. The news ran like wildfire

¹ Carlyle thus describes him : “ a broad solid looking man, with grey hair, mild intelligent eyes, massive, rather aquiline nose and countenance : the very face of him attracts you.” Thackeray’s description : “ a short, handsome, honest looking man, of some two and forty years, with nothing remarkable in his manner except that it is exceedingly simple, hearty, and manly.” Kohl’s description is : “ Father Mathew is not tall, but is well built and proportioned, his movements and address are simple and unaffected, and altogether he has something about him that wins good will. His features are regular and full of noble expression, of mildness and indomitable firmness ; his eyes are large, his forehead is straight, high and commanding, his mouth is small and his chin round—projecting firm and large like Napoleon’s.” “ Mr. Mathew,” said the Duke of Devonshire, “ is a man of such divine countenance and of a manner so marvellously winning, that I could easily understand how the people are moved as by an impulse to fall down before him.”—*Life of Father Mathew*, by Frank Mathew, p. 10.

through the slums that he had the gift of curing drunkenness and, indeed, sickness as well. By January he had 200,000 persons enrolled; a four day meeting in Limerick brought 150,000 recruits; Waterford followed with 80,000; Maynooth with 35,000, Dublin with 75,000, Galway with 100,000.

He established temperance reading rooms in every town, and endeavoured to arrange courses of literary and other education in connexion with them. A visit he paid to the North was a great success. The most Orange localities gave him an enthusiastic reception, Cootehill, a great Orange stronghold, turning out in procession, with Orange flags flying to welcome him. He kept the movement clear of all politics, and was much chagrined when O'Connell, whom, perhaps not without reason, he suspected of wanting to make political capital out of the movement, put himself at the head of a great procession in Cork.¹

The effect in Ireland was extraordinary. Miss Edgeworth speaks of the public houses in Edgeworth town being left empty; it was said that 5,000,000 persons took the pledge.² The production of Irish whisky fell from 12,296,000 gallons, on which £1,434,457 duty was paid, in 1839, to 5,546,483 gallons, on which £852,418 duty was paid, in 1844; the number of serious crimes diminished by about a third. He paid visits to Scotland and England, and was very favourably received; *The Times* was enthusiastic in his praise; and Bishop Stanley, of Norwich, welcomed him at a public meeting. Later, he was granted a life annuity of £300 from the Civil List; and a sum of £1,000—which he owed to the Board of Works in connection with church building he had undertaken was forgiven. A visit to America in 1848 was also a success.

But even in the apostle's lifetime the Irish movement showed signs of sagging; Father Mathew's heart was sorely grieved by the backsliding. The famine may have been partly the cause of it, but the chief cause, no doubt, was that a pledge that is the outcome of momentary, if intense enthusiasm, is scarcely ever kept. Father Mathew, too, got into bad health.³ He got a stroke of paralysis in 1847, another in 1853, and died in 1856. Of the great numbers who took his pledge, it is certain that tens of thousands—it may be

¹ At a meeting in Kilrush, when a speaker made some reference to O'Connell, he shouted, "Order, order."—Kohl, *On Ireland*, p. 59.

² Kohl, p. 52.

³ The arrest of Father Mathew for debt in 1844 suggests a great lapse in the movement, though he was speedily released as a result of a public subscription.

hundreds of thousands—kept it; and even at the smallest estimate it was a great work for God and the nation. But, when a generation had passed, the volume of drink that annually flowed down Irish throats was as large as if Father Mathew had never been born. All the same, the memory of him and his work is sweet and wholesome; the hope of its revival occurs and recurs to many good Irishmen; some day, perhaps, a movement may be brought about which, if less intense, may be more lasting. The course of the movement indicates the pliability and fickleness of the Irish character. We see a nation responding, easily and instantly, to the call of a saintly and striking personality; we see it pledged to his principles with every circumstance of solemnity—publicly, with ceremonial under religious sanction; we see it in a few years abandon these principles and forget all about them. There are many parallels in the political history of the country; instability is the mark of a nation which is guided rather by emotions than by convictions.

As far back as 1784, the increase of tillage was one of the objects upon which the hearts of Irish statesmen were set. In that year the Irish Parliament passed the law known as Foster's Corn Law, which granted large bounties upon the exportation of corn.

After the Union, the British Parliament gave substantial encouragement to Irish tillage by a tariff against foreign corn, while Irish corn was admitted duty free. This policy, which was one of the causes that led to the creation of small holdings, the increase of the population and the famine, was reversed by Peel on his conversion to free trade in 1846. In that year Peel passed a measure greatly reducing the import duties upon corn imported into Great Britain from abroad; and somewhat later, these duties were repealed altogether.

The fiscal business of each county was entrusted to the County gentry who were nominated to the Grand Jury by the High Sheriff. In former days the Grand Jury were unblushing in the perpetration of jobs, all the more readily as their deliberations were behind closed doors; and the Grand Jury cess or rate could be applotted at the will of the applotter.

A check was put upon corruption and jobbery, by the Grand Jury Act, 1836, which ensured publicity, gave persons aggrieved a right to appeal to the Judge of Assize, and made the cess payable on the poor law valuation.

Statutes were passed authorizing loans for improvement purposes. An Act in the year 1831 made the loan repayable in three years, in

1846 the period was extended to twenty years ; in the latter year the Drainage Act authorized loans up to £1,000,000 repayable principal and interest in twenty years at 3½ per cent.

An Irish Charitable Trusts Act was passed in 1844 vesting the control of Irish charities in a Board, one half of whom were to be Catholics and one half Protestants. The Act had the warm support of the Catholic bishops, but O'Connell bitterly opposed it for no apparent reason. The Act has worked extremely well in practice.¹

Maynooth College, opened in 1795 by the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Camden, was managed, under 35 Geo. III, c. 21, by a board of trustees, a majority of whom were to be laymen, and composed partly of Protestants, the Lord Chancellor and other judges were to be visitors. A statute was passed in 1841 which deprived the Government of all control over the institution, gave unlimited power to trustees of whom four-fifths were to be Catholic ecclesiastics, with the right of co-option in case of a vacancy ; a statute of 1845 increased the grant from £9,000 a year to £26,000 a year. £33,000 was voted for the extension of the buildings.

In 1845 three Queens Colleges, purely, undenominational in character, were established in Cork, Galway and Belfast, to provide University Education, and substantial State grants were provided. O'Connell opposed the Colleges, stigmatizing them as " Godless " ; the Young Irelanders supported them. The Catholic bishops were at that time divided in opinion, the Primate, Dr. Crolly, and the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Murray, being for ; the majority, headed by Dr. McHale, Archbishop of Tuam, being against. Later the unanimous voice of the hierarchy was raised against these colleges, but, nevertheless, many Catholics completed their education at these institutions.

In adopting as correct the following summary taken from Martin's *Ireland Before and After the Union* ² I must not be taken to advance it, as Martin does, as a justification for the Union.

" Since the Union Catholic Emancipation has been granted, the commerce between both countries has been put upon the footing of a coasting trade ; the Irish and British currency has been assimilated ; the municipal corporations have been reformed ; tithes have been converted into rent charge, thereby relieving the poor cultivators ; taxation has been materially diminished ; £10 millions sterling of Imperial Revenue have been spent upon public works ; a national

¹ O'Connell's papers called it a " nefarious," " accursed," " atrocious," " infernal," " hellish measure ! "

² P. 34.

system of education has been established; Orange associations have been abolished; a legislative provision has been made for the poor, sick and destitute; public banks and companies have been formed with British capital for the benefit of Ireland; Church rates have been abolished; the prison laws amended and consolidated; a survey and valuation of Ireland of a most complete and extensive nature has for some years been in progress as a remedy for the inequalities of local taxation; improved grand and petty jury bills have been passed; the criminal code has been reformed; the numerous abuses in every court of law have been rectified; a valuable and commercial system of county courts where justice is cheaply and effectively brought to the door of every poor man has been established in every part of Ireland. Dispensaries have been formed in every village in Ireland for the relief of the poor; free hospitals and lunatic asylums not surpassed in any part of the world have been established in every district; excellent and numerous roads now intersect the whole Island."

Every word of this summary is true.

Trevelyan¹ gives the following account of the sums "advanced in loan since the Union." In some cases the advances were not repaid and in others large grants were made in addition to loans.

	£
Works for special purposes under 57 Geo. III, c. 34	496,000
Do. for employment and relief of the poor under 1 & 2 Wm. IV, c. 38	1,339,146
Grants in aid of public works under various statutes	125,000
Advanced by London Loan Commissions for sundry works between 1826 and 1833	322,500
Do. for Poor Law Union Workhouses	1,145,800
Kingstown Harbort	1,124,586
Improvement of the River Shannon	233,359
Wide Street Commissioners, Dublin	267,778
Improving Post Roads	515,541
Gaols and Bridewells	713,005
Asylums for Lunatic Poor	710,850
Valuation of Lands and Tenements	172,774
Royal Dublin Society	285,438
Farming Society, Dublin	87,132
Linen Board, Dublin	537,656
Tithes (Relief of Clergy who did not receive letter of 1831)	50,916
Tithe Relief	918,863
Tithe Relief Commissioners	279,217
Relief of Trade	178,070
Board of Officers of Health	196,575
Police purposes (various)	4,693,871
Police purpose (Constabulary Police)	1,748,712

¹ *Irish Crisis*, p. 20.