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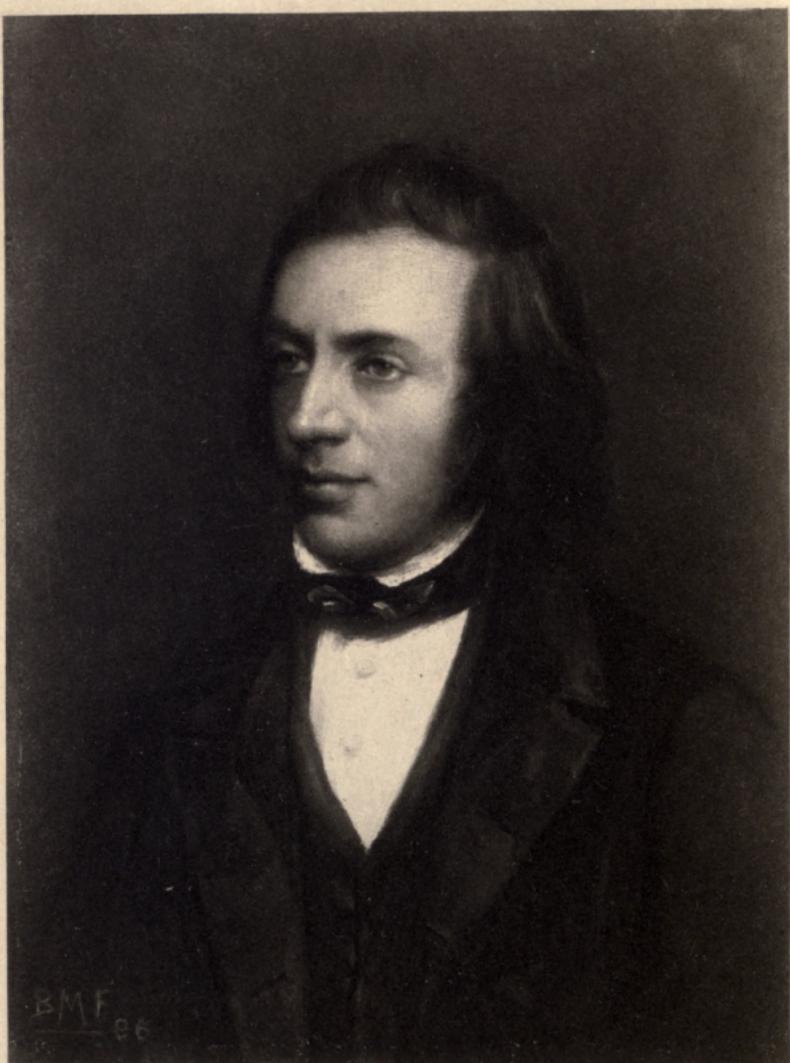
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MY LIFE IN TWO HEMISPHERES

BY

SIR CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY

*Author of "Young Ireland," "Life of Thomas Davis,"
"Conversations with Carlyle," &c.*

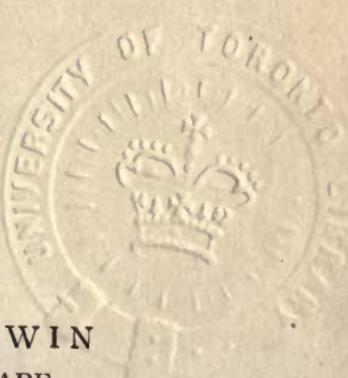
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MY LIFE IN TWO HEMISPHERES

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH. MONAGHAN

My object in writing this narrative—Family pedigree—Boyish memories—My first school—Condition of Catholic schools in Ulster—Second school—Reception among Protestant schoolfellows—Earliest books and periodicals—Rupture with Mr. Bleckley—Companions: Terence MacManus, Henry MacManus, Mat Trumble—First political ideas—“The naked truth”—Charles Hamilton Teeling—First visit to Dublin—T. M. Hughes—Lord Mulgrave in Ulster—Departure from home, never to return.

I PROPOSE to write my memoirs, not because I assume that the world is impatient to become acquainted with my adventures and misadventures, but because I have seen life under strange and varied conditions in two hemispheres, have encountered many notable men, and have something to tell of those protracted experiences which may prove worth hearing. In the language of Browning—

“I have trod many lands, known many men,
Probed many hearts, beginning with my own.”

And why should I omit another and stronger motive? For a generation I was a factor in whatever was done or projected in the public affairs of Ireland, and if my countrymen in after times come to regard that era as the well-head

of their liberty they can never be indifferent to its authentic history. For nearly another generation I lived in a new country, whose marvellous development is destined to take a permanent place in the annals of mankind, and I was not an idle witness of its progress.

I desire to make the story as impersonal as such a narrative can ever become, and I shall rarely pause upon any event merely because it concerns the narrator, unless it possesses, moreover, some historic value, or, what is perhaps better, illustrates habits and customs which have since passed away. Much has passed away. I was born into a country almost as different from the Ireland of to-day as from the Ireland of the penal laws.

The most tedious chapter in a biography is commonly the family pedigree. Antiquaries have furnished me with an elaborate table of descent, in which soldiers, brehons, and scholars are plentiful. At the era of the English invasion there was an illustrious Archbishop of the West whom a national synod despatched to Rome, in company with the Archbishop of Dublin (afterwards canonized as St. Lorcan), to remonstrate with the Sovereign Pontiff on the sanction which he had given to the invader, and as his native name was Cathal O'Dubhthaigh (pronounced Doovhi), *Anglicé* Charles Duffy, I make no doubt if he had not been a celibate the antiquaries would have given him to me as a lineal ancestor. I am shy of pedigrees. When I was a boy, however, there were half a dozen of my relations among the Catholic priests of the diocese of Clogher, and I listened with complacency to their talk of the M'Mahons, chiefs of Oriel, and the M'Kennas, chiefs of Truagh, as our near kinsmen, and I was delighted to be told that under George III. when the existence of a priest was at last grudgingly recognised, provided he could find two freeholders willing to be sureties for his good behaviour, such sureties for a dozen priests of Clogher were furnished by the Duffys of Monaghan, who held land in their native Oriel, under the imperfect tenure permitted by law. These were facts which in after life I submitted to the test of critical scrutiny, and found to be authentic.

I was born in the town of Monaghan on Good Friday,

1816. My father, John Duffy, was a shopkeeper, who by industry and integrity had accumulated considerable property in houses and townparks, and had purchased a share in a bleach-green at Keady, the art of transforming the grey web into one of dazzling whiteness being then, as it still is, one of the standard industries of the country. The Ulster Catholics had been reduced by law to abject penury, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century they were here and there slowly lifting their heads. Even while the penury was sorest old social distinctions were cherished, and my father, as a descendant of "the old stock," was one of the few leaders of the people in his district. Among the family papers bequeathed to me was a resolution of the Catholics of Monaghan, thanking him for having acted as their faithful treasurer for sixteen years, an authentic testimonial which I prefer to a glittering and shadowy pedigree furnished by Ulster King at Arms.

My maternal grandfather, Patrick Gavan, was notable in his day as a Catholic who had succeeded in emerging from the obscure and trampled multitude. He held on lease a large tract of land which had once belonged to his clan, and was in fact a gentleman farmer. He was known among his neighbours as "the King of Aughabog," and I remember when a child pestering my mother to show me any crown or sceptre he had bequeathed to his posterity ; but to my despair there were no regalia forthcoming. A tradition, however, has descended to us which keeps him and his dame fresh in our memory. When the Union was proposed it was sweetened by a promise of Catholic Emancipation from a united Parliament, which the Irish Parliament had peremptorily refused ; and Paddy Gavan, like the Catholic Primate of the day, thought the compromise ought to be accepted, and got a petition in its favour signed by many of his neighbours. But our grandmother Judith flew into a rage at the proposal to give up Ireland for a bribe, and flung the petition into the fire. The flame she kindled that day has illuminated her memory for more than three generations among a numerous progeny who are proud to bear her name. Judith, I regret to say, derived her name, according to the genealogists, and perhaps her robust will, from a Puritan soldier ; her mother being

daughter and heiress of Captain John Dawson, of Dartry, who gave her in marriage to a native gentleman, one of the MacMahons of Oriel, father of our Judith.¹

When my father died I was only ten years of age, and the youngest of six children. As one of my elder brothers was in the office of Philip Hughes, an enterprising merchant in Newry, who was our kinsman ; a second in the office of another Newry merchant (the father of Sir Patrick Jennings, who has risen to distinction in New South Wales in recent time) ; and a third pursuing his studies as a medical student in Scotland, the management of the family interests fell wholly on my mother. If sleepless assiduity in the interest of her children could secure success she would have succeeded ; but to regulate complicated accounts and take up the thread of incomplete projects, was a task for which she had no experience or training, and I was not of an age to be of any assistance to her. It looks like a dream of another life, that distant time when, seeing her exhausted with labour, I have induced her to hear me read a story to divert her jaded mind, "The Children of the Abbey," perhaps, or "The Scottish Chiefs," for though the modern novel was born with *Waverley*, it had not yet penetrated into provincial Ireland, and there was no national novel or romance of which I had ever heard.

The earliest political incident I can recall was hearing my father read the letters of Wellington and Peel, when they refused to serve with George Canning because he was friendly to Catholic Emancipation. I was barely nine years of age, but the oppressed learn their wrongs early, and I already

¹ In a diary kept in Melbourne half a century later, I find this entry on the same subject : "Jimmy Sherry, an Irishman, between seventy and eighty years of age, but in possession of his faculties, and even active and agile, who had been a servant of my grandfather Patrick Gavan fifty years ago called upon me and told me a good deal of family gossip which was new to me. My grandfather leased the townlands of Latnamard and Drumhilla, in the parish of Aughabog ; the lands were two miles square, and he cultivated the greater part of them, employing about forty men, but subletting a portion. His sons, Frank and Michael, were the finest and strongest men that appeared at Monaghan fair, and were, Jimmy asserts with great unction, a terror to the Orangemen. He had another son named Peter, who went to Canada, and had become prosperous there, his son-in-law and descendants named Lane being in a good social position. When the land fell out of lease he was offered a renewal of it for ninety-nine years at 10s. an acre. He declined, and it was afterwards let at £1 an acre."

knew dimly and vaguely that Catholic Emancipation meant the deliverance of our race from the subjection to Orange ascendancy in which we habitually lived.

At what time does a boy discover that he has in his bosom a monitor who punishes him when he misbehaves, and comforts him if he suffers unjustly? The Sacrament of Confirmation is administered to Catholic children at an early age, generally before they enter on their teens, and I received it in the ordinary course. The bishop and a senior priest sat on the altar steps, and questioned each boy in turn on the principles of Christian doctrine. When I had gone through the examination the bishop asked the assistant priest, "Do you think we may pass this lad?" The priest thought perhaps they might, and I retired deeply humiliated. The ceremony was followed by a distribution of prizes supposed to be granted in the order of merit. The schoolmistress of the chapel school who had prepared the boys for the sacrament arranged the prize list, and to my consternation I heard the first prize assigned to Charles Duffy, who, in fact, had barely escaped rejection. For many a day afterwards I was disturbed and unhappy with the sense of being an impostor who had received a distinction in the face of the whole congregation which he did not deserve. I have never since doubted that conscience is a tribunal before which the boy is as peremptorily summoned as the man.

An ardent youngster must have some outlet for his sympathies, and before patriotism awoke I was passionately religious. I can recall a time when I was despatched to bed at nightfall and took a coarse board with me to kneel upon under the blanket lest my prayers should be too luxurious; and for years after I read controversial books with avidity, and was ready on the shortest notice to defend the most abstruse mysteries of religion. But the first passion was superseded after a time by one which has lasted all my life—the determination to love, and, if possible, serve Ireland.

Some account of my early schools will help the reader to understand the social condition of Ulster at that time. The Ulster Catholics had been deprived by the Puritan Parliament in Dublin of their lands, their churches, and their schools at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and they were long

forbidden by statute to obtain education at home or abroad, or to possess property in land. At the time I speak of their schools were still very often what were then known as "poor schools." The schoolroom was commonly a barn or a garret, the furniture rude and scanty, the walls and windows bare, and some of the pupils probably shoeless and unwashed. But these establishments were regarded as evidence of remarkable progress by those who remembered the "hedge schools" of a previous generation, which had not even the shelter of a roof. My first schoolmaster was a one-handed man, named Neil Quin, who had probably become a teacher because this deficiency unfitted him for any other employment. He performed duties which were merely manual with marvellous dexterity—mending a pen, for example, as speedily and skilfully as a man with two hands. A long loop of twine passed through two holes in a table held the quill, flat, and was kept fast by his foot in the other end of the loop, while he trimmed it with his right hand, which happily remained. Of the elements of education Mr. Quin did not teach us much, I fear, but he told us stories, generally little apogees or homilies, intended to impart a homely moral. His rudimentary science was taught with a scanty equipment of instruments, but he contrived to make it impressive. One day he let his hat fall from his head to the floor, and exclaimed, "Now, boys, which of you will tell me why that hat fell down to the ground instead of falling up to the ceiling?"

My escape from this primitive institution was one of the most fortunate incidents of my life. My eldest sister, a girl of vigorous will, met me one day coming home from school in the midst of a clamorous swarm of urchins, some of them bare-footed and ragged, and all riotous and undisciplined, and she interposed with a vigour worthy of our grandmother Judith. She peremptorily declared that I should never return to that society. But where was I to go? There was not a Catholic school in the county a whit better. There was, however, a classical academy in the town taught by a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend John Bleckley, where the boarders were sons of the small gentry and professional men of two or three neighbouring counties, and the day boys sons of the principal townspeople. There were about fifty pupils, all

Protestants or Presbyterians, a Catholic boy never having been seen within the walls. It needed a considerable stock of moral courage to contemplate sending me to such an establishment, where I might be ill-received, or, if not ill-received, where I might be taught to despise the boys of my own race and creed whom I had quitted. The consent of my guardian, a parish priest living a dozen miles away,¹ had to be obtained, and he had liberality and good sense enough to approve of the project. Mr. Bleckley received me graciously, but during the first day one of the boys told me (what I soon learned had been muttered among many others) that it was unpardonable presumption for a Papist to come among them. But the bigotry of boys is mostly inherited from their elders, and has little root. This lad, Mat Trumble, son of a lieutenant in the British Army, but also grandson of a chaplain of the Volunteers, afterwards a notable United Irishman, soon became my close friend. He was a youth of good intellect, resolute will, and considerable reading, and with such aid I did not do badly in the strange society on which I had intruded. During the first year a boys' parliament, a boys' regiment, and a boys' newspaper were established, which I did something to initiate, and my connection with them was vehemently resisted in the name of Protestant ascendancy. But after a fierce debate the majority voted my emancipation, three years before the legislators of larger growth at St. Stephen's made a similar concession to my seniors. I used to boast that I was the first Catholic emancipated in Ireland, but though tolerated I was never allowed altogether to forget that I belonged to the race who were beaten at the Boyne. A cynical lad, who afterwards became a noted local preacher, sometimes occupied the recreation hour with marvellous stories of Popish atrocities designed for my edification.

One of them is worth quoting as an illustration of the cruel and wicked inventions by which the rancour of race hatred was promoted :

A farmer's son—so the story ran—went to confession, and as his offences were serious the priest made a tally with chalk on the sleeve of his coat, that the penance might be

¹ The Rev. James Duffy, P.P., of Muckno, Castleblayney, afterwards Archdeacon of his diocese, Clogher.

proportionate to the sins. "I was too intimate with a neighbour's daughter, your Reverence." "Very bad," says the priest, making a stroke on his arm with the chalk. "There was a baby, your Reverence, and, to keep it dark, I made her throw it in the river." "Oh, you unfortunate miscreant," cried the priest, making two long strokes on his arm; "I'm afraid you'll never see purgatory. Anything else?" "Yes, your Reverence, God forgive me, there's something worse. The girl took to fretting; I was afraid she'd tell her people, and I shoved her into a bog-hole." "Away with you," cried the priest, starting to his feet in a rage. "I can't absolve a double murderer who has hid his crime from punishment." "But, your Reverence, wait a minute. I forgot to tell you she was a black Prisbiteran." "Pooh! pooh!" says the priest, brushing the score off his arm, "why did you make me dirty my coat?"

Mat Trumble, who was present, remarked that if the story was true, and doubtless it wasn't, the priest might have found a precedent in Anglo-Irish history, when the violation of a married woman, with which two Norman soldiers were charged in a court of Pale ended in a judgment that no offence was proved, as the victim was a mere Irishwoman!

The Presbyterian planters from whom my schoolfellows were descended preserved to an amazing degree the characteristics of their Scottish ancestors. They were thrifty, industrious, and parsimonious, and sometimes spoke a language worthy of Dumfriesshire. Their familiar sayings were of the same origin. "Keep the halter shank in your ain hand," was a Pawkie warning against rash confidence; or, "Don't let the want come at the web's end," an exhortation to foresight. The name employed to designate a courtesan was "an idle girl," a phrase which implies a population devoted to labour and duty. The few books which circulated among them were steeped in the bitterness of hereditary feuds. I remember being horror-struck by a copy of "Fox's Book of Martyrs," with illustrations fit to poison the spirit of a community for a century. Men reared for the liberal professions might in time outlive these prejudices, but with the poor and ignorant time only deepens them. But the nationalities sometimes mingled marvellously. I can recall more than

one descendant of Puritan settlers smitten with sympathy for the Celtic tongue and Celtic traditions, and on the other hand O'Neills and MacMahons speaking a dialect that might pass muster in Midlothian, and practising economies which would charm Sir Andrew Wylie.

A thoughtful boy needs a supply of books almost as imperatively as his daily bread. There were few books in my mother's house, but they included some which were treasures to an inquisitive lad. "Gil Blas," in pocket volume, with illustrations which are as familiar to my memory as the cartoons of Raphael; "Robinson Crusoe," "Ward's Cantos" (a burlesque history of the Protestant Reformation), and above all a volume of a little periodical full of Irish ideas, entitled "Captain Rock in London, or the Chieftain's Weekly Gazette."¹ I laugh still at a pleasant dialogue on the affairs of Ireland between the editor and an English gentleman whom he accidentally met of a morning in the Green Park. At the conclusion of their talk the stranger presented his gold snuff-box to his interlocutor, saying, "Take this, my friend, as a little memorial of the most useful and instructive conversation I have ever had on Irish affairs; you will not value it the less when I tell you that I am the Prince Regent." "Will your Royal Highness," said the Irishman, "permit me, in tendering my grateful thanks, to name myself, for I fear your Royal Highness has heard of me before?" "By all means," said the Prince, a good deal amused at the assurance of the intrepid Irishman, "tell me who you are." "May it please your Royal Highness, I am Captain Rock!" The Captain's name in those days was equivalent to a dynamiter or an Irish Invincible in our own.

I laid all our neighbours under contribution, and I can remember a friendly shopkeeper hoisting me up in his arms while I ransacked the upper shelves of his shop where the books of a dead customer were stowed away. I fished out "Peregrine Pickle," "Roderick Random," "Billy Bluff," "Irish Rogues and Rapparees," and some odd volumes of the *Spectator*. Later a new world opened up to me in the library of my guardian. The spiritual shepherds naturally

¹ The editor was M. J. Whitty, who a generation later established the *Liverpool Daily Post*, and became father of a man of genius, Edward Whitty, author of the "Friends of Bohemia."

shared the privation of their flocks, and my guardian, like many another priest of that day, was content to live in a peasant's cottage into which a village carpenter had put some sash windows and wooden floors, and which a country mason had plastered and whitewashed, but which was rich in books and engravings. I do not think he ever introduced me to any of his collection, except a couple which came in too threatening a form to be welcome, Valpy's "Prosody," and Dr. O'Reilly's "Catechism of Catholic Doctrine," but I discovered treasure-troves for myself. I found three or four soiled and tattered plays of Shakespeare, and read them with avidity, but I did not know, and was probably afraid to inquire if there were any more by the same hand. It was years later that I met elsewhere a large volume as big as the family Bible labelled "Shakespeare," and took it up with trembling hands and in a fever of excitement to ascertain whether there actually existed and was attainable such a store-house of the pleasure I had already tasted. I found also "Robin Hood" among my guardian's books, but the volume was so ill-edited that one met Little John and Friar Tuck in company with Robin long before reaching the ballad describing their first encounter. I was tortured with the incongruity, and to re-edit that book was one of my earliest literary projects, before I had ever seen a publisher or a printing office. There were a volume or two of Swift's prose and poetry, of which I could make little. I chanced upon the story of "An Unfortunate Lady," that entrusted the management of her affairs to a neighbouring squire, who plundered her habitually and quite shamelessly for his own profit. The author's advice that the ill-used lady should continue to maintain the knavish squire in the position of her agent, on condition that he undertook to spend her rents for the future for the benefit of her tenants and not for his own pleasure, seemed to me a singularly weak and unsatisfactory *dénouement* of such a story. I was impatient to see the knave kicked out of the partnership, and peremptorily required to refund his pilferings. It finally dawned on me that Dr. Swift was perhaps telling the story of Ireland, of which I knew almost nothing, and I was restless till I got my conjecture verified. "Moore's Melodies" were there,

and soon passed permanently into my memory, and Burns's poems, which were as common in Ulster as in Dumfriesshire.

The prints in the single sitting-room were as instructive as the books. I remember best an engraving of "Louis XVI. taking leave of his Family," for Irish Catholics were Royalists till misgovernment made Radicals of them ; and "Pius VI. refusing Bonaparte's offer of a National Cockade and a Pension." There were also portraits in rude wood-cuts of O'Connell and Sheil, and of some Irish ecclesiastics.

There was no regular bookseller's shop in Monaghan, but a couple of printers sold school-books ; and at a weekly market there was always a pedlar who supplied, at a few pence, cheap books printed at Belfast, of which the most popular were the "Battle of Aughrim" and "Billy Bluff." The drama of the battle was in the hands of every intelligent schoolboy in Ulster, who strode an imaginary stage as Sarsfield or Ginkle, according to his sympathies. I can recall a device employed by a book-hawker at that time to stimulate the interest of his customers, which may perhaps have been borrowed from precautions invented in the penal times. "I won't sell my book," he cried, "and I darn't sell my book, for the law forbids me to sell my book, but I'll sell my straw (producing a stalk of wheaten straw), and whoever buys my straw for a penny shall have my book for nothing." I bought the straw on an occasion, counting upon some tremendous disclosure of iniquity in high places or some device for liberating Ireland. I forget what the brochure contained, but I have a painful recollection that the investment did not answer my expectation.¹

Mr. Bleckley was a careful and assiduous teacher, much devoted to his school, and for five years I profited by his instructions. We parted under circumstances which, as I

¹ There were rustic poems of a national spirit printed from time to time, especially among the weavers of Ulster and the schoolmasters of the South ; classes whose sedentary pursuits lent themselves naturally to poetry. I remember a poem entitled the "Knight of the Shamrock Plume," printed in Monaghan, when I was a schoolboy, which described an episode in '98 in curiously inflated and sonorous verse, modelled on Pope's Homer, one couplet describing pike-making—which I considered prodigiously fine—I can still recall—

"The busy smiths with unabating care
From hissing bars the shining lance prepare."

have never since doubted, justified me in quitting him abruptly. One morning before the arrival of the headmaster I had a contest with one of the boys about something I have altogether forgotten. He complained to an usher, but, as the ushers were not permitted to punish the boys, this one promised to report me for misconduct. On the arrival of the master he did so, and Mr. Bleckley, who was perhaps disturbed by some personal trouble, immediately laid hold of me, stretched me over a desk, according to his practice, and administered a sharp discipline with a leather strap. When he had finished he faced me and demanded, "Now, sir, what have you got to say for yourself?" Though the result proved a great inconvenience to me I can never regret what happened as a test of character. "Say," I roared, "I say it is too late to ask for my defence after I have been punished; and that I will never suffer you to lay hands on me again." I seized my cap and vanished out of the school. Mr. Bleckley reported the facts to my mother, not ungenerously, I think, but I could not be induced to submit again to his authority. With the assistance of a student preparing for Maynooth, and in concert with my constant chum Mat Trumble, I read at home, to replace, as far as I could, the direction of a competent teacher.

Next to books—perhaps before books—a boy's earliest craving is for friends. I had three friends at that time who shared my whole life, and who in after years associated themselves with me in my public career, and continued till death my intimates and confidants. One was my school-fellow, Mat Trumble, who was afterwards an occasional writer in the *Nation*; another was Henry MacManus, the artist, who ten years later, with John Hogan, the sculptor, presented to O'Connell, at the monster meeting of Mullaghmast, a National Cap (which the English journalists insisted on identifying as the crown of Ireland); the third, Terence Bellew MacManus, who a quarter of a century later appeared in arms at Ballingarry, while I was a prisoner in Newgate, and in 1870 had a public funeral, so abnormal in extent and enthusiasm that it may be described as an historical event. By a happy accident these three young men represented three totally distinct elements of Irish society. Terence

MacManus was at that time serving his apprenticeship to a woollen draper. He was a good-looking, strapping young fellow, full of life and gaiety ; and as his people were understood to be a junior branch of the Belleys of Barmeath, he stood apart from his class—even his master at times designated him “the sprig of aristocracy.” Our Sunday afternoons (his only free time) were spent in long rambles, occupied chiefly with speculations and visions of what might be accomplished to reinstate our dethroned people in their rightful position. We did not know much of history, but we got what in recent times would be called “object lessons,” to keep it alive in our memory. The Orange drum was heard on every hill from June till August to celebrate the Boyne and Aughrim ; Orange flags and arches adorned the town on party festivals ; every office of authority in the province was held by Orangemen or their patrons and *protégés*, and to be a Protestant of any sort was a diploma of merit and a title to social rank not to be disputed. My comrade and I felt our present wrongs keenly, but we knew little of the remote causes from which they sprang. I had never seen a history of Ireland at that time. A few years earlier I had walked half a dozen miles to borrow a quasi history, Moore’s “Captain Rock,” in a country parish which had the rare good fortune to possess a parish library. The Orange processions forbade us to forget the past, and there was a history transacted under our eyes of which it was impossible to be ignorant. The bench of magistrates who administered what was called justice was exclusively Protestant ; the Grand Jury, who expended the rates paid by the whole population were exclusively Protestant, and took care, it was alleged, that the improvements they projected should benefit only loyal citizens, themselves first of all. There had been a Corporation endowed out of confiscated lands, but the body had long ceased to exist, and its endowment had fallen to the local landlord, Lord Rossmore, who, to keep up the pretence of a Corporation, still named a town sergeant and other subordinate officials at his sole pleasure. There was a corps of Yeomanry receiving arms and uniforms from the State, which was called out occasionally for inspection, and as the arms were left with the corps permanently,

every Orange lodge had a liberal supply of guns, and used them freely at their annual festivity. One of my earliest recollections is to have seen a butcher named Hughes shot in the public street before my mother's door by a Government gun fired from an Orange procession. Hughes had probably used some offensive language, or perhaps thrown a stone at the procession, and for his offence, whatever it was, the immediate punishment was death. He was carried to the grave in a coffin festooned with red ribbons, to signify a murdered man, but there the incident ended. To indict any one for the murder would have been the idlest work of supererogation. His comrades in the procession would not have given evidence against him, and his comrades in the jury box would not have convicted him. The ordinary result of a party conflict at that time was that if a prosecution followed the Catholics were convicted, and the Orangemen escaped scot free, either by an acquittal or a split jury. On such juries a Catholic was not permitted to sit one time in a hundred.

The town we lived in was an eminently historic one. It was founded by monks in the sixth century, and is heard of throughout all the contests with England. During the Elizabethan wars it was frequently besieged, and was occupied alternately by Irish and English soldiers down to the time of Cromwell, when Owen Roe was succeeded in command of the national army by a Monaghan man, Heber MacMahon, chief of the MacMahons of Oriel, and at the same time Bishop of Clogher. In 1798 the first martyrs for Irish liberty were three of the Monaghan Militia, who were shot for being "Croppies." But of this history we knew little except what concerned the affairs of '98. Survivors of that era were still plentiful in the north, and one old servant entertained me constantly in my boyhood with its legends and traditions. She even dazzled me with the hope of some day being shown "where the Croppies hid their arms when the troubles were over" if I were a good boy and minded my books; but I suppose my conduct did not answer her expectations, for I never was shown the buried treasures.

Henry MacManus was of a widely different class. He

was a Protestant, originally an Orangeman, and his training furnished a notable illustration of the policy and method of English rule in Ireland. His father was a Catholic soldier who died with his regiment, whereupon the paternal Government laid hold of his little boy, and reared him a Protestant in the Soldiers' Hospital in Phoenix Park. But all this I came to know only in after life. He was several years my senior, and at the time when our intimacy commenced was an artist engaged in the impossible task of living by his profession in an Irish country town. We rarely spoke of politics at the beginning of our intimacy; but he was a passionate lover of art, familiar with the lives of great artists and with many great works of art, and he introduced me to an unknown region full of wonder and delight.

My first decisive impulse towards practical politics came from without. Our next door neighbour, John Sloan, generally regarded as a Quaker, but belonging in fact to a more limited church, of which he was himself the patriarch, took an early interest in me, and undertook, as he declared, to open my mind. He had been a United Irishman a generation earlier, and was one of a little club of shopkeepers and tradesmen, generally belonging to his own peculiar faith, who met once a week over pipes and punch to discuss the affairs of the nation. He was a tall, gaunt man, with only one eye, which gave his face an alarming but not at all a sinister expression. His only daughter, a young woman of charming manner and striking beauty, was a mantua-maker. All day long he sat behind her counter, with a shelf of dingy books at his elbow, most of them, as I soon came to know, beyond the sympathy or intelligence of a boy. He had published a little tract himself, called "The Naked Truth," the scope of which I can surmise from the naked truths he was in the habit of disclosing to me from time to time. His daughter one day, when I was a schoolboy, called me playfully "Royal Charlie." "No, no," cried the old democrat, "he sha'n't be 'Royal Charlie,' he shall be 'Anti-Royal Charlie.' I hope before his head is grey he will see the last of royalty here and everywhere." From that time he spoke to me habitually of politics, and some of his axioms and homilies still remain in my memory. "Mind

this, my boy, 'tis not so much the question of kings or governments which concerns us here in Ireland as the question of the land from which the people get their daily bread. In '98 we spouted Gallic sentiments and sang the 'Marseillaise' and the 'Shan Van Voght' over our grog ; but all that was folly. What we ought to have borrowed from France was their sagacious idea of bundling the landlords out of doors and putting the tenants in their shoes. When you are enrolling your United Irishmen a dozen or a score years hence, promise every man who will fight loyally for the cause twenty acres of land, rent free for ever, as soon as Ireland is liberated. The Orangemen, poor creatures, kept together to protect the landlords' rents, may not listen to you. The drum and fife by day, and the jolly carouse at the lodge at night, will be too much for you ; but the Presbyterians whose fathers were United Irishmen, would prefer twenty acres of free land to the whole clanjaffray of kings, Parliaments, and bum-bailiffs. You see the agent, Dacre Hamilton, cantering into town on a big horse every morning, and you hear of his master, Lord Rossmore, now and then, as the providence on which all our lives depend ; but did you ever reflect, my boy, that the corn would ripen just as well, and the flax blossom, and 'Cork reds' eat as sweetly with chicken and bacon, if there was no agent and no landlord ?" As patriarch of his little congregation John Sloan was accustomed to utter sonorous maxims of morality on occasion ; but he was considerate of the Catholic lad, and I can recall only one dogma which he was accustomed to assure me included the whole corpus of Christian doctrine —" Do all the good you can, my boy, and do no harm."

The most persuasive political teaching is often that which is altogether unpremeditated. During my father's lifetime the Catholic leaders in the county, several of whom were his kinsmen, met habitually at his table ; and after his death my guardian, when he visited Monaghan, gathered them round the same board. Such social reunions at that time were always the occasion for speech-making, and I was allowed to creep into some silent corner and listen to the oratory. The passionate talk of men striving for religious liberty moved me strangely, and whatever I did not com-

prehend was explained to me later, if I asked for light, by Father Bogue and Father Tierney, who had taken the sympathetic boy into special favour.¹

But more specific knowledge came to me from another source. The senior curate in Monaghan, the Rev. John Caulfield, maintained the sort of friendship with me with which a generous man sometimes favours an intelligent boy. He spoke to me at times of the religious persecutions in Ulster. How the native princes, who were Catholics, were lured into foreign countries, and their fertile lands given to Scotchmen and Englishmen. How when the natives rose to regain their own, they were savagely repressed and almost exterminated, as if it was an unpardonable crime to take back the lands which their forefathers had held since before the coming of St. Patrick. How, when the natives rose to support King James, and were defeated at the Boyne by a foreign army, they still held Limerick year after year till the new king, with whose hooked nose Orange banners made me familiar, sealed a treaty with them, securing them the enjoyment of their lands and their religion ; and how the Puritan Parliament in Dublin, with a shameless disregard of honesty and honour, denied them the rights so secured. How the daughter of James, when she became queen, sanctioned laws designed to exterminate the Irish race. They were not permitted to till the lands except as serfs ; it was a crime punishable with crushing penalties to teach them to read or write ; and a priest, who performed the sacred functions for which he was ordained, was liable to be hanged. How their churches were taken away from them, and in later times they were not only humiliated by annual processions to celebrate their overthrow, but were compelled by law to pay a special tax levied only on Catholics to defray the cost of flags and regalia for some of their insulting celebrations. Our wrongs, he said, were not merely historic ; little more than a generation ago in the neighbour-

¹ The incidents of a human life are often connected by mystic and invisible ties. A dozen years later Father Bogue presided at a public dinner, proffered me by my native county when I entered on public life, by undertaking to edit a newspaper in the capital of Ulster, and sixteen years later Father Tierney stood by my side, as one of the State prisoners indicted with O'Connell for political conspiracy.

ing county of Armagh, the Catholic farmers who possessed profitable farms were ordered to abandon them to their Protestant neighbours ; a notice was served on them at night by a secret society called Peep o' Day Boys, fixing the date at which they must betake themselves "to hell or Connaught," and for a long time the Government at Dublin refused them protection, and they had no choice but to fly or have their houses burnt over their heads. In the acrimonious epigram of the time, the emigrants selected Connaught and left the alternative locality for their oppressors. My immature judgment was naturally inflamed with rage at these crimes ; a rage which did not abate when I came to read history later and found the tragic story was substantially true. These, it may be said, were not teachings calculated to promote tranquillity and good will ; but whether does the blame belong, to the men who committed or to the men who narrated the offences ?

My three brothers died before I reached manhood. Of John, the brother nearest my own age, I heard recently a story from a grey-haired kinsman, a landowner in Buenos Ayres, which I think will touch generous hearts. "I was present, a boy in my first breeches, when my elder brother was sharply called for by our father, a strict disciplinarian with his sons. 'Mick,' he cried, 'bring me your pocket-knife.' Michael was in consternation, and whispered, 'What shall I do ? I've lost my knife.' 'Take mine,' says John Duffy, 'tis the same colour.' 'No, no,' my brother muttered, 'the blade of my knife was broken, and father will know the difference at a glance.' Cousin John, without a word spoken, put the blade of his knife under his heel and broke it off. The tears, concluded my friend, ran down my face at the time, and after sixty years they could run down still when I think of that generous transaction."

The early death of my brothers seemed to presage mine. In all my nonage my health was feeble and uncertain, and dyspepsia came so early that it must have been hereditary. I can gauge the sharpness of my dolor by remembering that when literary ambition began to awake, and I had written some chapters of a novel, and some scenes of a play, I confessed that if I had the choice of producing a romance equal

to "Ivanhoe" every year, or enjoying tranquil sleep and painless meals, I could scarcely reject the latter blessing. Of the precautions necessary to secure and reclaim health no one had ever spoken to me, and since I arrived at the years of discretion I have constantly insisted that the principles of physiology and the structure of the human body ought to be taught to children at school with more care than the multiplication table. When I was approaching manhood, a young Irishman, returned from the United States, lent me a *Journal of Health*, from which I got the first gleam of light on that structure which is so fearfully and wonderfully made. One of the maxims in the *Journal*, which I have never forgotten, served me well throughout life—"Keep your head cool, your feet dry, your skin clean, your digestion regular, and a fig for the doctor."

When I was nearly eighteen my guardian still treated me as a boy whose duty it was to be silent in the presence of his elders. I had thought a good deal and written a little at this time, chiefly about love and patriotism, I fancy; but I uttered my thoughts to no one except my three friends. But my emancipation came at last. One day a stately, venerable gentleman walked into my mother's house, and was announced as Charles Hamilton Teeling, and for the first time I saw an historic man, one of the surviving leaders in 1798. He was establishing a newspaper in Belfast, and after some talk invited me to accompany him on a round of calls to promote this object in Monaghan. I took up his project with enthusiasm, for was he not a man who had served under the Green Flag which I had never seen except in dreams? He rewarded me by telling me a hundred things I had longed to know. When we returned to dinner my guardian had arrived, and fell to discussing the newspaper project, but, to his surprise and mine, Mr. Teeling insisted on having my opinion on every point debated. He was my first patron, and from that time I was emancipated from the *status pupilaris*.

My new friend gave me his "Personal Narrative" of the transactions of '98. It was the first book dealing frankly with the aims and hopes of Irish Nationalists which I had read, and it thrilled me with a new emotion. Only a generation ago there was an Irish army led by Irish gentlemen,

which swept the British forces out of two counties, and might have swept them out of two-and-thirty but for adverse accidents. What men had done, men, with God's help, might do again—and do better, and if Heaven was propitious I might be there to see. From that time my mind was largely occupied with speculations and reveries on Ireland. I read all the books I could buy or borrow on the history and condition of the country, and gradually came to understand the epic of Irish resistance to England, often defeated, often renewed, but never wholly relinquished.

Mr. Teeling made his appearance from time to time in Monaghan, and always brought me sympathy and encouragement. But his most effectual service was to invite me to contribute to his journal, the *Northern Herald*. I began timidly to send scraps of prose and verse, which were well received. The paper was edited from London by two law students, who poured out weekly long and sonorous essays on the wants and wrongs of Ireland. I read, admired, and emulated these productions, the ordinary stages in self-discipline. I made vigorous but quite unsuccessful efforts to draw my comrades into this study, and became, I dare say, under this new passion which entirely engrossed me, an intolerable young prig and pedant. But I obtained ideas more or less exact on many public problems, and began studies which were never to be relinquished. The spirit of the *Herald* was the old fraternal spirit of '98—the union of Catholics and Protestants for the national cause. The chief contributor was a young Catholic whom I had never seen, but who was destined to be my closest friend through life.¹ His associate was a Protestant of an old plantation house who, in the end, became a clergyman and relinquished his early opinions; but his comrade believed the change to have been an honest one, and maintained a regard for him to the end.²

¹ Thomas O'Hagan, in the fulness of time Lord O'Hagan, Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

² While he was still a patriot the second contributor published a narrative poem, "The Warden of Galway" (the Irish Brutus), which contained a ballad beginning, without any regard to Lord Byron's copyright—

"The Emerald Isle, the Emerald Isle,
Where Grattan rose and Curran spoke."

Some cynical critic suggested that in England it was said of an orator that the honourable gentleman rose and spoke as follows, but that in Ireland the task seemed to be divided, Grattan rose and Curran spoke!

The fraternal doctrines of '98 had few friends in Ulster in the first quarter of the present century. The Protestants and Presbyterians had for the most part renounced them, and the Catholics, who were subject to daily insolence and injustice, thought it idle to talk of being embraced as brethren till they were received as equals. Mat Trumble, who cherished the opinions of his grandfather, was still a United Irishman, somewhat modified by his surroundings; and the subject was constantly debated between us. He was impatient of Orange excesses, but more impatient of Catholic retaliation. "Don't you see," he would urge, "that to irritate the Northern Protestants is to defeat, or at any rate to postpone, the liberation of the Catholics? You can't get rid of the Ulstermen—we are fighting fellows with England behind us; and if you could get rid of us it would be a gross injustice, for time settles such disputes as ours, and we have been here two hundred years. Make good Irishmen of us and the battle with England is won. And why not? Thirty years ago we were better Irishmen than any of you, and I assert that we might, could, would, and should become so again. But when an Orangeman is maimed in a Catholic riot the most moderate Protestant in Ulster thrills with sympathy. Like Falkland I cry 'Peace, peace, peace!'"

"Peace!" I rejoined, "does that mean abject submission to contumely and wrong? I hate party riots as much as you do; but when a riot breaks out I wish with all my heart that the Catholic may have the best of it; for the Orangeman or his sympathisers will never listen to the claims of justice till we prove strong enough to be dangerous. Peace by all means, if we are treated with some approach to fair play; but if the Orangeman breaks the peace, thrash him; that's my doctrine. Our rights will not come by being submissive, but by being strong."

Mr. Teeling from time to time urged my guardian to send me to Trinity College to complete my education; but he would not hear of the project. To obtain the honours and prizes of the only University in Ireland, a student was required to take the Sacrament of the Church of England, and though it is possible that opposition would have operated as it did at school, to make me firmer in my religious

opinions, and I might have ignored honours and prizes, so many students had succumbed to the temptation that I have never blamed him for refusing.

I read many hours every day at that time. The *major duomo* of Colonel Westenra, brother of Lord Rossmore, did me the inestimable service of lending me books, one volume at a time, from his master's library, and I dipped into many new reservoirs of thought. One curious result is worth noting ; I read *Blackwood's Magazine* from the days of the Chaldee Manuscript down to the pasquinades on Peel for granting Catholic Emancipation. The wild drolleries of Maginn, the rhapsodies of Wilson, and Lockhart's letters of Timothy Tickler, which rivalled Cobbett in vigour and Sydney Smith in pungency, gave me infinite enjoyment. But they did not convince or persuade me the least in the world. The constant object of their obloquy was the Cockney school, Hazlitt, Hunt, Lamb, and their associates, whom they mauled in every number. But the rabid critics sometimes quoted a passage from the writings they condemned ; and I was so fascinated by the spirit of Hazlitt that a few years later I bought a file of the *Examiner* to become better acquainted with him and his colleagues, and his portrait hung over my writing-desk for nearly a generation. An evidence, I think, that malice overdone misses its aim.¹

Hazlitt was a man whose heart was tortured by the injustice with which the world was governed, and he was proportionately abhorred by all who profited by injustice. The present generation have probably an imperfect idea of the insolence to which this great pioneer of public justice was habitually subjected. Here is a specimen. Christopher North, it may be premised, was a *nom de plume* of the editor of *Blackwood*, and the colour of the cover of the journal was olive, whereas that of the Liberal organ, the *Edinburgh Review*, was blue trimmed with yellow :

"Thus saith our Christopher to his gallant crew,
 'Up with the olive flag down with the blue ;
 Fire upon Hallam, fire upon Hume,
 Fire upon Jeffrey, fire upon Brougham,
 Fire upon Sydney, fire upon Moore,
 But spit upon Hazlitt
 The son—'"

Two generations have since passed, and there are few readers competent to judge who would not rather have the reputation of Hazlitt than that of his assailants or of any of the men whom they preferred to him.

About this time I was drawn into my first political adventure. An election was on foot in which the son of Lord Rossmore, landlord of the town, was a candidate, against what was called the Liberal Club, practically the Catholic electors. I took the popular side with enthusiasm, wrote one or two election squibs, and canvassed right and left; at any rate I made myself disagreeable to the great man's agent, at this time a person known as Colonel Lewis, from an imaginary command in a local regiment of militia, which had no existence except on paper. The income of my family arose mainly from the rents of town property, most of which fell out of lease shortly after the election. When the ordinary renewal was demanded the agent announced that he would not continue as tenants a family which reared such a fire-brand, and the houses built or bought by my father were confiscated by the landlord. This peremptory decision started me in life with a lively impression of the land system in Ireland, which in good time bore fruits.

About this time I made my first journey to England to visit my eldest surviving brother, a doctor practising in Liverpool. His illness and death protracted the visit, which extended over a year. A great commercial dépôt and crowded seaport were phenomena new to me. The great streets, the multitude of comfortably-dressed artisans and sailors and the total absence of beggars made it a land of wonders. The Reform movement, which began in 1830, had not yet spent its force, and public meetings as well as a liberal supply of books furnished me with a crowd of new ideas which I had abundant leisure to digest. After my return to Monaghan I found that my comrades were doing something while I was doing nothing. I was now on the eve of my twentieth year, and I became uneasy and anxious for some decisive change.

An accidental visit to Dublin made me acquainted with a kinsman some years my senior, who was a successful journalist. T. M. Hughes was then in Dublin as a special correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*; at a later period he became correspondent of the *Times* at Madrid, and published books and edited periodicals which may still be encountered

occasionally.¹ I was charmed with the gay independent life he led. He showed me O'Connell at the Corn Exchange, and Plunket and Bushe at the Four Courts ; took me to theatres and public meetings in the evening, and allowed me to browse at intervals of leisure on a harvest of periodicals scattered through his sitting-room, the like of which I had never seen. But above all, the little lectures he gave me over his mahogany on current politics often appeared next morning as a leading article, and I, who dreamed I had something to say, longed for such a marvellous method of communicating with the people. I was fascinated, and determined to become a journalist. My guardian, whom I had accompanied to Dublin, opened negotiations with Michael Staunton, the proprietor of the *Morning Register*, a daily paper founded a dozen years earlier by the Catholic Association. He had no vacancy, but he was willing to take me as a tyro, to be trained in journalism, who could afterwards get employment if he proved fit for it. Early in April, 1836, when I was just twenty years of age, I set out anew for Dublin, my friend, Terence MacManus, accompanying me, as he also obtained employment in one of the monster shops which were then beginning to be founded by adventurous Scotsmen ; Henry MacManus had preceded us by a few weeks and was now resident in the metropolis, and Mat Trumble had become usher in an English school.

Before I left Monaghan the monotony of provincial life was interrupted by an event which produced a prodigious clamour in Parliament and the Press, but is now altogether forgotten. It was, however, of genuine, even of historic, importance. The Lord Lieutenant, Lord Mulgrave, made a tour in Ulster, and, for the first time since the capitulation of Limerick, the representative of the Sovereign received Catholics and Protestants on perfectly equal terms. He employed the royal prerogative in favour of prisoners whose term of detention was nearly completed, or whose conduct in prison justified clemency. This was an unheard-of procedure, and Tyrconnell O'Mulgrave, the Orange Press declared, was clearing the

¹ Among them were "Revelations of Spain," "The Ocean Flower, a Poem," "The Biliad, a Satire," "The London Charevari, a Monthly Magazine," which preceded *Punch*, and was illustrated by John Leech.

jails of convicted rebels, and, in the character of the king's Viceroy, opening his arms to the scum of society. The gentry held aloof from him, but the Catholics and the more intelligent Liberals thronged his undress levées. As he approached Monaghan the leaders of the Liberal Club voted an address and deputation, and I made my *début* in public life as secretary of the movement. The great man of the town, the Provost of a Corporation which had not met for a quarter of a century, could not, as land agent of an Irish Lord angling for a British peerage, altogether withhold his countenance; but he intimated that he would visit the Viceroy on his own account, and not form part of any deputation. The men we mustered were the local doctor, attorney, woollen-draper, an exceptional farmer or two, and half a dozen priests, headed, or rather heralded, by a handsome and stately old gentleman, who was a casual visitor to the town at the moment—no other than Charles Hamilton Teeling. Mr. Teeling's name was a familiar one throughout the North, and it is probable that it was this unwonted spectacle of priest and rebel honouring the constituted authorities which is commemorated in Colonel Blacker's contemporary Orange ballad :

“Forth starts the spawn of treason, the 'scaped of 98,
To bask in courtly favour, and sway the helm of State.
He comes the open rebel fierce, *he* comes the Jesuit sly,
But put your trust in God, my boys, and keep your powder dry.”

Lord Mulgrave received us as if we came in court suits, and he did wisely, for these men were the leaders of the club which ten years before had opened the county for the first time since the Union, by electing an emancipator against a combination of the gentry and the Government.

This was my formal entry into public affairs. It was on a provincial stage, indeed, but the occasion did not seem a small one to men, some of whom remembered when Ulster Catholics were ordered to betake themselves to hell or Connaught, and the authorities were deaf as stone to their complaints. At any rate it was for me the beginning of work. The era of indolent studies, of perfuming my brain with

romances and reviews, was at an end, and the serious business of life had begun. I quoted laughingly to my dear mother the ordinary opening of Folk Lore stories which she was accustomed to tell me.

“Bake me a bonnock, mother, and cut me a collop, I’m going to push my fortune.”

CHAPTER II

A TYRO IN JOURNALISM. DUBLIN

Dublin journalists in 1836—Introduction to libraries and theatres—Visits to historic places—First impression of O'Connell—Reporters' stories—A tithe funeral—A martyr for conscience sake—First money I earned—Work as sub-editor of the *Morning Register*—Clarence Mangan: the secret of his life—Thomas Moore—Father Tom Maguire—Sam Gray appointed sub-sheriff—Peremptory intervention of Thomas Drummond—Removal to Belfast—My health in 1838–9—Note.

THE Dublin journalists, when I came to know them, were a marvel to me. They resembled nothing I had associated in day dreams with the profession I was about to embrace. Hazlitt and Cobbett and their compeers I knew by their work, and I thought of a publicist as a man somewhat combative and self-willed perhaps, but abundantly informed, and with settled convictions, for which he was willing to face all odds. The young editors of the *Northern Herald* were at least familiar with the whole cyclopædia of Irish affairs, and had the enthusiasm of missionaries or soldiers. But the society into which I was now introduced swarmed with the gypsies of literature, men who lived careless, driftless lives, without thought of to-morrow. The staff of the journals which supported O'Connell had slight sympathy with his policy, and few settled opinions or purpose of any sort. The editors of the three peculiarly Catholic papers at that time were all Protestants, and the co-editors of a pre-eminently Protestant organ had been born and bred Catholics. To the reporters, for the most part, public life was a stage play, where a man gesticulated and perorated according as his *rôle* was cast by his stage manager. Most of them had lived through the first Repeal movement: and

whatever public spirit they possessed probably evaporated with its collapse.

The dream I had had of journalism as a mission had a rude awakening. But the new life was not wanting in new enjoyments. I had longed for unattainable books, and in the Dublin Library I found all the books I longed for. The most startling revelation which books brought me was the knowledge that sentiments which I had long regarded as peculiar to myself were common characteristics of the class of whom books are the daily bread. Hazlitt's frank confession and Montaigne's self-reproaches sometimes read like my personal experience. And I first discovered from Isaac Disraeli's "*Literary Character*" that I had the prevailing weaknesses, perhaps some of the gifts, of the man of letters. I had dreamed of seeing Shakespeare's heroes and heroines, no longer as shadows, but in the flesh, and now I had a free admission to two theatres. In one respect the theatre disappointed me, I expected as much enjoyment from the wit of the gallery as from the art of the stage, but the wit was dreary and scanty. I can only recall two laughable incidents in all that theatre-going period. An eccentric attorney named Toby Glascock was a famous amateur actor, and on one occasion the little theatre of Fishamble Street was engaged for one of his performances, and I found myself one of a motley and expectant audience. The curtain did not rise at the usual time, and rumour flew round the house that Toby would not appear. The audience, who had paid their money, became so troublesome that the manager intervened, and endeavoured to quiet them. He talked placebos and platitudes, but said not a word about the missing amateur. At length a gallery boy muttered in a burlesque imitation of the manager in "*Hamlet*": "To-by or not To-by, that is the question ?". On another occasion a fiery melodrama entitled "*God Defend the Right*," was being played in Hawkins Street, and in a single combat the hero got a gash on his hand. "That's the left," cried a boy in the gallery, "God defend the right."

For a time I chummed with Henry MacManus, and he brought me to see treasures of art like the Hogarths in Charlemont House, the historic portraits in Trinity College,

Grinling Gibbons' carved ceilings at Kilmainham, and the noble palaces which Gandon erected on the Liffey. In Sunday rambles with T. B. MacManus and T. M. Hughes I visited the sites where the Volunteers had been reviewed, where Emmet was tried, where O'Connell defended his life against D'Esterre, where the Catholic Association met; and on week days I freshened my impressions of the Irish Parliament by looking again and again at Plunket and Bushe, who had been eminent members of that assembly, and were now sitting at the Four Courts. As I was an unpaid volunteer I had nearly as much leisure as I chose, and I occupied it in various studies. In company with James Coffey, afterwards a successful lawyer, I organised a debating society, which met in a vacant house in Sackville Street; a class to study French, which unhappily had for a teacher a German who had published a French grammar but understood imperfectly the art of teaching; and a little later a social club, which met occasionally over a broiled bone and a moderate jorum of punch. But above all I revelled in Irish history and biography. The panorama of Irish resistance, rarely slackened, never abandoned from St. Lorcan to O'Connell, passed before my imagination, and I burned to strike a blow in that hereditary conflict. Among my new experiences O'Connell proved the great disillusionment. I had formed a romantic ideal of the National leader, the successor of Owen Roe, Sarsfield, and Grattan, which he did not answer. I left the country ready to venerate and obey him; but he belonged altogether to the nineteenth century, and not at all to the region of romance in which I had placed him. A practical man of affairs, a caustic humorous commentator on the business of to-day, rising at times into flashes of fire, or settling down into cold logical analysis in which he caught and crushed the case of an adversary like a *casse-noix* closing on a walnut. His attacks on opponents surprised me by their fierceness and vulgarity as much as by their inexhaustible humour. At a Dublin election, where he had laid about him mercilessly, assailing Mr. West, one of the candidates, as Sow-West, and Recorder Shaw, a remarkably handsome and dignified man, as a fellow whose visage "would frighten a horse from his oats the Lord Mayor of the day, Mr. Morrison,

of the famous hotel, in proposing a candidate referred to these amenities, and observed that a stranger might suppose such a critic, like Hamlet's father, was endowed with Hyperion curls and the front of Jove himself, instead of a wrinkled brow and a scratch wig. For himself he would not be unwilling to compete with the demagogue before a jury of ladies if they could only see him as nature made him without the aid of the barber. This sally was received with roars of applause, but before they concluded O'Connell strode to the front of the platform, snatched off his wig, and, pointing to his naked head covered with a stubble of grey hair, cried, "Ladies, I demand your instant judgment." The laughter was universal, and he had the best of the encounter ; but at a price I thought the National leader ought not to have paid for it.

Coffey, who was a handsome, gentlemanly young fellow, very careful of his dress and appearance, was the cadet of the reporters ; the *doyen* was Christy Hughes, a cheerful, friendly old man, always shabbily dressed, and of almost repulsive ugliness ; his mouth being disfigured by projecting teeth, and his cheeks the colour of beetroot. One of his colleagues, in the frank simplicity of Bohemian intercourse, described his head as "a Beotian Temple with a 'Tusk-an' pediment." There were pleasant stories of his adventures floating about among his comrades. In the parliamentary recess O'Connell used to attend Charity Dinners and make a speech on philanthropy and brotherly love which did service repeatedly in the same cause. One year Christy Hughes, having relished the good things at a dinner too keenly, lost his note-book containing the report of O'Connell's speech ; but after a little bewilderment he made good the deficiency by turning back to the speech of the previous year, cutting it out of the file of the *Freeman* and republishing it ; and nobody, it was said, discovered the substitution, not even O'Connell himself.

Of the current stories of that day I will recall only one. There was a good-looking, clever scamp, an Englishman, named H—, connected with Irish journalism at this time. He had been a reporter in Dublin, but suddenly left town to conduct a new journal in Galway. After a year he reappeared in his old haunts. "What brings you here ?" one of his acquaintances demanded ; "are you not editor

of the *Galway Thunderer?*" "Be more accurate, my dear boy, the *Galway Irishman.*" "And how came you, you Cockney impostor, to edit the *Irishman?*" "Why not, my son? I am more Hibernian than the Hibernians. I can spout like Burgh Quay, handle a cudgel like Donnybrook Fair, and I have got an Irish wife; I'll trouble you to beat that record!" "And your hopeful experiment, does it still prosper?" "No, sir; that great journal which I created died in my arms." "Died!" exclaimed his friend. "How did it die with that tremendous backing of agitators and priests you used to parade in your leaders?" "That was just it, dear; it died of too many patrons." "What do you mean?" "You don't know, my son," rejoined the ex-editor, "what a Galway patron does for his favourite journal." "No; tell me." "He dines with the editor every time he comes to town, writes a libel once a quarter, and never pays his subscription." I decline all responsibility for Mr. H——'s epigram, which is too good, however, to be suppressed.

My honorary employment on the *Morning Register* was pleasantly varied by a temporary engagement as official reporter to a Royal Commission. The subject on which a commission was appointed to report will help to explain the puzzling fact that the representation of the metropolis fell frequently to men of the most unpopular politics. The Irish Reform Act had been so constructed that a citizen of Dublin could not vote in a Parliamentary election without paying numerous rates and taxes, sometimes amounting to as many as ten separate payments. But the Dublin Corporation in which a Catholic had not sat for four generations, did not consider these barriers against Popery sufficient. Some of their officers, it was alleged, had received secret instructions to absent themselves when an election was approaching, and so render it impossible for electors to comply with the law. This was the complaint which the commission was instructed to investigate. Thomas Drummond asked the editor of the *Register* to send him a competent reporter, and I was selected. When the inquiry terminated I had some personal communication with that remarkable man, which I have described elsewhere.¹ The report of the commission effectually promoted

¹ "Thomas Drummond: his Life and Work." By R. Barry O'Brien.

the reform of the Dublin Corporation which had been long resisted by the House of Lords, but was at length accomplished. The payment of my official labours was on a scale that seemed munificent to a young man who had never earned a guinea before, and it afforded me the exquisite enjoyment of making a considerable gift to the mother who had made so many to me.

Another unexpected enterprise was a mission to conduct the funeral of a tithe martyr from Dublin to Queen's County. The resistance to tithe was at that time nearly universal, and as the recovery of the imposts by seizure and sale of property had become very dangerous, defaulters were generally proceeded against by "writ of rebellion" (a device disinterred from the middle ages) and sent to prison. The prosecutions were often for sums incredibly small, sometimes less than a shilling, and the popular exasperation grew intense. One man who died in prison had expressed a desire to be buried with his family, and Peter Purcell, who was then a man of decisive importance in O'Connell's organisation, the Precursor Society, determined that his wishes should be gratified. A public funeral was ordered, and Mr. Purcell selected James Coffey, who always stood high in his favour, and myself to accompany it on behalf of the Press and the Precursor Society. The incidents of that journey, our reception by the local leaders in the towns along the line of route, and the speeches of the young missionaries, neither of whom had passed his twenty-second year, have not altogether faded from my memory, but the interest has passed away, and I leave them to sleep in peace. It was my first personal share in popular agitation, and it made my heart beat fast with enthusiasm.¹

¹ I made a week's visit to London at this time on personal business and got a hurried glance at parks and theatres, and the streets and squares, which books had made most familiar to my imagination. My first great disappointment was in Paternoster Row, associated with so many handsome and brilliant books, and which, to my amazement, I found narrow and dingy, and overcrowded with insignificant shops. T. B. MacManus recommended me an hotel frequented by commercial travellers and shop assistants, and my residence there furnished an insight into social life which I have never forgotten. Among this class, so smooth and deferential behind the counter, I heard more *chansons graveleuses*, not at all deficient in point or humour, during my week's stay than in all my life before, and in all my life since.

Before a year in Dublin was completed an incident happened which proved very fortunate for me. I called one day at the Henry Street Police Office, where the divisional magistrate was a namesake and an acquaintance of mine. A case was being heard of a class which always attracts attention in Ireland ; a convert to the religion of the State was threatened with martyrdom, it was said, for his honest change of opinion. James Donnelly, a servant in the employment of a gentleman resident in the suburbs, told the Bench that six months before he had become a Protestant and had lived a life of happiness and serenity in his new faith, interrupted only by the ill-will of his fellow-servants, who were Catholics. About three months ago he had received an anonymous letter threatening his life if he did not return to the "true fold." A little later other letters reached him adorned with coffins, cross-bones, and similar emblems of terror and death.

On the Tuesday preceding his appearance at the Police Court, when he was out exercising his master's horses, he met two men armed with pistols, who inquired if he had received the "warning letters." He admitted that he had, and they threatened immediate vengeance if he did not forthwith abandon the false religion. Donnelly told them that he would rather be torn to pieces by wild horses than give up the blessed light and guidance of the Gospel. One of the men immediately pulled his trigger, but the pistol did not go off, and the horses plunged and kicked so furiously that the men ran away, one of them, however, turning and flinging a heavy stone, which knocked off the martyr's hat. When he got free of these assassins he rode to the police-station and swore information, and in consequence of certain suspicions which he communicated to them the police arrested Michael Collins, then in custody. Donnelly identified Collins as the man who had snapped a pistol at him, and affirmed that the manifest intention of his assailant was to murder him. To the best of his belief it was on account of his change of religion that the prisoner assaulted him, and Collins must have been acquainted with the anonymous letters, for he asked complainant if he had not received them. Here was a dainty dish to set before the Converts' Protection Society.

The prisoner denied the charge, and declared he had never seen Donnelly before, nor heard of him except as a man whom prisoner's sister, one of his fellow-servants, had refused to marry.

The complainant was a sinister-looking fellow, and listening to his evidence I suspected that his story was an invention. I asked the magistrate to show me the anonymous letters, and I found several words in them misspelt, and some peculiarly-shaped letters which might identify the writer. I framed a sentence containing these words and letters, and communicated my suspicions to the magistrate, who undertook to test the facts. He inquired if Mr. Donnelly could write. "Yes, your worship," he replied, "the Lord be thanked, I can read and write."

"Take up the pen," said the magistrate, "and I will dictate you a sentence."

Mr. Donnelly took up the pen with alacrity, but after he had written a few words he suddenly became agitated and said he would rather not write; but the magistrate insisted on his proceeding. When his manuscript was handed in to the Bench all the words misspelt in the threatening letters were similarly spelt in the manuscript, and all the ill-shaped letters similarly formed.

The case was adjourned till the next day, when the complainant's master was required to attend. When this gentleman compared the threatening letters and the manuscript he ordered the martyr to strip off his livery and quit his service forthwith. The case was discussed in the Press, and the *dénouement* helped to promote me to a pleasanter position. I soon found myself appointed sub-editor of the *Morning Register*, and shortly afterwards I became Dublin correspondent of Whittle Harvey's *True Son*, a journal then much in repute, and I was invited to write occasionally for the *Pilot*, a paper published in the *Register* office.

When I passed into the editorial rank Christy Hughes, when I next encountered him, condoled with me in a sympathetic voice on my early fall. "Where have I fallen from, Christy?" I inquired. "Why, don't you know," he replied, "when a fellow is found too stupid to be a good reporter they immediately make him an editor."

The *Register* was conducted at this time by Hugh Lynar, a Northern Unitarian, who afterwards obtained public employment at the Cape of Good Hope. He was a man of integrity and capacity, who probably found the task of conducting a journal essentially Catholic rendered tolerable by the opportunity it afforded of supporting the policy of the Mulgrave Administration. Lord Mulgrave, Lord Morpeth, and Thomas Drummond were at the Castle, and were ruling the country in a way which an enlightened Whig like Lynar could unreservedly applaud.

I entered on this new employment with a feverish desire to justify my promotion, which nearly proved fatal to a constitution never robust. Rooms in the *Register* office were assigned me, and for a month together I sometimes did not cross the threshold, except on a Sunday morning, and Lynar and other friends warned me that I would destroy myself if I did not relax this perpetual strain. But country walks with a chum brought me back into contact with nature, and none of the luxuries of a varied life rivalled the pleasure which we found in a luncheon of bread and cheese and porter after a long confabulation. The recreation which I loved best, and which all my life long continued to be a keen enjoyment, was a frank confabulation with a friend upon men and books and the eternal problems of life. Since my arrival in Dublin I made a friend, Clarence Mangan, with whom a Saturday night, the newspaper holiday, spent together till the small hours sounded, was a constant delight. His memory for poetry was prodigious, and he recited speeches from Byron's dramas or Shakespeare's, or long passages from Anster's "Faust" or Marlowe's, with an intensity and sympathy which resembled dramatic skill, but was something rarer and more touching. He told me from time to time the story of his doleful life, and finally introduced me to the heroine who had unconsciously turned that drama into a tragedy. Before I left Monaghan I was familiar with his contributions to the *Comet*, the *Penny Journal*, and the *Dublin University Magazine*; but I got less pleasure I believe from his racy translations than from the mad antics, banter, and burlesque into which he sometimes broke. After five-and-fifty years I can still recall, not without a titillation of the midriff, his

defiance of the poet laureate of that time to match his stupendous rhymes—

“Malmsey- and Sack-swilling Southey ! I’m happy to see you so gloomy—
Dare you stand forward, you shoeboy ! and dare you attempt to outdo
me ?

Were you to go for to think, for to try for to beat *me* at lyrics,
Men would drop dead with the laughter, and women go off in hysterics !”

The achievement he had just completed was not a tragedy or an epic poem, but an acrostic—

“There ! it is said and done—oh ! my enchainèd, enchanted
Spirit ! what is the value of all that folly has vaunted ?
Poet, or doctor, or philosoph ; Magian, or Mason, or Gnostic,
Never, I stake my word, transacted so prime an acrostic !”

And the poet demanded an adequate reward for his successful labour—

“Waiter, I solemnly charge you to vanish and make yourself handy ;
And the simplest way to do that is to cadge me a bottle of brandy !
If you’ve no pitcher, you sumpf ! haul in a half-gallon decanter—
Haul it in here by the neck, in style, in state, and instanter.”

In another extravaganza he discoursed of philosophy in this style—

“I’ve studied sundry treatises by spectacled old sages,
Anent the capabilities and nature of the soul, and
Its vagabond propensities from even the earliest ages,
As harped on by Spinoza, Plato, Leibnitz, Chubb, and Toland ;
But of all systems I’ve yet met, or p’rhaps shall ever meet with,
Not one can hold a candle to (videlicet compete with)
The theory of theories Pythagoras proposes,
And called by that sublime old smudge
In Greek—metempsychosis.”

This delightful and unhappy man of genius has had his life made the subject of strange and fantastic speculations, especially about the event which made him an unhappy lover, which has been accounted for on half a dozen diverse theories, all of them wrong. As the facts are familiar to me, it is better, perhaps, that I should state them here. Shortly after our acquaintance commenced he brought me to visit a County Clare family, Mrs. Stacpoole and her daughters, living, I think, in Mount Street. I found them agreeable and accomplished, and repeated my visit several times, always with Mangan. One night, coming away, he

suddenly stopped in the moonlit street, and laying his hands on my shoulders and looking into my face, demanded : "Isn't it true that you are becoming attached to Margaret ?" and finally he said : "I will save you from my fate by telling you a tragic story. When I knew Margaret first I was greatly attracted by her charming manners and vivid *esprit*. I talked to her of everything I did and thought and hoped, and she listened as willingly, it seemed, as Desdemona to the Moor. I am not a self-confident man—far from it ; but when I besought her to be my wife I believed I was not asking in vain. What think you I heard ? That she was already two years a wife, and was living under her maiden name till her husband returned from an adventure which he had undertaken to improve their fortune." "You cannot think," I said, "that she deceived you intentionally, since you have not broken with her ?" "Ah," he said, "she has made my life desolate, but I cannot help returning, like the moth to the flame."

My position on the *Register* brought me into contact from time to time with notable persons, political and literary, whom I was destined to know better in after times. One Sunday when I had sat down to luncheon a message was brought me that a gentleman awaited me below on urgent business. To be disturbed in the only tranquil hour of a busy day was not pleasant, and I would have requested him to call later but that the messenger said he would only occupy a minute, as he was on his way to lunch at the Viceregal Lodge. When I descended I found a little, middle-aged man, with pleasant smile and lively eyes, but of a countenance far from comely, and so elaborately dressed that the primrose gloves which he wore did not seem out of harmony with the splendour of his attire. But my interest was awakened in an instant when he told me his "name was Moore—Thomas Moore." He had come to ask for a proof of some words spoken the night before at the theatre on a universal call from the house. I knew the Irish melodies from boyhood. Later I had learned to taste the bitter-sweet of his political squibs, and revel in the veiled sedition of "The Fire-worshippers." There was probably no one living I would have seen with more satisfaction, and he enjoyed my sympathy. What other reward, indeed, has

the secluded man of letters for a life of endless toil than the affection he awakens in youthful breasts?

Father Tom Maguire, who was then exceedingly popular as a successful controversialist, was another unexpected visitor; a vigorous, agile man, with abounding life in every limb. He looked like a weather-beaten missionary who had encountered, and triumphed over, all the storms of life. Modern taste would probably pronounce him unclerical, but he stood above convention, and was in spirit and endowments a genuine tribune of the people.

A brief visit to my mother first brought me into personal contact with a friend destined to largely influence my life. Thomas O'Hagan, whom hitherto I had only known as a young editor, was now a practising barrister at the outset of a prosperous career, and was on circuit at Monaghan when I reached that town. The good old parish priest, Dean Bellew, invited us to his table *tête-à-tête*, and from that day a friendship commenced which was only interrupted by his death half a century later. He was four years my senior in age, and many more years in discipline and experience, and I can well recall that he looked as much the ideal of a nobleman then in his early manhood as when afterwards he wore the ermine of a chancellor and the coronet of a peer. Wig and gown were not yet worn on circuit, but in the evening dress which was substituted for them his sweet, serene countenance (in which I afterwards so often found comfort and confidence in the troubles of life) seemed to me an ideal of intellectual and manly beauty. I loved and trusted him entirely from the outset, and his influence on my character constantly tended to make me more considerate and circumspect, that I might be less unworthy of my friend.¹

Shortly afterwards a transaction occurred in my native county in which the value of a man of the character and capacity of O'Hagan became manifest. The High Sheriff of Monaghan appointed as his sub-sheriff, on whom the busi-

¹ A few months later I made a second visit to Monaghan, summoned to the death-bed of my mother. I saw death face to face almost for the first time when the pale phantom struck the dearest and best of mothers. That last scene is very familiar to my memory, and there is perhaps no incident in my life which I have recalled so often or with such contentment as her last words, "God bless my son Charles."

ness of selecting juries principally fell, Sam Gray, a notorious Orange leader who had been tried for murdering a Catholic in broad day, and only escaped by the favour of his brethren in the jury box. Any time between the Union and the Irish administration of Mulgrave and Drummond such an appointment might have been made with perfect impunity. It was said, indeed, that if Judas Iscariot was selected for such an office the remonstrance of Catholics would be treated as an impertinence. But there was at length a strong, just man in authority, and when O'Hagan brought the facts under his notice immediate action was taken. Mr. Drummond wrote to the High Sheriff, pointing out the impropriety of the appointment which he had made, and requesting that he would substitute some unobjectionable person for Mr. Gray. There was wrath and indignation among northern squires, and consultations with the Tory leaders in Dublin. The High Sheriff, duly advised from headquarters, at length replied that it was his undoubted right to select his deputy ; neither law nor usage entitled the Executive to interfere with his choice, and by his choice he was determined to abide. Drummond, in rejoinder, promptly admitted the right of the Sheriff to select his deputy, but he pointed out that the right of the Lord Lieutenant to appoint and remove the Sheriff himself was equally beyond controversy. That right he informed the arrogant Shire-reeve his Excellency had thought proper to exercise by superseding him in office. The Northern gentry were frantic with amazement and indignation, and, under the advice of party leaders who had grown grey in office before the coming of the Whigs, they resolved to checkmate the administration—to boycott it, as we would say just now. An agreement was come to that no gentleman of the county would consent to hold the office from which the patron of Sam Gray had been removed. It was like a cordial to the heart of Ulster Catholics, who had never before had a taste of fair play in such contests, to see how Drummond and his colleagues dealt with this impediment. A Catholic gentleman of insignificant estate, but of good sense and good education, was immediately appointed High Sheriff, and for the first time since a M'Mahon held the office under James II., a Catholic framed grand and

petty panels, controlled prisons, and received the circuit judges in the "gap of the North." I was kept informed of what was being done, and in the Press was able to speak of the case with exact knowledge and complete sympathy.¹

My duties on a daily paper, which never altogether ceased day or night, were very trying. My deliverance from this slavery came to me in this way. There was a lively movement among political parties in Ulster; the Belfast Conservatives had induced Isaac Butt, a Professor of Political Economy in Trinity College, and editor of the *Dublin University Magazine*, to conduct a new Conservative journal for them, and the Catholics of Newry had been fortunate enough to secure the aid of Thomas O'Hagan to write

¹ I must not omit to note that my work was performed in constant ill-health, probably arising from indigestion, but which I confounded with consumption, the disease of which my mother died. Sir Dominick Corrigan, an eminent Dublin physician, who entered Parliament late in life, and who was very much awake to what was going on throughout the world, wrote me a letter thirty years later, which recalls my condition in 1838 better than my memory of it:—

"4, MERRION SQUARE, WEST, DUBLIN,
"April 16, 1872.

"MY DEAR CHIEF SECRETARY,—You will probably not recollect me, but I never can forget the incident of our first meeting many years ago when you were hard at work on the Press here, and when I was hard at work at my profession.

"You asked me, and that was the purport of your visit, were you going into consumption, that if you were you would work—work while you had life to add something more to the little capital you had laid by for your sister, that if you were not you would make an ambitious move, I think you said to 'The Bar,' and you added that on my answer depended your choice of life. It was an anxious moment for me as well as for you. I did not hesitate. I told you you were not on the way to consumption, and thank God my prediction has been true, and you have lived to be the chosen of Victoria, and Victoria is really my debtor, for to me she owes the gain of you.

"I too, like you, have laboured, and Dublin has fully rewarded me, and flattered me, for born within her walls, taught at her schools, and passing my life among the people, she has chosen me as her representative, and I now sit for her in the House of Commons.

"If you were among us now I think you would pity us. We have no master mind like O'Connell of yore. We have at one time some Fenians fancying they are to liberate the country. They furnish enough informers to hang or shoot the others. . . . I am sure it is time for me to have done, and all I can do is to apologise to you for thus trespassing on your time, and to say that I have no excuse to offer for it but the recollection of old times and the hope that if we do not soon ourselves improve here, we have at least the consolation of seeing good from our blood in Australia.—Believe me, faithfully yours,

"D. J. CORRIGAN."

leaders for their local journal, founded by a Protestant patriot, the once famous John Morgan. The Catholics of Belfast, who amounted to fifty thousand, and included several men of opulence, determined to have a journal of their own, and they sent a deputation to Dublin to find an editor with the help of O'Connell. O'Connell recommended T. M. Hughes, but Hughes declined to live in Belfast, and finally I was chosen ; and, as the new journal was to be a bi-weekly one, I was relieved for ever from the exhausting slavery of a daily paper.

The leaders of the Monaghan Liberal Club, who knew me from birth, entertained me at a public dinner in my native town to launch me in my career with a parting hurrah. In the half century that followed I sat at many feasts, but the exquisite flavour and intoxicating odour of the first never returned. I was then twenty-three years of age, in impaired health, but devoured with ambition to do something memorable for Ireland. My apprenticeship to journalism was short, not exceeding three years, and henceforth I was called on to exercise authority instead of obeying it. *

* An incident occurred on my last visit to Monaghan which it is still pleasant to recall. Since I left my native town an Orange journal had been established there, and on my return the editor paid me a visit of courtesy. He proved a good fellow, bearing the tremendous name of Arthur Wellington Holmes, and I decidedly liked him. A few weeks later his brother called to ask advice in a serious difficulty. The editor was struck down by fever, and was tortured by the impossibility of bringing out his paper. I walked down to the office, had all the proofs produced, which I carefully revised, called for the latest papers, selected the current Orange news, and the difficulty was overcome. The editor's gratitude spread the story abroad, and it was the subject of endless banter, but it probably did something to mitigate the bitterness of local prejudice.

CHAPTER III

A PROVINCIAL CAREER. BELFAST

My position in Belfast—New friends—James M'Knight—Rev. James Godkin—A bolder policy advised—Derry, Ballybay and Belfast supposed strongholds of Unionism—Muster of Ulster Catholics in nearly a hundred meetings—Effect on O'Connell—He determines to hold a provincial meeting in Belfast—Rage and resistance of the Orangemen—Anxiety of the country on his behalf—He arrives at Belfast, is entertained at a public dinner, and sails for Scotland—Political and social studies—Literature in the *Vindictor*—Clarence Mangan—National songs—Conference in Dublin with Thomas Davis and John Dillon—the *Nation* projected—Davis visits Belfast—Conference in Dublin with John Dillon and John O'Hagan—Become a law student and am engaged to be married—Visit to Edinburgh.

I WENT to Belfast to be a Catholic journalist among an unfriendly majority, and my first business was to take stock of our resources for defence or attack. There were about fifty thousand Catholics in Belfast, and we were a moiety of the population of Ulster. We were the descendants of the men to whom the entire territory had belonged of old, but laws designed to turn us into helots had snatched away our possessions, and left us poor, ill-educated, and often pusillanimous. The malign laws had been at length repealed, but the change was ignored or only reluctantly acknowledged by our fellow citizens, and was ill understood even by those whom it emancipated. A small section of the Belfast Catholics had refused from the beginning to have any share in the new journal, for which they would recognise no necessity, and among many of those associated with it the prevailing virtue was prudence.

My position was essentially one of isolation and aggression, but I had never held aloof from honourable opponents, and I had no disposition to do so in my new home. My friends

brought me to a sort of inorganic social club, where men of various opinions and pursuits met when the day's work was done, over pipes and punch. "Jenny Macalister's," as the place was popularly called, was a favourite rendezvous for men of business, young professional men, and journalists, and the current talk was a summary of whatever was mooted at the moment in the world outside. In this smoky atmosphere I made acquaintance with a man with whom my relations gradually became intimate, and a few years later, as we shall see, became memorable. James M'Knight was editor of a Presbyterian journal, and probably an elder of the Presbyterian Church, but he had slight resemblance to the ordinary type of Northern Presbyter. He was as little of a bigot as a man of his training and position could possibly be ; he took a keen interest in the history, antiquities, and music of Ireland, a taste (as he afterwards wrote) not common with a "black-mouthed Presbyterian." The patriotic history of Belfast was familiar to him, and he held utterly aloof from Orangeism. We viewed each other at the outset with mutual caution, but at bottom we desired the same thing, and we advanced by degrees from an armed neutrality to a friendly pact. Somewhat later I made the acquaintance of another notable man, who also proved a serviceable ally in later times. The Rev. James Godkin was an Independent minister and editor of a controversial journal called the *Christian Patriot*. We met at first as opponents, but on better acquaintance discovered we had much in common, and finally became associates in the same cause. Three years later he wrote a Repeal prize essay, and ten years later became one of the founders of the League of North and South, and to his death was a writer on the Irish side of the National controversy.¹

The *clientèle* whom I came to Ulster to represent was immense but totally unorganised. The Catholics of Belfast were rarely consulted on political movements ; they were expected to follow the lead of the Whigs, one or two of whom were men of considerable ability. Outside Belfast

¹ Mr. Godkin reared a son who has become a distinguished publicist in the United States, and editor of a journal which probably derived its title (*the Nation*) from the contest in Ireland.

the Catholics were a moiety of the population of Ulster, and in some counties had been accustomed to assert themselves at times ; but the Presbyterians, who were less numerous, had ten times more influence. It seemed to me my clients did not know their own strength and that their opponents knew it still less. I thought we ought to come to an understanding with the Whigs on the policy and organisation of the popular party ; or, failing such understanding, to act for ourselves. My opinion did not meet the universal support of my friends in Belfast, but I controlled an instrument by which, in the language of a French statesman, a man could drop the same thought into a thousand minds at the same minute. When I submitted my proposal to the people I received encouragement and sympathy from many places and persons. John Fisher Murray, a young Belfastman in London, beginning to make a name in letters, applauded heartily, and a priest or professional man here and there gave it a certain assent. At length I proposed that to enlighten those who ignored our existence we should parade our forces. Let us meet in every county and barony of the province on the same day, or in rapid succession of days, in perfect order and with unbroken urbanity, but in all our strength. We were Liberals as much as ever, we should be ready to help any cause that promised to promote the liberty or prosperity of Ireland or human progress, but under leaders selected by ourselves, not bound to follow, but rather bound *not* to follow, the whistle or whip of any other organisation.

This was my first stroke of practical work, and I spared no pains to perfect the project. I was fascinated by the idea of an appeal to the clansmen of the North, which to the heated fancy of a boy recalled the achievements of Roger O'Moore. The proposal had a striking success. On an appointed day, or within a brief period of it, nearly a hundred meetings were held between Antrim and Cavan to proclaim the principles of civil and religious equality. At that time Ulster was regarded throughout England, and largely regarded in our Southern provinces as the enemy's country ; a territory where Nationality could only appear under some decent disguise. But I was an Ulsterman and knew better. Summing up the movement after it had concluded, I declared that there was not

one town in Ulster in the market-place of which I would not undertake to hold a Repeal meeting. The contrary impression which prevailed so widely was, I insisted, a complete delusion. Derry was one of the towns which had the reputation of being an Orange fortress : Protestant Derry, English Derry, Londonderry, the city that shut its gates against James II., and still shut them annually in commemoration of that undoubtedly gallant achievement. But nowadays when the imposing ceremony of shutting the gates against the Popish enemy was performed there were as many Papists shut in as Protestants. The first town in which Orange processions were suppressed was no other than this reputed stronghold. The Corporation had encouraged processions down to recent times, though they produced riot and bloodshed: At length they were warned that if so much as one further procession took place it would lead to disastrous consequences. A procession was held notwithstanding, and to the surprise of the offenders did not excite a ripple of disturbance. The historic "No Surrender" was shouted with new significance, and the thunder of "Roaring Meg" swelled the popular diapason. But on an autumn morning shortly afterwards it was reported to the Civic Fathers that forty thousand men were assembled at Bogside, and might be observed arranging themselves in three columns to advance on the city. Hurried consultation of frightened officials ensued, with much running hither and thither, and finally an appeal was made to the Catholic bishop, who hurried to the Bogside, and besought the malcontents to disperse. But the sturdy peasants refused to retreat a step on any other condition than an undertaking by the Mayor that an Orange procession should never more be held within the walls of Derry. The Mayor accepted the terms, and had he not done so the Maiden City would probably have ceased to be maiden on that autumn morning.

Ballybay was another boasted fortress.

"The brave Ballybay,
From which Jack Lawless was hunted away."

So ran the Orange boven. The literal truth, without a shadow of hyperbole, was that Mr. Lawless ran away from

his own followers, not from the Orangemen. He was sent to the North by the Catholic Association to organise the county Monaghan. When he arrived at the Catholic chapel outside the town of Ballybay he found to his consternation 150,000 men assembled, many of whom were armed with guns, blunderbusses, and ruder weapons. They had lived so long under the Orange magistrates and yeomanry that they secretly determined to give their enemies a signal lesson. A regiment of infantry had been sent to the district, and the Commander, General Thornton, warned Mr. Lawless that he was about to strike the first blow in a civil war. Mr. Lawless exhorted his followers not to enter Ballybay ; they could sack the town no doubt, but they would be disobeying the strict commands of the Catholic Association never to violate the law, and next morning they would be an insurgent army with every hand in the island against them. But his remonstrance was thrown away ; he was denounced as a coward and a traitor, and in the end had to quit his carriage, mount a horse, and gallop off from his own adherents.¹ When he was gone, the priests, by dividing the multitude into parishes, and each taking charge of his own parishioners, contrived to break up the assembly peaceably ; but the task was one of the utmost difficulty and peril.

In Belfast, which was pronounced solid for the Union, a weekly Repeal meeting was held as regularly as in the Corn Exchange. There was a large anti-Repeal majority in the town, no doubt, but the middle-class Presbyterians were not Orangemen, and might be won to love their country as of old—provided always we taught them to respect us ; otherwise never.

The Orange Press was furious, but no longer contemptuous. A single extract will suffice to indicate the new spirit which the movement awoke. “The *Vindicator* (screamed the

¹ Mr. William Jackson, a Liberal Protestant of Ballybay, well known at that time, published an account of the day's transactions at a later period in the *Nation*. The multitude who met Mr. Lawless on the 23rd September, 1828, came, he affirmed, not alone from Monaghan, but from Armagh, Louth, Meath, Cavan, Leitrim, and Tyrone (to which districts notice had been sent from Monaghan), and amounted to nearly 200,000 men. The Orangemen in Ballybay, who did not exceed five hundred, would, he was persuaded, have been destroyed but for the wise moderation of Mr. Lawless.

Northern Standard) is to be found in every hamlet ; it has become the oracle of the peasantry, and the manual of respectable Romanists." But a more memorable and significant impression was made outside Ulster. The national leader was naturally delighted with this unexpected temper of the hostile province, and he proclaimed his satisfaction triumphantly :—

"The spirit of the North has been aroused by a free Press ; that excellent journal, the *Vindicator*, has caused a new light to dawn upon the people of Ulster, and still continues to do incalculable service to the cause of freedom. As an illustration of what has been effected and what we may expect in the coming struggle, I may tell you that not less than ninety-three meetings were held in one day."

Returning to the subject later, O'Connell declared that he would hold a provincial Repeal meeting in Belfast at which all Ulster would be represented. An O'Connellite meeting in Belfast ! It sounded like the announcement of High Mass in the Mosque of St. Sophia, or an Abolitionist mass meeting in Virginia. The attention of the country was soon universally fixed on the design, and its development was watched with feverish anxiety. I took up the proposal cordially, but my ordinary abettors were alarmed at the project ; they believed that such a meeting would exasperate the Orangemen to frenzy, and perhaps lead to open conflict. They were certainly more discreet than I, and were determined that O'Connell should not be allowed to run into danger. I was persuaded that the foolishest bigot in the North understood that he could not injure O'Connell with impunity while a nation stood by "to ask the reason why." A provincial dinner was suggested as a compromise, and a deputation was despatched to Dublin to propose it to O'Connell. I find by a letter to Mr. O'Hagan, who was then resident near Newry, that O'Connell, as the project developed, saw more clearly the objections to Belfast, and, without abandoning a Northern meeting, desired to change the venue.

"MY DEAR O'HAGAN,—Mr. Magill and I waited on O'Connell this morning ; he will *not* go to Belfast, but he is most anxious to go to the North, and will visit any other

town that will get up a Provincial Dinner. He talked of Derry, but there is not spirit enough there for anything of the sort. I suggested Armagh, and he said he had been talking to you of that city, and he thought it would do admirably. I intimated that the Primate¹ might be too cautious to countenance such a demonstration, and he said if that were the case there was nothing to do but bow to his wishes. Finally we told him, since he regarded Belfast as out of the question, we could say nothing more till we heard from you, who were about to communicate with Dr. Crolly—that you would either write the result of your inquiry or arrive in town yourself, and that as far as we were at present instructed it would be either Armagh or nowhere. Write me on Sunday and say which hour you will arrive in town on Tuesday, and we will appoint a later hour to see O'Connell that you may come with us.—Always yours,

“C. G. D.

“DUBLIN, 16th April, 1841.”

O'Hagan was against Belfast, which as a native he knew *au fond*, but in favour of any place else in Ulster.

“MY DEAR DUFFY,—I had your two letters. As to the first I hope we shall dine together on Tuesday, for I go down to-morrow morning to Newry and shall return by Tuesday morning's mail, by which probably you also will travel. Say if you will. We have four holidays at Easter.

“As to the provincial meeting there are great difficulties. I saw O'C. to-day, he is eager for it and will attend, but Belfast would not do, just now. The effect of the holding back of the Liberal Protestants would be very bad. So O'C. thinks and declares that he never thought of Belfast. Newry would hardly do. There is no good place of meeting, and there might be opposition. Indeed this is greatly to be apprehended anywhere. If there be a public meeting the Orangemen will pour in and at least produce awful confusion, if not something worse. But if the thing is to be done, I think it may best be done at Armagh, and I shall assist to the utmost of my power. O'C. agrees that Armagh would be

¹ Dr. Crolly.

the proper place, and I have agreed to write to the Primate on the subject. I fear he will be against the movement ; but as a middle measure O'C. proposes a provincial dinner which would save us from troublesome intruders. We will do either thing if the Primate consent, and probably the dinner, all things considered, should be held rather than the meeting.—Ever yours,

“THOMAS O'HAGAN.”

Mr. O'Hagan did not obtain the approval of the Primate, and we were for a time dead-locked. With the rash confidence of a young man intoxicated with his own rhetoric, I insisted that we could and would succeed in Belfast ; but when the thing was done and over I looked back on the adventure as a man who has walked close to a precipice in the dark, and sees with amazement and thankfulness how narrowly he has escaped a catastrophe.

The Tory Press probably surmised the state of affairs, and persistently defied the agitator to visit the capital of the loyal North, and in the end O'Connell grew angry and resolved at all hazards to accept the original invitation. It will help the reader to understand the condition of Ulster at that time to note what followed. The Ulster Orangemen were vehement supporters of the law, when the law was a convenient instrument of oppression, but they treated it with contempt whenever it crossed their purposes or prejudices. An eminent public man desired to meet his political friends in a town where they amounted to over fifty thousand, and it was determined to resist this design by open force. To Newry, a frontier town with a large Catholic population, it was admitted he might go, but he was warned that if he presumed to pass the Orange frontier it would be at his peril. Between Newry and Belfast Orange lodges were convoked, and the mildest measure proposed was to clutch his horses' heads, turn them back, and hunt him out of Ulster. After Newry was passed on the line of approach to Belfast, all the active magistrates were Orangemen. The first stage from Newry was Bannbridge, and the only innkeeper there, obeying the political pressure, announced that he would furnish no post-horses to the Agitator ; the same resolution was adopted

at various stages between Bannbridge and Belfast, and it was assumed that a sure barrier to his design was interposed.

Intense anxiety began to prevail in the other provinces lest O'Connell should suffer some gross insult or perhaps some disastrous injury, and I was not unnaturally assailed for having advised so dangerous an adventure. But we had reached a point when it was more dangerous to retreat than advance, for retreat meant humiliation for the National leader and his party, and the preparations went on steadily.¹ In Belfast a pavilion was erected for the banquet, and a public meeting was announced for the previous day. The North was like a beehive rashly overturned ; all buzz and menace ; a muster of Orangemen was summoned at various points along the line, and the pass into Ulster was pronounced secure. But O'Connell was not so easily baffled. I received by special messenger a letter from his most confidential agent, Patrick Vincent FitzPatrick, describing a method by which it was believed the enemy would be baffled, and announcing the exact hour of his probable arrival in Belfast, the device to be kept a profound secret, even from the committee, till he appeared amongst us. The resourceful old man set out a day earlier than was announced, horses having been ordered in the name of a gentleman who accompanied him, one of a little band selected for the purpose, of a temper not to be trifled with. He passed quietly through the enemy's pickets and arrived safely in the midst of his friends. The news spread like a bush fire in Australia ; in an hour it was known in every corner of Belfast, and next morning throughout all Ulster. From an early hour in the morning bodies of Orangemen began to arrive in Belfast, and a brisk demand for tickets for the public meeting began—a demand not only from known O'Connellites, but from grim men with high cheek-bones, and vigorous young fellows with purple complexions and party-coloured cravats. It was plain the meeting was to be interrupted, and O'Connell advised that it should be abandoned, the banquet supplying sufficient opportunity to meet his friends and proclaim his opinions.

¹ It is a curious evidence of how wide the interest in these transactions was that upwards of £40 were received at the *Vindicator* office in separate sixpences sent by post from persons in various parts who wanted an immediate copy of the journal recording the visit to Belfast.

A placard was issued announcing that the meeting would not take place, and that those who purchased tickets might have their money returned at the *Vindicator* office. The Orangemen were naturally in a rage, and recreated themselves by an attack on my office, in which there was soon not a pane of glass unbroken.

I went immediately to the officer in command of the Constabulary, and reported what was happening. He was a grey-headed, saffron-coloured old satrap, who had probably never once in his life employed his authority to restrain Orange violence or protect Popish property. At any rate he gave me no assistance, and seemed amazed and insulted that I should expect it. This was the way the scales of justice were poised at Belfast fifty years ago.

The banquet and a levée where O'Connell received his friends were remarkably successful, even the Whigs who would not go to the banquet thought fit to send a deputation to welcome him to the North as an eminent reformer. The pavilion accommodated fifteen hundred persons, and was crowded with the flower of the Ulster Catholics and a few Liberal Protestants, notably Robert M'Dowall, a Belfast merchant, who occupied the chair. O'Connell's original purpose was certainly attained ; he succeeded in moving the entire population of Ulster from the "Gap of the North" to the Lough of Belfast. But the Orangemen boasted that they would lay hold of him on his return journey, and swore that he would have to run the gauntlet from the Lagan to the Bann. But they were mistaken ; he was due at a public dinner in the North of England in a few days, and the day after our banquet he sailed for Greenock in a Belfast steamer, and the Orangemen saw the last of him on board surrounded by his friends. The feeling of relief throughout Ireland was immense—nothing like it was known since he escaped the bullet of d'Esterre. No one probably felt the relief so keenly as I did when I realised too late how rash and perilous an experiment we had made. It had ended triumphantly, and I could now return to my ordinary business.

Whatever leisure I could command in so busy a career was employed in fitting myself for the battle of life. I took up anew the education so prematurely interrupted in my

native town. The Belfast College admitted students to lectures without examination, and I entered the class of Logic and Belles-Lettres in the session of 1841-2. My fellow students were for the most part lively country lads intended for the Presbyterian ministry who made light of logic and belles-lettres. When Professor Cairns was discoursing on the intrinsic relation of things, and expressed his regret that there was no convenient treatise "on relations," one of his audience suggested in a muffled voice, "Japhet in search of a father." Dr. Henry MacCormac¹ was then practising his profession in Belfast and teaching benevolence and good-will with unflagging zeal. I probably made his acquaintance as a patient, but we soon became friends. He introduced me to new regions of thought in metaphysical speculation, and to new views of duty towards the labouring, suffering people which were very welcome. In the double capacity of friend and physician he insisted that I needed relaxation, and took me into society with him for a time, but the experiment was a failure; I was feverish with political designs, and totally indifferent to social success of any sort. The experiment was worth something doubtless, but it was not worth the quantity of my treasured leisure it would consume. At that time I read incessantly, and was making acquaintance from day to day with new regions of thought, an enjoyment beside which other recreations were tame. O'Hagan sent me Carlyle's "Miscellanies," then recently published, and his daring theories moved me like electric shocks. It was O'Hagan who advised me to read in the *Edinburgh Review* the articles of a young man named Macaulay, who had written brilliantly on some of the great men and great eras of English History. The only poets I had known in boyhood were Moore and Burns. I now read Scott, Byron, Coleridge, and Shelley, and pitied somewhat presumptuously those who wasted their time in salons.

I made few intimacies in Belfast; I had not the disengaged mind and the holiday spirit in which intimacies flourish. The companions of whom I saw most were two young priests—Rev. George Crolly, nephew of the Primate, and

¹ Father of Sir William MacCormac, President of the College of Surgeons, London, and author of several books on metaphysics and social science.

afterwards a professor of Belles-Lettres at Maynooth, and Father Dorrian, in later times Bishop of the diocese. The former, like his distinguished relation, was a Whig, and the latter a steadfast Nationalist. These were young men little beyond my own age, but during my residence in Ulster I was fortunate enough to make two friends among my seniors who never withdrew their confidence from me during a tempestuous and changeful career. One was Father Mathew. He was at that time in the first flood-tide of success in his teetotal movement, and his sympathisers in Belfast invited him to visit the northern capital and administer the pledge. The unassuming missionary made it a rule not to visit any diocese without an invitation from the bishop of his church, and for some reason which I have forgotten the Bishop of Down and Connor would not give such an invitation. Dr. Denvir was a friend of mine, and to a Catholic journalist the bishop of the diocese is an important factor, but I was greatly moved by the career of the illustrious friar, and I determined to take his side unequivocally. I organised a deputation of Belfast Catholics to meet him at the town closest to the frontier of our diocese and give him a cordial welcome to the North. I afterwards attended a banquet to him in Newry, the second town in Ulster, and on that occasion broke new ground, on which I must pause for a moment, as it was practically the key-note of my whole after life. I insisted that what the Irish people wanted most was education, and that the benefactor who was giving them temperate habits might give them, and was especially bound to give them, this kindred blessing.

“When total abstinence ends,” I said, “in redeeming a man from the vice of intoxication it stops far short of the point which it is capable of reaching. We have not only appetites to restrain, but great faculties to cultivate, and the latter is not the least important portion of our duties; for the man whose heart and imagination are not opened and exalted by education is no more the creature God intended him to be than if eyes and hands were wanting in his physical organisation.

“You, Father Mathew, have taken from the people a

sensual, material stimulant ; ought you not to replace it by a moral stimulant ? You have quenched one thirst ; ought you not to excite another—a thirst which is not to be slaked in the whiskey shop, but in the library or lecture-room—a thirst for knowledge ? The human mind is never idle, least of all will it be idle when healthful action is no more impeded by the paroxysms and depressions of intemperance. It is your duty, I submit, to find it employment which will make it wiser, happier, and better.

“ How may this be done ? I venture to propose a method which, I am glad to say, has the concurrence of the illustrious guest of the evening. The teetotal societies should become not only agencies for the diffusion of total abstinence principles, but for improving the morals and cultivating the understanding of the people. Why should not every teetotal society have its lecture-room, where the artisan might be taught the principles of mechanics, the farmer the latest improvements in agriculture, and every one something that would make him a better man and better citizen ? I long to see the day when every town will have its temperance hall, and every temperance hall its schoolrooms, its reading-rooms, its lecture-rooms, its exhibition-rooms, and even its public baths and gymnasium, for the operative classes. Let the teetotaler come to be recognised not only by his sobriety and respectability, but by his intelligence ; not only by fulfilling life’s duties, but by enjoying life’s virtuous pleasures, till the very sensualist is forced to confess that the way to happiness is not through the indulgence of our passions, but through their regulation and restriction. Leisure is the poor man’s right as much as food or clothes ; leisure to think, to read, to enjoy. But without some friendly aid, how are the people to attain these blessings ? Many of them cannot read because education was discouraged by law, and by custom, which outlives law, and those who can read cannot get suitable books. Ten years ago, more than half the counties in Ireland were without a bookseller’s shop, and there are still several counties in that condition, but the teetotal societies might right this grievous wrong.”

The chairman of the banquet was Dr. Blake, bishop of the diocese, a spiritual and venerable old man, whose head,

if one encountered him in the Great Desert, would be recognised as the head of a Christian teacher. He supported my educational proposal cordially. "We were not permitted to govern our country," he said, "but we might teach it, and it is a nobler task to teach a people than to rule them." This was the second friend. From that time forth, whenever I made any public proposal entitled to his support the support of the Bishop of Dromore was sure to come; and whenever any difficulty embarrassed my public life the good bishop, as we shall see, came to my aid. This proposal did not perish on the highway. Father Mathew afterwards declared that he caused thirty thousand copies of my speech to be printed and circulated among the teetotalers of Ireland. These were some of the incidents which reconciled me to a provincial career, and left me not discontented with the use I had made of three years of my early manhood.

As a political journal the *Vindicator* was a success, but I longed to see it awaken an interest in native literature. The fragments of Celtic song which came down to us from the eras of resistance, often in rude translations only, had been a constant joy to me, and I was persuaded that among a race whose public festivities were always enlivened by ballad poetry, chanted by minstrels and chiefs, song was an immense though greatly underrated force. Swift, who was as little as possible of a Celt, seems to have divined this passion in the race, and his political songs were almost as powerful stimulants of opinion as his pamphlets. Clarence Mangan contributed constantly to the *Vindicator*, but his verses were either epigrams or mere elaborate pleasantries; his national enthusiasm and confidence were not yet awakened.

"MY DEAR DUFFY (he wrote to me at that time)—Don't ask me for political essays just now—I have had no experience in that *genre*, and I should infallibly blunder. I send you six pages, 'Our Budget,' 'Jokeriana,' 'Jokerisms,' 'Flim-flams,' and 'Whim-whams,' or anything else you like to call them—isms, they are *facetiae* (at least I hope so) in the American fashion, and might do for your fourth page—pray Heaven you don't imagine they'd DO FOR your paper altogether. If you like these I shall probably improve my

specimens as I go on, and shall intermix them with political epigrams ; but as to any formal political essay I fear I am not equal to do it at all."

Some of the epigrams were pleasant specimens of what his friends in after life came to call *Manganesque*. For example :—

"Says the bell to the bell-hanger, stop, my old trout,
Take your hand from my throat, let me off, let me out,
I'll be hanged if you know what it is you're about."

Or this—

"Tell me, my man, what is his honour's name,
The chief ground landlord of this wilderness ?'
'The *grinding* landlord you must mean,' says Pat,
'It is the tenants who are ground, I guess.'"

I wrote a few ballads which I still smile or blush to encounter in collections of national verse, and T. M. Hughes did much better. Here is one of his rude, vigorous songs which glows with all the fervour that a little later inspired the "Spirit of the Nation" :—

"Oh, bitter's the lot of the vanquished—'tis still to be scoffed at and scorned ;
The arms that are weakly relinquished to goads for the fallen are turned !
What, dare you to call yourselves equal to those who have bound you so long ?
What, dare you to look for a sequel but hate and oppression, to wrong ?
'Barbarians, ill-fed and ill-clothed,' your lords are the rulers of earth ;
By *them* know your manhood is loathed ; to them know your wrongs are a mirth !

Look, bondsmen, for help to the Senate ! Bleat, lambkins, and soften the wolf !
Can the drowning man's prayer for a minute pour oil on the merciless gulf ?
When our shores by the Dane were invaded, brave Brian petitioned with steel ;
How he scowls while his children degraded to lordlings a-blubbering kneel !

Invaded in hearth and in altar ! in language, religion, and blood,
Pronounced to be aliens¹ why falter, whose rights are all crushed in the bud ?
Hath Heaven the fair Emerald Island to waste as a province decreed ?
Eat your roots, ye cowed slaves, and be silent, or learn to be aliens indeed !"

¹ Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst had recently declared that the Irish were aliens in blood, language, and religion.

Sympathetic contributors soon flocked in, among them a Professor of Maynooth¹ whose verses, however, were of the peaceful school of O'Connell. After a little, local poets sang the revival of national spirit in the North and the decay of British ascendancy, and correspondents sent to the *Vindicator*, as to their natural *habitat*, verses disinterred from commercial and statistical newspapers of the day. Here is a specimen :—

“Thou shalt not die—thou shalt not die—
No—beautiful country!—no!
Though thy valleys are rank with a race of slaves
Who laugh as they look on their fathers' graves,
And hug the red hand of the foe,
Thou shalt not die—thou shall not die—
No—beautiful country—no!

Thou shalt not die—thou shalt not die—
No—beautiful country—no!
Whilst the soul and the spirit of Liberty fills
The depth of the valleys—the height of the hills,
And the crags where the strong winds blow—
Thou shalt not die—thou shalt not die—
No—beautiful country—no!

Thou shalt not die—thou shalt not die—
No—beautiful country—no!
Whilst pulses are panting and glowing each eye,
And the front of the freeman looks holy and high,
With his banner and breast to the foe—
Thou never shall die—thou never shall die—
No—beautiful country—no!”

The worm at the root of the whole social system in Ireland, the land laws, was not forgotten in these tirades.

“Degenerate race, not a sod is your own,
Of the soil where your fathers coursed free as the air :
Not a bird dare you mesh, where their falcons have flown—
Not a fish dare you draw from the stream which were theirs,
Of park, grove, or garden, which smile in the morn,
If you lift but a latch, by their mastiffs you're riven :
The food you have grown, they refuse you with scorn ;
If you starve by their law, you deserve it by heaven.”

I copy these rude experiments because they were the precursors and precedents of the poetry of the *Nation*, which produced a memorable and permanent change in the spirit of the country.

¹ Rev. Dr. Murray, of whom the reader shall hear more later. His ordinary life was that of a spiritual recluse, but there was a reserve of passion and force in his nature easily evoked by injustice.

Soon after I left Dublin Henry MacManus went to London, bent on doing for Ireland what Wilkie had done for Scotland. His ambition was not altogether a hopeless one. His training as an artist was indeed incomplete, but he had the inspiration of an artist, and he caught the character of the Irish peasant in all his moods with a fidelity which suggested Griffin or Carleton. Fostered by success he might have become a notable painter of national manners. But nobody in London, it seems, wanted Irish pictures unless they were flavoured with burlesque.

"I thank you, my dear Duffy (he wrote from his new home), for the notice of me in the *Vindicator*, in which I recognise the friend of my youth. I had need of such a cordial. Body o' me, man, we have entered on the busy arena of life, to tread or be trodden on, and mine is the spirit of that ugly customer Anteus whom our early friend Hercules met on his rambles. I never suffer an unjust defeat but I get a new strength, when the wound heals. I recently got back a rejected picture from the Royal Academy. I had worked on it for six months, and I expected it would tell well for me in London as *the* painter of Irish subjects. It was the 'Hedge School' which you saw on the easel. For success in London I ought to have copied the modern English school, with just a reaping-hook, a cotonore, a shillelagh, and perhaps a peck of potatoes in the corner for local colour. Then the Cockneys would have understood it ; but, being true and natural, it produced the same effect among them as the appearance of an actual Irish peasant would do at Almack's. I read you constantly, but you must not be surprised that I do not agree with all your politics. It is not with your work, but with yourself my wishes go."

MacManus did not realise his design of being the interpreter of Irish life to England ; but in his own country he became in time one of the leaders of the Royal Academy in Dublin, and in the end Master of the National School of Design. He had ambition and gifts for a greater career ; but Art, which prospers only in a rich soil, had few patrons and small public sympathy in Ireland.

A young Irishman entangled in politics had only one profession open to him, and I determined to become a barrister.¹ On a visit to Dublin to keep my first term I met at the office of the *Morning Register* a young barrister who had recently become a writer in the journal. He was introduced to me as John Blake Dillon, and after a little talk we made an engagement to see more of each other. He was a man of the type which I had sought, and had not found, when I joined the Dublin Press. Frank and manly in his bearing, deeply in earnest in his convictions, and well acquainted with the principles which underlay and justified Irish agitation, his talk begat sympathy and confidence. He desired to make me known to one of his comrades named Thomas Davis, and for this purpose we made an appointment at the Committee Room of the Repeal Association in the Old Corn Exchange. I was less pleased with Davis than with his friend ; he was able and manifestly sincere ; but at first sight I thought him dogmatic and self-conceited—a strangely unjust estimate as it proved in the end. When I returned to Belfast I thought much of these young men, so fundamentally unlike their predecessors in journalism, and resolved when I saw them again to open a design, on which I had pondered frequently, of establishing a weekly journal in Dublin. In Ireland there was no journal resembling the London *Examiner* or *Spectator*, which were original, critical, and vital from cover to cover ; and such a journal might, I believed, be created. What followed has been often told in detail ; enough to say here that on my next visit to Dublin I had a conference with Davis and Dillon under an elm tree in the Phoenix Park, and we came to an agreement to establish the *Nation* newspaper, of which I was to be proprietor and editor.

After winding up my affairs in Belfast, when I restored the property of the *Vindicator* to those who had bestowed it on

¹ In Michaelmas Term, 1839, when I was admitted a law student at King's Inns, a number of men with whom I was after associated in life were called to the Bar, among them Joseph Lefanu, the future novelist ; William Foster Stawell, Attorney-General and finally Chief Justice in Victoria ; and Richard Annesley Billing, afterwards of the Melbourne Bar. Among the law students who started with me were Patrick MacMahon, afterwards M.P. for Co. Wexford, and a dear friend and colleague of mine ; Thomas Wallis, the college tutor of Thomas Davis, and Andrew Russell-Stritch, a notable member of the Repeal Party.

me that it might be still carried on for the purpose for which it was created, I removed to Dublin in the autumn of the same year (1842), and the first number of the *Nation* was published on the 15th of October. Before leaving Belfast I took another decisive step in life by becoming engaged to be married to one who had sweetened my life during my residence in that conventicle.¹

A little earlier I was invited to a public dinner in Edinburgh, and saw that fine city for the first time. I was more anxious to see Christopher North than the Calton Hill, but did not succeed. Perhaps I escaped being impaled on an epigram. A dozen years earlier John Lawless, my predecessor as a National journalist in Belfast, was entertained by his admirers in Edinburgh, and "Crusty Christopher" declared in the "Noctes" that "the editor from Belfast was as great a goose as ever gabbled on a green or was grilled on a gridiron."

¹ My future wife was Emily, daughter of Francis M'Laughlin, a Belfast merchant, and grand-daughter in the maternal line of The MacDermott of Coulavin, one of the two or three Celtic families in Ireland whose hereditary title had survived to the nineteenth century. Her only child, John Gavan Duffy, is a Cabinet Minister in Australia when these pages are being written.

CHAPTER IV

A NATIONAL JOURNALIST

Debated with Davis the principles of the new journal, afterwards with Dillon and John O'Hagan—Success of the journal—National poetry in the *Nation*—Weekly suppers of the contributors, and Sunday excursions—The Father Mathew testimonial, and the purpose to which I desired to apply it—Letter from Father Mathew—Relations with O'Connell—Success of the new opinions—Testimony of Isaac Butt, Samuel Ferguson, Carleton, Lefanu, Lever, Lecky, and others—Notable men and women contributors—The “Spirit of the Nation” and its reception—Thackeray's squibs—Letters from Leigh Hunt, Thomas Carlyle, and Dr. M'Knight.

WHILE the new journal was still on the anvil, Davis visited me at Belfast, and we debated the principles on which it ought to be conducted. I told him what the *Vindicator* had effected in the North, a work which was provincial, suitable to the condition of Ulster, where the Catholics had not asserted themselves since the Battle of Ballynahinch, but manifestly unsuitable to a National struggle. I reiterated my rooted opinion that education was the agency, without which we could accomplish nothing. Men with convictions alone were strong, but our people had only sentiments and sympathies. Davis said education was a resource sure indeed, but slow; we ought to be able to win the help of classes already educated. We wanted the help of the Protestant middle class. The best of them were friendly to every popular demand except the final one; our bitterest enemies among them were descendants of the men who surrounded Tone and Russell in Belfast fifty years ago. A National movement ought to embrace the whole nation, the door not being shut against any class because of their opinions on any subject except repeal of the Union. I told him I was confi-

dent generous Protestants in three provinces might be won, but not in Ulster in this generation. The men associated with Tone and Russell had no successors. The young men of the Church of England were mostly Orangemen systematically trained in the belief that their Church, and perhaps their personal property, would be plundered by the Catholics if they obtained power. The Presbyterians were not in general Orangemen, but there were settlements of Cameronians and Covenanters among them who kept alive a fierce enmity and contempt of "the Romanists," and knew no more of Tone and Russell than of the Gracchi.¹ I had lived all my life in the province, and I never met a Protestant Nationalist of my own generation (although there were doubtless a few survivors of '98) except three—one of my schoolfellows, another who was a man of letters in London, and the third who was a young attorney residing at Bannbridge, who came to see me at the time of the O'Connell dinner, and expressed warm sympathy with the Nationalist minority.²

Of our promised colleagues in the journal Davis relied chiefly upon Dillon. Dillon, he said, was horrified at the condition of the peasantry in Connaught, and was impatient to take up the land question, which was doubtless of less interest in the North, where the farmers had security of tenure, and were tolerably content with their landlords. I assured him the tenants were not at all content, that the landlords violated the Ulster tenant-right as far and as often as they dared, and, like the Marquis of Londonderry, interfered in the management of farms with insolence which was wanton. In one memorable case the Marquis threatened immediate eviction to a tenant not in arrears of rent because he cultivated a whin hedge which offended the landlord's taste as a scientific agriculturist. I had brought some cases of this sort to light, and I was persuaded that there was a deep and widespread discontent among the Presbyterian

¹ Wolfe Tone, half a century earlier, had for the first time formulated the principle upon which alone Ireland could be saved. "To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishmen in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, or Dissenter—these," he said, "were my means" (to win the independence of the country).

² Matt Trumble, John Fisher Murray, and John Mitchel.

farmers, likely some day to break out with the suddenness and force of an earthquake.

I visited Dublin shortly after these conversations and went over the same ground with Dillon. I found that, as the aims of all three were identical, there would be no difficulty in harmonising our methods.

With Dillon I met a youngster, in whom I was greatly interested. Like myself he was a Northern, and a law student who had trained himself in a provincial town chiefly by the aid of books. John O'Hagan was still under twenty, but proved surprisingly well informed on whatever subject turned up in conversation, and with this intellectual agility he united the repose and authority of more mature years. When you are interested in a man it commonly happens that you hear of him in unexpected places, and every one who knew O'Hagan had something pleasant to tell of him. One of my kinsmen, living in the Argentine Republic,¹ who had been his schoolfellow, wrote to me a little later : "I owe my love of books to John O'Hagan. When we were boys together in Newry, not above ten years of age I should think, we read Shakespeare together day after day in a hayloft, and I got a taste for reading which I trust will never leave me. I shall probably never meet him on earth, but he is fitted to go to heaven, and I trust to meet him there some day." John O'Hagan² became my fast friend from that time to his dying day. Starting from a memorable youth, he constantly developed unexpected powers. The tranquil, sagacious talker surprised his friends by passionate poetry, and the poet amazed them by proving a profound dialectician. Such a man was an invaluable recruit, and naturally became one of the cabinet council of the new journal as soon as it got organised.

The story of the sudden rise and amazing growth of the *Nation* has been told elsewhere.³ In a few weeks it was read everywhere in Ireland, and read with a sympathy and confidence which had not been given to a newspaper within the

¹ Don Juan Hughes.

² In later years Judge O'Hagan, head of the Irish Land Commission. He was not at all related to Lord O'Hagan, as was commonly supposed, though in the end he became his son-in-law.

³ "Young Ireland," chaps. iii. and v.

memory of any man then engaged in public affairs. Its chief charm for the people was the frankness with which truths were uttered which had commonly been heard only in whispers. The case of Ireland was no longer (to borrow the metaphor of Moore) the lament of a beggar who showed his sores to excite compassion, but the remonstrance of an injured and angry partner, who insisted on fair play or a close of the partnership. The omnipotent landowners who controlled everything in the country, and could count for steadfast support from the courts and the Castle, were brought face to face with the first principles of public polity, and their misconduct habitually exposed. The Irish people amounted to nearly eight millions at that time, and the voice of haughty self-reliance was very welcome to them. The experiment commenced, as we have seen, in the *Vindicator*, of appealing to an old bardic people in passionate popular verse, I resolved to carry into the *Nation*; I invited my new friends to help, and set an example of the spirit which I desired to evoke.¹ Davis, who had never published a stanza, John O'Hagan, who had as little practice, even Mangan, who was a genuine poet, but had not yet been kindled into a confident trust in the destiny of Ireland, wrote frequently, and volunteers soon came who matched the pioneers at their own weapons. Williams's "Munster War Song," Ingram's "Memory of the Dead," De Jean Fraser's "Gathering of the Nation," Drennan's "Battle of Beal-an-Ath Buidhe," and Denny Lane's "Kate of Araglen," which came from volunteers, are not excelled in the whole circle of Irish song. It was Davis's habit to put his whole strength into any work he undertook; the new faculty he had developed delighted him, chiefly as another serviceable weapon to be employed in the war of deliverance, and for three years he poured out songs and ballads which inflamed and elevated the spirit of the country.²

¹ "Fag a Bealach," published in the third number, and previously sung at a supper of the contributors, was the first national poem in the new journal.

² I have published a memoir of Thomas Davis, in which his character and services, his genius and devotion to Ireland are described; these things can only be glanced at in the present volume. It is proper to say that Samuel Ferguson had been at work on Irish literature long before Davis or the other writers of the *Nation*, but the *University Magazine*, to which his contributions commonly went, circulated among a class who

The writers of the *Nation* lived much together, and educated each other by friendly discussion on every problem in the Irish case, for a man scarcely understands his own opinions till he has defended them in debate. A weekly supper on Saturday evening and Sunday excursions to historic places, to which sympathetic friends were invited, made the chief recreations of a busy life. The *Nation* was not a journal designed to chronicle the small beer of current politics, but to teach opinions, and this was a task never neglected. The ideal of an historic nationality embracing the whole people of whatever creed or origin was a topic to which Davis constantly applied himself. Dillon, to whom the practical side of life appealed most keenly, painted the desolate condition of the tenant-at-will, and analysed the exceptional laws under which he cowered. For my part I insisted over and over again on the need of systematised self-education, such as I had mooted to Father Mathew at Newry, and to Davis at Belfast. We interchanged topics, indeed week after week, but each man returned in the end to the theme which touched him nearest.

I aimed from the outset to stamp upon the *Nation* an individuality like that which distinguishes an honourable man, from whom it is instinctively felt that nothing underhand or unfair need be feared. Every line of the contents passed under my eye. No one was assailed for any offence except some public delinquency injurious to Ireland, and no one assailed was ever refused a hearing. The aim of the *Nation* was speedily understood by the best men in Ireland ; they recognised almost instinctively that here was a journal which was not a commercial speculation, but the voice of men to whom the elevation of Ireland was a creed and a passion. The profits, which were considerable, were spent in improving and distributing the journal, and paying contributors on a scale unprecedented in Ireland. ¹

had imperfect sympathy with his labours. In National stories and ballads and charming essays on the resources and attractions of the country he had anticipated much that was afterwards done in the *Nation*. But he had not reached the people, who knew so little of Ferguson that when I printed his fine ballads "Willy Gilliland" and "Una Phelamy" in the "Ballad Poetry of Ireland," a few years later, I was asked by educated people if the author was still living.

¹ Davis, and after him Mitchel, received from the *Nation* more than twice as much as Macaulay received from the *Edinburgh Review*, or Southey from the *Quarterly*, these two being the only men who devoted their entire

A signal opportunity soon offered for promoting the adult education so much needed. It was proposed to commemorate the services of Father Mathew by a national memorial. The chief nobility, gentry, merchants, and eminent ecclesiastics of both Churches tendered their aid, and the project promised to be a notable success. I suggested that instead of erecting a stone and mortar or marble and bronze monument, the opportunity ought to be seized to complete and consolidate Father Mathew's noble work. If the money were expended in perfecting the Teetotal Societies, they would become the clubs, the adult schools, the lecture-rooms, the parish parliaments of a sober people. As their resources and opportunities expanded they might be encouraged to establish museums, public baths, public walks, bands, exhibition-rooms, benefit societies, and all the other agencies of popular enlightenment and comfort. Among a people so equipped a national literature would spring up—a literature not founded on the gasconade and gormandising of pseudo Irish dragoons or slang stories about the blunders of Paddy and Andy, but genuinely native, recalling all we love or hate in the chequered history of our country, and reviving a thousand memories which made her sons proud to call her mother. Though long servitude had left the mass of the people not only ignorant of the historic past, but ignorant of contemporary events beyond the narrow horizon of their personal experience, there was a generation issuing from college and from the National schools, and gathered into the temperance societies which would constitute a fit audience for lessons of more informed and generous patriotism. My proposal was well received, and seemed not unlikely to be adopted in whole or part. But time to the journal. It is less by large and conspicuous transactions than by small obscure ones that the character of such a journal will be best understood. Quack advertisements universally seen in English and Irish journals, were altogether excluded. The proceedings of local meetings to collect the O'Connell Tribute were extensively published in national journals and paid for as advertisements. The *Nation* published as much as was legitimate news in a weekly paper and refused to accept any payment. Tickets for the theatre were purchased, and free admission declined. Nothing was done or permitted that might impair the dignity or independence of the journal. Its ultimate ends were well understood. Lord Plunkett, who presided in the Court of Chancery, and still took a certain interest in affairs, was discovered by a friend one morning in his robes reading the new journal. "What is the tone of the *Nation* to-day?" his friend demanded. "Wolfe Tone," replied the old man.

when I considered the time come to ask the assistance of the committee, Peter Purcell, the honorary secretary, warned me that I was building in the clouds. The plans and specifications of popular colleges were fascinating, he said, but where were the ways and means ? One half of the important personages who had joined the committee had never paid a penny of their subscriptions : the funds actually obtained were barely sufficient to defray the debt for medals which Father Mathew had incurred to Birmingham manufacturers. It is never easy to accomplish any good work for Iréland, and this attempt followed the common rule. But I had a more bitter illustration of this law in a painful communication with Father Mathew himself :—

“ It was indeed good of you,” he wrote, “ to send your subscription direct to Cork, without the hesitation and diffidence displayed by many of my friends in Dublin. *Nolens volens*, they almost insist upon my surrendering myself into the hands of a self-elected committee, to unfold to them my most private affairs, allow them to arrange with my creditors, and receive from them whatever pittance they may deem sufficient to supply my daily wants. To this I will never submit. I would rather take a staff in my hand and *walk* to the Temperance Meetings, and depend for support on the affection of my poor teetotalers.

“ I was solicitous to rebut the calumny of having amassed wealth by the sale of medals. The formation of bands, purchase of musical instruments, support of temperance rooms, &c., subjected me to vast expense. I hoped to get a part of the money received for medals, and I borrowed from my family in the expectation of being able to repay it. I was promised by an aged relative a large sum, but this promise was not fulfilled.

“ If I had the half of what I voluntarily bestowed, not to include what is due to me, I need not now be a heavy tax on my friends. . . .

“ Pardon these details, but I find relief from pouring my grievances into a sincere and sympathising breast.—Yours affectionately,

“ THEOBALD MATHEW.

“ CORK, Nov. 6, 1844.”

A little later I aimed to accomplish a part of the same purpose through Repeal Reading-rooms, to which the journals and periodicals which came to the *Nation* office, and all the suitable books I could obtain from friends, were sent weekly. But O'Connell looked upon these reading-rooms as part of the machinery for collecting Repeal Rent, and only aided them so far as they served this purpose. The design of making them schools of nationality did not altogether fail, however, and when a contest arose between O'Connell and the Young Irelanders a few years later, over what was called the Peace Resolutions, the Repeal Reading-room played an important part.

From the outset we had to fear the leader's displeasure on many more dangerous issues. He insisted on the fantastic dogma that all countries struggling for freedom, under whatever rule, would find in peaceful agitation the right and sufficient remedy. We knew that it was not as sheep that any people had been led to freedom, and that his own sole victory, Catholic Emancipation, had been yielded to the fear of an insurrection ; but so long as he did not insist on his opinions being adopted by his confederates, they were only a great man's whims to be smiled at in silence. During his long career the popular press commonly followed his guidance, criticising nothing and initiating nothing. A journal which broke new ground in every number, which criticised respectfully all his proposals, applauding or objecting, not as a matter of course, but according to the circumstances of the case, perplexed him. I was assured by O'Neill Daunt, who was a friend and occasional contributor of the new journal, that O'Connell was divided between satisfaction at the effective services rendered to the cause, and alarm at the temerarious novelties sometimes propounded. We knew he had ruined journal after journal which had crossed his path, and we were not ignorant that the *Nation* was about equally liable to founder in the Queen's Bench, or in the Corn Exchange. A prosecution for sedition was a constant probability, and denunciation by O'Connell for rashness and audacity was scarcely less imminent. He had driven a man of the conspicuous gifts of Richard Sheil from public life in Ireland, and a long array of popular

agitators—from O’Gorman Mahon, whose picturesque personality won favour with the multitude, to Feargus O’Connor, whose demagogic vigour enabled him to contest the lead with the great Tribune for a season, and Richard Ronayne, who believed in William Cobbett, and Marcus Costello, who believed in himself. All of us, and I above all, who was proprietor of the menaced journal, had to count the cost, and at the close of life it makes my heart throb to remember that we determined to hold on our course at any risk; the *Nation* might be ruined, but it should not be intimidated or dishonoured.

The denunciation, though it came at last, was so long postponed that the aim of the journal was happily accomplished before it arrived. “The new soul which had come into Ireland” beat not only in the breast of the suffering majority, but began to flutter in the bosom of the triumphant minority. When the *Nation* was established, whatever could be called literature in Ireland belonged exclusively to the Tories. The *Dublin University Magazine* was read throughout the two islands, but it was more vehemently anti-Irish than the *Times*. The only university in the country was a fortress of religious and political bigotry. The Whigs regarded O’Connell’s movement without sympathy and with feeble interest; the Tories regarded it with open scorn. They despised it, but did not fear it. The members for the metropolis, and for the metropolitan county, were Tories, and there was not one man of notable ability, and miserably few of reputable character, among the handful of members who followed O’Connell into the House of Commons. At such a time it seemed, to the vulgar rich, a waste of life to preach a nationality embracing the whole nation without regard to creed, class, or genesis. But this is what the *Nation* did; the merits of Irishmen were recognised without any relation to their politics; Irish interests were promoted to whatever class the interest pertained. The injustice of the land system was systematically exposed, and the necessity of religious equality insisted on; not for the benefit of a party but the tranquillity and prosperity of the Irish nation.

With what success were these new opinions taught? Half a century has elapsed since that era, and a widened

horizon enables us to follow the policy of the young men to its results. Of the more conspicuous and generous of our opponents scarce one escaped its influence. Isaac Butt, who had been recently editor of the *University Magazine* and of the *Ulster Times* in Belfast, was still leader of the most extreme Orange party in the Dublin Corporation. His successor in the editorship of the magazine, Charles Lever, nursed a rage against O'Connell so preternatural that it overflowed into his novels. William Carleton, Joseph Lefanu, William Wilde, and above all, Samuel Ferguson, were among the chief contributors; and even Ferguson, who loved his country from the beginning, and revelled in Celtic poetry and Celtic art, sent to one of his friends (who showed it to me) the first collection of the poetry of the *Nation* with the prodigiously false verdict endorsed upon it—"Some of these fellows long to stick their skeans in the bowels of the Saxon." The *Evening Mail* was the accredited organ of the Irish gentry, and its working editor was a clergyman of the Church of England named Halpin, and his principal colleague, who afterwards became editor, was Dr. Maunsell. One of the Tory members for Dublin was William Gregory, son of a former Under Secretary, imported from England; and the Grand Chaplain and leader of the Orangemen who desired to repeal the Emancipation Act and restore the naked despotism of Protestant Ascendancy was the Rev. Tresham Gregg. Before half a dozen years had elapsed, Samuel Ferguson was chairman of a Protestant Repeal Association, declaring in prose and verse that he shared the principles of the Young Irelanders. Before a dozen more years Isaac Butt was leader of a National movement to establish a Parliament in Ireland, surrounded by professors of the exclusive University, clergymen of the Church of England, members of all the learned professions, the leaders of the Tory opposition in the Dublin Corporation, and his old colleagues, Dr. Wilde and Dr. Maunsell. At one of Butt's meetings a Senior Fellow of the University read a paper in which Charles Lever advocated a Federal Parliament in Ireland. At an earlier date William Carleton declared himself a Nationalist and became a contributor to the *Nation*, and Joseph Lefanu, who could not be seduced out of the tranquil field of literature, wrote

books and poems which are still read by Irish Nationalists with affection and enthusiasm. Mr. Halpin probably remained faithful to his narrow programme to the end, but his son when he reached manhood became the laureate of Irish-American Nationalists, while one of the professors of Trinity reared a nephew who was first a leader of the secret societies which sprung up, as we shall see, when the Young Irelanders were defeated, and who became in the end one of the Directory placed at the head of the Fenian movement in 1866.¹ William Gregory wrote me an assurance of his sympathy and goodwill for the young patriots, and Tresham Gregg publicly estimated their writings as on a level with the acknowledged masterpieces of Irish genius; and there was not one of all these men who has not admitted that the *Nation* was the chief factor in the change he underwent. Mr. Lecky, the historian, remains a Unionist, but his testimony to the new propaganda is more significant on that account:—

“What the *Nation* was when Gavan Duffy edited it, when Davis, M’Carthy, and their brilliant associates contributed to it, and when its columns maintained with unqualified zeal the cause of liberty and nationality in every land, Irishmen can never forget. Seldom has any journal of the kind exhibited a more splendid combination of eloquence, of poetry, and of reasoning.”²

Professor Tyndal and Father Burke, the Dominican orator, who were students in Belfast and Galway at that time, admitted in mature manhood how deeply they were fascinated in youth by the generous opinions of the new school, and it is not rash to assume that they represented a considerable section of their class. It may be taken as a testimony of the permanence of their labours that the accepted leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party,³ at the period these pages are being written, has declared that he and his colleagues are only reaping the harvest, the seeds of which were sown by the Young Irelanders, and from the Irish Party Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley took fire, carrying the succession from the middle of the century to its close. An altogether unprece-

¹ Thomas Clarke Luby.

² Mr. Lecky, in “Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland.”

³ Mr. Justin M’Carthy.

dented force in Irish journalism was the passionate sympathy of women elicited by this struggle. That my kinswoman Margaret Callan should have written much might seem inevitable when a gifted woman belonged to such a society as the young journalists ; but a more constant contributor was Francesca Elgee (in latter years Lady Wilde), the stately daughter of an archdeacon of the Established Church ; and a constant counsellor watching the party as a mother does her beloved children, was Mary Macgee, the gifted and charming daughter of a Protestant clergyman whose name was synonymous with fierce and contemptuous antipathy to the Catholic majority.¹ The ballads and songs of the *Nation* had been so well received that it was resolved to publish a collection of them, and the little volume had a marvellous success. It was made the subject of a debate in the House of Commons and of a Tory demonstration in Dublin. Wilson Croker assailed it in the *Quarterly Review*, and Macaulay, to whom I sent a copy, acknowledged the beauty and vigour of the verses, but reprobated their hostility to England. It was much debated in the British Press ; the *Times* affirmed that O'Connell's sedition was tepid compared to the fervour of these young poets ; but one London journal² recognised the character of the phenomenon with more insight, I think, than any of its contemporaries :—

“The men of twenty-five have placed in the rear rank the men of fifty—and they come forward with all the energies and all the courage of their grandfathers—the Volunteers of 1782—to declare that they will not be content with a secondary position for Ireland amongst the nations of the earth. It may hurt our pride to find such a feeling avowed, but it would be a paltering with truth to conceal the fact. We see it ; it is evidenced by every Irish newspaper that comes to hand, and in a collection of songs and poems it bursts upon us with all the suddenness, quickness, and force

¹ Mrs. Callan, who was wife to Dr. J. B. Callan of Stephen's Green, Dublin, was my cousin german and constant friend, and touches this narrative at many points past and to come. She was sister of T. M. Hughes, mentioned in the first and third chapters, and of Don John Hughes, mentioned in the first and fourth, and a sympathetic granddaughter of Judith Gavan, who flung the Pro-Union petition into the fire more than a hundred years ago.

² *The Planet*,

of the electrical spark from heaven. There is a soul—there is an energy in this collection of poems, such as are only brought forth in times when the hearts of men are moved, as if by a mighty convulsion."

The volume was republished in the United States, and largely translated in France and Germany. It is a fact of strange significance that half a century after its first appearance the people of Wales, bent on reviving and fostering their dormant nationality, have found an inspiration in the old "Spirit of the Nation."

Following the example of Robert Burns, who refused to make money by the songs of his country, we bestowed the copyright on the publisher. No one else ever made a penny by a book which ran through fifty editions, at prices varying from sixpence to a guinea.

Monckton Milnes, who had an appetite for whatever was stamped with individual character, sent for half a dozen copies of the brochure to be obtained in strict confidence, little foreseeing that his son would become a Lord Lieutenant in Ireland to carry out the national aims, which he feared it would compromise him to so much as recognise. He afterwards read some of the poems to a circle of friends at the Athenæum, who were divided in opinion whether the writers ought to be crowned with laurel or sent into penal servitude.

The literary and political notes, which are a feature in many modern journals, were anticipated in the *Nation* by the device of "Answers to correspondents," which covered a wide field of criticism and speculation. The correspondence of the journal, which was very extensive, was supplemented whenever it was convenient by inventing correspondents representing opinions which it was necessary to combat or enforce. An hour daily was usually occupied with this pleasant work, and my friends often contributed "Answers" better than the editors. Between us we made this column of the paper, commonly so insignificant, the one first and oftenest read in the journal.

This tide of suggestive correspondence, which was so attractive in the early numbers of the paper, did not diminish, as critics predicted it would, but increased with time. It seemed as if the spirit and vigour of a people long repressed

and denied many outlets rushed into this new channel. We noticed with peculiar satisfaction that men who represented past services to Ireland gathered round the new banner—William Drennan, son of the patriot poet of '98; Henry Grattan, the son of the man who had liberated Ireland in '82; Cornelius Keogh, grandson of the Catholic leader, who immediately preceded O'Connell; Count Condorcet O'Connor, and Colonel Byrne, resident in Paris, who had been themselves conspicuous among the United Irishmen, before they became staff officers in the *grande armée* of Napoleon. The survivor of the two authors of the "Tales of the O'Hara Family," the brothers of Gerald Griffin, the most gifted of Irish novelists; the eminent antiquaries, Curry and O'Donovan; the scions of historic houses, the O'Neills of Brefni, the MacDermotts of Coolavin, the O'Dohertys of Inneshowen; among others General Charles Wolsley and General Peronet Thompson, who had led generous movements for popular liberty in England, were among our contributors or counsellors. Colonel Thompson sent me some of his writings in the *Westminster Review* ten years earlier, which fell in completely with our design. He claimed to be, and I believe he was, an early and sincere friend of Ireland and the Irish, though in his political troubles he got from them in return "nothing but buffets." Finally O'Connell himself, *facile princeps* of his nation, and two of his sons were drawn into the irresistible current.

A little later I was agreeably surprised by receiving through a friend a couple of squibs lighted up with graphic illustrations by a young Englishman who had recently published a humorous and impudent book upon Ireland, with the signature of Michael Angelo Titmarsh. Thackeray did not love the *Nation* at that time, but he felt under obligations to Mr. Peter Purcell who had been very friendly during his Irish visit, and as Mr. Purcell was in conflict with the Government over a mail-coach contract, Thackeray came vigorously to his aid.¹

On my first visit to London as a law student, I gratified a hope long caressed in reverie, by visiting Leigh Hunt, comrade of William Hazlitt. Henry MacManus, then residing in London, proposed to provide me with a suitable introduction,

¹ For Thackeray's squib, see "Young Ireland," bk. i. chap. vii.

but I preferred presenting myself as an anonymous admirer, who longed to shake the hand which had scourged the scandals of the Regency, and vindicated the genius of Shelley and of Keats. I was accompanied by a fellow-student named Martyn, whom I subsequently lost sight of in the *mélée* of life. Mr. Hunt received us graciously, and spoke frankly of things which interested me, especially of Hazlitt, Lamb, and Shelley. Shortly after my return home he wrote to me :—

“KENSINGTON, September 25th.

“DEAR SIR,—When you and your friend Mr. Martyn were kind enough to visit me in Edwardes Square, I was not aware that I had a patriot in the room—one, too, of a nation whose blood my own veins partook of, and in whose cause I have had the honour, as well as yourself, of suffering. I have since learnt to know more of you ; not only from the papers in general, but from extracts in them out of your own paper the *Nation*, and if I have been startled at the vehemence of these extracts, I have no less admired their trumpet-like music and poetical vigour. It is not for me to dictate to any man, much less to one like yourself ; but you will, I am sure, permit a friend, now with a grey head, but not without a young heart, to wish that your writings would retain all their fire and generosity, with none of the *vi et armis* part of their spirit. I do not mean to say that nothing *could* justify an appeal to arms in Ireland, but I feel certain that nothing will render it necessary, so long as the horrible possibility is kept out of sight, and the justice of the cause is so admirably kept *in* it, as it now is. In all my life, nay, in all history, I have seen no such spectacle as the bloodless triumph your leader is achieving, and manifestly achieving, *because* of the bloodlessness. *He convinces everybody at heart*, and has set the example of a novel, beautiful, and most hopeful mode of warfare, which it would be a million pities if the world were to lose. Pardon me who has been an ardent spectator of human affairs for so many years ; and try if you cannot content your intrepidity with this, its only want—a still braver endurance of immediate provocation.

“It galled me extremely, when you and your friend were here, not to be able to ask you to spend the day with me.

Accept the accompanying little book, and beg him to accept the other, in lieu of my sorry hospitality, of which, I am afraid, their unbound outsides do but look like another symbol. But circumstances, over which I had no control, have conspired to keep me poor, and the shabbiness, believe me, is not in the heart of, dear sir, your most sincere well-wisher and humble servant,

“LEIGH HUNT.”

A second letter shortly followed :—

“KENSINGTON, November 8th.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I have been very ill (with an attack of liver) and work is pressing upon me, otherwise I should indulge myself with a long acknowledgment of the letter I received yesterday. Accept my heartiest thanks for it, particularly for what you are so good as to say in explanation of that ultra-vivacious tone in the *Nation*, to which I ventured to object. The number of it which accompanied the letter so interested me, that I read, forthwith, almost every word of it, except the advertisements, and what I had seen in other papers. By this you may judge of my zeal in Irish affairs, and how thankfully I shall receive your promised weekly copy, and so pass an hour or two with you every seventh day. I shall read, be sure, every article both of you and your friends, who, indeed, seem worthy of you, if I may judge in general from what I see, and from the estimable letter of Mr. MacNevin.

“How delightful to me is what you say about the *Indicator*. No approbation goes to my heart like that. But the tone you take in speaking of me is altogether most touching to my feelings, especially in one who so combines energy with delicacy. How can such a nature speak of ‘intrusion’? I fear it was my confused dread of being thought inhospitable by the very kind of people I longed to entertain which put something in my aspect that made you dream it. . . .

“Dear Sir, I am most truly, your obliged and sincere friend,

“LEIGH HUNT.”

I did not altogether lose sight of Mr. Hunt, but I took no

measures to improve or consolidate my intimacy. A busy life might have been the cause, but a more cogent one will probably be found in an entry in my diary somewhat later :—

“ I used to find Leigh Hunt’s literary criticism just and sympathetic, and his literary gossip as pleasant and wholesome as that dainty can ever be made, but I fell in of late with his ‘ Lord Byron and his Contemporaries,’ which acted like a douche bath of unclean water on my enthusiasm. The book is stuffed and larded with ungenerous criticism of sayings and doings of the poet while Hunt was practically his guest, and reported remonstrances from H. to B. which must have been exasperating. Byron was arrogant and selfish, I daresay, but Hunt, on his own showing, would have provoked a saint. There are some extracts from Hazlitt in the book of solid sense and sparkling style, which run through the text like a ledge of granite shining with mica through an Irish bog.”

On my next visit to London I had the good fortune to make acquaintance with a man of genius and his gifted wife, which ripened into a steadfast friendship, only ending with their lives. Frederick Lucas proposed to introduce me to Thomas Carlyle, and I gladly acquiesced. How much I owed to Thomas Carlyle’s counsel and instruction, and to his wife’s gracious and affectionate offices, I have endeavoured to record elsewhere.¹ We agreed in few opinions except *au fond* in the duty of living for ends which are not selfish or sordid; but his talk was as stimulating as the morning breezes in an Alpine valley. I must not repeat here correspondence or conversations which I have already published, but I cannot refrain from printing the first letter he sent me a few weeks after our acquaintance began :—

“ CHELSEA, May 12, 1845.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I am happy to hear that there is at last a prospect of seeing your book, which I have been in expectation of since the night you were here. Certainly I will look into it; my distinct persuasion is that you must mean something by it—a very considerable distinction for a book or man in these days.

¹ “ Conversations with Carlyle.” London : Cassell and Co.

"I have likewise to thank you for your kind purpose of sending me the *Nation*, the first number of which, indeed, I find has safely introduced itself through the Rowland Hill slit in the door this day. As I have very little time, and especially at present hardly read any newspaper, it would be a further kindness if you now and then marked such passages as you thought would be most illuminative for me.

"I can say with great sincerity, I wish you well ; and the essence of your cause, well—alas ! if one could get the essence of it extracted from the adscititious confusions and impossible quantities of it, would not all men wish you and it right well ?

"Justice to Ireland—justice to all lands, and to Ireland first as the land that needs it most—the whole English nation (except the quacks and knaves of it, who in the end are men of negative quantities and of no force in the English nation) does honestly wish you that. Do not believe the contrary, for it is not true ; the believing of it to *be* true may give rise to miserable mistakes yet, at which one's imagination shudders.

"Well, when poor old Ireland has succeeded again in making a man of insight and generous valour, who might help her a little out of her deep confusions—ought I not to pray and hope that *he* may shine as a light, instead of blazing as a firebrand, to his own waste and his country's ! Poor old Ireland, every man she produces of that kind, it is like another stake set upon the great Rouge-et-Noir, of the Destinies : 'Shall I win with thee, or shall I lose thee too—blazing off upon me as the others have done ?' She tries again, as with her last guinea. May the gods grant her a good issue !

"I bid you, with many kind wishes, good speed, and am,
very truly yours,

"T. CARLYLE."

I maintained friendly relations with my Northern colleague, Dr. M'Knight, and, judging by his replies, probably strove to draw him into the National Party, but that goal was only to be reached by stages.

"... You are right in saying (he wrote at this time) that my fears of Catholic ascendancy constitute my *chief*, though not my *only*, objection to Repeal. I have other and serious

objections, but upon these there is no use in entering in a letter intended not for controversial, but friendly purposes. I enclose you two pamphlets, the imputed authorship of which has cost me no little trouble. Whoever may have been their author, I am not disposed to controvert the position laid down by him, and you may conclude that while I regard Roman Catholicism as a very complete system of spiritual, and consequently secular, despotism, I am far from supposing that other denominations have not their theoretic intolerance in proportion to the liberality or illiberality of their ecclesiastical constitutions."

I came to learn from these pamphlets that there were two parties in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church—one resting on authority and traditional practice, the other preaching progress and reform—and I had good reason to know in the end, as we shall see, that my friend was an influential member of the latter section.

Eighteen hundred and forty-two brought the fulfilment of all my dreams of literary labour. In the long perspective of memory, that fruitful era looks like the occupation of a new territory by a strong immigration. Everybody was busy, everybody was hopeful, new fields were cleared daily, new seeds and saplings were planted, and new and engrossing hopes created which have not ceased, and which shall not cease.

CHAPTER V

THE SPRINGTIDE OF NATIONALITY

O'Connell in 1842—Davis, Dillon, and the early recruits—The Corporation debate and its consequences—Junction of the Catholic Bishops—County meetings summoned which become monster meetings—Peel's menace of Civil War—O'Connell's answer—He places the resistance on the basis of national force—Samuel Ferguson's remonstrance with Peel—O'Callaghan analyses the English army—An unfit instrument for oppressing Ireland—The *Times* warns Peel of his mistaken policy—Increase and growth of the monster meetings—The Government deprive Lord Ffrench of his Commission of the Peace for attending a Repeal Meeting—Effect of this stroke on the magistracy—Effect on the Bar—Sympathetic meetings in the United States countenanced by the President and eminent statesmen—Appeal from America to France to help Ireland—Important meeting in Paris addressed by Ledru Rollin, Marast, and others—Movement of the Irish Whigs headed by Smith O'Brien—Eight days' debate in the House of Commons—Manifesto of Lord John Russell in the *Edinburgh Review*—O'Connell's new policy—The Mallow Defiance—The *Nation* and the army—The Quartermaster-General's department—Sir Charles Trevelyan's description of Ireland in 1843—The education and discipline of the people—The Library of Ireland—The 'Eighty-two Club.

I HAVE written the story of the Repeal movement,¹ and it would be unpardonable to repeat it here ; but to preserve the perspective of this personal narrative it is necessary to cast a glance from time to time at the public transactions of the period. In the autumn of '42, when Davis, Dillon, and a few of their associates joined the Repeal Association, the National movement was torpid and lethargic. The enthusiasm of the young recruits kindled the first genuine fire, and the effect produced on Burgh quay was repeated in many places, and with increased force, by the success of the *Nation*. O'Connell worked with an energy which was a marvel in one to whom time and familiarity with the facts must have tempered indig-

¹ "Young Ireland."

nation against the wrongs he assailed. At this date he had nearly reached his 70th year, but his vigorous frame showed no symptoms of decay. He was as erect, alert, and vigilant as at forty. He spoke at every meeting of the Association for an hour or more, and his voice was as resonant and expressive as of old. His ordinary speech was homely and colloquial, and would often have been bald but that his position clothed his words with authority. Flashes of passion and gleams of wrath came at times to light up his narrative or exhortation, and a happy anecdote or homely proverb to put his audience in good humour. When there was need of the heavier artillery of controversy it was still forthcoming. He stated a case with a clearness and precision which seemed to amount to a demonstration, and he smashed a fallacy with sudden strokes, as with Thor's hammer. His trusted lieutenant was his son John, a feeble, conceited young man, who believed he had inherited with his name the splendid endowments of his father. And from an early date his father was possessed with the hopeless project of making John his successor in the popular tribunate.

The year '43 saw a marvellous change in public opinion. The case on which Ireland relied for repealing the Union was stated by O'Connell before the Dublin Corporation with singular lucidity and force. From that time a tide began to flow which increased in volume from week to week. The bulk of the Catholic Episcopacy joined the Association from which they had hitherto held aloof. The Repeal rent increased prodigiously, exceeding the weekly amount received by the Catholic Association on the eve of the Catholic Relief Act. Men of station and importance declared themselves Repealers. County meetings were summoned to be held in succession in every county in the island, and the people attended in such unexpected force that they became known as monster meetings. At some of them the assemblage was so great it was estimated that so many men were not engaged on both sides in all the battles extending over centuries fought on Irish soil since the Norman Conquest. It was said a new soul had come into Ireland with the *Nation*, and it made itself felt in every fibre of the national character.

The Irish gentry became alarmed, and insisted that the

Government should declare their intention to arrest this dangerous movement. Their old suspicions against Peel the Emancipator revived, and nothing would content them but a plain and emphatic menace to the Repealers. Peel answered their expectations. He assured Parliament that there was no power with which the Constitution armed the Executive which would not be employed to resist Repeal, even at the painful cost of Civil War. To the inquiry, whether he held with one of his predecessors, that if all classes in Ireland united in the demand for Repeal it must be conceded, he replied brusquely, he did not.

The determination to put down opinion by force, and to resist the repeal of an Act of Parliament by Civil War, was so indefensible that it was promptly repudiated by the Whig Opposition, and has never been repeated by any English Minister under similar circumstances. Irish gentlemen, even among his warmest supporters, felt insulted by the declaration, that their opinion would count for nothing in deciding an international question to which they were a party. O'Connell answered Peel with contemptuous defiance : "I belong," he said, "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."

Samuel Ferguson afterwards wrote in the *Dublin University Magazine* : "If the Conservative gentry of Ireland thought fit to invite their friends and tenants to meet them at a new Dungannon there is no power in Britain which could prevent the severance of the two islands. And there can be no more fatal delusion than to suppose that Irish gentlemen, because they do not profess the Roman Catholic religion, are insensible to contemptuous language against their country, or that they are disposed to rest satisfied under any social inferiority whatever to the rest of the United Kingdom."

A letter from John Cornelius O'Callaghan, one of the staff of the *Nation*, was ordered on the motion of Mr. John O'Connell to be inserted on the minutes of the Association, recording the fundamental fact that the army which was

to be employed to put down the Irish people consisted of fifty-one thousand Englishmen and forty-one thousand Irishmen, and might prove an unsuitable instrument for such a service. O'Connell might have said on this cardinal occasion, and was expected to say, that he was pursuing a peaceful end by peaceful means, which force could not touch; but he chose to meet menace by defiance, and by doing so he placed the contest once for all on the basis of force. There was ample justification in the state of Ireland for such a policy if he were determined to pursue it to the end, and to make the preparation which such a resolution required. If he were not so determined he was entering on a path which must lead in the end to humiliation and defeat. O'Connell's declaration was echoed throughout the island, and men for the first time were driven to estimate the price at which political liberty might have to be bought, and to consider whether or not they were ready to pay the price.

The English Press sustained Peel with a unanimity that recalled the national support which George III. obtained in trampling on the liberty of the American colonies. But there was one exception seriously embarrassing to Ministers. The *Times* warned Peel he was pursuing a false route. "A people"—this was the emphatic language of warning employed—"a people labouring under unexampled distress send in their £600 a week to a Repeal Fund, contributed generally in the inverse ratio of their means. The rabble of Repealers is joined by respectable and well-intentioned persons; and an insignificant faction has become a powerful party. In all this there is neither Whiggery nor Radicalism, nor pursuit of Roman Catholic as opposed to Protestant interests: it aims at being, and almost threatens to become, a national movement. The people of the United Kingdom"—the powerful journal added—"were firmly persuaded that it was better to conciliate by repealing bad laws than to pour troops into Ireland for the purpose of enforcing them, when they could no longer be executed except at the bayonet point." The *Leeds Mercury*, a principal organ of the Dissenters, echoed this counsel. The *Northern Star*, on the part of the working men, whom it represented at that time as authentically as the *Times* represented the middle class, declared that they would not resist Repeal,

but aid it in every way ; and that the English aristocracy would have to crush two nations instead of one.

From this time everything was changed. The pace of the movement, so languid at the outset, assumed the stride of a revolution. The monster meetings grew in force, the language became fiercer and more confident. The Government were besought by the Irish landlords to interpose, and they tardily consented ; but every stroke they struck proved a *coup manqué*. An English lawyer, who was Lord Chancellor in Ireland, removed Lord Ffrench and his sons from the Commission of the Peace for attending a Repeal Meeting, and immediately a number of the most respectable magistrates in Ireland, Repealers and non-Repealers, answered this challenge by flinging their commissions at his feet. Twenty members of the Irish Bar joined the Association in a day to express their reprobation of the Chancellor's law. The flame spread from Ireland to the Irish race abroad. Immense meetings, continuing from day to day for more than a week, were held in New York and Philadelphia ; large sums were subscribed towards the Repeal Fund ; and men of high political importance, including the President of the United States, Mr. Seward, afterwards Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of State ; General Cass ; and Horace Greely, the darling of the people, sanctioned the movement. Irish merchants of great opulence declared that they were ready to help Ireland in her peaceful struggle, and if an arbitrary Government forced her over the frontiers of legality to follow her unto new fields.

If Ireland were invaded by England, the loss of Canada, it was declared, would be the certain penalty. An address was sent to the Democrats of France, asking the generous people who had helped America in her struggle with England to help Ireland. Paris responded by a meeting sanctioned by Lamartine and Victor Hugo, and addressed by Ledru Rollin, Marast, and others, who before five years sat in the Provisional Government of a French Republic, proffering sympathy and aid in the struggle in which Irish Nationalists were engaged, whether it took a civil or military form.^x

^x One of the results of this *entente cordiale* has hitherto escaped notice. We learn from Lord Aberdeen's "Life of Sir William Napier" that the Government at this time (1843) consulted that officer and others, with a view to fortifying the Channel Islands against a French invasion.

The *Nation* from the beginning had preached the duty and need of a foreign policy for Ireland, and here was a signal foreign policy. Strength comes to the strong, and help to the successful. Every fibre of the Irish nation was moved to sympathy, the more liberal Irish Whigs who afterwards became Federalists, brought the case of Ireland before the House of Commons, and demanded if the wrongs they specified were not redressed how could they justify themselves in resisting a repeal of the Union ? The leader on this occasion was Smith O'Brien, who had hitherto no relations with the National Party. His speech was weighty with facts, made poignant by fairness and moderation. Ireland, he insisted, was made poor, and kept poor, by exceptional treatment. She was overtaxed in violation of the terms of the Union. The public establishments she formerly possessed had been gradually transferred to London. There did not exist a single naval dockyard in a country rich in safe and capacious harbours, and the navy estimates for the current year which amounted to six and a half millions, only proposed the expenditure in Ireland of ten thousand pounds. In a country where four-fifths of the population were Catholics all the great officers were habitually Protestants. Belgium and Canada had revolted chiefly against the unjust distribution of patronage, but nearly all the heads of departments in Ireland were Englishmen. The Established Church and the land code disclosed other wrongs, and the Poor Law was framed and administered in complete contempt of Irish opinion. The debate lasted for eight nights, and produced a profound impression in Ireland, but a majority of the House of Commons were of opinion that there was no need for inquiry. The movement of opinion did not rest here. The Irish peers who were Whigs held a consultation, and demanded reforms and concessions to placate the country. Even the English Whigs were moved ; a party manifesto—revised by Lord John Russell, was published in the *Edinburgh Review*, proposing to extend the franchise, reform the land code, subsidise religious education in Ireland, and assemble the British Parliament in Dublin once in three years.

O'Connell's speeches grew in intensity as the movement spread. At Mallow, in the county Cork, he made a declara-

tion which became known as the Mallow Defiance, the purpose of which did not seem to admit of misconception :—

“ Do you know (he said) I never felt such a loathing for speechifying as I do at present. The time is coming when we must be doing. Gentlemen, you may learn the alternative to live as slaves or die as freemen. But, gentlemen, as long as they leave us a rag of the Constitution we will stand on it. We will violate no law, we will assail no enemy ; but you are much mistaken if you think others will not assail you. [A Voice : We are ready to meet them.] To be sure you are. Do you think I suppose you to be cowards or fools ? ”

Later he added—

“ Are we to be trampled under foot ? Oh ! they shall never trample me, at least (no, no). I say they may trample me, but it will be my dead body they will trample on, not the living man.”

To Europe and America, and to the great bulk of the people of Ireland, this declaration seemed to be the signal of pending revolution. The Repeal Association ordered a statue of the leader in white marble with the Mallow Defiance engraved on the pedestal, in eternal memory of a great wrong adequately encountered. By some of us, at least, the idea was not taken up with levity or insouciance. Contending with a people so much stronger in numbers, resources, and organisation, complaint and remonstrance (it may well seem) were the only weapons Ireland could employ, but the system was a painfully tedious and wasteful one. Agitation for twenty or thirty years for some single concession was like the economy of ancient Egypt, where the labour of an entire generation was expended to raise a pyramid. And the agitators came out of the contest like soldiers from a long campaign, unfit for any other work and indifferent to the ordinary means and methods by which a people become prosperous. If the conflict could be brought to a close by a fierce encounter in arms it was not too high a price to pay for permanent peace. Letters from soldiers to the *Nation* were not unfrequent. One sergeant, a man of considerable ability and experience, kept me acquainted with the sentiments of those whom he named “ Irishmen with red coats but green hearts.” The captain of his company was peculiarly offensive, and directed

that no one should presume to bring into *his* barracks a paper so offensive to loyal feeling as the *Nation*. Similar reports came from other military depôts, and I was much perplexed how to deal with the difficulty when a fortunate incident enabled me to turn the tables on the military censors. The following paragraph, when printed in the *Nation*, was read, I am assured, with shouts of laughter and exultation in all the barracks in Munster and Leinster :—

“On Saturday last, when our office was surrounded by a multitude of persons, the orderly of Lord Cardigan’s regiment rode up to the door—to the great terror of the well-disposed, who thought he was sent to arrest the Editor—and delivered a large official-looking letter, marked ‘On Her Majesty’s Service’—remember that, red coats, *on Her Majesty’s Service*—which, on examination, was found to be as follows :—

“‘ QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL’S OFFICE,

“‘ DUBLIN CASTLE, Oct. 21, 1843.

“‘ MEMORANDUM.—The Editor of the *NATION* is requested to supply the Quartermaster-General’s department with the *NATION* newspaper, which he will be so good as to send to this office, Lower Castle-yard, as soon as published, until further orders.—By Order,

“‘ J. M. NAPIER.

“‘ The Editor of the *NATION*.’

“We put this communication on record as a precedent and an example for the army in Ireland. A journal which has the sanction of Dublin Castle, and the Quartermaster-General’s department (not to speak of Lord Cardigan’s orderly), cannot be bad ; and we expect no paltry subaltern will have the insolence to prohibit the *NATION* in his quarters for the future.”

The national movement had now reached its zenith, and there was a fevered and impatient pause for the result. Sir Charles Trevelyan, an experienced Indian officer, who visited Ireland at this time on a semi-official tour of inspection, describes the condition of the public mind. He had set out on his journey regarding the demand for Repeal as a gigantic piece of blarney, but he found among the people intense desire and a genuine belief on the subject. They had taken up universally O’Connell’s doctrine that they must not be the

aggressors. "We don't mean to go to war with the Government, but if the Government goes to war with us then the boys will rise." The methods and agencies of guerilla warfare were constantly in their mouths. They declared there was no want of arms in the country, and if the people were of one mind they could turn every agricultural implement into a weapon. They counted on the sympathy of the army, where nearly all the soldiers were Irishmen and every Irishman a Repealer. They denied that the Presbyterians of the North would fight against them at the bidding of their greedy and oppressive landlords. They counted upon assistance from foreign countries, and assistance in the shape of a diversion from Wales and the manufacturing districts of England. A remark invariably made was that though the affair might begin in Ireland it would not end in Ireland. The people, animated with those sentiments, he found, to his amazement, not only singularly sober, but advancing in industry, good order, and respect for the laws. Faction fights had ceased, and shillelaghs were rarely to be seen, except when they were used for firewood. When the time came for showing colours he believed the men of property who figured on Repeal platforms would side with the Government to save their estates. But he regarded it as beyond doubt that a more influential class, the Catholic clergy, had gone into the movement in the same spirit as the people. There was another estate in the Repeal organisation of the existence of which the people of England were imperfectly instructed—the young men of the capital. As far as the differences in the circumstances of the countries admitted, they answered to the "jeunes gens de Paris." They were public-spirited, enthusiastic men, possessed, as it seemed to him, of that crude information on political subjects which induced several of the Whig and Conservative leaders to be Radicals in their youth. They supplied all the good writing, the history, the poetry, and the political philosophy, such as it was, of the party. Though O'Connell was the origin and author of all this mischief, the Whig traveller regarded him as the chief reliance for the preservation of peace. He at any rate never intended fighting.¹

¹ Sir Charles Trevelyan was brother-in-law of Macaulay, and father of Sir George Trevelyan, the statesman and gifted man of letters.

The movement of the Forties was distinguished from all that preceded it by a passionate attempt to elevate and educate our people. The work of the Association was supplemented by the subtler work of the Press. The young men who gathered round the *Nation* bore the same relation to O'Connell as the heads of the permanent staff of the public service bear to the Cabinet. They projected much of the work announced from the platform, executed a liberal proportion of the agenda authorised in committee, and constantly brought the supreme stimulus of imagination to the cause. Under their inspiration the monster meetings were held on historic sites, rich in inspiring memories ; bands were formed, banners were lifted above the multitude, and the people began to muster and march in ordered ranks. Historic books and pictures became common, and there soon might be found in every district of the country groups of students reared in the new ideas.

I proposed to my friends a simple device for feeding this flame which had a decisive success. We announced a series of monthly shilling volumes of Irish history, poetry, biography, and literature, bearing the title of the Irish Library. The first volume published was Thomas MacNevin's "History of the Volunteers of 1782," which was received with cordial welcome. The second was my "Ballad Poetry of Ireland."

I had a passion for ballad poetry from the time I read "Robin Hood's Garland," secreted in a lexicon at school, and longed for Irish ballads of the same scope and spirit. In Belfast I began to collect native poems from forgotten periodicals and books which had perished early, without any other aim in the first instance than personal enjoyment. But as the collection grew, new hopes and views arose, and now I was able to draw from that storehouse the first collection of Irish ballads ever published. Up to that time "Irish ballad" had only a grotesque meaning ; even Sam Lover, who aimed to be a national lyrist, had written a burlesque essay on Irish ballads, selecting his illustrations from Zozimus, or some other bard of the Liberties. It was a keen delight, as well as a profound surprise, to sympathetic readers to find that Ireland had produced Anglo-Irish and Celtic ballads which might be classed without exaggeration with the ballads of Scotland

and Germany.¹ The volume was received with enthusiasm, went into a second and third edition as fast as they could be printed, and into a sixth edition within the year,² and since has not only run into more than fifty editions, circulating, the publishers affirmed, more copies than any book published in Ireland since the Union, but has become in time the foundation of a large library of ballad poetry framed in the same spirit. It was in this little volume that the bulk of Irish readers became acquainted for the first time with Ferguson's "Willy Gilliland," Banim's "Soggarth Aroon," Lady Dufferin's "Irish Emigrant," Gerald Griffin's "Orange and Green," Furlong's "Drunkard," Mangan's "Kathleen ni Houlahan," and the Ulster ballad of "Willy Reilly," and many others, which have since become as familiar to Irish readers as the "Shan Van Vocht." The third volume projected was a "Life of Wolfe Tone," by Thomas Davis, but a calamity as unforeseen as an earthquake ruined that project, and many other noble works from the same hand.³ A little later a social club, with

¹ How little the idea of Irish ballads, such as they really were, had become known even to cultivated Irish men and women is curiously illustrated by a note from Mrs. Jameson. I had made her acquaintance in London, and afterwards wrote to inquire if among her verses there were any Anglo-Irish ballads. "I never wrote any ballads," she replied; "I wish I had—or could; but what do you mean by Anglo-Irish ballads, for I do not understand exactly what style of ballad would come under that category? I might otherwise help you to some—not of my own, certainly. I regret to hear that you are leaving town immediately, but should I visit Ireland within the next few months, which is probable, I shall hope to find you somewhere."

² Davis wrote to Smith O'Brien, "The 'Ballad Poetry' has reached a third edition, and cannot be printed fast enough for the sale. It is every way good. Not an Irish Conservative of education but will read it, and be brought nearer to Ireland by it. That is a propagandism worth a thousand harangues such as you ask me to make." Davis's friend, D. O. Madden, author of "Ireland and its Rulers," "Memoirs of Fox and Pitt," &c., wrote to him at the same time, "The 'Ballad Poetry of Ireland' is admirable. It is all to nothing the best edited collection I ever saw. The introduction is a choice specimen of writing; it merits what the *Spectator* said of it—and what more could be desired? It reflects immense credit on Duffy."—"Life of Thomas Davis."

³ At this time there were, it was computed, more books published in Ireland than in Scotland—a quite unprecedented circumstance—and they were all coloured more or less with the new opinions. Irish art, long slumbering, seemed to have risen anew, like an awakened angel, radiant and strong. Ireland had produced great artists, but they were mostly absentees. At this time John Hogan, a sculptor of fertile and original genius, and F. W. Burton, a painter of the same calibre, were making a generous experiment to live by their art at home—an experiment full of interest to men who believed that Ireland, if she were free, would rear

a costly uniform of green and gold was founded, named after the era of Independence, the 'Eighty-two Club, to draw into the national movement men who would never cross the threshold of Conciliation Hall. One of the earliest recruits was Lord Cloncurry, a Privy Councillor and a quondam state prisoner. He had lived from early manhood the perturbed life of an Irish patriot, under conditions not a little discouraging. His father had been a Catholic, and changed his religion at a convenient moment to found a family ; and he had probably been a Protestant patriot till the conflict over the Union provided a favourable opportunity of exchanging his party for a peerage. But this peer's eldest son, Valentine Lawless, broke with those conditions, became the friend of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Arthur O'Connor, and Thomas Addis Emmet, and conspired with them for the deliverance of Ireland. In later times he had fierce conflicts with O'Connell, but never abated his steady devotion to Ireland. The young men aimed to bring him into the 'Eighty-two Club, and in the end succeeded. This was a time never to be recalled without pride and triumph. The work of a generation was accomplished in a few years, and, if fortune had been kind, would have been crowned with signal success. It was a time of incessant labour and responsibility, richly repaid by the conviction that we were assisting in the resurrection of our country.

merchants like the Medici, and nobles like the Colonna, to foster native art. Constant efforts were made to inspire the wealthy with this ambition, and a movement was commenced to create Schools of Design in Dublin and Cork—a project accomplished in later days. Dublin had eminent men of science, but no recognised Irish school. Hamilton, Graves, Lloyd, Robinson, Stokes, and Kane were known wherever science was cultivated, but known as Englishmen. There were now few Irish gentlemen who did not sympathise with the desire of the Young Irelanders that these eminent men would do for their country what Adam Smith, Hume, and Robertson, and in later times Dugald Stewart and Brown, had done for Scotland. The *Dublin Review*, always Catholic, had now become a skilful guide to Irish students in history and fiction ; the *Dublin University Magazine*, always intensely Protestant, shook off a corps of third-rate English contributors enlisted by Lever, and replaced them by Carleton, Mangan, Ferguson, Le Fanu, M. J. Barry, and other Irishmen. "Turlogh O'Brien" was issuing monthly from the same house, with generous and graphic pictures of the struggle under James and Tyrconnell ; and Lever, who had left the country, sent from the Continent a story which might have been published as a *feuilleton* in the *Nation*. And a new and more methodic edition of Dr. Madden's "United Irishmen" was issued—a book which is a marvel of patient research and loving enthusiasm.—"Four Years of Irish History," bk. i., chap. iii.

CHAPTER VI

TROUBLED WATERS: CONFLICTS WITH O'CONNELL

An indiscreet secretary summoned the attendance of Repeal Cavalry at the Clontarf Meeting—A proclamation issued forbidding the Meeting—O'Connell submitted to the proclamation—Effects of his submission—Attitude of the Young Ireland Party—Arrest of O'Connell and seven other Repealers—Their trial and conviction—Juncture and character of Smith O'Brien—Policy of the Repeal Association under Smith O'Brien and Thomas Davis—Writ of error and decision of the House of Lords—Liberation of the State prisoners—Position of Ireland at that time—Visits to O'Connell at Darrynane—His gradual abandonment of Nationality—The Federal controversy—Effect upon public opinion in Ireland—O'Connell repudiates the Federalists and quarrels with France and America—*Tait's Magazine* on the position—Slanders on Thomas Davis—Peel's Provincial Colleges—Controversy between O'Connell and Davis—Effect of the controversy on public opinion—Tour in the North with O'Hagan, Mitchel, and Martin—Dungannon, Charlemont and battlefield of Ballynahinch visited—Vice-tribunate of John O'Connell—Letters from Mitchel, Martin, and O'Hagan—Visit to Wicklow with T. D. M'Gee—Death of Thomas Davis and my wife within a week—Letter from Father Mathew.

THE language of the Mallow Defiance placed O'Connell and the Government under obligations which neither could evade with impunity. If O'Connell's haughty declaration represented his actual intentions there was force and spirit in the country at that time ready and willing to win the liberty demanded. But he was the trusted leader from whom the word of command must come; any one anticipating him would have been regarded as a dangerous traitor. And his language unfortunately did *not* represent his intentions. In the contest for Catholic Emancipation he had alarmed Wellington and Peel by the fear of an insurrection, and he counted on the same result on this occasion. But Emancipation had friends in England who would not have supported the Government in suppressing it by force. Repeal

had no English friends ; only one English member voted for so much as inquiry, and Ministers had no Parliamentary opposition to fear. The duty of the Government was equally stringent ; they must yield what was demanded, as they had done before, or they must prepare for aggression. They took the latter course. The country was occupied by a strong army, barracks were fortified and provisioned, and strategical positions taken possession of. They waited for some favourable opportunity to arrest the movement, and this, after fifteen months of astonishing success, an unfortunate accident at length provided. An indiscreet secretary described the horsemen for whom a place was assigned at a projected meeting at Clontarf, as "Repeal Cavalry," and a proclamation was issued forbidding the Clontarf meeting to assemble. A proclamation is but an advertisement without any legal force, but O'Connell determined to submit to it, and that decision deprived the movement in a moment of half its dignity and all its terror. "Ireland," whispered one of O'Connell's old guard on this occasion, "was won at Clontarf, and now it is going to be lost at Clontarf." The policy of the young men was altogether unequivocal. They preached resistance to aggression as emphatically as O'Connell, but they desired to *do* the thing they counselled. Their hopes were centred on the employment of the prodigious power and enthusiasm of the time to secure the legislative independence of the island, as such a force had been successfully employed in 1782 for the same purpose. And, if a contest in arms ended in the separation of the islands, it would not have been an unwelcome termination of a long reign of contemptuous injustice. After the Clontarf submission they agreed in bitter humiliation that it was no longer possible to attain either of these ends during O'Connell's lifetime. After a short pause, another stroke was levelled at the National Party. O'Connell and seven other Repealers, of whom I was one, were arrested on a charge of conspiracy, and speedily brought to trial. I have told that story also, and it is not necessary to repeat it here. The State prosecution, like every stroke of the Government, drew new support to the cause. A number of the gentry, the most conspicuous of whom were Hely Hutchinson, brother of Lord Donoughmore, and William

Smith O'Brien, joined the Association. O'Brien's historic descent and stainless reputation made his junction an epoch. To perfervid persons, indeed, he seemed the precursor of his entire class. He was immediately treated as the Tanist of the National Party, and the position he occupied from that time forth was singular and significant. He had none of the gifts which attract the multitude except a tall, striking figure, and a well-poised head. He was not an orator, as an Irish leader is expected to be, but a formal, and at times, a tedious speaker. His manners were not genial or winning, and he made few intimacies. But as his character developed in action he was recognised as a man who, when he recommended an inconvenient or hazardous proceeding, was always ready to undertake it himself ; who might be counted on to keep his word with a rigid and even pedantic strictness ; who was absolutely free from jealousy, who never uttered ill of any one, and whose lightest word was better security than the sealed bond of ordinary men. There was an anecdote current about him which was believed, because it was probable and characteristic. He had a duel with the brother of O'Gorman Mahon, and when the men were placed and the signal about to be given, O'Brien cried, "Stop ! No signal, I pray." His opponent's second stepped forward and said with a serious countenance, "This is very irregular, sir. Pray, what do you want to say ?" "I want," replied O'Brien, "to call your attention to the fact that the gentleman opposite me has let the cap fall off his pistol."

The State prisoners were tried before a jury on which, in a Catholic country, not one Catholic was permitted to sit, before judges the chief of whom was a furious partisan, and we were sent to prison before an appeal which had been lodged, on the advice of experienced lawyers, could be tried. The prison was under the control of the Dublin Corporation, and the imprisonment proved as little unpleasant as a holiday in a country house. But O'Connell was deeply humiliated, as any imprisonment impugned his legal infallibility, on which the people so confidently relied.¹

¹ The Government promoted at this time a second prosecution, in which I was for a time the defendant. Father Davern, a notable Tipperary priest, charged Lord Hawarden with deliberately exterminating his Catholic tenantry, and gave the names and residences of some hundreds

During the imprisonment the National movement fell under the control of Smith O'Brien and Thomas Davis, and attained a dignity and practical method which compensated for the popular *élan* it had lost;¹ but it received a secret wound which could not be healed. O'Connell lost faith in the movement he had created, and began to ponder on the best means of retreat.

After we were three months in prison the judicial members of the House of Lords assembled to determine the strange question whether we had been legally convicted. Every step in the proceeding (it was contended) was tainted with error. The panel was badly arrayed, the offences were badly charged, and the Chief Justice so seriously misdirected the jury that the conviction was not a legal one. The Chancellor and Lord Brougham sustained the judgment of the Court in Dublin at all points, but three Whig Law Lords pronounced it fatally bad, and one of them declared in language which became memorable, that "such a system rendered the administration of justice a mockery, a delusion, and a snare." We were discharged from custody, and O'Connell was restored to a people delirious with joy at his victory. But from that hour forth he never made one step in advance, or one serious effort to reanimate the National movement. At the moment this change of policy was only imperfectly realised by his ablest supporters, and was not at all suspected by the mass of the people.

The defeat and reversal of the State prosecution restored the prestige of the National movement as if by magic. Before Clontarf, when friendly foreign nations and converted domestic opponents did her homage, Ireland had won a

of tenants driven out of their holdings to perish. Lord Hawarden was a court official, and as he flatly denied the charge Sir Robert Peel required him to vindicate himself by the prosecution of his libeller. His solicitor wrote to me saying Lord Hawarden would gladly pass over the journal to reach the real offender, if he would acknowledge the authorship. I replied that the land system in Ireland wanted to be investigated, and I was ready for the inquiry. O'Connell, who knew that Father Davern was a man of great popular influence, intimated to him that if he was sure of his facts, the Repeal Association would undertake the defence, and Father Davern immediately announced himself as the author, and was accepted as defendant, and I heard no more of the case at that time.

¹ "Four Years of Irish History."

position more powerful and impressive than she had occupied within the memory of living men, though some of them remembered Grattan and the Volunteers, and the good times now seemed restored. It looked like the dawn of liberty ; the painful and tragic story of how it became the herald of disaster and humiliation must now be narrated.

After our release from prison I visited O'Connell at Darrynane, his mountain home in Kerry, in company with John O'Hagan and D. F. M'Carthy. The story is already told,¹ but I have since found among Davis's papers a letter I wrote him on this journey, warning him of a political storm brewing in the mountains, but with slight apparent belief in the danger, though it was real and imminent :—

“Take life easier, *mon ami*, you are doing far too many things at once. When you are in your normal health I have no objection to your driving as many horses as Neptune or Mr. Ducrow, but you have had no holiday this year. To enable you to get one, I will return to town immediately. You ask news of O'Connell. He is by no means disposed just now to lay his head upon the block if we do not reach the promised land in six months. *Au contraire*, he pictures the road we have to travel as long and dreary. Have you ever noticed that if you ask your way from an old man he magnifies the distance, while a boy makes nothing of it ?

“I don't think I told you how much pleased I was with the Christian Brothers' school at Waterford. The boys had an easy, contented look, as if they were in presence of a father rather than of a pedagogue. And the brothers have set the courageous example of using the illustrations of Natural History published by the Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge. Note this as an evidence of progress. Though Natural History is of no sect, the thing would have been impossible five years, perhaps twelve months, ago.

“I did not tell you from Kilkenny a prediction of Cane's, it seemed so impossible. The lowered tone of the Association he insists is intended to prepare the way for abandoning the cause and silencing Young Ireland, if it be possible. Looked at historically would the attempt be very surprising ? Is it

¹ “Young Ireland,” bk. iii. chap. ii.

not rather the exact thing to be expected. Roger O'Moore was denied a place on the Supreme Council of the Catholic Confederation, which but for his genius and daring would never have existed ; and Wolfe Tone was in the end robbed of all authority in the United Irish Society which he created. But we rarely look at contemporary events historically. He may put us out of the Association indeed, but can he put us out of Ireland ? It seems an easy task to disperse a few young men without fortune or authority, but it will not prove so easy if they are the heirs-apparent of the Ireland that is to be. They have Will and Conviction, I think, and these are the forces which have conquered the world. O'Connell said nothing to justify this suspicion suggested by Cane, but I had a mesmeric feeling while talking to him that there is storm in the air."

If any jealousy existed in O'Connell's mind it was certainly unfounded. The young men of the National movement, who by this time came to be discriminated from the ordinary following of the leader as the Young Ireland party, had no more desire or intention of disturbing O'Connell's authority than the Opposition of the day had of deposing Queen Victoria. They seconded his designs loyally, and were as proud as his children of his gifts and his triumphs. But, unlike his Old Guard, they were not *his* soldiers, but the soldiers of Ireland, and if a divided duty ever arose there was no doubt which side they needs must choose. They had devoted to the deliverance of Ireland, as frankly as he had done, their lives and fortunes, and that mystic inestimable future so precious to youth, and their paths seemed destined to pass side by side to the end. On many minor points of policy O'Connell had cheerfully yielded to their wishes ; on many other points they had cheerfully submitted to defeat at his hands ; only one determined contest had taken place between them, and of that contest the country knew nothing. In the interval between his conviction and sentence, O'Connell suddenly proposed to the general committee, in private conference, to dissolve the Repeal Association, and to found another free from the vulnerable points attributed to the existing one in the State prosecutions. The proposal excited consternation among men who were deter-

mined never to retreat. The Association was the heir of the monster meetings ; it had enrolled two million adherents ; it had negotiated on equal terms with France and America ; and its policy had moved every party in the Empire to sympathy or resistance. Its fall would be regarded in the Old World and the New as the collapse of the National movement. Besides, such a submission to the arbitrary law of the Queen's Bench would render a writ of error futile and ridiculous. The young men respectfully and courteously, but unequivocally, declined to sanction the measure by their votes ; and, if it were adopted, they intimated they would not feel at liberty to enter the new Association. O'Connell, whom experience had taught when to yield, abandoned his proposal, and it was never heard of outside of Conciliation Hall. But it must be now judged in connection with the events which speedily followed it, and there can be no serious doubt that it was a move towards the new policy on which O'Connell had secretly determined in Richmond Prison, to reconcile himself with the Whig party and let the national enthusiasm evaporate.

It may well seem impossible that the honoured and adored leader of the Irish people could sell the mighty space of his large honours for any Whig trash of boons or patronage. It is a painful, and in its consequences an intensely tragic story, which I would gladly put away from me, but it is impossible, for it explains all that followed for many years in Ireland. I will simply state the facts ; they are so marvellous and so painful that the reader, I repeat, is only expected to accept them if the evidence prove irresistible. I cannot too earnestly exhort the reader to remember that O'Connell was old, infirm, and in the first stage of a disease under which he sank, and it may well be that he believed *Repeal* impossible in his lifetime ; but it was open to him to proclaim his new conviction, and declare he would get all he could for Ireland before he departed. The best men in the Association (who were not overtaken by age or infirmity) would, no doubt, have refused to follow him into a compromise, but many from custom and reverence would have accepted his decision as necessarily wisest and best, and at any rate his conscience would be clear and his head erect. What he unfortunately determined

to do was to maintain in public that he was still on the same track, and to conceal from the people, by painful and shameful devices, that he had altogether changed his purpose.

The threatened storm soon came, and came in a fashion wholly unforeseen. After my return from Darrynane Davis went to Belfast to meet Thomas O'Hagan, Sharman Crawford, and other leaders of the Federal party who were about to hold a conference in the northern capital. Davis wished well to their experiment, as we all did. It would bring men into the field likely to be listened to in England, and perhaps by the Irish gentry, and who were of undoubted integrity of character and purpose. O'Connell made a vain attempt to draw them into the Repeal Association as Federalists only, but they would not listen to him. If they overcame their personal objections, which were rooted, they knew that the bulk of their followers could not be induced to enter Conciliation Hall on any pretence, and it was plain that the chief force of Federalism arose from the fact that it was an alternative to Repeal. It would have been a powerful auxiliary to the National movement if O'Connell had let it alone, but he had left prison with the determination to break definitely with the Mallow Defiance and the monster meetings, and retreat steadily to the *status quo ante bellum* whenever he had secured a decent pretence. As the Federalists would not come to him, he unhappily determined to go to them. In a long letter to the Repeal Association, dealing with a multitude of topics, this portentous sentence appeared :—

“ For my own part, I will own that since I have come to contemplate the specific differences, such as they are, between simple Repeal and Federalism, I do at present feel a preference for the Federative plan, as tending more to the utility of Ireland and the maintenance of the connection with England than the proposal of simple Repeal. But I must either deliberately propose or deliberately adopt from some other person a plan of Federative Union before I bind myself to the opinion I now entertain.”

Nor was this all. “ The Federalists,” he added, “ cannot but perceive that there has been on my part a pause in the agitation for Repeal since our liberation from unjust captivity.”

The motive and meaning of this language were not so plain then as now, but they were plain enough.

What was the duty of the leading spokesmen of the National movement before this new danger? If the Association adopted the policy suggested all the men of character and influence won since the beginning of 1843 would surely abandon it, as they did later under kindred provocation. The respect and sympathy of foreign nations would be withdrawn from a people who did not know their own mind, and suddenly discovered that there was no substantial difference between a nation enjoying legislative independence and a province possessing a dependent legislature for domestic purposes. The result that would have ensued, and which the keen intellect of O'Connell could not but foresee, was the dwindling away of the National movement till it might be swopped, as it had been in '34, for a handful of promised boons from the Whigs. What ought to be done under the circumstances? I had no doubt indeed what ought to be done, but it was autumn, and all my colleagues were away on holiday, and I might commit them to a contest with O'Connell which they would have found some honourable means of evading. But clear as my duty was to them, there was even a higher duty to the multitude of young men in the country who believed that the *Nation* in all difficulties would be just and fear not, and whose faith and patriotism would be fatally shaken if their confidence proved to have been ill bestowed. I solved the difficulty by making the leading article in the next *Nation* a letter to O'Connell in my own name. I objected to the change he favoured, which I believed would equally damage Federalism and Repeal, and insisted, with careful courtesy, that the Association had no more right to alter the constitution on which its members were recruited than the Irish Parliament had to surrender its functions without consulting its constituents.¹ The letter was reprinted by

¹ Federalism, as it was then generally understood, meant little more than the creation of a Legislative Council, with fiscal powers somewhat in excess of the fiscal powers of a grand jury, but not authorised to deal with the greatest concerns of a nation—domestic and international trade, the land code, education, national defences, or the subsidies to religious denominations.—“Young Ireland,” bk. iii. chap. iii.

A précis of the arguments employed may be borrowed from a former narrative. I denied the proposition that Federalism was better than

the organs of all parties, and was commented on by nearly every political paper in the Empire, and finally by the journals of France and the United States. The Conservative Press generally predicted that the *Nation* would be speedily destroyed for its audacity, and that O'Connell's letter might be regarded as the funeral oration of Repeal. When Davis and my other friends returned to town, or could communicate with me, they cordially accepted the policy of resistance, and for nearly a month, during which O'Connell and the Association maintained absolute silence, the country was

Repeal as a national settlement, and contended that it was not better but worse :—

“ The Imperial Representation on which it is based is calculated to perpetuate our moral and intellectual subjection to England. It will teach the aristocracy still to turn their eyes to London as the scene of their ambition. It will continue to train them in English manners, feelings, and prejudices, and establish permanently a centre of action apart from their native country. By the same process it will plant deeper the evil of absenteeism. It will compel Lords and Commons to reside out of the country, and continue the drain upon our resources in which you found so strong an argument for Repeal.”

A share in the control of the Empire, I contended, was an inadequate compensation for accepting an Irish Legislature with shorn authority, for our minority in the Imperial Parliament would be as powerless hereafter as it was powerless at present to control the colonial policy of the Empire. It was, moreover, a settlement not less difficult to obtain ; for while Repeal only contemplated the restoration of a Constitution which formerly existed in Ireland, Federalism raised a new and serious difficulty by necessitating a reconstruction of the Empire on a new basis, with local legislatures in each of the three kingdoms.

I then urged, as courteously as I could, the delicate objection that Federalism, whatever were its merits, would not be promoted by his adopting it.

“ Federalism has undoubtedly the advantage of Repeal in one point—it is less hated. Unionists have not been trained to regard it as a raw head and bloody bones. They look upon it with comparative calmness, and are certainly more likely to become reconciled to it than to Repeal. But it would not be in a better, but in a worse, condition for effecting this purpose if the National Party adopted it to a man. The Lords used to think it an excellent reason for rejecting measures that they were countenanced by O'Connell, and I fear party prejudice at home would treat Federalism in the same way. To be misunderstood and misrepresented is the progressive tax upon greatness, and since you are a millionaire you cannot complain of paying in proportion.”

I warned him that, even if Federalism were desirable, the way to create a party for it was not by identifying it with Repeal. The men mooting the question were men who always kept a day's march behind the people. If he had begun three years before by asking for Federalism they would be now speculating on “ justice to Ireland ” and the restoration of the Whigs ; and if ever he fell back on their ground he would inevitably find it deserted ; Federalism was the shadow of Repeal, he could not get nearer to it or farther from it.—“ Young Ireland,” bk. iii. chap. iii.

occupied with the controversy. The bulk of the National Press declared that, as far as the merits of the question were disclosed, they could not approve of the change indicated ; others were of opinion that O'Connell must have good and sufficient reasons, which would be finally disclosed, for the course he took ; and Mr. Richard Barrett, of the *Pilot* (the domestic organ of the O'Connell family), could discover no honourable motive for resistance to the leader's policy. There were serious reasons, however, to convince O'Connell that the people did not agree with him. The collection of the O'Connell annuity, the annual stipend paid by the people to their leader, was announced, but the old enthusiasm with which it was received was wanting. In his private correspondence, recently published, we find a letter from O'Connell to the Secretary of the Fund dwelling on this change :—

“ Do you know that I have a feeling of despondency creeping over me on the subject of this year's tribute. It seems to have dropped stillborn from the Press. In former years, when the announcement appeared, it was immediately followed by crowded advertisements in the Dublin papers to meet and arrange the collection. The Cork, Waterford, Limerick, &c., newspapers followed, but there is not one spark alight.”

And Michael Doheny, who met O'Connell at a public dinner in Limerick, given to him on his way back to town, wrote me that public opinion on the subject, which was occupying all minds, exhibited itself there in a manner offensive to the leader :—

“ Your name was received with the loudest cheers ; to such a degree indeed as, in my mind, to rouse the great man's wrath. But although the reception was most flattering, still there is a strong feeling that the *Nation* was wrong in intimating that Dan had abandoned the cause. To be sure most men who entertain that feeling have not inquired into the justice or the value of the argument in the *Nation* : they content themselves with saying that it is necessary to preserve the inviolability of his character.”

The result of this controversy I abbreviate from “ Young Ireland ” :—

On the 25th November O'Connell returned to the Associa-

tion. His first task was to assert and justify himself. He replied to the critics who had discussed his Federal letter, passing lightly over the objections of Irish writers, but falling with intense bitterness on English and French journals. The Whigs were never, he affirmed, so hated in Ireland as now, and the reason was to be found in the conduct of their newspapers.

"It was to be found in the solemn insolence of the *Morning Chronicle*, the slanderous mummery of the *Examiner*, and the stupidity of Lord Palmerston's paltry *Globe*, which turned the just aspirations of the Irish people into unholy mockery. Even the Press of Louis Philippe took up the cry : Odillon Barrot's *National* began ; but the Repealers were lovers of monarchical government and were Christians, two unpardonable offences in the eyes of the *National*. Thiers's paper, the *Constitutionel*, joined the cry. Thiers published a history of the French Revolution, in which he related the September massacres, where hundreds of bishops and priests were murdered, in a style which made it plain that if he could he would enact that massacre anew. He was glad to have the animosity of such a man. Next came the *Journal des Debats*, which said, 'Let not O'Connell and Ireland imagine that in case of a war with England they would get assistance from France.' He hurled his contempt on the paltry usurper Louis Philippe and his newspapers. He would not accept Repeal at the hands of France. Sooner than owe anything to France he would surrender the cause of the country he loved best in the world. It was likely the *National*, the *Constitutionel*, and the *Debats* were not scoundrels for nothing. They gave money's worth to England, and they probably got money value in return."

But though O'Connell reprimanded his critics, he amended as far as possible the blunders they had exposed. He broke decidedly, and even rudely, with the Federalists.

"After the liberation of the State prisoners (he said) advances had been made to him by men of large influence and large property, who talked of seeking Repeal on what they called the Federal plan. He inquired what the Federal plan was, but nobody could tell him. He called upon them to propose their plan, the view in his own mind being that

Federalism could not commence till Ireland had a Parliament of her own, because she would not be on a footing with England till possessed of a Parliament to arrange her own terms. Yet a cry was raised, a shout was sent forth, by men who doubtless thought themselves fitter to be leaders than he was, and several young gentlemen began to exclaim against him instead of reading his letter for explanation. It was not that they read his letter and made a mistake, but they made the mistake and did not read the letter. He had expected the assistance of the Federalists, and opened the door as wide as he could without letting out Irish liberty. But (he continued) let me tell you a secret: Federalism is not worth that (snapping his fingers). Federalists, I am told, are still talking and meeting—much good may it do them; I wish them all manner of happiness, but I don't expect any good from it."

If the writers of the *Nation* desired controversy, here was a tempting *thesis*. It might have been asked, If no one could tell him what the plan was of the Federalists, how he came to give the "Federal plan" a preference over simple Repeal, which he had been advocating for thirty years? It might have been easily shown that these young men, of whose rashness he complained, asked to have no more done than he himself found it necessary to do to satisfy public opinion. The suggestion that he expected the Union to be first repealed and an Irish Parliament established before Federalism came to be mooted between the countries, was a text upon which they could have scarcely trusted themselves to write; for it was cynical experiments like this which had reduced O'Connell's influence over the educated classes so low. But instead of having recourse to any of these themes they uttered no personal complaint and no note of triumph, but urged the whole party on to a campaign of renewed hope and restored confidence.

The controversy was at an end, but O'Connell's unhappy experiment had produced only mischief. His supporters were seriously alarmed and Federalists were completely alienated. The English journalists occupied themselves largely with what they described as his defeat. "H.B," the popular satirist of the day, exhibited him in one of

his sketches as mastered by Young Ireland, and *Tait's Magazine*, at that time the organ of Philosophical Radicalism, summed up the controversy in terms which were considered not unfair or ungenerous :—

“The Agitator has ceased to be master of the agitation. The magician is impotent to exorcise—has only a qualified and conditional power to command—the spirits that his spells have evoked. He cannot now do what he will with his own ; there is a power in the Repeal Association, behind the chair, and greater than the chair. Why did Mr. O’Connell take the first opportunity he could find to snap his fingers at Federalism so soon after having deliberately and elaborately avowed a preference for it ? Not merely because Federalists stood aloof and did not seem to feel flattered by his preference, but chiefly because Mr. Duffy wrote a certain letter in the *Nation*—a letter, we may say in passing, which more than confirms the sense we have long entertained of this gentleman’s and his coadjutors’ talent, sincerity, and mental independence—refusing in pretty flat terms to be marched to or through the Coventry of Federalism. Mr. O’Connell has since, not in the best taste or feeling, sneered at ‘the young gentlemen who thought themselves fitter leaders than he was’ ; but the young gentlemen carried the day, nevertheless, against the old gentleman. We see in this that there is a limit to the supremacy of this extraordinary man over the movement which his own genius originated ; what he has done he is quite unable to undo ; Repeal has a life of its own, independent of his influence or control ; his leadership is gladly accepted and submitted to, but always under condition that he leads the right way.”

The Federal controversy might pass as a skirmish arising accidentally—one of the domestic broils no political party can altogether escape ; but incidents followed which justify the belief that the advance to Federation was the first move in a deliberate design to relinquish the National cause, substituting for it some sort of alliance with the Whigs, and planting in Conciliation Hall instead of the powerful Repeal Association an organisation so feeble and mean-spirited that the Young Liberator (as Mr. John O’Connell came to be called in good-humoured irony, largely leavened with con-

tempt) might be able to control it, when the leadership was bequeathed to him.

An essential part of such a scheme was to sap the influence and disparage the character of such men as would probably offer a vigorous resistance, and finally to hustle them out of the Association. That this was the design in 1845 is my conviction after having witnessed all the transactions. But I submit the case absolutely to the judgment of the reader, exhorting him again to accept no fact which is not well established, and no theory which the facts do not render irresistible. At the outset let it be remembered that the young men could have no personal object in a conflict with O'Connell ; their personal interests were manifestly all the other way. O'Connell might shut them out from a public career during his lifetime, or for ever, and in my own case he might destroy a journal which conferred a large influence and a liberal income. The motives which induced us to disregard these dangers may reasonably be presumed not to have been unworthy ones. We had been accustomed from boyhood to love and reverence O'Connell, and we recoiled from a conflict with him as generous boys recoil from a dispute with their father. But the National cause was far above all sympathies and affections ; the Irish people for long centuries had watered it with their blood, and in the half century which has since ensued, we know by what sufferings and sacrifices they have laboured to maintain and defend it. Only those who condemn all this long martyrdom as national folly can doubt what was the duty of the sentinels at the gate, when they discovered the intention of letting the enemy into our citadel.

The second trouble came in a manner as unexpected as the first, and it was one in which the duty of the young men seemed as peremptorily prescribed by their character and convictions. From the date when the *Times* advised the Prime Minister to conciliate Ireland, rather than coerce her, the Whig Opposition pressed the same counsel on him in many keys. It is probable that the last thing they expected was that he would take their advice, but at the opening of the session of 1845 Sir Robert Peel had the supreme civic courage to declare that he desired to make peace with

Ireland. There was heat with the United States which might kindle into war, and before engaging in a conflict with America he hoped to revive concord at home. There was a dangerous conspiracy in Ireland against the authority of Parliament, which could not be broken up by force ; but he was persuaded it might be broken up by forbearance and generosity, and he was about to make the experiment. His first proposal was to increase and make permanent the provision for supporting Maynooth College, where students for the Catholic priesthood were penitulously and inadequately educated. This measure, which was received with applause in Ireland, and with a roar of disapprobation from the English Dissenters, after much resistance became law. The second proposal was of a still larger scope. It was a plan for establishing middle-class education in the Irish provinces. Genius or patriotism could not devise a measure more stringently needed. The State, which had endowed preparatory schools, colleges, and a University for Protestant education, had made no provision for the sons of the Catholic gentry and professional classes. There was not then, and there is not now, a body of gifted young men so ill-equipped and disciplined to fight the battle of life anywhere in Europe or in the greater Christendom which embraces three continents. The proposal was welcomed in the House of Commons by the Irish members, including on the occasion a nephew of O'Connell. The middle classes in Dublin and Cork hailed it with rapture. It was proposed to educate Catholic and Protestant students together, an arrangement which seemed to Thomas Davis to insure concord and liberty in the near future. What it was to me, to whom education was the essential and indispensable preliminary of freedom, I need not describe, but as I was no longer a member of the Association I could only help it with the pen.¹ The task of safeguarding our policy from misrepresentation fell on Davis, and was performed with the calm enthusiasm and exact knowledge which a great minister gives to a vital law.

¹ After the State Trials, when O'Connell's proposal to dissolve the Repeal Association was resisted, I suggested as a compromise that the journalists should retire from the Association, which was accepted, and there was now no editor on the committee.

When the new proposal was mentioned in the general committee there was universal congratulation, till John O'Connell entered and declared that it was an abominable attempt to undermine religion and morality in Ireland. Amid the wonder and contempt this criticism created his father arrived, and echoed the objections of his son. Hitherto O'Connell had always advocated the education of Irish youth in the same colleges that they might become good citizens and good patriots; but he broke with his past opinions on this occasion, as peremptorily as he had broken with the Mallow Defiance. Under these circumstances Davis besought him to keep the question out of the Association. Members had been invited to join as *Repealers* whatever were their opinions on other questions, and it would not be fair to compel them to take sides in a controversy like this. By crossing the street it could be discussed outside of the Association, and good faith with their colleagues preserved. O'Connell peremptorily refused this concession. At the next meeting of the Association he and his son assailed the Bill without stint, and Davis and Dillon defended it. Next day a requisition was privately presented to O'Connell asking that the subject might be mentioned no more till the Catholic bishops, who were about to hold a conference on the Bill, should have spoken; as the requisition was signed by forty members of the general committee, including all the barristers and country gentlemen, and indeed every man of education outside the O'Connell family, he thought fit to consent. The respective parties were to be at liberty, during the truce, to urge their views on the country outside the Association; Davis and I wrote largely on the subject in the *Nation*. O'Connell sent several articles anonymously to the *Freeman's Journal*, and Mr. John O'Connell interpreted the truce as authorising him to use the machinery of the Association to get petitions signed for the total rejection of a measure of which the bulk of the governing body approved.

Why did O'Connell break with his past life, and insist on the utter rejection of a measure which might have been amended into a consummate system of middle-class education? At the time we knew only half the truth. He had never shaken himself free of *Whig* entanglements. It was

not five years since he had been drudging on their behalf in the House of Commons ; and it was to them he owed his recent deliverance from prison. He was determined that Peel should not outrun his friends in popular favour by a second success. But he was equally influenced no doubt by the determination to make John his successor, and John knew that the only sort of Association he could control was one which had resumed the old sectarian character of Corn Exchange agitation. O'Connell had a sincere desire, no doubt, that no institution should be established dangerous to Catholic faith ; but Peel, who wanted to make peace with Ireland, would have consented to any amendments which could be carried through the British Parliament. Half a century has since passed, and thousands of young men have failed in the battle of life for want of the education and discipline which opened the way to fortune for so many Scots, Belgians, and Swiss.

The Catholic bishops at length deliberated. They declared that they were ready to co-operate with the Government in founding provincial colleges, but that the proposed scheme did not make provision for the religious and moral discipline of students separated from their families, and was, on other grounds, also dangerous to their faith and morals. They suggested amendments which would render the measure acceptable, but they could not support it in its present form.

When the Association met, O'Connell declared triumphantly that the bishops condemned the nefarious scheme, which must now be utterly rejected. John O'Connell followed, denying that the bishops had given any sanction to mixed education. Davis was about to reply vindicating the actual character of the Bill and the actual decision of the bishops, when he was anticipated by another speaker. I have described in the "Life of Thomas Davis" the scene which followed, and as it influenced the whole future life of O'Connell, of Davis, and of the Association, I must reproduce it here :—

" Among Davis's fellow-students in college was a young man named Michael George Conway. He was gifted with prompt speech and unblushing effrontery. But he wanted conduct and integrity, and had gradually fallen out of men's

esteem. He had been recently blackballed—by the Young Irelanders, he believed—in the 'Eighty-two Club, and he came down to the Association burning for revenge. He fell on a chance phrase of Barry's in the debate, misrepresented it outrageously, and declared that it was characteristic of his party and his principles—a party on which the strong hand of O'Connell must be laid.

“The Calvinist or Episcopalian of the North, the Unitarian, the Sectaries, every man who had any faith in Christianity was resolved that it should neither be robbed nor thieved by a faction half acquainted with the principles they put forward, and not at all comprehending the Irish character or the Irish heart. Were his audience prepared to yield up old discord or sympathies to the theories of Young Ireland? As a Catholic and as an Irishman, while he was ready to meet his Protestant friends upon an equal platform, he would resent any attempt at ascendancy, whether it came from honest Protestants or honest professing Catholics.’

“During the delivery of this false and intemperate harangue O'Connell cheered every offensive sentence, and finally took off his cap and waved it over his head triumphantly. He knew, as all the intelligent spectators knew, that a man destitute of character and veracity was libelling men as pure and disinterested as any who had ever served a public cause, and he took part with the scoundrel. It was one of the weaknesses of his public life to prefer agents who dared not resist his will; but this open preference of evil to good was the most unlucky stroke of his life. Twelve months later he died, having in the meantime lost his prodigious popularity and power; and of all the circumstances which produced that tragic result the most operative was probably his conduct during this day.

“Davis followed Mr. Conway. The feeling uppermost in his mind was probably suggested by the contrast between the life of the man and his new heroic opinions; and it will help to put the reader in the same standpoint when I inform him that the pious Mr. Conway a few years later professed himself a convert to Protestantism, to obtain the wages of a proselytising society.

“The reader knows in some degree what Thomas Davis

was, what were his life and services, what his relations to his Catholic countrymen were ; that he had left hereditary friends and kith and kin to act with O'Connell for Irish ends ; and they may estimate the effect which the attempt to represent him as a bigot had upon the generous and upright among his audience. John Dillon ruptured a small blood-vessel with restrained wrath ; others broke for ever the tie which had bound them to O'Connell. He was not worthy, they declared, of the service of men of honour, who used weapons so vile against a man of unquestioned honour.

“ Davis took up the question of the colleges, and examined it with undisturbed temper and judgment. He did not regard himself as a debater, but he proved on that occasion to be a master of debate. Cool, resolute, good-humoured, he raised and disposed of point after point with unbroken suavity in a manner I have never heard exceeded in legislatures or party council.

“ ‘I have not,’ Davis said on rising, ‘more than a few words to say in reply to the useful, judicious, and spirited speech of my old college friend, my Catholic friend, my very Catholic friend, Mr. Conway.’

“ Mr. O’Connell—‘It is no crime to be a Catholic, I hope.’

“ Mr. Davis—‘No, surely no, for—’

“ Mr. O’Connell—‘The sneer with which you used the word would lead to the inference.’

“ Mr. Davis—‘No, sir ; no. My best friends, my nearest friends, my truest friends, are Catholics. I was brought up in a mixed seminary, where I learned to know, and, knowing, to love my countrymen, a love that shall not be disturbed by these casual and unhappy dissensions. Disunion, alas ! destroyed our country for centuries. Men of Ireland, shall it destroy it again ?’

“ While he spoke O’Connell, who sat near him, distracted him by constant observations in undertone ; but the young man proceeded with unruffled demeanour and calm mastery of his subject. He cordially approved of the memorial of the Catholic bishops, which declared for mixed education with certain necessary precautions. They asked for ‘a fair proportion’ of professors, meaning beyond dispute, that the remainder should be Protestants—this was mixed instruction.

They demanded that, in certain specified branches, Catholic students should be taught by Catholic professors—this was a just demand, but it implied a system of mixed education. He, like them, objected to the Bill as containing no provision for the religious discipline of the boys taken away from the paternal shelter ; and, beyond all, he denounced it for giving the Government a right to appoint and dismiss professors—which was a right to corrupt and intimidate.

“O’Connell, who had already spoken for two hours, made a second speech in reply to Davis. His peroration was a memorable one. The venerated hierarchy, he insisted, had condemned the principle of the Bill as dangerous to the faith and morals of the Catholic people.

“‘But,’ he said in conclusion, ‘the principle of the Bill has been supported by Mr. Davis, and was advocated in a newspaper professing to be the organ of the Roman Catholic people of this country, but which I emphatically pronounce to be no such thing. The sections of politicians styling themselves the Young Ireland Party, anxious to rule the destinies of this country, start up and support this measure. There is no such party as that styled “Young Ireland.” There may be a few individuals who take that denomination on themselves. I am for Old Ireland. ’Tis time that this delusion should be put an end to. “Young Ireland” may play what pranks they please. I do not envy them the name they rejoice in. I shall stand by Old Ireland ; and I have some slight notion that Old Ireland will stand by me.’

“When O’Connell sat down consternation was universal ; he had commenced a war in which either by success or failure he would bring ruin on the national cause. Smith O’Brien, and Henry Grattan, who were sitting near him, probably remonstrated, for in a few minutes he rose again to withdraw the nickname of ‘Young Ireland,’ as he understood it was disclaimed by those to whom it was applied. Davis immediately rejoined that he was glad to get rid of the assumption that there were factions in the Association. He never knew any other feeling among his friends, except in the momentary heat of passion, but that they were bound to work together for Irish nationality. They were bound, among other motives, by a strong affection towards Daniel

O'Connell; a feeling which he himself had habitually expressed in his private correspondence with his dearest and closest friends.

"At this point the strong, self-restrained man paused from emotion, and broke into irrepressible tears. He was habitually neither emotional nor demonstrative, but he had been in a state of nervous anxiety for hours; the cause for which he had laboured so long and sacrificed so much was in peril on both hands. The Association might be broken up by the conflict with O'Connell, or it might endure a worse fate if it became despicable by suppressing convictions of public duty at his dictation. With these fears were mixed the recollection of the generous forbearance from blame and the promptitude to praise which marked his own relations to O'Connell, and the painful contrast with these sentiments presented by the scene he had just witnessed. He shed tears from the strong passion of a strong man. The leaders of the Commons of England, the venerable Coke, John Pym, and Sir John Eliot, men of iron will, wept when Charles I. extinguished the hope of an understanding between the people and the Crown. Tears of wounded sensibility choked the utterance of Fox when Burke publicly renounced his friendship. Both the public and the private motives united to assail the sensibility of Davis."¹

Smith O'Brien and Henry Grattan again interposed, and O'Connell and Davis were induced to interchange courtesies and good wishes; but a blow was struck from which the Association never recovered. Davis's friends were enraged at the misrepresentation to which he was subjected, and at the ingratitude of O'Connell, and though sacrifices of feeling were made for the public cause the wounds inflicted bled inwardly. Peel's Bill passed without amendment, and though the Primate and the bishops of the three cities in which the institutions were planted determined to accept the new colleges, the bulk of the Catholic episcopacy withheld their sanction, and the institutions maintained only a feeble and unprosperous existence. I have since lived for five and twenty years in a country where a system existed which illustrates the wicked policy of refusing to amend a scheme of

¹ "Short Life of Thomas Davis." London : Fisher Unwin.

education which might have been made a strength and a blessing to Ireland. I have encountered hundreds of young Irishmen of bright and intelligent natures, but without practical training, and who for want of it fell into the humblest pursuits ; and on the other hand there was in Melbourne and Sydney a University where students of all religious denominations are educated together without ampler provisions for their morals and religion than Peel was willing to make in Ireland, and on the Senate of each there was a Catholic archbishop ; and while these pages are being written I see with satisfaction that the Sovereign Pontiff is sanctioning rules for the education of Catholic students at Oxford. The sacrifice of Peel's proposal was made to the low ambition of Mr. John O'Connell, and unfortunately it was not the last nor most serious sacrifice demanded for that pitiful result. It was now whispered among the followers of the Young Liberator that the friends of mixed education ought to retire from Conciliation Hall, or if they did not retire ought to be expelled. Davis wrote to Smith O'Brien :—

“ O'Loghlen (Sir Colman) and all whom I have consulted are firm against secession. O'Loghlen proposes, and I agree with him fully, that if O'Connell on his return should force the question on Conciliation Hall an amendment should be moved that the introduction of such a question against the wish of a numerous and respectable portion of the committee is contrary to the principles of the Association and likely to injure the cause of Repeal. A steady, elaborate discussion for a number of days would end in the withdrawal of the motion and amendment, or in rendering the motion, if carried, powerless. An explanation would follow, and—the cause would still be safe.”

A little later he renewed the subject with his friend :—

“ I will not interfere again till an attempt be made to pledge the Association to vile resolutions. If the O'Connells wish, they can ruin the agitation (not the country) in spite of any one. Between unaccounted-for funds, bigotry, Billingsgate, Tom Steele missions, crude and contradictory dogmas, and unrelieved stupidity, any cause and any system could be ruined. America, too, from whence arose ‘ the cloud in the west ’ which alarmed Peel, has been deeply offended, and but for

the *Nation* there would not now be one Repeal Club in America. Still we have a sincere and numerous people, a rising literature, an increasing staff of young, honest, trained men. Peel's splitting policy [a policy which split up the Tories], the chance of war, the chance of the Orangemen, and a great though now misused, organisation ; and perhaps next autumn a rally may be made. It will require forethought, close union, indifference to personal attack, and firm measures. At this moment the attempt would utterly fail ; but parties may be brought down to reason by the next four months. Again, I tell you, you have no notion of the loss sustained by John O'Connell's course. A dogged temper and a point of honour induce me to remain in the Association at every sacrifice, and will keep me there while there is a chance, even a remote one, of doing good in it."

The period of recess arrived ; O'Connell and O'Brien went into country quarters ; the young men in general set out on their autumn excursions, and the dangerous marplot, Mr. John O'Connell, was left in control of the Association. My holiday was taken in an excursion to our native Ulster, with John O'Hagan, John Mitchel, and John Martin. Mitchel was a young attorney living in the village of Bannbridge, whose acquaintance I made when I resided in Belfast. I had made him known to my Dublin associates. He had contributed one article, entitled "Convicted Conspirators," to the *Nation* during the State Trials, and one review of a pamphlet, but I detected a capacity for writing, and invited him to contribute a volume to the Library of Ireland, which he was to bring with him on this excursion. Martin was a gentleman farmer of unusual education and culture, whom I met then for the first time. We set out in extravagant spirits, but a month which would otherwise have been a social honeymoon was overcast at every point where the Dublin newspapers brought us an account of the Young Liberator's exploits, or some fierce comment on them by our friends in the South and West. MacNevin wrote me :—

"John O'Connell is the most mischievous public man in Ireland. The Association is now merely a Catholic Association. Repeal or any high or honourable principle of Nationality is never heard there. . . . Look at the Corpora-

tion. Is that the spirit of municipal freedom ? Oh Brussels, Bruges, Ghent, and Anvers ! ”

I have described elsewhere the disastrous results which followed the attempts of this modern Phaeton to drive his father’s chariot of flame :—

“ Week after week new outrages were committed against the fundamental principles on which the national confederacy rested. It was open to Irishmen of all political opinions who desired the repeal of the Union ; but it was suddenly pledged to a Whig-Radical programme of measures to be obtained at Westminster. It was bound to cultivate the goodwill of friendly nations ; but the two most friendly nations in the world, the only two which took any genuine interest in our affairs, were wantonly insulted. O’Connell himself, as we have seen, declared that he would not accept Repeal if it were to be obtained with the assistance of such a people as the French, and on another occasion he proffered England Irish assistance in a conflict with the United States to pluck down the stripes and stars ! That the Association should be free from sectarian controversy was a condition of its existence ; but week after week harangues were delivered on the German Catholic Church, and the holy coat of Treves. Richard Scott, one of the most respectable men in the movement, an adherent of O’Connell from the Clare election down to that day, was asked by the Young Liberator ‘ how he dared ’ to come to the Association to remonstrate against the attacks on America as unwise and unnecessary.

“ The move towards Whig-Radicalism greatly alarmed Smith O’Brien who counted on Tory adhesions. He wrote to Davis :—

“ ‘ Having received lately intimations of support of the Repeal cause from quarters in which I did not in the least expect to find it, I am doubly disappointed in finding that the policy about to be adopted by the leaders of the Association is such as to destroy all my hopes of immediate progress.’

“ Of the attack on America, Dillon wrote to Davis :—

“ ‘ In Dublin everybody is indignant at O’Connell meddling in the business. His talk about bringing down the pride of the American Eagle, if England would pay us sufficiently, is not merely foolish, but false and base. Such talk must be

supremely disgusting to the Americans, and to every man of honour and spirit.'

"The effect of the mispolicy was speedy and signal in America. The Repeal Associations in Baltimore, New Orleans, and other cities were dissolved, and the native Press was furious against Irish ingratitude. But the attack on individual liberty outraged Dillon more than the blunders in public policy.

"'I have just read,' he wrote to Davis, 'with inexpressible disgust, the speech of John O'Connell, and the scene which followed between himself and Scott. It behoves you to consider very seriously whether the *Nation* is not bound to notice this matter. . . . My notion is that Scott has a right to protection, and that the public will, or ought to, feel indignant if this protection be withheld. The *Nation* could not possibly get a better opportunity of reading a long-required lecture to Johnny. The immediate topic is one on which public opinion is universally against him. . . . [Mr. Scott, who was an old man long associated with O'Connell, and having no relation with the Young Irelanders, made a slight effort to pacify America by excluding from Conciliation Hall negro slavery, Texas, Oregon, and the whole range of Transatlantic questions upon which O'Connell and Mr. John O'Connell had been haranguing.] Can anything be more evident than the puerile folly of it? When the Americans were engaged in their own struggle only fancy one of their orators coming down to the Congress with a violent invective against the abuses of the French Government of the day. It is impossible latterly to bear with the insolence of this little frog. There is no man or country safe from his venom. If there be not some protest against him, he will set the whole world against us.'

"The most respectable of the recent recruits began to waver. Grey Porter had retired, and Hely Hutchinson declined to enter Parliament, though a southern county was offered to him. This was the condition of public affairs a few weeks after the question of the provincial colleges was forced upon the Repeal Association."¹

The Northern tourists did not follow the ordinary track of

¹ "Short Life of Thomas Davis." London : Fisher Unwin.

travellers, but made a new one running from one historical site to another. We visited the rude little church of Dungannon, where the Volunteers had held their memorable Convention. It had got new aisles since '82 ; at that time it could not accommodate more than three hundred persons on the ground floor. There is no memorial of the great transaction of which it was the theatre. A few Volunteer flags would have been welcome. At Charlemont, now a mere hamlet, we visited the first fortified place which opened its gates to Sir Phelim O'Neill, afterwards the quarters of his illustrious kinsman, Owen Roe. The site is one of the most commanding in Ireland. Owen could survey nine counties from the battlements, and feast his eyes on the fertile plains of Armagh and the noble waters of Lough Neagh. We traversed the field of Benburb, where Owen completely overthrew the army of Munro and the Ulster Puritans. We knelt at the reputed grave of St. Patrick at Downpatrick, and visited the tomb of Thomas Russell, the Protestant patriot of '98. The reputed grave of the Irish Apostle is shamefully neglected. No monument, no railing, no cross, and the naked sod scratched into holes, doubtless by the piety of the poor people who love to carry a fragment of the clay to their homes. The tomb to the memory of Russell in the Protestant church was not erected by public spirit, but by the private affection of a woman, Miss M'Cracken, sister to his friend, Henry Joy M'Cracken. We made a *détour* to the graveyard where the first Presbyterian minister, hanged for his connection with the United Irishmen, sleeps in an old Dominican Abbey. I kept a diary of that journey, from which I shall only extract an account of the battle of Ballynahinch, the first battle Catholics and Presbyterians fought side by side for Ireland. It was furnished to us on the battlefield by one of the survivors named Innes :—

“ The night before the engagement the insurgents were mustered on the Hill of Ednavady. The Presbyterians, who were greatly in the majority, commenced singing psalms which contained expressions offensive to the Catholics, and it was reported that Munro, the Commander, said they should have a Presbyterian Government, which gave great offence. Bullocks were roasted and whisky distributed, and the insur-

gents regaled themselves too plentifully. Dr. Swailes, one of the leaders, advised a night attack on the town, which was occupied by soldiers, but a spy discovered that they were not drunk, as had been reported, but on the alert, and that the yeomanry, some of whom were supposed to be friendly, were mixed with the regulars to keep them under control. About three o'clock in the morning the soldiers attacked the United Irishmen, and the battle continued to nine o'clock. A diversion made in the interest of the insurgents was very successful. A party entered the town by the rear of the houses and fired on the troops from the front windows ; but they were finally dislodged. Ninety-eight dead bodies of insurgents were found on the field (a symbolical number it was thought), and about as many more were killed in the retreat. Munro was taken next day in the house of a man of his own party, still living, who was believed to have sold him to the enemy. I asked whether Munro wore any uniform. 'No,' Innes said, 'he wore his ordinary dress during the battle, with the exception of a green cockade in his hat.' There was a green flag in the ranks, and the force was divided into companies under officers selected by Munro."

Finally, on an autumn evening, we entered Donegal, and paused before the lofty and impressive Castle of O'Donnell, Prince of Tyrconnell, where the Four Masters compiled their great historical collection. When we reached the hotel, weary with travel and exhausted with emotion, I found awaiting me a letter announcing a change for the worse in the health of my wife, and I had to turn my face immediately towards home, and travel night and day till it was reached. The alarm proved premature, and Davis urged me to rejoin my friends, but this was not to be thought of. A joint letter from the tourists speedily followed me :—

" DERRY, August 22, 1845.

" MY DEAR DUFFY,—Yesterday, in Rathmelton, we received your letter, and were indeed delighted to find that the alarm about Mrs. Duffy was over. We have had a most delightful tour through Donegal, and only arrived here yesterday ; but we missed you sadly. On Slieve League, at Dunlewy, at Horn Head, and wherever the earth and the heavens were

grandest, we thought with regret that you should have been turned back from the very threshold of such glorious scenery, and by so melancholy a cause ; but we shall meet again in Donegal, and end the tour another day. O'Hagan's journal ought to be good, for he spends a good deal of time writing it. He has turned out a capital mountaineer, and will tell you of strange passages that he and I have gone through amongst the hills : how we walked twenty-five miles through woods and morasses one day, and were at last benighted about fifteen miles from any shelter, in the midst of a pathless wood that stands now as wild and shaggy and savage, as it was one thousand years ago ; how we struggled on all night, having fortunately moonlight, and not liking to lie down to sleep in the wood, inasmuch as we were wet to the bone ; how, towards morning, we reached the hotel, weary, wet, and famished with hunger, &c., &c. In short, I have good hopes of making a tourist of him yet—if he survive my instructions.

“ Poor Martin has had a good deal of illness, but has pushed on gallantly. However, he was not out with us in the night adventure.

“ I am hurrying home, and intend to be in Bannbridge on Tuesday, when I will work hard till I finish Aodh,¹ and will carefully refer to my index expurgatorius of Carlylish phrases.

“ We got the *Nation* yesterday, and simultaneously asked each other which of *us* was the enthusiastic gentleman referred to in ‘Answers to Correspondents,’ who requires his letters to be addressed to the Merman of the Rosses, and Roaring Meg. We approve highly, *all of us*, of ‘Our Correspondent’s’ account of the Enniskillen meeting, and *disapprove* of giving so much good language to the treacherous *Evening Mail*.

“ The other two are going to complete this letter, and will doubtless give you some valuable information and instruction, which you will receive with high respect.—Very truly yours,

“ J. MITCHEL.”

“ MY DEAR DUFFY,—I must write my name upon this paper as one of the Co. of tourists. We have had delightful climb-

¹ “The Life of Aodh O'Neill, Prince of Ulster,” which he was writing for the Irish Library.

ing of great wild mountains, and looking down over the brink of fearful sea-cliffs, and rambling through endless dismal wastes of moor and bare fields of rock, and among deep, silent, dark glens, where lie the mountain lakes, gloomy or placid—and we have heard the sullen roar of the Atlantic, and seen the long lines of foaming waves advancing in battle array, and like all the proud old armies of men rushing into oblivion. And we have viewed ruins dear to Irish hearts—seats of ancient learning, dwellings of Irish power and pride. And we have had great nights of 'tea and Sartor.' But our one great sorrow was that you were away. Still, it is most satisfactory that the alarm which recalled you was not well founded. When we meet we must have great talks over our adventures, and we will live in hope of a grand tour next year. O'Hagan *journals* at a great rate. I must leave room for him.—Sincerely yours,

"JOHN MARTIN."

"MY DEAR DUFFY,—I have only got time and space left to assure you of my hearty joy that you found Mrs. D. so much better than we feared, at the same time the regret we all of us felt at losing your society, and your losing the glorious scenery of Donegal. No matter, it is well worth a summer to itself, and please God we will give it one again.

"I will try and make my journal as good as possible, but I greatly fear it is very stupid. Unlike Byron, 'Description's not my *forte*.' If my genius does not lie in that direction, where then does it lie? We are just about to start to see Royal Aileagh. To-morrow to Coleraine.—Your affectionate friend,

JOHN O'HAGAN."

As Davis vehemently resisted my proposal to resume work at once, I spent a few days in Wicklow with a new friend recently arrived from America, Thomas D'Arcy M'Gee, of whom I shall have to speak presently. A note I sent to Davis tells how we employed our time :—

"We have established a personal acquaintance, almost a friendship, with all the glens of Wicklow, sunny Clara, gloomy Glendalough, soft Avoca, rugged and purple Glenmalure, the woody Downs, and dark Dunran. M'Gee is full of original thought and will be a serviceable recruit."

On the Northern excursion Mitchel read aloud the MS. of his volume for the Library of Ireland, and we found it spirited and graphic, but spoiled by many involuntary imitations of Thomas Carlyle. He promised to eradicate these blemishes, and while I was still in Wicklow he wrote me on the subject of the book :—

“ BANNBRIDGE, *September 11, 1845.*

“ MY DEAR DUFFY,—I thought you were probably still in the county Wicklow, and yesterday I sent a Preface to Mr. Davis requesting him to look over it, and if he did not like it to alter it. There seems to be some importance attached to that part of a book (a part which I take leave to think wholly unnecessary), and one would not wish to disgust one's dear public with the first page. Will you take a look over it and make it right if you think it in any part wrong ?

“ As to the Carlylean phrase about Hugh na Gavelock, out with it by all means. I shall begin to hate the name of Thomas.

“ I enclose a copy of an old letter which I found in the notes to the battle of Maghrath (it is also printed in the State Papers, Henry VIII.), which it struck me would be a desirable addition to the Appendix. If you think so, pray give it to the printer ; it could be introduced by a note at page 8, where the numbers of the Ulster clansmen that composed O'Neill's army are specified. I send the note, if there be no room or it be otherwise inconvenient it can be well dispensed with.

“ The reason I did not ask *you* to copy the letter of Essex for me is that I know you must be very much occupied, probably more than O'Hagan, and I was unwilling to trespass on your time. I am very much obliged to you for the attention you are giving to the bringing out of this book—the *parturition* of it. I need not say I wish it a safe delivery.

“ I am sorry to hear Davis is ill. You, I hope, are now quite strong and able for your work.—Yours very truly,

“ J. MITCHEL.

“ I scorn to dedicate it to you or to Davis, lest you should think I wanted a handsome review in the *Nation*. Thomas O'Hagan has got a book dedicated to him already. John O'Hagan is a very young gentleman who 'writes poetry.' I

can't bear to inscribe it with the name of any distinguished person, and on the whole will take John Martin."

I found when I returned to the *Nation* office that Mr. John O'Connell's industry had not been limited to the public affairs of the universe. He found time to sow suspicions of Thomas Davis as a dangerous, intriguing infidel, whose friends acquiesced in his dark designs. The young men in towns treated these rumours with contempt, but they made a serious impression on the Catholic clergy. Among a pious people irreligion is the most unpardonable of offences, and from this time rumours were circulated in many parts of the island that the Young Irelanders were the enemies of God and their country. Dillon wrote me from Mayo that Repeal was dead in that county, and that there was but one priest who was not unfriendly to the *Nation*, but that one, he added, was worth all the rest. Doheny sent a similar report from Tipperary, and bade me gauge the force of the popular sentiment by the fact that a doctor lost subscribers to his dispensary among the clergy because he would not give up the obnoxious journal. A few of the Repeal Reading Rooms were induced to abandon so dangerous a teacher, and it seemed certain that a sectarian controversy would spring up, in which ignorance and bigotry would be on one side, and intelligence and integrity on the other. More was done in a month in what was scoffingly called the Vice-Tribunate of John O'Connell, to lower the force and damage the character of the Repeal Party than ever had been done in twelve months to animate and elevate them.

To crown these troubles came suddenly without forecast or warning the heaviest stroke that could befall the young men or the unconscious country. Thomas Davis died after a week's illness.¹ By God's inscrutable providence it has often been the fate of Ireland to suffer the loss which nothing can compensate, the loss of the guiding mind. Brian fell while his soldiers were still hot with the triumph at Clontarf; Hugh O'Neill died in exile while his principality was being partitioned among strangers; Roger O'Moore died when the

¹ The detailed story of that tragic event may be read in the "Short Life of Thomas Davis."

nation which he had awakened was on the threshold of its greatest conflict; Owen Roe died when he was leading the army which had conquered Munro at Benburb to encounter Cromwell, and now again the soul which inspired the new generation was suddenly withdrawn.

I passed from the deathbed of Davis to that of my young wife. In a moment the tender grace which sweetened life, and the manly friendship which fortified it, were gone. My closest intimates feared that my life was rendered for ever desolate, and perhaps barren. The language of Father Mathew represents the consensus of many friends :—

“CORK, September 28, 1845.

“MY DEAREST FRIEND,—It is not to speak words of comfort, but to mingle my tears with yours, that I intrude on the privacy of your affliction. Your loss is complete and irreparable, and you must go sorrowing to your grave. I, too, have drunk deeply of the bitter cup, and can therefore sympathise in your bereavement. May the God of all consolation console you in this your great tribulation. To your ever to be lamented lady I had the pleasure to be introduced at Moira, and I rejoiced in the prospect of long and unalloyed happiness that your marriage with one so virtuous, so accomplished, so amiable, opened to your hopes. May God grant you grace so to live as to ensure you through Christ a blissful reunion with your beloved wife in the eternal world. Ever mindful of her and you in the Holy Sacrifice and in my humble prayer, I am, my dearest friend, your ever affectionate

“THEOBALD MATHEW.”

But the result was different. I found comfort in action and inspiration in the design to vindicate my friend's memory so insidiously assailed, and carry on his labours to their final issue.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

THE SECOND YOUNG IRELAND PARTY

The death of Davis followed by the maladies of Dillon and MacNevin, and absence of John O'Hagan—The original Young Ireland Party being disbanded by death and disease, I recruited a new one—M'Gee, Meagher, Mitchel and Reilly—Position of Smith O'Brien—Peel declares for Free Trade, but fails to form a Government—Lord John Russell sent for, and O'Connell promises him the help of the Irish members—Secret compact with the Whigs—Slanders of the *Pilot* against the party and against Archbishop Crotty—Opinion of Frederick Lucas on the *Pilot*—M'Gee becomes a regular contributor to the *Nation*—I retire to the country to write the Great Popish Rebellion—Interrupted by visits from Frederick Lucas and Thomas Carlyle, and finally by a Government prosecution—O'Connell points out the *Nation* as guilty of sedition, and forbids any sympathy to be expressed with it in Conciliation Hall—John O'Hagan on the management of the *Nation* in my absence—"The Railway Article"—My justification of it—Letter from Samuel Ferguson (*note*)—Speeches of O'Brien and Grattan—I am called to the Bar.

TROUBLES, says the German proverb, come not singly but in flocks, and when I returned from the graves of my wife and my friend to the editor's room I found a formidable flock on the wing. Up to the day of Davis's death he had been assailed in the journals which Mr. John O'Connell could inspire, and in the gossip of malicious enemies, and not infrequently of honest simpletons, who believed whatever they were told. I could not, from the warnings that reached me, doubt that an attempt would be made to silence the Young Irelanders, and if that proved impracticable to destroy the *Nation*. I found friends full of sympathy, some of them ready to attempt a little amateur journalism to secure me a few tranquil hours, but the men who had made the *Nation* a great power and a trusted coun-

sellor of the people were stricken with sudden and unexpected paralysis. Dillon and O'Hagan were the men whose advice I had always sought in trouble ; MacNevin was the friend who could be counted on whenever promptitude was necessary to do any literary work in the *Nation*, or submit an opinion to the Association on the briefest notice, and at the moment I lost Davis these three friends were lost almost simultaneously. Dillon was languishing under the effects of the ruptured blood-vessel, of which the reader has heard, and was under orders to winter in a warmer climate, under penalty of speedy death. He attempted to come to Dublin on receiving the news of Davis's death, but his doctor and family absolutely prohibited him. He wrote something for the *Nation*, but the stamp of his malady was on it, and for the first time, and when his aid was most needed, he found himself a rejected contributor, and thanked me for rejecting him. MacNevin complained that he was suffering from an unaccountable lethargy which made work a torture. He would always do what he could for the *Nation*, but never again enter Conciliation Hall. He did not know and none of us suspected the cause of this mysterious trouble. The spirit so gay and loving, the large heart and large intellect were soon stricken with the most painful disorder under which a human creature can suffer, and after a brief eclipse of his faculties he followed Davis to the grave. John O'Hagan had made the preliminary arrangements to enter a pleader's office, and he and his comrade, John Pigot, were about to start for London when Davis died. No distance, I was well aware, could break his affectionate ties to the *Nation*, but he would no longer be at hand ready, as of old, for every emergency. MacCarthy and Barry wrote only verse and occasional criticism, and counted for little in the political counsels of the party. Doheny, who had remarkable power of popular oratory, was a speaker rather than a writer, and, moreover, belonged to an elder generation, and Richard O'Gorman was exclusively a speaker, having never written in the journal before or after. O'Neill Daunt gave us sympathy and good-will, but he could not be counted on to pursue any policy not previously sanctioned at Conciliation Hall. The defamation with which Davis had been assailed was now directed against his comrades, and it

might well seem, in this disabled condition, they would be an easy prey ; but it proved otherwise.

It will be obvious that the question of submission or resistance to O'Connell's policy of lowering our national flag must be answered primarily by me. I was the editor and proprietor of the recognised organ of the party, and the sole representative of the men who had founded it, and gathered adherents around it. If I resisted it was plain it would be a struggle for existence. But if I did not resist the National cause would disappear from Conciliation Hall, the men of integrity and intellect who still remained would retire, the surrender of 1834 would be renewed, and again we should see the shameful transmutation of national tribunes into sleek officials of the Castle.

After consultation with the few friends who remained I determined to accept the struggle, and to spare no pains to make it a stubborn one. It looked a forlorn hope, but in the Federal controversy the leader had found it necessary to submit to public opinion, and by the favour of Heaven this result might befall us again.

But there must be men who could speak the opinions of the party in the Association, from which I was excluded by one of its new rules, and writers to replace those who were withdrawn from the *Nation*, or the contest could not be successfully maintained. I promptly sought for recruits, and before the Association commenced serious work in January there was a second Young Ireland Party as uniform in opinion and united in policy as the first. Their opinions and policy were the same as those of their predecessors, that the National cause must not be sacrificed to any intrigue, and that if little could be done to promote it during the lifetime of O'Connell it must at any rate be kept pure and above suspicion for an inevitable future. My tour in the previous autumn with Mitchel in Ulster and M'Gee in Wicklow suggested two recruits, and inquiry brought me others.

When Thomas D'Arcy M'Gee came across the Atlantic he was drawn back to his native country chiefly by electric sympathy with the young men of the *Nation*. He possessed rare intellectual gifts, which were only partially developed, for he was still a boy ; but it was already possible to discern

the rudiments of a poet and an orator, and in the end no one but Thomas Davis brought such splendid faculties to the National cause. But there were drawbacks which long masked the depth and range of his powers from his associates. In the midst of a group of self-confident, somewhat dandified young men, he looked ill-dressed and underbred, and till the exercise of authority much later gave him self-reliance, he seemed painfully deferential. By some strange freak of nature his features were almost African in cast, and scoffers parodied his name into Darky M'Gee. He was as uncomely as John Philpot Curran, but almost as liberally endowed with powers, which made one forget his defects. When I thought of him as a recruit, M'Gee was in London revelling in Irish annals in the British Museum, and I found that he had entered into an engagement with the *Freeman's Journal*, from which there was no honourable escape. He sent from time to time letters to the *Nation*, chiefly of historical criticism, but a closer connection was impossible at the moment.¹

The eldest son of the popular Mayor of Waterford had contributed some verses of no great merit to the *Nation*, and I knew him only as a partisan of our opinions. But he wrote me a letter on Davis's death, so generous and elevated in spirit, that I was greatly touched, and made the young man's personal acquaintance. He was in his twenty-second year, and he had an English manner and accent which perplexed me. This was Thomas Francis Meagher, destined in a brief

¹ Sir Samuel Ferguson, an eminently competent judge on such a question, regarded M'Gee as the most gifted of the Young Ireland poets. I quote his language from the graphic memoir of Sir Samuel by his wife. Personally I would place M'Gee, not as Ferguson does, but after Davis and Mangan, and before all the rest :—

"Other young spirits," says Sir Samuel, "came into contact with me at this period, destined afterwards to be poetically famous as the singers of the *Nation*, and politically conspicuous as the leaders of the party known as Young Ireland." Here was the spark destined to kindle the souls of these fiery young men who thought to guide the destinies of Ireland by making her ballads. Davis and Duffy, Mangan and MacCarthy, and later on Thomas D'Arcy M'Gee, *the greatest poet of them all*, burst into song, and while I followed up the endeavour to elevate the romance of Irish history into the realm of legitimate history in the "Hibernian Nights' Entertainment" in the *University*, awoke the whole country to high and noble aspirations through their fine enthusiasm in the "Spirit of the Nation."

space to make a reputation like Vergniaud's, the inspired spokesman of a nation, able to sway the popular mind against the greatest and most trusted of his elders. When I launched the Library of Ireland, I had invited John Mitchel, as we have seen, to contribute a volume, confident he would produce an effective one, which indeed he did. He was trained by his profession to systematic work, and I bethought me of him as one fit to aid me in managing the journal, the complicated correspondence of which consumed much of my time. I made him an offer which induced him to abandon his professional *clientèle* for ever, and take up the perilous pursuit of a National journalist in Ireland. When he settled down to work, his character and faculties became familiar to his associates, to nearly all of whom they were before unknown. He was a man of prompt and receptive intellect and lively fancy. He was abundantly endowed with pluck, which, indeed, none of his comrades wanted. He had an imperturbable temper, and a love of business fostered by the habits of his life.¹

Thomas Wallis was amongst Davis's trusted friends ; he had been his college tutor, and sometimes suggested the audacious hypothesis that it was he who had made Davis a Nationalist. He was a man of remarkable capacity and extensive reading, but of uncertain disposition, and disposed to believe that the world owed him much more than it was ever likely to pay. He had not written in the *Nation* hitherto, but O'Hagan and Pigot brought him to me as an important volunteer. In the end he did not do much service to the cause, being always readier to write a letter of ten pages of admirable speculation and piquant gossip, to justify himself for having neglected to send a promised article, than to be moderately punctual, but he could be confidently counted on as a caustic and not altogether useless critic of the men who were neither idle nor negligent. It is not an uncommon

¹ Among the ungenerous criticisms which in Irish politics are too plentiful, nothing is more unjust or more egregiously inconsistent with his earlier declarations than what John Mitchel wrote of me in his later years in his "Jail Journal." His brother-in-law, John Martin, declared, as we shall see, and the facts of this narrative emphatically declare, that he would have lived and died a village attorney if I had not drawn him out of his obscurity and enlisted him in the national cause. For Martin's letter see page 308.

habit, indeed, of men who do nothing in life to employ themselves in showing those who do everything how they ought to have done better.

Smith O'Brien had hitherto held a neutral position in National politics ; he was neither an Old Irishman nor a Young Irishman. But his integrity and his fearless character and perhaps his historic descent predetermined the side to which he would turn when a choice must be made. He was a dozen years older than me or the average of my comrades, but he was in the prime and vigour of life, and his generous nature kept him young. After Davis's death he showed himself disposed to honour me with the confidence he had given to my friend, and an intimacy commenced which only ended with his life. From that time I desired and aimed to make him the leader of the earnest and resolute men in the movement.

Richard O'Gorman had never written in the *Nation* and spoken infrequently in the Association, but he was now determined to speak often, and do his full share of work as one who embraced the whole creed of the party. When a modern writer alludes to the Young Irishmen, it is commonly one of these men he has in view, yet no one of them had any share in founding the party or giving it a creed.¹ But they came in a day of disaster, almost of desperation, to take up the task from which so many of the original workmen had been withdrawn. In the *Nation* I worked incessantly and kept the tone high on behalf of those who would not assent to any lowering of the National flag.²

¹ It is a curious evidence of this misapprehension that when Mr. Justin McCarthy first wrote a sketch of the Young Ireland Party in his "History of Our Own Times," the name of Thomas Davis was not mentioned.

² John Dillon, who was anxiously watching the labours he could not share, wrote to me of one of my articles at this time :—"The *Nation* has surpassed itself in the last two numbers. The one before the last was amongst the very best, and the article headed 'Another Year' in yesterday's, in my judgment, has never been surpassed in the *Nation* or elsewhere. It was a trumpet blast. While I read it my heart bounded with hope for the first time during many weeks. Who wrote it ? It is not like your style, and yet I do not know where else to look for its strength and extreme clearness of thought. It is replete with manliness, sound sense, and strong genuine feeling, without the slightest tinge of obscurity or fustian. It vexes me much that I can do nothing at this time to lighten the load of your labour and sorrow. I would have gone to town if the state of my health did not absolutely forbid it. I have got a return of that ugly cough which brought on me some startling symptoms

Meanwhile O'Connell, under the malign influence of his feeble son, was drawing closer to his old allies, the Whigs. It was beginning to be whispered that he would renew the submission of 1834, and declare the Repeal experiment at an end, and justice to Ireland substituted. And this would assuredly have befallen had there not been a second Young Ireland Party in the accustomed place as determined and inflexible as the first. The new men became members of Committee of the Association, and spoke from time to time in Conciliation Hall, where O'Connell received them with formal courtesy, recognising at a glance what a formidable impediment they constituted to his secret designs.

At the beginning of the new session of Parliament, Peel announced that he had come to the conclusion that the Corn Laws ought to be repealed. Some of his colleagues refused to support him in this precipitate change of policy, and he had resigned office and advised the Queen to send for Lord John Russell. Here was the very danger long foreseen and dreaded. The party O'Connell had supported to the eve of their downfall were once more about to assume office. I sounded an alarm bell in the *Nation*, and Smith O'Brien wrote to the Association declaring that if the people were not faithful to their pledge never to abandon Repeal, he would regret that he had ever announced himself a Repealer—his motto was Repeal and no surrender. O'Connell declared that it was superfluous to insert this letter on the minutes; it would be engraved on every Irish heart. His own motto also was Repeal and no surrender. After a glance at current affairs the leader came to the real purpose of his speech, the duty of the Irish party. "The new Administration will be wanting us," he said, "and they shall have us if they do good work for Ireland." The good work required of them was specified and was not onerous. "They must repeal the Corn Laws"—to repeal the Corn Laws being the precise work for which they were called to office, and in which Ireland, a granary of cereals, had not a shred of interest—"they must facilitate before I left. I am combating it with the sharpest remedies I can. While I write I have two troublesome blisters on my neck and breast. I trust, my dear Duffy, you will make a brave stand against this affliction. It requires no little fortitude to pursue an occupation every act of which calls to your mind the remembrance of one you loved so well."

the construction of Irish railways, and have the evidence sifted by a Commission in Dublin instead of by a Parliamentary Committee ; they must improve the tenure of land and restore the magistrates who had been dismissed or had resigned under Peel." If Lord John performed these services (the popular tribune announced) he would have to transfer his green cap over to the Whig Minister. The achievements of a green-capped agitator it was manifest would no longer resemble the labours of Hercules or Fin M'Coul. The Whig journals in London declared that with the assistance of the Irish members Lord John would form a new Administration, and some of them predicted that in twelve months Repeal would be a thing of the past.

The consternation and wrath which his speech, though only partly understood at the moment, produced on the young men will, perhaps, be best understood by the language of one of the most moderate of them. John O'Hagan wrote me from his pleader's office in London, declaring that resistance had become inevitable :—

"I saw O'Connell's speech in to-day's *Times*. What the infernal devil does he mean ? If he meditates betraying the cause, I would appeal to the country against him without a moment's hesitation. However, you on the spot know, of course, far better what is going on and how to act than I can here. But will you send me true accounts ? I have just heard from a gentleman who mixes with Whig coteries that Lord John will take office now that Dan says the Irish members will come over, the doubt of which was his difficulty before. What it is to be engaged in a holy cause with a—"

An open conflict seemed near at hand, but accident postponed it. Lord John Russell proved unable to form a Government, and Peel returned to office with a Cabinet purged of Protectionists and determined to repeal the Corn Laws. But in Ireland we had a warning, not to be misunderstood, that the surrender of the National cause to the Whigs was only postponed, not abandoned.

It need not be repeated how painfully we shrank from a contest with O'Connell. We had grown up, most of us, in love and reverence of his name, and such a contest would

split up the Association, on which we relied for the deliverance of Ireland ; but there was an unanimous consent that whatever the consequences might be we would not allow the cause so proudly proclaimed at Mullaghmast and Mallow to be again bartered for any official mess of pottage. We now know from evidence under his own hand the painful fact which was then only surmised, that he had entered into a second compact with the Irish Whigs, represented by D. R. Pigot and Richard Sheil, to secure their Irish seats against the competition of Repealers, to support the party in the House of Commons, and, as of old, to dispose of the patronage of the Irish Government at his discretion. From this time the two parties in the Association worked side by side in a concert which might be described as an armed neutrality. But vague rumours of a great calamity which threatened the country began to prevail, and created alarm and uncertainty. It was predicted that there might be a famine on a prodigious scale.

While the truce in the Association continued, the agents of Mr. John O'Connell were not idle ; they still disparaged the young men, chiefly in private talk. Our most systematic assailant in public was the *Pilot*, and a happy circumstance spiked for a time the guns of that battery of slander. Some time earlier, in the letter of an American correspondent, there appeared a calumny on the young Irelanders of more than usual audacity. The correspondent, who was well known in Dublin and did not choose to be made a cat's-paw, wrote assuring me that he had never written a word of the slander in question, which was doubtless composed in the *Pilot* office and interpolated into his correspondence. He authorised me to publish his denial, and it enabled friends at a distance from Dublin to estimate the value of Mr. Barrett's evidence. In Dublin it was sufficiently known already. Not warned by this mishap, Mr. Barrett fell into a more rash and dangerous one at the period which we have now reached. Dr. Crolly, the Catholic Primate, did not agree with the attacks of the O'Connells on the provincial colleges, which he thought might be rendered safe and most useful. This was an offence to be signally punished, and Mr. Barrett only knew one way of punishing an opponent. He announced

that the Primate was unable to attend a conference of bishops at Maynooth, being unhappily subject to an attack of lunacy, the Primate being in fact at that moment chairman of the conference in question, and in perfect health. It is not a safe sport in Ireland to belie an archbishop, and Mr. Barrett was immediately subjected to a cannonade of fierce and contemptuous contradictions by the clergy of the Archiepiscopal diocese, under which a sensitive man might have expired. Frederick Lucas, an acknowledged authority on questions of morals, who was on the same side as O'Connell on the colleges question, declared that Mr. Barrett, who was guilty of forgery in the case of the *Nation*, and a falsehood in the case of the Archbishop, was a disgrace to the Catholic cause, and he hoped so good a cause might be speedily purged of so shameless an ally. Thus we were disembarrassed for a time of our most persistent slanderer, and almost the only one heard in public; but no word of censure on the offender was ever uttered in Conciliation Hall.

A recruit whom I greatly desired was now at liberty to join the *Nation*, and I welcomed him cordially. M'Gee sent me this letter some months after my original application to him:—

“No. 7, AGAR STREET, STRAND, LONDON.

“April 13, 1846.

“MY DEAR DUFFY,—I have ceased, from Saturday night last, to be connected with the *Freeman*. When Dr. Gray came here a fortnight ago he asked me if I knew who wrote the ‘Letters from London’ in the *Nation*, which I at once told him I did. In a note to me on Saturday evening he announced that he and his ‘co-directors’ considered that fact sufficient cause to ‘determine our connection.’ I must tell you that when he first spoke to me on the subject I told him that I wrote the letters in question. He expressed astonishment, on which I said, ‘If you think I have wronged you, or broken any engagement given or implied, in making this use of my leisure, I have only to add that I do not, and I would wish from this moment to resign all connection with you, supposing you think as I say.’ He then said something of a

violation of 'the etiquette of the Dublin Press,' and so dropped the subject until Saturday, when his note renewed it. As you are our literary Mentor, I wish to know whether you think I acted as became an Irish writer and a man of honour?

"I breakfasted on Sunday with Pigot and O'Hagan, no one in London or elsewhere knowing *from me* what has occurred except O'Hagan. We talked of your projected School History,¹ when the former said he thought we ought to wait until we see what the Repeal Prize will produce. However, a month will determine that. Meantime, I may see you in Dublin, or, if I continue here, will certainly not lose sight of that work, so long wanted, and so necessary now.—Believe me to be very truly yours,

"T. D. M'GEE."

In reply I invited M'Gee to return to Dublin and become a regular contributor to the *Nation*, which he did.

The Library of Ireland claimed constant attention, and to aid me in corresponding with contributors and others I appointed as sub-editor Thomas Devin Reilly, a townsman, whom I had known from his infancy. But he was still a boy, though a boy of remarkable ability, and he soon reported to me that the contributors would not accept him as a substitute for the editor, and the plan had to be relinquished, and in compensation I placed him on the permanent staff of the *Nation*. Another trouble I had with the Library must be mentioned. I had promised to write a second volume for the series, and had selected a subject in the untrodden places of history—untrodden, at any rate, by Irish students. The Rising of 1641, which I proposed to name, after the habit of its disparagers, "The Great Popish Rebellion," was announced to appear at a period only four or five months distant, and I had not written a line of it. Early in the new year I put Mitchel in temporary control of the paper and took up the book. I procured country lodgings at Dundrum, and resolved to live secluded and tranquil for two or three months, till the book was completed. I worked

¹ I had proposed to M'Gee to write a School History of Ireland, a work then greatly wanted, and unfortunately still greatly wanted.

steadily for a couple of weeks, but to discount the coming time is a rash operation. When the Emperor of Ethiopia decreed a week of general enjoyment, in which it would be treason to fret or grow sulky, we know what came of it. I find in a diary of the period that during these two months stringent engagements rained on me. The printers of the *Nation* threatened a strike if they did not get concessions altogether inordinate; it became suddenly necessary to prevent the collapse of the Library of Ireland by a large loan to the publishers by William Eliot Hudson and myself. Frederick Lucas arrived in Dublin and was entitled to receive prompt personal attention. A more important visitor followed him, Thomas Carlyle, and during the week of his stay in Dublin work was impossible. These claims were met to the best of my ability, but "The Great Popish Rebellion" got neglected. To write history in such an imbroglio indeed was like trying to play a sonata of Beethoven amidst the perpetual din of a quartz mill. When the need arose I rushed into town, and when it was over I rushed back again, but the current of thought was often fatally interrupted. To crown all these perplexities I was suddenly warned that the *Nation* was, in popular parlance, "losing its head." Wallis, who did not mince matter, assured me that Mitchel was dealing with financial questions in the *Nation* with a recklessness which was appalling, and with foreign politics in a way that moved the laughter of experts. John O'Hagan, whose opinion was weightier, suggested a more serious alarm. He thought we were misleading the people who trusted us so thoroughly.

"MY DEAR DUFFY (he wrote, April 6, 1846),—I sent Mitchel a long essay, and John Pigot sent him one twice as long, upon and against the excessively violent tone of the *Nation* of late. I can assure you when J. P. and I are unanimous on such a point we are all but certain to be right. I was very glad Pigot wrote, and I think it very likely Mitchel and he agree more in general ways of looking at things than either of them does with me, and I thought he put the case admirably well. But do *you* agree or differ with us, that is the question? I do assure you I was never more convinced of anything in my life than this, that that tone does no

service at home or abroad, does vast disservice with many, and if you look before you, and look at anything but a bloody issue, is not the path to success—but for our views in detail I must refer you to the above-mentioned despatches. I will only add that the last *Nation* is not much of an improvement. The leader was extremely good, but John Murray's article, though very clever, was shockingly coarse, false, too, in some things (e.g., pretending to cull the phrase 'surpliced ruffians' out of the two or three last weeks' numbers of the *Times*). Again, Mitchel (I presume) in his article on the Sikhs speaks of the blow which is to destroy the English Empire in the East as likely to be struck 'nearer home.' Heaven and earth, what is the meaning of this? With about as much practical prospect at present of achieving our liberty by arms—I won't say as of bringing over Stonehenge to the Curragh—but weigh the amount of probability yourself. Are we to vapour in this way? Besides the character it gets us, which materially lessens our utility in other things, it is *suggestionis falsi* to our own people and calculated to mislead and confuse them.

" But what I want specially to say to you is this—You don't write enough yourself. What is that you say? '*You have been busy at your book, and have been out of town.*' No excuse, Mr. Caudle; at least, though an excuse for not writing much in the *Nation*, it is none for omitting it altogether. There was a great deal to be said of a kind which no one could say as well as you. Do you remember me speaking to you when you were here about keeping perpetually hammering at the famine, and the remedies which ought to have been and were not applied? I think there was an opportunity for you of putting the *Nation* at the head of public opinion in Ireland on that question. Gird yourself to the work and come out with one or two of your most forcible articles.

" You are doing remarkably well in poetry; Mangan is sticking to you like a brick. I think that little translation from the French in the 'Answer to Correspondents' excessively clever, though the rhymes are somewhat too forced. *Apropos* of rhymes, MacCarthy in that long poem of his about Ceiman eich, some stanzas of which were exceedingly beautiful, fell

into a great mistake in trying to ride Mangan's phooca. In the original himself there is a curious felicity which prevents us from being annoyed at his forced rhymes, but in any one else it does not do at all.

"Send me True Thomas's letter, and send me a letter from C. G. D. touching the *Nation*, and stating how far he agrees with P. and me.—Yours ever faithfully,

"JOHN O'HAGAN."

This was my reply :—

" Mitchel has shown me your letter, and I agree with every line you have written. In fact I said the same sort of thing a week ago when I saw him last. To wit : ' Why, Mitchell, *mon ami*, where are you going ? This is not 1843, but 1846. We are not in the tropics, but in the frigid zone. You write of insurrections as if they were made to order in the back office of a newspaper. Have we the priests, as in '43 ? Have we even the people ? If we had, have we military leaders with skill and knowledge for such an enterprise ? We have *not*, and what will come of feeding the people with false hopes ? ' Or, in the vein ironic, in relation to his recent perambulations among foreign politics—' I congratulate you on your expanding philanthropy and growing indifference to mere Irish interests almost in rivalry with the Head Pacifier. The Sikhs, the Armenians, the Poles, have had full share of your attention, but one might as well look for Ireland in a Queen's Speech as in your articles of late.'

" Now, I confess the shameful laxity of all this badinage. I should have said, ' Halt, this is a road we must not travel.' But the fact is that while I was working at my book I read the *Nation* as I did the *Freeman*—for news, and without any strong feeling of responsibility. Moreover, I calmed my conscience, now and then, by a vow that I would never again put the helm out of my hand for an hour while I commanded the ship. I have still over a month's hard work to do, and, that done, I will be anchored at my post. Meantime Mitchel, who feels the force of your remonstrances (I have not yet seen Pigot's) will act accordingly. I will write something even during the month of work. I have reviewed John O'Connell's Memoir of his father for next number."

But even a month's leisure proved impossible, for a new and serious trouble had suddenly sprung up. Before the month approached its close, Mitchel came to me on the eve of publication, bringing the proofs for next day's *Nation*, and with them the news that O'Connell had returned from London in a fury, real or affected; and Mitchel predicted that if I did not drop the book and return to the editor's room I should find, when it was completed, the *Nation* engaged in a conflict with O'Connell in which it would possibly perish. I wrote no more history in that era. The grounds of O'Connell's wrath were a pronunciamento in the *Nation* famous in that period as "The Railway Article." *Apropos* of some food riots, which the threatened famine had provoked, the *Morning Herald*, then a Government organ, announced that it had become necessary to declare the agitation for Repeal high treason, and to shut up Sedition Hall; and the official journalist triumphed in the ease with which the thing could be done by despatching troops to every dangerous district by the new railways, which were very handy for the purpose. Mitchel replied that if the new railways were to be applied in suppressing public opinion in Ireland the people were not without a remedy—a cutting could be filled up or an embankment levelled without much trouble. Hofer received the invaders of the Tyrol in a memorable manner. When the enemy appeared in a narrow pass his soldiers seized upon rocks and roots of trees, and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, discharged them on the enemy. "But," he added, "'tis a dream. No enemy will put us to realise these scenes. Yet let all understand what a railway *may* and what it *may not* do."

This answer seemed to me a natural and seasonable one in reply to a threat of suppressing by force an agitation for a perfectly lawful purpose. It was such an answer as the *Nation* would have given to such a menace at any period of its existence. But Mitchel, knowing that O'Connell was watching for a favourable opportunity to assail us, committed a serious mistake in tactique when he associated the Repeal Association with his menace.

"For actual measures of coercion," he said, "all Ireland laughs at them. The military uses or abuses of railways are

tolerably well understood ; but it might be useful to promulgate through the country, *to be read by all Repeal wardens in their parishes*, a few short and easy rules as to the mode of dealing with railways in case of any enemy daring to make hostile use of them."

On consultation, Mitchel frankly admitted his mistake and strove to remedy it,¹ but O'Connell was not to be placated. The safety of the Association, he declared at the next meeting, was endangered by such rash counsels, and he must separate himself from them publicly. Next day, when his speech was read, there was a wide feeling that O'Connell had pointed out the journal for prosecution, for the Conservative Attorney-General could not venture to be less solicitous for the public peace than the democratic Agitator. In a few days I received notice of trial for seditious libel, and was held to bail accordingly, and O'Connell issued strict instructions that no reference to the prosecution should be made in the Association. We had sinned very grievously, it might be assumed, when even a word of friendly sympathy was forbidden. These precautions were strangely perplexing to the people, who did not know that the original design to coalesce with the Whigs and abandon the National question was now completed by the kindred design to cow, or if they could not be cowed, to destroy, the men who would naturally oppose this policy.

Neither O'Connell's wrath nor legal penalties disturbed me so much as a vicious outcry, echoes of which reached me in the editor's room, that the *Nation* advised that the national railways should be destroyed. I did what I had always been in the habit of doing in such an emergency—I accepted the responsibility in my own person. In a letter published as a leading article, I examined, explained, and justified the impugned article, and defended my colleague. The defence must have answered its purpose effectually, for men so widely separated in opinion as Thomas Carlyle and Frederick Lucas expressed their satisfaction with it, and the Irish Press

¹ Mitchel in the next number mentioned that Mr. O'Connell had remonstrated on the subject, and that it must be clearly understood that the *Nation* "had neither connection with nor control over Repeal wardens."—"Four Years of Irish History."

almost without exception denounced the prosecution.¹ Even the *Mail*, the leading Conservative journal, declared there was no excitement in Ireland to justify such a proceeding. O'Connell's precaution to shut out the subject from the Association was not altogether successful. In a private letter (which I have seen) he urged James O'Hea to advise O'Brien to be silent. But on questions of public duty O'Brien's conscience and judgment were his counsellors. He attended the next meeting and opened up the subject in a manner I must describe from a former account of the transaction.

"O'Brien said he did not think it necessary to inquire whether the article was a discreet or politic one, but he was prepared on his individual responsibility to declare that it was morally and legally justifiable. It was a reply to offensive diatribes in English journals, announcing that railways would be exceedingly useful in effecting the subjugation of the Irish people. Maurice O'Connell, who had been placed in the chair as another measure of precaution, interrupted O'Brien to suggest that it was not quite in order to discuss a subject which did not immediately affect the Association, and

¹ My watchful friends in London kept me informed of the impression created by my vindication of the *Nation* in circles far away from party influence. "Now, *ad publica negotia*" (O'Hagan wrote); "your letter was beyond praise. There is not a sentence in it that did not win Pigot's and my own heartiest approval. If anything can set you right with the country that will. . . . They (Thomas and Mrs. Carlyle) had strong sympathy with you about this prosecution affair, and liked your letter extremely. Lucas feels about it in the way you see by the *Tablet*." Ferguson, who was in England at the moment, sent me friendly counsel, which altogether coincided with my intentions:—

"MY DEAR DUFFY,—I hear in all directions an expression of horror at something that has been said in the *Nation* about destroying troops in railway transit.

"It seems from what I see in London, that the provocation came from the other side.

"If so, perhaps it would be possible to mitigate the feeling (which, believe me, is fearfully strong) among the class I mean, whose good-will I think, ought to be of very great value to you, by something explanatory, showing the provocation, and putting the matter on the ground of being no more violent than the threat. I express myself imperfectly, but you will know what I mean. What right have one set of the Queen's subjects to threaten another with troops? The troops are ours as well as theirs. The Legislature and the Executive alone ought to threaten and punish. When the *Herald* says our party will crush your party by troops in a railway, it is not so unreasonable (it is very deplorable I think) to reply, 'Your instrument of intimidation is as good for resistance as for Coercion. —Most sincerely yours,

"S. FERGUSON."

that he was perhaps treading on dangerous ground. O'Brien said he would bow to the chair, but, as an appeal had been made to his discretion, he continued of opinion that it was not only discreet, but most advisable, that the topic should be treated in that place. The chairman rejoined that he individually agreed with Mr. O'Brien in the premises, but his business was to prevent the discussion of anything which did not relate to the Association. Mr. O'Brien sat down, but many persons continued to think that the prosecution of a *Repeal* journal for defending the honour of the country against a threat to shut up Conciliation Hall, and declare the agitation for *Repeal* to be high treason, was as nearly related to the Association as the character of Monsieur Thiers, or the proceedings of German dissenters from the Catholic Church, or the treatment of tenants in Darrynane Beg—O'Connell's estate—which had all been elaborately discussed without let or hindrance. At the ensuing meeting Mr. Henry Grattan took up the subject. He warned the Orangemen of Ulster that if they attempted to meet and express their constitutional opinion against the new-fangled commercial policy of Peel, the Government might send troops from Dublin to Armagh; and if any independent journal suggested that if they were sent by railway for such a purpose the result might be hazardous, he would be prosecuted for exercising that constitutional right. The Head Pacifier jumped to his feet to save the Association from manifest danger. He told Mr. Grattan, in the prodigious rhetoric for which he was distinguished, that 'from the lips of O'Connell himself, whose profound legal wisdom had been Ireland's palladium of safety for so many years, he heard as his parting words aboard the packet, that he considered the introduction of this subject while the case was pending in the Court of Queen's Bench as deeply and dangerously calculated to imperil the safety of the *Repeal* Association of Ireland.' Mr. Grattan yielded to this impassioned appeal; but O'Brien, who began to be impatient of the manifest injustice, declared that he had consulted legal friends since the last meeting, and they were of opinion that the subject might be discussed with safety and propriety. He would postpone it, however, till the return of Mr. O'Connell."

We refrained from comment in the *Nation*, though it would not be difficult to find pertinent criticism. It was not always an unpardonable sin to invoke the aid of Repeal wardens. It had been proved on O'Connell's trial that he had reminded the people at one of the monster meetings that they could follow and obey Repeal wardens as well as if they were sergeants, and march after a band as well in their grey coats as if they wore red jackets.

In Michaelmas, '45, I was called to the Bar. Mr. Waldron Burrows, grandson of one of Grattan's comrades, reminds me of an incident which happened at our call. The practice at that time was to impose an additional oath and an additional fee on Catholic barristers ; the oath being some obsolete absurdity about the Pretender. I took the oath but refused to pay the fee (only half a crown), regarding it as a remnant of the penal laws, and left the Court to its remedy. I heard no more on the subject, and the practice, Mr. Burrows informs me, was discontinued.

CHAPTER II

O'CONNELL RESOLVES TO SUPPRESS THE "NATION"

O'Connell takes measures to destroy the *Nation*—Whig intrigues the probable cause—Supply of *Nations* to the Repeal Reading-rooms stopped—Interview with O'Connell on the subject—Letter from Father Kenyon—Costs of the Hawarden Case—Interview with Mr. Potter—O'Brien's committal to prison by the House of Commons—The effect on Irish opinion—Deputation to O'Brien from the 'Eighty-two Club—Letter from John Mitchel—O'Brien's release and O'Connell's proposal to give him a public reception in Ireland—Lord John Russell's disparagement of the *Nation*—Railway Trial—Robert Holmes' impressive constitutional defence—The 'Eighty-two Club thanks Holmes, and publishes his speech—Before the trial a meeting of Whigs in London attended by O'Connell and his son—Speech imputed to him—Indignation in Ireland—Debate by Meagher and others in Conciliation Hall, followed by letter from O'Connell—J. Reilly's imputations on the *Nation*.

THE second Young Ireland party soon found themselves immersed in a sea of trouble. We were facing a State prosecution without the aid of the National treasury, wanting which in the late prosecution it is certain no writ of error could have been sued out. We were denied even the sympathy of the National organisation, never before refused to any one contending for the Irish cause, and we were submitted to a steady system of misrepresentation, at the instigation of Mr. John O'Connell, in which the machinery of the National Association was employed to undermine the National cause. There is no doubt that the bulk of the Catholic clergy past early manhood joined our enemies, for many of them deplored their delusion to me in after times; priests under thirty were generally partisans of the *Nation*.

We have now arrived at a point where O'Connell had

secretly determined to destroy the journal, and push all the men connected with it out of Conciliation Hall.

The chief motive for writing history, or for reading it, is to learn from the past how errors may be averted or success promoted in the future ; but we can have neither benefit except on conditions of strict fidelity to the facts. I desire to present a narrative and adopt a theory as generous to the Irish leader as the fact would justify. It is written for a people who are liable to commit the same errors generation after generation, and who more than any people in Christendom need the light of history to save their feet from perpetual pitfalls. To the best of my knowledge and judgment this is what happened. Shiel, Pigot, and the other managers of the Whig interest in Ireland urged on O'Connell : " You are wasting your life for what you cannot attain ; if Repeal is ever to come, which we altogether doubt, it will not come in your lifetime, whereas something as good or better is within your reach. Lay Repeal aside, and the Government of Lord John, when he comes in, will repair Irish wrongs and raise the country to a perfect equality with England. Public employments which are habitually bestowed on the enemies of the country will be bestowed only on its friends, especially such friends as you recommend, and you will see the tap-root of Protestant ascendancy stubbed out and subdued."

If these promises could have been fulfilled, they would have been a poor substitute for self-government, but it is conceivable that to an old man on the brink of the grave they may have seemed preferable. Had O'Connell frankly stated this change of purpose, it is certain many Irishmen would have still adhered to him. Many would have abandoned and scorned him, but his conscience would have been at ease and his front unabashed. Unfortunately what he determined to do was to accept this Whig alliance, to push out of the Association any men who would not follow him ; to declare that they were thwarting his National policy ; to proceed apparently as of old in Conciliation Hall, and in secret to hand over the popular constituencies to the Government. I shall not argue this painful and deplorable *thesis*, but state such facts as seem to me to justify it. His motive in not

openly abandoning the movement as he had done in 1834 was probably the futile hope of entailing the National tribunate as an inheritance on his son John.

While the Railway prosecution was ripening, O'Connell bethought him of a more effectual stroke which might be delivered within his own jurisdiction and without any of the law's inconvenient delays. It was the practice of the Repeal Association to allow districts which contributed £10 in Repeal rent to select a weekly newspaper, to be sent free to their reading-room. The people had preferred the *Nation* to an extent which yielded an annual profit of over £1,000, and this revenue O'Connell determined to cut off unless I purchased its permanence by a blind submission to his will. He sent for Mitchel and me and made us a little diplomatic speech about his disinclination to do us any injury, especially his old fellow-prisoner. But duty was above all, and if we did not give him an assurance that the *Nation* would not oppose the decisions of the Association, he needs must disconnect the National organisation from the newspaper. I assured him that no one could be more anxious to act habitually with the Association than we were. We foresaw that discussion might ruin the cause ; he might be well assured we should not seek a quarrel, but as regards future decisions of the Association we must necessarily reserve the right of considering them on their merits as they occurred. O'Connell declared that under these circumstances his duty was clear and paramount, and he immediately gave notice of bringing the question before the committee. The question was fought stubbornly in committee, but in the Association and in the journal we were determined not to mix up the *Nation* with any sordid question of profit and loss. It is a curious evidence of O'Connell's far-seeing sagacity that he had never permitted any of the newspaper proprietors to know to what reading-rooms their journals were sent. A certain number was ordered each week *in globo*, and Mr. Ray had them distributed to the proper districts. Thus we were cut off in a day from communication with nearly 1,200 reading-rooms, to which I would have sent the paper for a time at my own cost, had we been in a condition to identify them. But after a little the wrong began

to be remedied in the most practical and satisfactory manner. Many districts found that they could not do without the *Nation*, and they subscribed for it anew at their proper cost. The disobedience of authority when it became known at headquarters was counteracted in a manner we shall see presently. The first ally who brought a fresh and decisive force to the controversy was Father John Kenyon, of whom I have already spoken. He published a letter stating the actual facts of the case in a style of notable grace and lucidity, and with a careless confidence as if there was no dictator and no censorship to fear. The effect was electric. The plain truth awoke and arrested the whole community. Some of his notes to me at the time were characteristic:—

"CHAPEL HOUSE, TEMPLEDERRY, Monday.

"I am just after hearing by a communication from Mr. Ray that your paper is stopped from this parish. I have written to him, but in the meantime beg to send a year's subscription. I had requested before two or three copies of next Saturday's number.

"It may interest you to know what I replied to Mr. Ray. It was thus:—

""SIR,—In reply to your printed circular announcing the stoppage of our *Nation* newspaper, I beg to say—

""That many of the contributors of the Repeal rent which I sent last February to the Association were mainly moved to contribute by the wish to get the *Nation*; if, therefore, you break your contract with them you are bound to remit their subscriptions.

""That all the contributors of that sum are opposed to the policy of your present extreme measures, as you may see by our parish resolutions published in the *Evening Freeman* about a week since; and cannot convince themselves either of its justice or necessity. They can therefore be no parties to it.

""That you may stop any paper which we would now select, in a month's time, just as fairly as you now stop the *Nation*.

""I beg your committee, therefore, to relieve themselves of

solicitude and us from inconvenience and disappointment by sending us the money that we may provide ourselves with a paper.

“If you do not choose to do this I fear I shall be placed under the necessity of demanding back the entire subscription.

“Expecting to hear from you at your earliest convenience, I remain, &c.”

“Of course if they disgorge the money I shall remit it to you for a parish copy, and remain perplexed but undespairing,—Yours faithfully,

“J. KENYON.”

Another message from O’Connell warned me that the war had only begun. Preparations for the defence of Father Davern against Lord Hawarden, undertaken by the Repeal Association, of which I have spoken earlier, went on steadily. O’Connell had entrusted the defence to Mr. Potter, a skilful attorney resident in an adjoining county, who, it was understood, had the case ready for trial, when the defendant died suddenly of a disease caught in attendance on the poor. One morning Mr. Potter was announced in the editor’s room. His name was not unknown to me but I had never met him before, or held any correspondence with him. He came, he said, by the instructions of the *Liberator*, to present his bill of costs, which exceeded £800. Up to the time O’Connell interfered the case had been conducted by my ordinary attorney, and at my cost and responsibility, but I had been requested to transfer it to the Repeal Association, and I had done so. My first feeling was one of strong indignation, but after a little I was pleased to have to meet an attack in which no public interest was involved to disturb the judgment of the people. After glancing at the bill of costs, the question was disposed of in a brief conversation. “Who employed you, Mr. Potter?” I inquired. “I was retained by the Repeal Association,” he answered frankly; “but the *Liberator* is of opinion that the responsibility is properly yours.” “What do you think yourself, Mr. Potter, of my responsibility?” “Excuse me, that is not the question.” “How were these heavy costs incurred in a case which never came to trial?” “Chiefly in obtaining affidavits from ejected tenants, who were scattered over the world and

very difficult to find." "With what plaintiff and defendant's names are the affidavits headed?" "They are probably headed Lord Hawarden *a* Patrick O'Brien Davern." "Am I Patrick O'Brien Davern?" "No, of course; but Mr. O'Connell thinks—." "Never mind what Mr. O'Connell thinks; the question here is what I think of a claim made upon me personally, and I think it unjust. I will not pay one penny of it. Without the least disrespect to you, I must refer you to the public body by whom you were retained. I never asked Mr. O'Connell to interfere in the Hawarden case; he came into it on his own motion, and for his own purposes, and took it out of my hands, and I will not allow a fine of £800 to be inflicted on me for transgressions very remote from the case of Lord Hawarden. I deny any liability to you, and if necessary, I will contest the question." The controversy was kept dangling for several months, and was the subject of repeated conversations in the General Committee. There was a considerable party there who thought it more than enough that I should at that moment be liable to a new prosecution, stimulated by the Repeal Association, without being saddled with its private responsibilities, and they did not conceal their sentiments. O'Connell never made any personal application to me in the business except through Mr. Potter, and in the end that gentleman wrote to say his costs were paid out of the Association Funds.

The law's inevitable delay postponed my trial till July, and meantime a new trouble arose. O'Brien was a man not only of sensitive honour, but of a susceptible personal dignity, and an affront was put upon him which nearly resulted in driving him from the Repeal movement, and it is difficult to doubt was designed to do so. His maxim was Repeal and no Surrender, and it was certain he would resist striking the Repeal flag. It had become necessary, therefore, to provide some effectual method of removing him from the scene. This is what happened:—

During the Session of 1845 Joseph Hume gave notice of a call of the House of Commons for the avowed purpose of compelling the Repeal members to attend. O'Connell and O'Brien declared they would not attend, and O'Connell insisted that the House of Commons had no power to enforce

attendance on Irish members. Mr. John O'Connell refused the summons of a Select Committee on the grounds that he could serve his constituents more effectually in his own country. But before the Session of 1846 commenced the Whig alliance was secretly negotiated, and O'Connell and his son served on Select Committees without any explanation with O'Brien. There had been no change in the public policy to which the Association was pledged, and when O'Brien was summoned he declined to attend, answering that there was famine in Ireland, and he had more urgent business there. He was declared to be in contempt, and the House of Commons committed him to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, O'Connell making no sign. When the news reached Ireland there was excitement everywhere except in Conciliation Hall. The Head Pacifier and Captain Broderick, a kinsman of O'Connell, were of opinion that it would be an insult to the Liberator and his son, who served on Committees, to applaud O'Brien for refusing to serve, and that, consequently, no allusion whatever ought to be made to the subject. But this remonstrance was a feeble barrier to the tempestuous feeling of the people. In a little time the *Nation*, the Association, and provincial meetings loudly demanded sympathy and applause for the man in jail for Ireland. The imprisonment lasted for three weeks, during which the excitement did not slacken, but increased. Nothing since the State Trials had provoked feelings so sincere and emphatic. The 'Eighty-two Club sent a deputation to London to assure O'Brien of their confidence and sympathy, and addresses reached him from the most distant districts. Mitchel, who was one of the deputation, reported progress to me in the following letter :—

“ LONDON, *Tuesday Night, May 13, 1846.*

“ MY DEAR DUFFY,—We had a very long passage, and arrived here (O'Gorman, Bryan, and I) only at half-past nine o'clock to-night. O'G. and I went out at once, found S. O'Brien walking with his attendant, and went with him into his room, where we sat an hour. He is in excellent spirits, and set out by retracting every peevish expression he had used in writing to you and MacNevin. He is delighted with

the conduct of the Limerick people, and is altogether in high hope. He entered fully with us into his notions and intentions, and was as open as we could wish. Pigot will go with us again to-morrow, and we will have further conversation. On the whole, it is evident that, without entering formally into the matter, we can have all the satisfaction we wish for.

"I will try to get a draft of his *reply* from him to-morrow to send you, so that you can have address and reply in type; but you know, as we are to present the address on Thursday, I cannot write you any account of it before Thursday evening's post, which you would not get till *Friday night*—too late for your first edition. I must make it as short as possible, and you can have it in the second edition.

"I have not, of course, seen Pigot or O'Hagan yet; but found here a note from P. addressed to you appointing to meet us in the morning to go with us to O'B.

"Altogether, our interview to-night was satisfactory—but popular feeling must be still more *excited about it in Ireland*. O'B. thinks that O'C. will not accompany us to present the address, but we will, of course, invite him.—Yours truly,

"J. M.

"COLONNADE HOTEL."

The address and reply greatly affected public opinion in Ireland, and made the policy which Conciliation Hall had adopted of ignoring the imprisonment bootless and even ridiculous. At length Frederick Shaw, one of the Conservative members for the University, moved for O'Brien's release, and the House acquiesced. The *Nation*, trampling over conventionalities and commonplaces, insisted from the outset that the services of the man who was acting honourably and consistently should be honourably and consistently recognised by the Association. The response was emphatic. O'Connell, who gauged the public feeling like an experienced leader of men, now visited O'Brien in prison, proffered him affectionate explanations, and when he reached the Association declared that the prisoner on his return must have a triumphant entry to the city and the cordial thanks of the Association. O'Brien declined the

proposed public entry, and suggested that whatever compliment was paid to him should be combined with the celebration of the 6th of September, the day when the State prisoners had been released from Richmond. But before September arrived the Whigs were in office with the support of O'Connell, and O'Brien and O'Connell were separated for ever.

O'Connell was not left without Whig support in his designs against the *Nation*. Lord John Russell, then leader of the Opposition, and who was confident that he would soon be leader of the House by the aid of the Irish members, took occasion to express his contempt for the wicked journal which impeded so noble a purpose.

“There is a numerous body in Ireland (he said)—numerous even among her representatives—which says that no legislation of a united Parliament can devise fit remedies for Irish grievances, and that it is in a domestic Parliament alone that fit and wise legislation can be looked for. There are others, I fear, who, if I read rightly their sentiments as expressed in a newspaper—I will name it—called the *Nation*, which has great circulation in Ireland, who go beyond that question of the Legislative Union—who would wish not merely to have such a Parliament as that which it was the boast of Grattan to found, and which legislated under the sceptre of the same sovereign as the Parliament of Great Britain, but a party which excites *every species of violence*, which looks to disturbance as its means, and regards separation from England as its end.”

It would be humiliating to defend a journal over which I watched as over my personal honour from such foul imputations. Among notable men of the period there probably could not be found one to adopt the calumnies of this meagre and frigid pedant. His imputations would not affect opinion in Ireland, but it might perchance win the vote of a stray Whig in the jury-box at the coming trial.

At last the day of my trial, the 6th of July,¹ arrived. Nobody expected any other result than the conviction, for Blackburne, one of the most subtle, skilful, and vindictive of the Crown lawyers, had been raised to the Chief Justice-

ship, and was to preside. John O'Hagan wrote me from London :—

"Your health is reasonably good, you say. That won't do at all ; you must make it unreasonably good. As there is a chance of your going into jail, do, I conjure you, endeavour, during the time you have to get strong, that you may despise bolts and bars. . . . I think they will put you in jail (*dissidente Pigoto*, i.e., dissentient from my opinion), but depend upon it, if you take care of yourself it will do you no harm. . . . It will be such a comfort that you will not be up for the fourth time before your friend Pennefather ; but then, to be sure, both Tom Smith and Blackburne are acquaintances of yours. Happy to have such a circle of friends ! I'm sorry I'm not over there to be your junior counsel ; but never mind, there's a good time coming. With the help of God, this won't be the last prosecution against you !"

Denny Lane wrote to me at the same time in the pleasant badinage of which he was master :—

"You ought to give yourself as much relaxation as possible at present. You are greatly in want of physical exercise. Your amusements are too intellectual ; you ought to ride, play billiards, hunt, shoot, and kick up shindies. Cultivate the society of O'Gorman : he has what you want—the intense enjoyment of physical existence. He would want, as I told him, to be put upon Tennyson and soda-water for half a year, while on the other hand your regimen ought to be beefsteaks and porter, fox-hunting and a main of cocks. Make yourself more of a brute without delay. Acquire low tastes and gratify them, and you may defy Blackburne and all his works."

Mr. Smith, the Attorney-General, prosecuted ; the defence was entrusted to Robert Holmes. Mr. Holmes was approaching his eightieth year—he was Father of the Bar, and leader of the North-East circuit, and a trusted adviser in all difficulties of the opulent bleachers of Ulster and merchants of Belfast. He had refused a silk gown, refused to be a judge, and held jealously aloof from both parties in politics. Forty years before, he had been a State prisoner, having excited the suspicion of Government as brother-in-law of Robert Emmet. In recent times he had taken no part in Irish politics, except to rebuke O'Connell somewhat contemptuously for his dis-

paragement of the men of '98, whom the Agitator had denounced as miscreants. Never did the result justify more triumphantly the selection of an advocate. The handsome and stately old man, venerable by years and services, rich in the confidence of his own order and the respect of the nation, opened the case by declaring that the prosecuted article was a natural, justifiable, and perfectly constitutional answer to the menace which had provoked it. He was glad to appear on behalf of a journal which had never been defiled by attacks on private character, but which with respect to public measures and public men took a determined course. He meant to found his defence in the present case on the fact that Ireland had been all along, and was at that hour, treated as a conquered country ; and the people of a country so treated had certain natural rights, which were precisely the rights insisted upon in the prosecuted article.

The real meaning of the article indicted was that if the sword should be employed to put down opinion, and the railways used to facilitate the conveyance of troops for that purpose, resistance would be justifiable. And undoubtedly it would. This was the law of nature, and it was the constitution of the realm.

It was certain that if force were used for the purpose of stifling the voice as the people calling constitutionally for any particular measure, resistance under such circumstances would be justifiable.

This prosecution ought utterly to fail, and he did not ask their verdict as the boon of mercy, or the safety-valve of doubt, but as the unequivocal expression of their regard for the right of nature and the welfare and honour of their native land.

He proceeded to illustrate and justify these opinions from history and the text-books of constitutional law. The court was crowded with eager Nationalists, and we had the satisfaction of listening to the most powerful and lofty vindication ever addressed to an Irish audience of a movement for the deliverance of Ireland from abject and unlawful dependency.¹ The noble effort of the eloquent old man attained a triumph

¹ A full *précis* of the speech will be found in "Four Years of Irish History," bk. i. chap. iii.

which scarcely any one hoped for ; the jury could not agree, and after being locked up for four-and-twenty hours, without food or drink, had to be set at liberty, and speedily informed their friends that they had been divided nearly half and half. The judge, who charged directly against the defence, bade the jury not to be influenced by a speech "which had never been surpassed in a court of justice."

The news of this victory was received throughout the country with what may be fitly described as a paroxysm of joy. It was felt that on this basis the national contest might still be won. "I wish," said O'Brien, "we could hear such language in Conciliation Hall as Mr. Holmes was not ashamed to utter in the Queen's Bench," but unfortunately O'Connell did not share this sentiment. The great speech rendered ridiculous his elaborate precautions for the safety of the Association, and he hated Robert Holmes from of old. He wrote to Ray that the subject must not be alluded to in Conciliation Hall. But this was too much ; the men foremost in the National movement were determined that the victory should be commemorated, the orator honoured, and this seed of a noble nationality sown far and wide. In the 'Eighty-two Club, where their influence prevailed, notice was given of a motion to thank Mr. Holmes, and to request his permission to print and circulate the great speech at their own cost. At their meeting where the motion was ripe for debate, O'Connell, who had just returned from London, happened to be in the chair. The motion was enthusiastically carried, it being evident to the sagacious and experienced leader that there was a high tide of popular enthusiasm, and that if he attempted to impede it, he would try in vain. It was further proposed to pay the costs of the trial out of the public funds, but I declined the offer as I declined similar offers in other cases before and after.

During the fortnight preceding Mr. Holmes's speech the public mind had been engrossed by a controversy which made such a lofty pronouncement singularly well-timed. The controversy began in this way : A muster of Whig members was held at Lord John Russell's residence in London to consider the policy and prospects of the party, and among the partisans who gathered round the Whig

leader *Repealers* read with consternation the names of O'Connell and his favourite son. The *Evening Mail*, which undertook to describe the meeting in some detail, attributed to O'Connell a statement that all he wanted was a real union, the same laws and franchises for both countries. It seemed to us highly improbable that while he kept the doors of Conciliation Hall open O'Connell would make such a complete submission ; that he was toying with the Whigs we knew, but that they had successfully wooed him to dishonour was still doubtful. The *Nation* insisted that the report was false and impossible.¹ It was necessary to carry the denial to Conciliation Hall, and Meagher undertook this duty. His oratory had become a recognised popular force, and he exercised all his powers to paint the infamy of deserting the national cause. Mitchel, O'Gorman, and Barry also spoke, and the debate was raised to a scale almost forgotten in Irish affairs. I have described it sufficiently elsewhere,² and must not renew the narrative here. The Head Pacifier thought such admonitions were highly unbecoming addressed to men not wavering under the advent of the Whigs, but determined to prosecute their object to the end. At the ensuing meeting a letter was read from O'Connell. He declared the rumours which suggested that the *Repeal* cause was to be abandoned, postponed, or compromised were quite unfounded. He recommended that the pledge adopted at the last *Repeal* levée should be read. This precaution might take away claptraps from some juvenile orators, but it would satisfy every rational *Repealer* that the cause could not be sacrificed to any party or postponed for any purpose. The pledge, which was read, declared that the men signing it would

¹ The article, which was written by Mitchel, contained this vigorous denial of the story :—

“ O'Connell did not say this, or anything like this—he neither said nor thought it—and no *Repealer*, even if he were base enough to think it, would dare to whisper it in the solitude of his chamber, lest the very birds of the air might carry the matter to an Irish ear. Heaven and earth ! what would those words, in the mouth of a *Repealer*, mean ? Listen to us, Irishmen, and we will tell you. They would mean that for four years past—at some thousand meetings—through five million throats—from Tara to Mullaghmast—from palaces of Irish kings and graves of Irish martyrs, Ireland had been bellowing forth one monstrous lie in the face of all mankind and of God Almighty—one loud, many-voiced national lie, which the vales re-echoed to the hills, and they to heaven.”

² “ *Four Years of Irish History*,” bk. i. chap. v

never while they lived place reliance on any English party, but contend for an independent domestic legislature.

A point in the debate in which I was personally concerned belongs properly to this personal narrative. Mr. John Reilly, one of O'Connell's Old Guard, affirmed that the *Nation* was teaching disastrous doctrine, and he assailed Mitchel, one of the *Nation* party, as responsible for it. Mitchel interposed briefly :—

"I avow the connection with the *Nation*. I should say this, I am not the editor of the *Nation*—my friend, Mr. Duffy, is editor and proprietor ; my friend, Mr. Duffy, is, in fact, the *Nation*."

Mr. Reilly read a specimen of the impugned article which will enable the reader to gauge the depth of our offence. Speaking of the new men, the new ideas, and the new sympathy of foreign nations which had fortified the movement in recent times, and which were so worthy to be preserved and cherished, I said :—

"Shall we quarrel with our new strength—with this growing wealth of mind and energy ? Once there was little more in the agitation than O'Connell and the multitude, and then surely it was not well with Ireland. For less than a miracle of God would not liberate a people among whom knowledge and self-respect and independence, the capacity to see and the courage to dare, were not common. Never have such a people won freedom ; seldom, when freedom was their birthright, have they retained it."

CHAPTER III

HOW THE DECAY OF O'CONNELL'S POPULARITY BEGAN

The Whigs come into office—Speeches of O'Brien and Grattan on the danger to the National Cause—O'Connell's recent declarations with respect to the Irish elections—His conduct when the ministerial elections arrived—Dungarvan abandoned to the Master of the Mint—Public indignation—O'Connell's son refused as a candidate at Dundalk—O'Connell's private letter to the Irish Attorney-General—The Peace Resolutions designed to drive the Young Irelanders from the Association—Declarations of Mitchel and Meagher—Smith O'Brien's absence and my remonstrance—My letter on the policy of the *Nation* in '43 and '46—The false charge of the *Pilot* refuted—Mr. John O'Connell demands that either his father's friends or the Young Irelanders quit the Association—"The Sword speech"—Secession of Smith O'Brien and the Young Irelanders—Dr. Cane's advice—The Bishop of Ardagh and the parish priest of Clones on the situation—Letters of the Bishop of Derry, of Grey Porter, and of John Martin—Bishop Blake's remonstrance with O'Connell suppressed—O'Connell denounces the *Nation* for having committed high treason—The Dublin Remonstrance of 1500 Repealers flung in the gutter—Meeting of the Remonstrance—The Bishop of Elphin's denunciation of the Young Irelanders—First public meeting of the Young Irelanders—O'Connell would have them back, but John declines—A deputation to O'Connell—Negotiations and final rupture—Place-begging and its fatal consequences in 1834 and 1846.

THIS controversy had scarcely terminated when news came across the Channel that the Peel Government had fallen, and Lord John Russell was engaged in forming a Cabinet. Smith O'Brien and Henry Grattan spoke at the Association with a vigour and directness worthy of its best days. The Whigs, O'Brien said, were better than the Tories, but they were more dangerous ; they would sap the popular strength by proposing good measures which they probably could not carry, and by distributing good places. For himself he had broken with them for ever, relinquishing the chance of office, which was not beyond his scope, because he believed that the Association

and the people would be faithful to the National cause to the end. They would soon have the opportunity of expressing their feeling at the re-election of Irish members who formed part of the new Government. He did not think the Association had acted wisely in the case of his imprisonment, but he retained no feeling of enmity, and would work cordially with those who had counselled that policy. Henry Grattan contrasted the conduct of men like Swift, Lucas, and Grattan, whom the British Treasury could not purchase, with the conduct of those who betrayed their country. Some of them died obscurely in foreign countries, some suffered agonies of shame and self-reproach, and one conspicuous offender died by his own hand. These speeches greatly increased the difficulty of the task which O'Connell had set himself; but unfortunately both gentlemen assumed they had done their duty adequately, and retired to the country.

When O'Connell returned to Dublin public attention was fixed on the course he would take on the Ministerial elections. The policy of the Association had been proclaimed and insisted upon, in no case more rigorously than in the battle of the hustings. O'Connell had specified some of the men now claiming re-election as persons who must be peremptorily excluded from Parliament, unless they declared themselves *Repealers*. As it would be impossible to understand the conflict which followed without completely realising this fact, I borrow a couple of paragraphs from a former narrative referring to a period a few months past:—

“O'Connell still held occasional meetings and banquets in the country. His constant theme was the necessity of a Parliamentary party; ‘with sixty-five members he would carry *Repeal* and restore the Parliament to College Green.’ When he abandoned the policy of the Mallow *Defiance*, the only alternative, if he continued a *Repealer*, was a Parliamentary party. If he would not fight, then he must persuade or coerce the Legislature; there was literally no third method. He recognised this necessity so clearly that after his *Federal* proposal had failed it was the topic to which he constantly applied himself. At local meetings and banquets he exhorted constituencies to insist upon their representatives supporting the National cause or to cashier

them. In Sligo he promised that there should be seventy Repealers in the next Parliament ; the Clare election had carried Emancipation, and the election at which seventy Repealers were chosen would carry Repeal. In Galway he exhorted the people to elect members of the Repeal Association, two for the city and two for the county. In a public letter he bade the Whigs 'not to lay the flattering unction to their soul that this rule would be relaxed in the slightest degree' ; and he warned the most gifted of them, Richard Sheil, in language which subsequent events rendered memorable, that even he must cease to sit for an Irish constituency unless he returned to his original faith as a Repealer. 'Sheil is a brilliant orator (he said) ; I love, I regard, and I esteem him ; but when I tell him from this spot that he shall not continue to represent Dungarvan if he does not become a member of this Association, I speak a truth most unpleasant to me, but one that assuredly will be worked out.' These were promises sufficiently specific, and the time was near at hand to give them effect."*

It was believed to be altogether impossible that O'Connell could abandon these specific pledges without abandoning at the same time the National cause. Upon the transactions which followed I am willing to rest entirely the question whether O'Connell had made a secret compact with the Whigs, one of the conditions of which was to secure the election of Whig Ministers for National constituencies. Let it be assumed that all else which I have recorded in recent chapters—the abandonment of O'Brien to the Sergeant-at-Arms ; the pointing out the *Nation* for prosecution ; the excluding the *Nation* from the Repeal Reading-rooms which it had created—let it be assumed that all this, and the shameful silence of Conciliation Hall on great practical issues were subtle strokes of policy to promote some great public end, but the Ministerial elections remain, and the painful and fatal contrast between O'Connell's conduct in Conciliation Hall and his correspondence in private at the same moment with Whig Ministers. The generous reader will naturally mitigate his censure on the story about to be disclosed by the memory of O'Connell's great services, by the

* "Four Years of Irish History."

knowledge that he had fallen under the influence of his feeble and malicious son, but let him not forget also that a group of young men who had given their lives to the public cause, and older men like O'Brien and Grattan, were struggling, not for any personal end, but against what they believed to be, and what indeed was, the ruin of their country. For the emancipator, the guide and father of his people, was about in his old age to make a wreck not only of us but of himself, of the cause to which he was pledged, and of the people who loved him so tenderly. At the next meeting there was an immense crowd, and a vivid interest in the expected speech of O'Connell. The Whigs, he declared, had an opportunity of doing great service to Ireland ; there were eleven measures which he wanted them to pass in the current session of Parliament. As we had already reached the 6th of July, to expect eleven important measures to be passed in the month that Parliament would still sit was being *exigeant* with his friends.¹ But we now know what the most suspicious scarcely foresaw, that the session would pass, and the Parliament would pass, and the lives of O'Connell and Lord John Russell would pass without one of these measures becoming law, without indeed one of them being so much as proposed to Parliament.

¹ He concluded with an enumeration of the eleven measures he expected to be immediately passed into law, and which the government, as he affirmed on a later occasion, had promised to support. None of them related to the pressing emergency of the famine, but they included many useful and practical reforms, such as enlarging and simplifying the franchise, increasing the number of members for Ireland, limiting the power of ejectment, creating county boards in lieu of grand juries, and levying a tax of twenty per cent. on absentees, to be applied to the purposes of these boards. Let Parliament give him the eleven measures in the present session, and the twelfth, Repeal, he would look for in another session. It was a dainty dish to set before the people—eleven sweeping reforms, all to be accomplished in a single session. Small wonder that simple, well-intentioned persons thought relaxing the Repeal agitation for a little was a cheap price to pay for such abounding blessings. But a people who lay down their arms hope for concessions in vain. Whether O'Connell, after twelve years' familiarity with the procedure of the House of Commons, expected that eleven measures could be carried through Parliament in a session which had already reached July, or that one serious measure could so fare, need not be debated. A readiness to believe the impossible, and to accept promises of the sun and moon to be delivered on a future day, is one of the weaknesses of an enthusiastic people ; but he sins against his race who subjects them to the scorn of their enemies by appealing to that sentiment.—"Four Years of Irish History."

At length he took up the question of real urgency, the Ministerial elections, and moved that the General Committee be instructed to obtain candidates, and make arrangements for securing the election of *Repealers*, wherever it was possible. He would not, however, sanction vexatious opposition, which could not serve the cause. A voice—one of those anonymous warnings which often interpret the popular will in a critical crisis—cried out “Dungarvan.” “Yes,” O’Connell continued, “certainly ‘Dungarvan.’” If they could get a *Repealer* elected, they would, of course, do so. If necessary, he would go himself to Dungarvan for the purpose, but he would not sanction vexatious or bootless opposition.” Dungarvan was a constituency where the *Repealers* had a majority of nearly two to one, and the defeat of Shiel, who was still loved by the people, would have marked in a signal manner the depth of the National sentiment. The writ had already been issued, but the committee, who were ordered to consider the question, was not called together till four days later, and when it met O’Connell expressed his fear that it was too late to find a candidate. There were several men in the room who were candidates a little later, among them his son Daniel and Thomas Meagher. John Augustus O’Neill, a conspicuous Old Ilander, admitted on a subsequent occasion that he would gladly have stood if he had been asked. To bring the matter to an issue, one of the Young *Irelanders* proposed that O’Connell’s relative, Captain Broderick, then present, should be despatched to Dungarvan, and aided with all the influence of the Association, but that experienced gentleman, who knew the state of the case, declined to stand. The committee, after a long contest, adjourned, and before it reassembled Shiel was member for Dungarvan.

There were other Whig elections pending, but after the experience of Dungarvan the hope of winning them was faint. In Dundalk, where Monahan, the Whig Attorney-General was a candidate, the Nationalists vehemently demanded a *Repeal* candidate from the Association, and at length O’Connell’s youngest son was sent to them; but it marks in a signal manner the effect produced on the public mind by the Dungarvan transaction, that he came back to

report that the constituency declined to have him. Their objections were finally overcome by a painful and protracted negotiation, but their existence is a fact of signal significance. O'Connell's communication with the Whig leaders in Dublin at this time was probably managed chiefly by verbal instructions through a trusted agent, or, if there was correspondence, it will only be disclosed to a future generation. But one letter has escaped to the public, so painfully and shamefully conclusive that a hundred would not make the case clearer. While O'Connell appeared to be carrying out the policy of opposing all Whig candidates by Nationalists, while he moved a resolution directing the General Committee to find candidates to defeat the new Ministers, the most unhappy man wrote this letter to Mr. D. R. Pigot, a member of the new Government, and jointly with Richard Sheil, manager of the Whig interests in Ireland. It appears in the authorised collection of O'Connell's private correspondence, sanctioned by his family, and edited by Mr. W. J. Fitzpatrick. I shall not offer a syllable of comment on it.

"With respect to Clonmel, it is utterly impossible to do anything for Moore. It is true I have been working in an under-channel for Monahan, who may still have some chance, but I confess I have not much heart in the matter. But we shall see. I own I am a little fretted at the unexpected obstacle in Dundalk to my son's return. . . . There is only one thing certain, that we must make the best of things *as they are*; and I am glad to tell you that I have stifled all opposition to Sheil in Dungarvan. The election will not cost him a shilling, and that is what he likes—among other things. I am also very glad to find that Wyse is in office again. He is personally popular, while O'Ferrall is not, though a very good man, and most suited for office. . . ."

All the persons named in this secret despatch were members of the new Government and Anti-Repealers. Mr. Wyse had been denounced in the Colleges controversy as betraying the country.

In this fatal position it was essential for O'Connell to get rid of critics who would not permit anything to be done

¹ Letter of O'Connell to the Right Hon. D. R. Pigot, M.P., dated Dublin, 8th July, 1846.

against the national cause in silence, and he adopted a device which in the end proved successful. Immediately after Dungarvan was lost he submitted two reports to the General Committee ; one offering some feeble and utterly untrue defence of that transaction, on which it is not necessary to comment ; the other, known as the Peace Resolutions, defined the policy of the Association anew. This was his marvellous contention, that it was necessary for the safety of the Association—which, it seems, was in danger of being prosecuted by a Whig Minister, who kept his place only by the help of Repeal votes, and who could not get his officials re-elected except by shameful connivance with the Repeal Association—to declare its peace policy anew, and in more definite terms. One of its purposes, O'Connell avowed, was to draw a line between Old and Young Ireland. In fact he could not carry out his now manifest compact with the Whigs without silencing the Young Irelanders. He assumed that this end could best be accomplished by tendering them propositions which they could not affirm without self-contempt and public reproach. Had he required them to deny the law of gravitation, or the motion of the earth, it is certain they would refuse, and he required their immediate acceptance of propositions as false and absurd. The Association was asked to affirm that moral force furnished a sufficient remedy for public wrong in all times and in all countries, and that physical force must be abhorred. Any one, Mr. John O'Connell declared, who refused to accept this doctrine must cease to be a member of the Association. Referring to the Young Irelanders he said, if they did not submit, unconditionally and unequivocally, to the principles of peaceful agitation and to the utter repudiating of physical force under any circumstance, it was the instant necessity of the case that they should cease to be members. The object in view could not be misunderstood by any man of sense. The Bishop of Killaloe wrote privately to O'Brien :—

“ Whigs are to be supported, and that support given to them in violation of the most solemn engagements, and to the disappointment of the most disinterested advocates of the National cause.”

The snare was obvious, and on a hasty consultation we determined to evade it by *not* retiring, whatever resolutions might be adopted. A man does not abandon Parliament when a Bill which he disapproves of becomes law. It was agreed that the report should be opposed resolutely, and its immediate design to draw away attention from Ministerial elections exposed, that the distinctest denial should be given to any design to violate the rules of the Association, or use it for any but purely peaceful purposes. Mr. Mitchel stated opinions and intentions which might satisfy the most fanatical friend of peace :—

“ He did not mean (he said) to oppose the resolution, nor was there the slightest necessity to do so. The Association was a legally organised society, seeking to attain its objects by peaceful means, and no others. Constitutional agitation was its very basis, and nobody who contemplated any other method of bringing about the independence of the country had a right to attend there or to consider himself a fit member. By these means, if boldly, honestly, and steadily carried out, legislative independence, he believed, could be won ; and with this conviction he should feel it his duty, if he knew any member who, either in the hall or out of it, either by speaking or writing, attempted to incite the public to arms or violence as a method of obtaining their liberty, while that Association existed, to report such member to the committee and move his expulsion.”

It will be convenient, with a view to future developments of opinions, to note that Mr. Mitchel, in a letter to the *Tablet* at this time, said :—

“ I do not even, as Mr. Meagher seems to do, contemplate the possibility of failure in that course. I entertain no thought, either present, future, or paulo-post-future, of resorting to violence ; and see as plainly as any man that peace is our true *policy*—our only policy—and will be, if we do not wantonly ruin it, our inevitably successful policy.”

Meagher and O’Gorman spoke with equal plainness on their opinions, and to a large extent satisfied the meeting. O’Gorman thought the young men had a triumph, and wrote to one of his friends^x :—

^x M. J. Barry.

"The report can give you no notion of the scene of riotous confusion in the Hall. O'Connell, you know, wanted to get us out, and in that, at all events, he certainly failed. He also wanted, I think, to sneak out of the Dungarvan affair, and in that he failed. He also wanted to have us hooted down in the meeting, and in that he failed. And all that amounts, I think, to a triumph for Young Ireland."

But they had not contented O'Connell, and a considerable section of Repealers were determined from the beginning to accept his guidance wherever it would lead them. It is impossible not to respect the determination to uphold as long as possible a leader who had served Ireland so long and so effectually. But when at length the choice lay between him and the manifest welfare of Ireland the sentimental preference for the leader was a fatal mistake ; and fatally has Ireland paid for it.

It will be noted that O'Brien was absent from these contests, which were thrown entirely on young men new to debate, and who had not yet won personal authority. Looking back on the transactions with serener vision, I have no doubt that O'Brien's motive was to preserve his influence for public purposes by not coming into conflict with O'Connell. He wrote a letter to the Association indicating his dissent from the new policy, but it attracted no attention. But in the heat of the battle I regarded his reticence differently, and in a man whom I greatly esteemed it wounded me keenly. I wrote to him brusquely, perhaps rudely :—

"You will see by the papers of to-day what became of your letter—it was read and put aside without a word of comment. If it kept your character clear with the people, it certainly had no other practical effect. To have saved Dungarvan would have needed your personal presence in the committee and in the Association. The contest for the honour of the cause and its safety (both being, I think, involved in the question of Dungarvan) was very unequally maintained, when a few young men had to set themselves against all the venality, all the timidity, and all the honest, confiding ignorance of the Association. And most of them have now left town for circuit ; so that while you stay in the

country Mr. John O'Connell will give laws to the Association as he did last year. I am afraid—there is reasonable ground to fear—that the strength of the Association will be sapped away. The evil already done is enormous, and if we let every new encroachment towards Whiggery go unresisted there will in time be nothing worth making a stand for. If you got suitable candidates named *at once* for all the Repeal constituencies, it would be a security against new compromises. And this may be done, if done promptly ; if delayed, you may see what we have to apprehend in O'Connell's declaration yesterday that The O'Conor Don (who had become a Whig Minister) is not less a Repealer because he had never joined the Association ! A time may come when it will be too late to resist Whiggery ; but, if so, it will be our own fault for not resisting it when it was ashamed to show its face.

"O'Connell has done nothing more against the *Nation*, but he still talks threateningly. If he ruins Repeal it will be no great matter that he ruins the *Nation* too. Whatever his motive for refraining may be, it would not be candid to leave you under the impression that the men likely to be attacked attribute his silence to your remonstrance. One and all, they believe that, having got into this battle in your defence, you left them, when a crisis came, to take care of themselves. Neither they nor I desire to complain of this, or mean to let it influence our public conduct in the smallest degree ; but, since you refer to it, it would be wholly foreign to my nature to say or do anything to mislead you as to our feelings on the subject.

"Meagher, you will perceive, was attacked for stating that Mr. Clements had taken a place ; the authority for the story was no other than Mr. O'Connell, who told it in the committee, and stated that Sheil had procured it. I tell you this that you may not misconceive Meagher's conduct."

It is to the honour of O'Brien, and will help the reader better to understand his fine character, to know that he did not resent this brusque remonstrance, but took the earliest opportunity at a public dinner in his neighbourhood to separate himself from the Peace Resolutions, and express his fixed confidence in the young men assailed. On behalf of

myself and my friends I thanked him cordially, and assured him of our complete satisfaction and content with the course he had taken.

The minority bore their defeat with a self-control rare in political history. In the *Nation* following the debate not a syllable was uttered against O'Connell. We feared that if the faith of the people in their worshipped leader was shaken they would cease to believe in anything. And it helped us to be patient to remember that a man between seventy and eighty could not long control public affairs. But after my established habit, whenever the character of the journal was in danger of being misunderstood, I wrote, under my own name, a deliberate review of the state of affairs, justifying the proceedings of my friends. As this article became the occasion of the most memorable transaction of that era—the secession of O'Brien and the Young Irelanders from the Repeal Association—I must pause on it for a moment. I meant it to be a sober and entirely truthful account of our position and policy and the stringent necessity under which we acted.

There was no need, I insisted, for peace resolutions, because there was not at that time the slightest design of employing physical force—a policy from which the current of events had carried us far away. But to make this admission the more significant, I compared it with the hopes and aims which existed before the Clontarf meeting.

“To the eyes of the Irish millions who knelt by the Croppies’ grave with brothers’ love, and sang the fierce songs of the era by their hearths, and on the hill-sides, and at their wakes and fairs and merry meetings, there was clearly discernible in the monster meetings an intense under-purpose, which filled their souls with passionate expectation. What it meant to the majority of them needed no oracle.”

I admitted that this sentiment had been shared and fostered by the writers of the *Nation* :—

“I fully confessed that much was written calculated to stimulate the hope and desire of great and speedy changes wrought by a people’s might ; but not one whit beyond what was spoken by the orators of the movement at Mullaghmast dinners, and in Lismore declarations, and Mallow Defiances.

And then, or since, or before, there was never a line tending to excite the people to outrage, or insubordination—not one line."

I described the gloomy change in the national prospects which followed Clontarf ; a change deepened by sectarian controversies in the Association, and by insults to France and America.

" From that hour the tone of the *Nation* on the *means* of liberation altered. We promised speedy and sweeping success no more. There was now but one mode left—a slow, deliberate one—and we turned with all our energy to create a new moral force in the country. Education and Conciliation were their means. The Repeal Reading-rooms, the Library of Ireland, many reports of the Association, many volumes of national literature, were our agencies.

" Under these circumstances it was idle to talk of peace resolutions, for nobody meant anything but peace. Resolutions against Repealers taking place and ceasing to be Repealers, against the return of any but Repeal candidates, under any circumstances, these would have been pertinent to our condition. It is the side from which danger is threatened that men ought to guard ; not the side where danger is impossible.

" As we must rely on moral force, the greater, I insisted, was the need that our policy should have an intelligible and practical method, and that it should not wantonly undo one year what it had strenuously striven to accomplish the year before :—

" To war, marshalled armies, stored arsenals, mapped campaigns, are not more necessary than a large, distinct, and liberal policy to moral progress. Without that beacon men run hither and thither doing and undoing ; throwing down to-day what was built up with care and pains only yesterday, outraging friends won by labour and sacrifices, belying principles which lie at the foundation of our hopes ; laying waste the labour of years by some escapade of ignorance, intolerance, or vanity."

This was a sober and perfectly accurate report of the transactions in question, but it outraged the sensitive conscience of the Head Pacifier. When he was a young

man he had joined the Spanish Revolutionists under Mina, and if he still believed in anything it was in the sword, but it was the misfortune of the dilapidated old man to be the paid servant of an Association which had declared its abhorrence of the ordinary doctrines of public liberty, and it was his duty to sound an alarm. He solemnly warned the meeting that after this admission of high treason committed in '43 no business could be transacted till it was clearly ascertained that O'Connell's policy was universally admitted. The business then waited O'Connell's direction.

A new iniquity was alleged against the Young Irelanders in this hysterical era. The *Pilot*, which after long hibernation was beginning to be heard of again, was the authority for this offence. Mr. Barrett had discovered that a series of books were being published by these gentlemen who boasted they were teaching the people a nobler policy and a higher morality, which stabbed O'Connell, and through him the country, and these publications were known to be under the management of a man associated with the *Nation* party, who at the time of the State Trials had been in communication with the Crown lawyers, and was, in short, a hired spy. Here was a grave indictment. I answered it in a letter to the *Pilot*, which that respectable journal considered itself justified in repressing, but the letter was of course published in the *Nation*. The facts were simple to nudity. The books in question were identified by some extracts from them published in the *Pilot* article, and I was able to declare that the books were not only not connected with the *Nation* or with the Young Irelanders, but that the series was established to rival and undersell the Library of Ireland. The books were never reviewed in the *Nation*, but among the notices which they had obtained and published the most conspicuous was a laudation from the *Pilot*. The editor of the series, who was charged with being a Government spy in 1843 (and who probably was so), had never at any period written a line in the *Nation*, but at the time he was alleged to be a Government spy, and at the time then present, he was a writer in the *Pilot*. The man in question was named Mark O'Callaghan, and unfortunately was brother to an honest, respectable man, John Cornelius O'Callaghan. He finally took office openly

in the Secret Service, and died in Tasmania in the house of another Government spy named Balfe. Frederick Lucas, horrified at this revelation, declared that when a fact was stated in the *Pilot* the *prima facie* assumption was that it was a lie. But the censure of Conciliation Hall was never directed against the faithful journal.

At the next meeting of the Association Mr. John O'Connell came over from Parliament with a message from his father in the nature of an *ultimatum*. After a speech in which France, Belgium, and the United States were disparaged for having won their liberty by arms, instead of relying on the growth of opinion, he declared that his father could not accept the aid of any man who did not unequivocally adopt the Peace Resolution. If the Association did not agree with him let them say so, and the founder and his friends would withdraw.

Mitchel, who followed, repeated his policy of acting strictly under the rules of the Association. He did not believe that any one was afraid of physical force, but there were many mortally afraid of Whiggery. He was told that he might retire if he did not agree with the Peace Resolutions. No doubt, he might, but he had come into that hall with the view of helping to repeal the Union, and he had no desire to relinquish that task. He was a Saxon Irishman, and he would remind his audience that if they had determined to hold that class of his countrymen aloof, England would long keep her heel on both their necks. Meagher, who was a brilliant boy, defended me and the *Nation* passionately, and reiterated his determination to pursue no policy but a peaceful one in that Association. But he could not restrain his scorn of the false and impossible doctrine of non-resistance applied to other countries, and he left a maladroit opening to an opponent who was watching for it. He had reached his peroration, which had raised the audience to a storm of enthusiasm, when Mr. John O'Connell interposed. This was the peroration :—

“ The soldier is proof against an argument, but he is not proof against a bullet. The man that will listen to reason, let him be reasoned with ; but it is the weaponed arm of the patriot that can alone avail against battalioned despotism. Then, my Lord Mayor, I do not disclaim the use of arms as

immoral, nor do I believe it is the truth to say that the God of heaven withholds His sanction from the use of arms. From the day on which, in the valley of Bethulia, He nerved the arm of the Jewish girl to smite the drunken tyrant in his tent, down to the hour in which He blessed the insurgent chivalry of the Belgian priests, His almighty hand hath been stretched forth from His throne of light to consecrate the flag of freedom, to bless the patriot's sword. Be it for the defence, or be it for the assertion, of a nation's liberty, I look upon the sword as a sacred weapon. And if, my lord, it has sometimes reddened the shroud of the oppressor, like the anointed rod of the high priest, it has at other times blossomed into flowers to deck the freeman's brow. Abhor the sword and stigmatise the sword? No, my lord, for in the cragged passes of the Tyrol it cut in pieces the banner of the Bavarian, and won an immortality for the peasant of Innspruck. Abhor the sword and stigmatise the sword? No, my lord, for at its blow a giant nation sprang up from the waters of the Atlantic, and by its redeeming magic the fettered colonies became a daring, free republic. Abhor the sword and stigmatise the sword? No, my lord, for it scourged the Dutch marauders out of the fine old towns of Belgium, back into their own phlegmatic swamps, and knocked their flags, and laws, and sceptre, and bayonets, into the sluggish waters of the Scheldt. My lord, I learned that it was the right of a nation to govern itself, not in this hall, but upon the ramparts of Antwerp. I learned the first article of a nation's creed upon those ramparts, where freedom was justly estimated, and where the possession of the precious gift was purchased by the effusion of generous blood. My lord, I admire the Belgians, I honour the Belgians, for their courage and their daring; and I will not stigmatise the means by which they obtained a citizen king, a Chamber of Deputies——”

Mr. John O'Connell declared that it was the strongest conviction of his soul that it would be unsafe to allow Mr. Meagher to proceed. If the meeting approved of these sentiments he and his friends would retire. Mr. O'Brien rose and spoke with marked seriousness and dignity.

“I am afraid that the alternative which has been presented

to us by Mr. John O'Connell is of such a nature as necessarily to compel the termination of this discussion, because he gives us no other choice than his seceding from the Association or closing this discussion. But I cannot allow this meeting to come to such a conclusion without expressing my opinion that the course of argument adopted by Mr. Meagher was perfectly fair and legitimate. I understand we were invited to come to-day for the purpose of considering deliberately whether any gentleman can continue a member of this Association who entertains the opinion, conscientiously, that there are occasions which justify a nation in resorting to the sword for the vindication of its liberties. Mr. Meagher has distinctly stated that he joined this Association for the purpose of obtaining Repeal by peaceful and moral means alone. But he does not consider, nor do I consider, that when you invite us to a discussion of this description, we are precluded from asserting the opinion which, after all, is involved in the discussion ; and for submitting such reasons as we feel ourselves at liberty to submit to our fellow-countrymen in vindication of the opinions which have been arraigned. Remember this, gentlemen—and it is fit you should remember it—for the proceedings of this day are an event in Irish history. You are charged with being a people who will never give fair play to an adversary. You are charged with being willing slaves to any despot who may obtain the reins of power at a particular moment. This is the charge against the Irish people. I entertain a different opinion of them. I should designate as a calumniator the man who would give you such a character ; but I ask you, are you now going to fortify, as far as regards this assembly, the assertion of your enemies, by putting down the man who is endeavouring calmly and dispassionately to discuss a question to which he was invited—which he was compelled to discuss ? If this discussion be terminated, I shall have the satisfaction of entering my protest against the proceedings which put down Mr. Meagher on the present occasion."

Smith O'Brien, who was determined never to come into personal conflict with O'Connell, rose and left the hall. The young men followed him. How, indeed, could they do otherwise?—for to remain would have been to desert and betray him, but they had retired from a meeting,

they had not resigned from the Association. They would willingly have continued to act, but when they made inquiries on the subject the Secretary was authorised to inform them, as we shall see, that they were not and could not be members.

I must pause here for a moment on the cardinal question—Who caused this secession? It is one that cannot be put aside or evaded. It involves a tremendous responsibility—responsibility under which the strongest shoulders might break like pipe stopple; for it may be justly doubted whether one man of the two million of the Irish people who perished in the Famine would have been permitted to die of starvation if the strength of the National Party had remained unbroken and its spirit unsubdued. The young men had no wish to retire, no conceivable interest in retiring. By retiring they were abandoning to their opponents the council chamber from which the people expected guidance. They were leaving not to O'Connell, but to Mr. John O'Connell, the cause upon which all their hopes were set. They were certain to be misrepresented and maligned in their absence, and by the one act of separating from the Association their public career was apparently brought to an end. But it is beyond controversy that they had no choice. Mr. John O'Connell, as we have seen, came over from London expressly to declare his father's will, and his will was that he and those who had dissented from his new and incredible propositions could not remain in the Association together. One or other must immediately go.

The Secession, and all its fearful consequences, was the work of Mr. John O'Connell; as his brother Maurice declared on the last day of his life, "John did all the mischief."¹

¹ A startling confirmation of the public verdict against Mr. John O'Connell, as the mischief maker, came to me by a curious accident. In the session of '54, one night in the House of Commons, Maurice O'Connell, with whom I had ordinarily little or no communication, crossed the floor and sat down by me. He had long wished, he said, to correct a misapprehension which he believed existed in my mind, that he had been a party to the disastrous quarrel between his father and the Young Irelanders. On the contrary, he had strongly opposed it, and never crossed the threshold of Conciliation Hall after it happened while his father lived. John had done it all. His own influence with his father had also been undermined in his old age (as I understood by the same person). I was so surprised and puzzled by this unexpected confidence that I excused myself on the ground that I had an appointment with some friends. While I was sitting, immediately after, in the tea-room with Dr. Brady, member

The private correspondence of the period is hot with wrath and indignation, but there was no public remonstrance, and to all appearance O'Connell had effectually quelled all resistance to the new policy. Dr. Cane, of Kilkenny, who was a man of capacity, in complete sympathy with the party, and my private friend, wrote to advise against any immediate resistance. After describing some of the difficulties he went on to say:—

“This state of things springs from many causes besides the immense influence of the man opposed to you ; individual opposition would not have sufficed were it not for the long, pre-arranged blackening of all your characters in the minds of the Catholic clergy, who are hereabouts to a man opposed to you, and view you as a body as little better than infidels, and most inimical to the Catholic Church. You are not without supporters—earnest and devoted ones, too—but they scarcely dare to stir at a public meeting, and would be of little weight there. They are the young men, the reading men, the tradesmen, clerks, young shopkeepers, &c., who have been educated in Repeal Reading-rooms and fed upon the *Nation*. They will be, in a few years, the men of Ireland, but not yet. Nor must they be sacrificed in their honest devotion to noble opinions. At a public meeting they would be borne down by the priests and the men who will back the priests. No public move now—but wait a little while ; be steady, firm to your purpose ; no compromise of noble aspirations and high resolves ; but as you value Ireland let there be no recrimination or angry personality cast upon the idol of the people.”

Resistance to O'Connell's will had never been successful within his own party, and men shrank from it as from a task which is confessedly hopeless. If O'Connell had been content to stop at this point, many experienced critics believe that the Association would have become as tame in his hands as a beaten hound, and the resistance in the *Nation* would for Leitrim, and Mr. Swift, member for Sligo, Mr. O'Connell came in, sat down at the table with us, and repeated in their presence all that he had been saying to me privately. He urged me to visit him at Darrynane in the autumn, and, as an inducement, promised to show me documents confirming his statement. The conversation was fixed in the memory of all of us by the tragic circumstance that Mr. O'Connell died suddenly that night.—“ League of North and South.”

have produced no practical or permanent results. The recruits won since 1843 would have silently retired, and the residue would have accepted Mr. John O'Connell as master. But he was not content. The *Nation* must be ruined and all sympathisers with it weeded out of the Association. This operation would clear the path for the Young Liberator's succession to the Tribune. When O'Connell returned from London he adopted and applauded all his son had accomplished, and made it the starting point of future operations. He referred to the committee the question how all connection between the *Nation* and the Repeal Association could be effectually terminated, and the remnant of the committee promptly concurred in his design. Partisans at a distance were stimulated to sanction these proceedings, and men who for three years had been preaching independence, mutual tolerance, and integrity as the basis on which a nation must be built, had week after week signal evidence how much remained still to be done to create a public opinion which would be just and firm. The Bishop of Ardagh wrote to say that in his diocese there were no physical-force men, nor, he thanked God, any schoolboy philosophers, false and sanguinary Repealers, or Voltairian newspapers; the *Nation* was the most dangerous publication that ever appeared in Ireland. But in Ardagh they had applied a prompt remedy to so serious a peril. They had ignominiously expelled it from almost all of their literary institutions. This episcopal counsel became the text for many ecclesiastics of various degrees. The parish priest of Clones, who had been a Professor in Maynooth, and was, it may be surmised, a practical man, applied himself to the business with a will.

"I think it right to inform you," he wrote, "that a considerable time since I ejected the *Nation* from this parish. Individuals have since privately employed a person in this town to supply them with it; I ordered that person last week to write back to the *Nation* office to stop it."

The results of these energetic proceedings were not visible at once, but in time they became very conspicuous. Half a century passed, and these schoolboy philosophers and false and sanguinary Repealers after spotless lives have died without exception in the faith in which they were bred, and the

newspaper, denounced to immediate ruin, outlived every man conspicuously engaged in the warfare against it. Had the charges been true the newspaper would properly have perished, and the men associated with it would be only remembered with contempt ; but they were not true, and the names of these men are more honoured in Ireland to-day than any of their opponents but the greatest. The only certain result of this tempest of injustice was the undesirable and almost calamitous one that the opinion of a prelate on a political question in Ireland had no longer either the force or the character that once belonged to it.

O'Connell resolved to improve his victory. The Young Irelanders, he declared, were false to Repeal, and were answerable for having kept away from the cause the Northern Protestants, who were alarmed by their opinions, and would doubtless otherwise have joined. This proved an unhappy stroke, for it brought forth two conspicuous Northern gentlemen who had joined the Association to contradict the statement. Mr. Grey Porter declared that what withheld the Northerns from the Association was primarily the unaudited funds. Protestants would never join an Association with a despotic and irresponsible treasurer. For himself he was opposed to physical force now, as he had been opposed to it in 1843, when Mr. O'Connell was holding his physical-force meetings. The second Northern, Mr. John Martin, wrote to the committee declaring his adhesion to the peace principles on which the Association was founded, but his decided objection to the dictatorial conduct by which Mr. John O'Connell had brought about the secession, and to the withdrawal of the *Nation* from reading-rooms entitled to receive it under a distinct regulation, and in return for money paid ; a proceeding justified on the ungenerous pretence that the journal had committed a crime of which a Tory Government found it impossible to convict it. Mr. Ray was instructed to send Mr. Martin the marvellous reply, "That inasmuch as he dissented from the rules of the Association he ceased to be a member of that body." Mr. Martin, who was a man of feeble physique and uncertain health, had a boundless supply of northern pluck, and determined to attend the Association, and assert his right as a member. He was as much a member,

indeed, as Mr. O'Connell, having adopted the rules and paid his subscription. But O'Connell declared he could not be heard, and described him as a man who had taken the indescribable liberty of writing to the committee, not being a member. He was clamoured down and forced to retire from the meeting.

But the first symptoms of a dangerous reaction began to appear. Dr. Maginn, the Bishop of Derry, was an able and popular man. He had maintained an affectionate correspondence with me up to the day of peril, and it seemed impossible to me he would agree in the Ardagh theology. And so it proved. He transmitted to the Association resolutions agreed to by his clergy, of which the principal one contained a reservation identical with that made by the Young Irelanders. "Without pronouncing on the abstract question whether nations should, under any circumstances, appeal to arms, it is certain," they said, "that moral force is consonant with the genius of Christianity and applicable to the case of Ireland." These resolutions were placed on the minutes of the Association without a word of dissent. When they appeared Mitchel wrote to Mr. Ray to say they expressed his opinions accurately, and to inquire if he was still a member of the Association. Mr. Ray informed him that he had ceased to be a member, and that the committee could not enter into any correspondence with him. At the same time O'Gorman wrote to the Secretary to say that the treatment of Mr. Martin suggested the necessity of his inquiring whether he was still recognised as a member. On moral force he had stated his opinions in the Association; and with respect to the *Nation*, had he been in Dublin he would have resisted its withdrawal from the reading-rooms. Mr. Ray replied that his declaration was inconsistent with the principles on which alone the committee could associate with any gentleman, and that he virtually ceased to be a member. The Rev. Mr. Meehan sent a remonstrance against the treatment of the *Nation* and the enforced retirement of Smith O'Brien, and was informed that "as he did not acquiesce in the principles on which the Association was based," he had ceased to be a member. Mr. Denny Lane simply resigned. His letter was courteous in form, but in substance

hard to digest. "As the policy lately adopted by the Repeal Association," he said, "and the recent expulsion of several of its independent members without cause, charge, form, or notice, seems to me to be calculated, if not designed, to perpetuate the Legislative Union, and to extinguish freedom of opinion in Ireland, I request that you will immediately remove my name from the list of members of that body." O'Connell interposed and declared it was unnecessary to read any more of these communications. A little later Mr. D'Arcy M'Gee, who had not received his card of membership since the payment of his subscription, demanded it. "Of physical force," he said, "I will say nothing. I dislike meddling with abstract principles, and I think my brother members should avoid them, as dangerous to the public cause and ruinous to their continuous existence as a corporation." He was informed that in consequence of this letter "he was not, and could not be, a member of the Association."

The country was becoming exasperated. Repeal Wardens who had resigned their office in disgust, and members who had retired, informed us that their letters had been suppressed, reminded us that the business was now being managed by a handful of paid officials, and entreated the *Nation* to make a public stand against this corrupt and disastrous tyranny; but I was of opinion that if we came to blows with O'Connell the cause would be ruined between us, and I desired to avoid all responsibility for that catastrophe. I explained our policy in the *Nation* :—

"It is not to conciliate our accusers we exercise forbearance—not to get this journal taken once more into favour—emphatically we say that the *Nation* can do without Conciliation Hall better than Conciliation Hall can do without the *Nation*—but because we should feel the sin and shame lie heavy on our own souls if we were conscious that we had done an act or written a word to perpetuate or exasperate these mad quarrels. Better that the *Nation*, and all who contribute to it, were sunk in the Red Sea than that they should become the watchword of faction, the pretext of division, the rock whereon to make shipwreck of so noble a cause!"

But the war went on briskly in Conciliation Hall, not against Imperial rule, but against the *Nation*. One day the chairman produced a census of the two sections of Repealers; exactly eight, he said, adhered to the *Nation*, and a million and a half followed the guidance of O'Connell. Another day the Head Pacifier submitted, to the horror of indignant Repealers, "a hellish article" enunciating "the infernal Young Ireland War Policy"—"the most infernal article that has ever appeared even in the *Nation*." This diabolical production was a paragraph from a not unfriendly review I had written some weeks earlier of Mr. John O'Connell's Life of his father, and was in these terms:—

"From 1793 to 1829—for thirty-six years—the Irish Catholics struggled for emancipation. That emancipation was but admission to the Bench, the Inner Bar, and Parliament. It was won by self-denial, genius, vast and sustained labours, and lastly, by the sacrifice of the forty-shilling freeholders—the poor veterans of the war—and by submission to insulting oaths; yet it was cheaply bought. Not so cheaply, perhaps, as if won by the sword, for on it were expended more treasures, more griefs, more intellect, more passion, more of all which makes life welcome, than had been needed for war; still it was cheaply bought, and Ireland has glorified herself, and will through ages triumph in the victory of '29."

The resignation of members went on with such increasing velocity that one week it was necessary to publish a special supplement to the *Nation* to contain the names; but the silent retirements were perhaps more formidable. The whole body of barristers and publicists who had drawn up all public documents and reports disappeared; even Maurice O'Connell could not be induced to attend, and O'Neill Daunt made but one appearance at the urgent request of O'Connell.¹

¹ The war against the *Nation* had begun with professions of anxiety for its prosperity; it was shut out of the Repeal Reading-rooms, it was alleged, only on urgent public grounds. Now at length however, O'Connell, when some enthusiastic follower announced his determination to burn the *Nation*, reminded him that he would first have to commit the absurdity of buying it. Thus the great work contemplated from the beginning was at length consummated—the *Nation* was placed on the *Index Expurgatorius* of Conciliation Hall. It was an offence to buy it, to read

But at last the reaction began. The venerable prelate whose friendship with me commenced at the Newry *soirée* to Father Mathew, of which I have spoken, and continued throughout the intervening years, wrote to the Association that these idle differences should terminate, and the seceders be recalled. This was a heavy blow against the new policy: the differences described by a bishop as idle, and the return of the seceders represented as an object to be desired; but O'Connell knew how to evade it. He suppressed the bishop's letter, and wrote privately to him assuring him that all members of the Association would be liable to a prosecution for high treason if the seceders were permitted to return. He would go down on his knees to induce his lordship to withdraw a letter calculated to promote new trouble. The bishop did not insist on his letter being read,

it, to lend it, to borrow it. The Repeal Reading-room into which it was admitted had long forfeited its connection with the parent society. The man who sold it in the way of business was denounced as a bad citizen. The man who bought it was a fool. But time, as the poet teaches, "shows who will and can." The *Nation* had wound itself into the fibres of the Irish heart. The poor peasants clubbed their pence that they might hear on their only day of rest what they could do for the cause; the young tradesmen, to whom it had become almost as necessary as their daily bread, clung to it. The Conservative students enjoyed it as a stolen pleasure, trembling to be caught in an act of patriotism; the Irish exiles in England or France, or felling forests in Canada, or digging railways in the Western Republic, who still longed, like their predecessors two generations earlier, to hear "how was Old Ireland, and how did she stand," the poor Irish soldier who stole into a secret place with his treasure, the young priest who judged it with his own brain and conscience, not by word of command, cherished it the more for the dangers that it ran. "We never," a young farmer wrote at this time, "knew how we loved the *Nation* till now." This enthusiasm, the slanderers declared, was merely the paroxysm of a temporary fever; but it did not so prove. More than a generation has passed since those events, and to-day only an exceptional man can point out where Conciliation Hall stood; its hired *claque* have disappeared as completely as Major Sirr's "battalion of testimony"; insanity, suicide, the profligate renunciation of opinions for place, the fog of obscurity, have swallowed them up; its special press died in a stench; but the work done by the young men of the *Nation* is to be found in every Irish library in the five divisions of the world; the soldier on his march, the missionary in China and India, the digger in California, the solitary shepherd in the Australian Bush, have found refreshment in it. These men, too, have been heard of in the world, not to their discredit. And if the capital of the island which he did so much to free from the chains of sectarian ascendancy possesses a great monument to the memory of O'Connell, it was these "enemies of the Liberator" at home and abroad, more than any men, commenced and crowned with success this national undertaking.—"Four Years of Irish History."

but there was still the danger that he would authorise me to publish it in the *Nation*, and against this danger O'Connell took precaution so marvellous that for a time there was a suspicion that he had lost his intellect. In a speech extending to five columns, the Irish Liberator undertook to prove that the *Nation* had committed high treason, not some sentimental extravagance, sometimes so named, but the high treason for which men are hanged, drawn, and quartered. He recited and accepted principles of high prerogative authority incompatible with public liberty, and which would have rendered the Repeal movement impossible. Pennefather or Blackburne had never uttered sentiments more irreconcilable with Irish nationality ; it was the renunciation and denial of all Robert Holmes had preached so successfully in the railway prosecution, and much of what he himself had said at the monster meetings. Out of this long arraignment I will only quote a single sentence to illustrate its spirit. Chief Justice Holt, he said, described one specimen of treason : "If persons do assemble themselves and act with force in opposition to some law which they think inconvenient, and hope thereby to get it repealed, this is levying war and treason." This was hard to bear from the convener of the monster meetings, and the author of the Mallow Defiance, directed to the destruction of men one of whom had been tried along with him in the same spirit of prerogative law. From that moment opinion could be restrained no longer. It burst out in many directions. All the transactions I have glanced at were revived in the public memory, and in a few months O'Connell lost his unparalleled popularity, and the Repeal Association became a wilderness. It was seen now that the *Nation* had not taught in vain, for everywhere the men who had been reared on its doctrines of patriotism and integrity came to the rescue in an ever-increasing volume. The reaction commenced in Munster, where the Celtic race are predominant. The Cork Repealers refused to allow the *Weekly Register* to be substituted for the *Nation* in their reading-rooms, and traced with fatal plainness all the disorder to the surrender of Dungarvan to a Whig official. In the Limerick Corporation Dr. Griffin, brother of the eminent novelist, reviewed recent transactions, justifying

O'Brien and the Young Irelanders, and declaring that the expulsion of the *Nation* and the treatment of Mr. John Martin would prevent Protestants from joining the Association, and compel earnest Catholics to withdraw. A procession of O'Brien's constituents, with bands and banners, extending to a quarter of a mile, and headed by the local clergy and professional men, visited Cahermoyle to assure him of their continued confidence. In Repeal centres, North and South, Repeal Reading-rooms refused to relinquish the *Nation*, and if the Association would not supply it, demanded that the money which they had subscribed for it should be refunded. The resistance spread to England. In London, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and other towns, the Irish population, headed by their Repeal Wardens, sent remonstrances to the Association dealing courteously with O'Connell, but trenchantly with his lieutenants, urging that the controversy might terminate, and the seceders be invited back. In Leeds, where the remonstrance was sharp and bitter, Mr. Ray, under the instructions of Mr. John O'Connell, requested to be furnished with the names of the persons who had agreed to the resolutions in order that they might be expelled from the Association. The Leeds Secretary replied that to furnish the names required more pains than he was disposed to take for the pleasure of a committee, reduced to a handful of persons, living for the most part on money subscribed by the Irish people to promote Repeal of the Union; but if Mr. Ray desired the names of the Repealers who did not agree with the resolutions they could be furnished without inconvenience. All remonstrances were suppressed in Conciliation Hall, and even the *Nation* was loth to publish them. It was in these moderate terms the facts were noticed:—

“From each of the four provinces we have received copies of letters addressed to the Association by clergymen, inspectors of Repeal Wardens, collectors of Repeal rent, &c., some of them bitter and sarcastic, some expostulatory and remonstrant, but all, we find, carefully suppressed at Conciliation Hall, where no indication of public opinion is welcome which does not precisely suit the present remarkable policy of the Association.”

I cannot occupy this narrative by following this story into detail. But as it will be impossible without some knowledge of it to understand O'Connell's fatal and precipitate fall from the confidence of the people, the reader is invited to make acquaintance with it where it is set out in detail.¹ The policy of the *Nation* and the Young Irelanders was not to injure O'Connell, or even John O'Connell, but to make such a truce as would enable them to return to Conciliation Hall and keep the organisation still devoted to Repeal. A united party could alone deal effectually with the famine, and alone promised that after O'Connell's death the Association would resume the policy which prevailed during the Richmond imprisonment. From a letter which I wrote to O'Brien at the time our purpose will be clearly discerned :—

" You see opinion was not dead, but only a little lethargic, and it is making up for delay. The tradesmen of Dublin to the amount, I am assured, of at least 1,500, are about to present a strong remonstrance to the Association ; the Repealers of Liverpool will send resolutions of the same character to the next meeting. I have seen a protest to be signed in Newry very emphatic in its condemnation of recent proceedings in the Hall. These things and the avalanche of letters will make it necessary for O'Connell to seek a reconciliation. If so, this surely is the time to put the agitation in a right track once for all ; to have regular accounts for the future, to have a committee with real power, and composed of men fit to use, and unlikely to abuse, it. Any junction which would merely enable O'Connell to do nothing with a plausible face would be, I think, a far worse state of things than the present. . . . We are all most anxious to know the terms upon which you think a reunion would be serviceable to the country—I mean at this moment, for we all look to an ultimate reunion as essential."²

The Dublin Remonstrance referred to proved to be a decisive factor in the public cause. There were 120 Repeal Wardens in Dublin, and 74 of them signed this document, and over 1,400 other Repealers, each man signing his name and address. A deputation, holding their cards of member-

¹ "Four Years of Irish History," bk. ii. chap. i.

² "Cahermoyle Correspondence" (Duffy to O'Brien).

ship in hand, was sent to present the Remonstrance, but Mr. Ray had notice of their intention, and ordered them to be stopped at the door, on the pretence that by signing such a document they had *ipso facto* ceased to be members. As they were not permitted to enter they sent the Remonstrance by a messenger to the chairman of the day. The chairman held up a large roll of paper, and asked what he was to do with it. Mr. Ray told him he could not receive such a thing, and Mr. John O'Connell called for one of the messengers of the Hall, and directed him to throw it out. The faithful messenger carried it into the street, and flung it into the gutter. The mass of the people were difficult to move ; whatever O'Connell did seemed good to them. Criticism was in vain. It was the abuse of his enemies in a new shape, but they were staggered by facts they could grasp, and this contemptuous reception of the complaints of 1,500 men of their own class, and other facts, struck them in succession. The famine was spreading over three of the provinces, and Conciliation Hall continued to promise that if they were patient the Government would certainly come to their assistance, and Mr. John O'Connell was able to assure them that even if the Government did not come to their assistance, they had only to be faithful to the principles of peace and morality, "and he was firmly convinced and persuaded that they were on the threshold of prosperity to them and happiness to their native land by the restoration of their national independence." At this time of day it is hard to understand the rage and wrath with which this vile cant was read by humane and intelligent men.

When O'Connell returned to the Association after a long absence it was thought he would have been chastened by the events which had marked his absence ; but he took occasion to assume the entire responsibility of his son's proceedings, and to declare that the Remonstrance, instead of being flung out, ought to have been kicked out of the Hall.

The Young Irelanders, who had been vehemently urged to start an association of their own, had, under O'Brien's moderating counsel, resolved to limit themselves to writing, and a special department of the *Nation*, under the title of the "Phalanx," was assigned them for the purpose, and O'Connell

took occasion to remark that the infidel philosophers who heralded the French Revolution began in the same manner. He did not know whether they would succeed as well as Voltaire, Rousseau, and others had done.

The tradesmen of Dublin who had been so cruelly maligned determined to hold a public meeting to justify themselves. The great hall of the Rotunda was engaged, and the 1,500 presented themselves to the public gaze. Some of the artisans spoke of their past love of O'Connell in terms so simple and pathetic that the fountain of tears was touched in their audience, but there were fiercer strings struck. Father Kenyon, who had written in the *Nation* with a vigour which recalled Swift, was the spokesman of sympathisers with the Remonstrance :—

“ If O'Connell's character could be kept separate from the bad faith and base policy which reigned in Conciliation Hall, it would be a joy to preserve it from shame which an old man could not hope to outlive. But his unprincipled intimates and hungry dependents, supplemented by true but inconsiderate friends, made it impossible. The vile arts of the interested had been plied with fatal assiduity ; large bodies of Irishmen in whose minds O'Connell had long been associated with the purest ideal of patriotism, forgetting the effects of age and other less excusable influences, were induced to profess unabated confidence in his counsels. Certain bishops, mistakenly associating the interests of the Catholic religion with his fatal policy, published similar professions ; and it was a psychological fact worthy of note that whenever a bishop was so minded he was sure to be supported by the bulk of the clergy. Thus a false standard of opinion was fabricated by a grovelling Press, and the lacerated hearts and hopes of honest and brave men were offered week after week in disgusting sacrifice. When at length the intelligent citizens of Cork sought to rouse O'Connell from his lethargy and haply reclaim him for his country, he was so far gone in delusion as to laugh in their faces. He was grateful to O'Connell, but he could not, in the language of Swift, ‘ ruin his country to show his gratitude.’ Neither would he pass over in silence offences calculated to entail danger and dishonour to the nation and its

posterity. For his part, therefore, he renounced the leadership of O'Connell till he mended his ways."

The meeting arrested wide attention, but O'Connell had a counter-stroke in reserve. Nothing was rarer than for a bishop to appear at Conciliation Hall, but a bishop was induced to appear to denounce the *Nation* and its writers. He came there, he said, "to enter his solemn protest against the puny efforts of the Young Irelanders. They are the enemies of religion. They thought to spread infidelity through the land, but they have failed. They thought to sever the ties which united the clergy and laity. In this they failed also." Here was an assistant whose office, at any rate, made him important, and I determined to join issue with him. I wrote with perfect gravity and respect inviting him to specify some of the instances, or any one instance, in which the *Nation* had preached infidelity or endeavoured to separate the priests from the people. This was a demand which a Catholic gentleman was entitled to make, and which it was not conceivable any gentleman, lay or ecclesiastic, would refuse. The bishop made no answer, having no good answer to make, nor did I hear much of his existence for half a dozen years after, when Mr. William Keogh, who had violated his pledges and his oath for office, appeared before his injured constituents leaning on the arm of the Bishop of Elphin, the prelate in question. A keen and critical audience read this tirade next day, an audience who knew that the statements were profoundly untrue, and this unhappy spectacle of bishops moved like pieces in a game of chess had the serious and tragic effect of making the declarations of men who had been regarded with unmeasured reverence as at times no more reliable than the ordinary professions of Conciliation Hall.

As they were not permitted to pursue their literary projects in peace the Young Irelanders at last decided to resume the platform and hold at least one public meeting. They met in the historic hall of the Rotunda, which was decorated with banners and mottoes which appeal to a poetic people. The attendance and enthusiasm were immense, and there appeared not merely the seceders but a number of the most solid and respectable of the middle-class Repealers, and the

multitude of artisans who had deserted the Association. The young men defended themselves with spirit and vigour, but without bitterness, and their case was made plain and even luminous to all who did not before understand it. A specimen of Meagher's fun on this occasion is worth preserving, for it is the mask and domino covering an important truth :—

“Three Repeal Wardens in Cappoquin wrote to Mr. Ray that they had abandoned all hope of reconciliation in consequence of the language used by Mr. O’Connell towards Smith O’Brien. Mr. Ray assured them of the delight of the Association in parting with men who unquestionably contemplated a resort to arms. ‘I am for freedom of discussion,’ says Mr. Shea Lalor. ‘That is physical force,’ exclaims the committee. ‘I am for the publication of the accounts,’ intimates Mr. Martin. ‘You oppose the peace policy,’ rejoins Mr. Ray. ‘I protest against place-hunting,’ writes Mr. Brady from Cork. ‘Sir, you contemplate a resort to arms,’ rejoins the Secretary from Dublin. He hoped he would be excused for trifling with these subjects, but it was as difficult to treat them seriously as to describe a farce with sublimity.”

Two metropolitan priests appeared on this occasion to defend the young men against the shameful attack on their religious opinions, and declared there was not one Dublin parish where they had not some warm friends among the local clergy. That such a meeting could be held in Dublin in opposition to O’Connell was an impressive fact, and it impressed nobody more than O’Connell himself. This account of the effect produced on him was reported by an eye-witness :—

“The next morning O’Connell sat in his study in Merrion Square, the daily papers before him; some friends, lay and clerical, around. He was depressed. ‘Don’t mind them, Mr. O’Connell,’ said one of these friends, ‘they are brainless boys. We will crush them.’ ‘Ah, no, no,’ said O’Connell, ‘they are a powerful party, and we must have them back.’ One of the friends was Sir Colman O’Loghlen. He seized O’Connell’s hand. ‘Commission me,’ he said, ‘to say that to Smith O’Brien.’ ‘I do,’ said O’Connell. ‘Be my ambassador; tell him and his friends to come back on his

own terms.' At that moment John O'Connell entered. Hearing what had passed, he protested it should not be, and the old man had not strength to oppose his best beloved son."

But the determination had taken root, and at the next meeting of the Association O'Connell suggested that in face of the growing famine the dispute in their own ranks ought to be settled. "Let the Young Irelanders show that they give up everything contrary to law and he would concede everything that the law would permit." He would propose a conference between Smith O'Brien and himself, aided by four lawyers—O'Hagan, O'Loghlen, O'Hea, and John Dillon—and they would understand each other for the future. At succeeding meetings he returned to the subject, and intimated that he would satisfy the Young Irelanders on all points at issue. Among the seceders some angry spirits said: "This is a trick, there is a trap. O'Connell cannot possibly want reconciliation, for reconciliation would mean abandoning the Whig alliance, which yielded so liberal a crop of offices to his partisans, and the cherished hope of making John his successor. Besides, how can he on any pretence take back men represented by bishops as infidels eager to destroy religion and betray the country? That is what we were represented to be a week ago. How have we changed?" But the leaders of the party were determined to accept the conference, certain that if they did not they would be assailed as the enemies of reconciliation, and cherishing some faint hope that O'Connell had repented of his fatal backsliding. There was a third motive which, though it was only glanced at in debate, was fixed in all their minds; they feared that O'Connell was determined to denounce them as impediments to a reunion of the party, and this misrepresentation they resolved to make impossible. The seceders held a conference and published resolutions declaring that they accepted O'Connell's overture, and were ready to confer on all the points in dispute as soon as they had leisure to consult O'Brien and some other seceders resident in the provinces. I wrote privately to O'Brien, urging him to come immediately to town, but he could not be induced to do so. He still regarded himself as a mediator between the two sections, recommending that we should negotiate with O'Connell

without him, intending to intervene if an agreement was not arrived at. We loved and honoured O'Brien, but we were not dependent on his guidance, and we agreed without hesitation to act without him. But O'Connell knew his man, and thought his end would be best attained by approaching O'Brien alone. He sent one of his friends to Cahermoyle to indicate that if the peace policy was universally accepted other difficulties might be got over. O'Brien, who, when points of honour were concerned, was proud and impatient to a fault, replied that he had no intention of debating the peace resolutions, which were merely a pretence for getting rid of troublesome members ; but if Mr. O'Connell desired he would specify the terms on which he would be disposed to return to Conciliation Hall, and to advise other people to do so.

The mission had failed, so O'Connell assured his adherents. O'Brien would not provide for the safety of the Association, and in face of such a refusal what more could he do ? It was melancholy to think, he added, that the Repeal Association had to enter on negotiations with the compositors' room of a newspaper office, but he was ready to make any concession short of principle, and to receive back every one of them on an equal footing with himself, if it could be done with safety. We took him at his word. A meeting was held at the *Nation* office, and a deputation appointed to confer with Mr. O'Connell. The deputation consisted of James Haughton, John Dillon, and Charles Gavan Duffy. We had, in addition to the instructions of the meeting, letters from forty districts, where secessions had taken place, specifying the terms on which they would be willing to return. It was no longer a question of the Young Irelanders alone, but of the thousands who had seceded after the expulsion of the young men. The deputation to O'Connell reported the proceedings in a document which, as it was written by me, I will reproduce :—

“ They opened the interview by assuring Mr. O'Connell that the seceders anxiously desired to co-operate with him in bringing about a reconciliation on any terms creditable to the parties and useful to the country. Mr. O'Connell replied that he was quite ready to go into a conference on the legal ques-

tion, which must be settled before any other could be considered. The deputation consented that the legal question should be investigated in the first place, but they desired to be informed, if this point were disposed of, whether he intended that the conference should determine the other points at issue between the Association and the seceders. Mr. O'Connell said if the legal question were decided against them they would not be members of the Association ; the time, therefore, had not come, and might never come, to raise them. The deputation rejoined that they were instructed to ascertain with certainty whether, if the legal question should be decided in their favour, he would then proceed to consider the other questions which had produced the secession. Mr. O'Connell answered that the conference must be confined exclusively to the legal question. The deputation reminded him that in his speech proposing the conference he was reported to have suggested that it should settle 'the points of difference between us.' He declared that he had not said so, but directly the reverse ; it was a misreport, as he had never intended bringing any but the legal question before the conference. The deputation assured him that the settlement of the legal question would not bring back the seceders, who had retired on various other grounds. Mr. O'Connell replied that if the seceders returned they could, in their places in the Association, propose any reforms they thought necessary. But as this was a proposal to renew what had been described as 'dissensions,' it was manifestly out of the question ; and, in conclusion, they offered him a statement of the reforms the seceders thought essential, but he declined to read or receive it.

"These reforms were that, in case of agreement, the seceders should be restored to their offices and status in the Association ; that the members of the managing committee should pledge themselves not to accept, or to solicit for others, any office of emolument from the English Government ; that, as persons of every religious persuasion were invited to join the Association, it was desirable to avoid the discussion of subjects calculated to excite religious dissension, reserving the right to remonstrate against substantial griev-

ances affecting the religion of any class of Irishmen ; that the Association should cease to circulate any newspaper ; that a committee should be appointed to secure the election of Repealers in all Repeal constituencies at the coming General Election ; that the conference should make arrangements for the publication and audit of the Repeal Fund, and for the trusteeship of all money and property of the Association ; and that no paid officer should be a member of the committee or be allowed to take any part in the public proceedings, except by direction of the committee."

O'Brien afterwards added an additional condition on which he intended to insist, that no member should be expelled from the Association except by a public meeting and after a week's notice. Without these conditions it was certain the provincial seceders or the Dublin artisans would never re-enter Conciliation Hall.

O'Connell closed this negotiation as he had closed his negotiations with the Federalists—by insulting to-day the men he had courted the day before :—

"It is all over," he cried. "There is an utter end to it. The Association will work on its way as well as it can without them, in total disregard, not to use a harsher term—though the use of a harsher term may be more applicable—of the paltry machinations and movements of the Little Ireland gang. I tell them this—I set them at defiance—and let them keep up as many dissensions as they please, and foment disaffection to no end, I shall still disregard them. . . . What crime has the Association committed that, in the first place, it should be condemned, and next handed over to such executioners as Duffy, Mitchel, and the other Young Irelanders ? I would rather see the Association emptied of the last man than I would submit to their dictation."

It was indeed all over. The influence of the Association was gone ; the potent sway of the great Tribune was at an end, and the remainder of his life was a protracted tribulation. It must have wrung his heart to see the people dying without effectual help or sympathy from the Minister in whom he bid them trust.

The bitterness was greatly increased by the circumstance that O'Connell used his influence with the Whigs for his

family and followers. When his son Morgan, Vincent Fitzpatrick, the secretary of the O'Connell tribute, the brother-in-law of his favourite son, his family physician, and other retainers were gazetted for office or promotion, there was deep exasperation. It was felt that in this way the public cause was being bartered for personal favours. What had happened in the former Repeal agitation was recalled as a signal warning.

In 1834 the people sent thirty-eight Repealers to support O'Connell in Parliament, and what became of these missionaries designed to convert England to Repeal? The bulk of them had accepted office or honours from the Government, and their places were now for the most part occupied by non-Repealers. The O'Connor Don was made a Lord of the Treasury; Morgan O'Connell was made a Commissioner; Charles O'Connell, a stipendiary magistrate; Christopher Fitzsimon (son-in-law to O'Connell), clerk of the Hanaper; A. C. O'Dwyer, filacer of the Exchequer; Nicholas Fitzsimon (brother-in-law to O'Connell), a divisional Magistrate of Police; A. M. Lynch, a Master in Chancery; Richard Shiel, Master of the Mint; David Roche and Henry Winston Baron were created baronets. Thus they were bought and paid for, and in almost every case the seat of the retiring member was filled by an Anti-Repealer. Dr. Baldwin, of Cork, Patrick Lalor, of Tinakil, and C. A. Walker, a Wexford proprietor, retired from Parliament in disgust. Edward Ruthven, jun., F. W. Mullins, William Reilly, and Henry Lambert quarrelled with O'Connell and lost their seats. Three of the three dozen and two had openly deserted Repeal—R. M. Bellew, Sir R. Nagle, and R. Sullivan. Thus twenty-nine were accounted for. Of the remainder a few silently quitted public life, and for all practical purpose abandoned the cause; three or four of the least reputable, Dillon-Browne, Somers, and the like, who found a seat in Parliament convenient, still professed Repeal opinions on the hustings, and believed in them as much as in the Koran. Two of the number, Henry Grattan and M. J. Blake, were understood to be honest if not very active Repealers; and Maurice and John O'Connell completed the list. The practical question was whether this process was

to be repeated in 1846. Can any one regard the risk as a sentimental or speculative one?

Some of the social events of this period may be briefly quoted from my diary :—

“This new year, dark with so many troubles for Ireland, opens with consolation for me personally, of which I am almost ashamed to feel so glad. In a few days I will be married to my cousin, Susan Hughes.

“Be blessed the home sweet Sybil will sway
With the glance of her soft and queenly eyes ;
Oh, happy the love young Sybil will pay
With the breath of her tender sighs !
That home is the hope of my waking dreams—
That love fills my eyes with pride—
There's light in their glance, there's joy in their beams
When I think of my own young bride.

“I received this morning from Ferguson the proof of a paper he is publishing on Davis in the *D. U. M.*, which will largely promote my desire to see Davis recognised for the man he was.

“I called yesterday with Bindon and Mitchel on Dr. West, a relation of the late Conservative Member for Dublin, who will soon join the Confederation with some of his friends. Arranged with M'Glashan the publication of D. O. Maddyn's book. A Belfast bookseller (Henderson) has published a pamphlet, without any promptings from us, containing the Y. I. meeting at the Rotunda, a significant and promising fact.”

CHAPTER IV

THE FAMINE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES TILL THE DEATH OF O'CONNELL

The remedy O'Connell would have proposed in the days of his vigour—The futile remedy he proposed in 1846—Lord Cloncurry's advice—Policy of the *Nation*—John O'Hagan's advice (*note*)—Course adopted by Peel's Government—Their fall from Office—Indian corn and the British Navy—Arrival of the *Macedonian* in Dublin with a gift from the United States—Condition of Ireland in 1847—The Irish Council of Conservatives and Young Irelanders created—Fate of Mitchel's appeal to the Boards of Guardians, and of M'Gee's Native Manufacture movement—Letter from Dr. M'Knight—Advice of the Confederation—Speeches of Mitchel and Duffy—Archbishop Hughes on the famine—Lord George Bentinck's plan—O'Connell's last appearance in the House of Commons—His journey towards Rome—His death—Conduct of the Confederation and the Repeal Association—The General Election of 1847.

I HAVE kept the fearful narrative of physical ruin which fell upon Ireland at this time apart from the political conflicts, which it dwarfed and overshadowed. The Famine, foretold from time to time as probable, announced itself unequivocally in the autumn of 1845 ; the potato crop was more or less blighted in almost every county in the island, and threatened before winter set in to rot in the ground. An eminent physician¹ warned the country that famine was not the worst danger they had to anticipate ; it had been noted for a hundred years that famine was invariably followed by fever and pestilence, from which no class escaped. The potato blight was not confined to Ireland ; it had appeared in many places in Europe and America, notably in Germany and the Low Countries, and in Canada and the United States ; but in Ireland alone the food of the industrious millions was exclusively the potato. How this calamity could be best

¹ Dr., afterwards Sir Dominic Corrigan.

resisted appealed to the benevolence and statesmanship of the country. An alarm meeting was held in Dublin, where O'Connell in his primal vigour, free from the influence of Whig intrigue and the selfish prompting of his worthless son, the O'Connell of the Catholic struggle, listening only to the instincts of his heart, would probably have said, "This island rears more cattle and corn than will feed all its people. The first claim on the harvest and the herds is the daily bread of those who reared them. We do not ask you to open the ports, but to shut them fast. No food must leave this island till the industrious people are fed—a precaution which has been taken by the legislature in all the self-governed countries in Europe threatened with famine. A national calamity must be met by a national sacrifice. No inordinate proportion of it ought to fall on the landlord. The law can distribute it fairly by and by. But meantime the people must eat. You have a great army and munitions of war, and we are an unarmed multitude; but I warn you, you must kill us before you create a famine by carrying away the food of the people." What he did was to demand remedies which, if he still stood at the head of a united nation able to impose them, would have been totally inadequate. He suggested that the exportation of cereals to foreign countries should be prohibited, that distillation should cease till the famine had disappeared, and that the ports should be opened to foreign corn. To bear the cost of these remedies he thought an income tax ought to be imposed at the rate of 10 per cent. on resident proprietors, and 50 per cent. on absentees. But opening the ports was entirely unnecessary, as the country produced more food than it consumed, and the prohibition against exporting cereals would have been precaution enough, had he not rendered it abortive by the proviso that the prohibition should not extend to England, to which the great bulk of our food supplies was in fact carried. He excused this exception by a statement which nobody but O'Connell could have made with impunity. "I do not mean," he added, "to suggest any prohibition to the exportation of food between England and Ireland; in fact, it is possible we may get more from England than we send there," a statement as marvellous as if he

affirmed that Newcastle gets more coal from Ireland than she sends to it. Lord Cloncurry spoke at the same meeting, with the real voice of the country ; he insisted that exportation of food to England ought to be specially prohibited, and he declared that he was ready to apply his entire income towards the task of averting this national calamity. The proposals of the alarm meeting were carried to the Lord Lieutenant for submission to the English Government, but nothing whatever came of them. The exportation of food was forbidden in all the countries of Europe where the potato blight was threatened, except in Ireland, where it was the only alternative to famine. The *Evening Mail* and the landlord Press in general were of opinion that this danger was grossly exaggerated, and was in part the work of dishonest persons who wanted to evade paying their rent. The landlords improved the occasion by seizing the harvest universally, and more corn was exported to England during that winter than in any similar period of which a record exists. The *Nation* insisted over and over again, if there was a famine, it would be a famine created by the landlords. They might be called upon to make large sacrifices, but they would be sacrifices to save a people who had created all their wealth.* It was the law of nature and of God, we insisted, for the landlord's claim for rent does not accrue till the farmers and farm labourers are supplied with daily bread. But the Government, who were supported by the class of which the *Evening Mail* was the spokesman, held a different opinion. The calamity, they insisted, did not furnish any adequate reason for interrupting the ordinary course of law, and rents must

* John O'Hagan, the most moderate, considerate, and scrupulous of the young men, expressed their deep conviction in language which deserves to be remembered :—

“Heaven, that tempers ill with good, when it smote our wonted food,
Sent us bounteous growth of grain—sent to pauper slaves in vain !
We but asked in deadly need, ‘Ye that rule us, let us feed
On the food that’s ours’ ; behold ! adder-deaf and icy cold !

Were we, saints of Heaven !—were we, how we burn to think it—
FREE !

Not a grain should leave our shore, not for England’s golden store ;
They who hunger where it grew, they whom Heaven hath sent it to,
They who reared with sweat of brow—they, or none, should have it
now.”

be paid. The suffering people, when no hope came to them from any quarter, made vain attempts to retain the harvest, and broke into what were called agrarian outrages, instigated by suffering and desperation. The Government proposed the old futile remedy, which had failed a hundred times, a Coercion Bill. Lord John Russell, on behalf of the Opposition, tendered them his support in this benevolent design, but Disraeli exhorted the Protectionists, who had by this time arrayed themselves into a solid opposition, to refuse. They did refuse, and Lord John Russell, who saw a sudden prospect of office, recanted his opinions on Coercion and aided them to defeat the Government. It was now that the Whigs came in, and O'Connell's quarrel with the Young Irelanders, as already described, came to a crisis. From that time his remedy for the famine was confidence in the Government ; it would do all that could be done if the people were peaceful and patient. As the calamity increased Mr. John O'Connell repeatedly declared that if the people would only refrain from violence, the Repeal of the Union and the fruition of all their hopes was near at hand.

It was urged on the new Government that as the food of the country was withdrawn, and some substitute must be found if the people were not to perish universally, Indian corn ought to be purchased in large quantities. It was selling in the port of London at 30s. a quarter, but half of this sum was freightage, as it could be bought at Chicago for 16s. a quarter. If large quantities were purchased in America, and brought home in the ships of the Royal Navy, a double supply could be obtained for the same expenditure. Lord John Russell, whose vision never ranged beyond the interests of the Whig Party, was warned that he would lose much support by interfering with private enterprise. The corn factors of Mark Lane, and the ship-owners of Liverpool and Southampton, hoped to make great fortunes by the public calamity, and the Minister declared that he would not interfere with them. The price of Indian corn immediately doubled, and went on increasing till more than half of the fund subscribed by the benevolent or voted by Parliament was wasted in yielding to English ship-owners and corn merchants profits which could have been altogether saved,

and might have gone to preserve human lives. Ships of war were pronounced by the Admiralty to be altogether unfit for carrying corn, and while this official placebo was still being debated in Dublin there sailed into the port a ship of war named the *Macedonian*, loaded with corn presented by the United States as a gift to the Irish people. The *Macedonian* had become a prize to the American arms in the last war, and it was naturally remarked that the only way to make a British frigate capable of carrying corn to Ireland was that it should fall into the hands of the foreign enemy. Our submission to this shameful wrong in silent indignation was a natural result of the Whig compact. A year earlier Ireland occupied a position more commanding than she had attained at any time since the Union. The bulk of the nation was organised into a disciplined and obedient army. The United States, through her President and conspicuous statesmen, and France through her natural leaders, proffered warm sympathy with her desire for complete self-government. The Liberal Irish members who had not accepted the Repeal pledge were labouring zealously to effect other reforms, the great Whig magnates in Ireland took occasion to declare that large concessions were just and necessary, and the Whig leaders in England published a manifesto proposing that the Imperial Parliament should meet in Ireland every third year, and projected large reforms in the land code and the ecclesiastical establishment. Before such a nation, strong, resolute, and triumphant, it is impossible to conceive the murderous ravages of the famine prevailing for one week, but the leader of the people allied himself with the Government, and his policy was submission.

I have written elsewhere in detail for those who care to read the history of this dire calamity, and the efforts made in vain to stimulate the people into saving themselves. What we wanted was a National organisation capable of speaking with authority both to the Government and the people, and that effectual weapon had been taken out of our hands. I will cite from my former narrative only one passage describing the state of the country when the secession took place :—

“ The condition of Ireland at the opening of the year 1847 is one of the most painful chapters in the annals of mankind.

An industrious and hospitable race were now in the pangs of a devouring famine. Deaths of individuals, of husband and wife, of entire families, were becoming common. The potato blight had spread from the Atlantic to the Caspian, but there was more suffering in one parish of Mayo than in all the rest of Europe. From Connaught, where distress was greatest, there came batches of inquests, with the horrible verdict 'Died of starvation.' In some cases the victims were buried 'wrapped in a coarse coverlet,' a coffin being too costly a luxury. The living awaited death with a listlessness which was at once tragic and revolting. Women, with dead children in their arms, were seen begging for a coffin to bury them. At Skibbereen, in the fruitful county of Cork, whose seaports were thronged with vessels laden with corn, cattle, and butter for England, the rate-collector told a more tragic tale. Some houses were found deserted—the owners had been carried to their graves. In one cabin there was no other occupant than three corpses; in a once prosperous home a woman and her children had lain dead and unburied for a week; in the fields a man was discovered so fearfully mangled by dogs that identification was impossible. The Relief Committee of the Society of Friends described the state of the town in language which was hard to read with dry eyes. The people were dying of the unaccustomed food which mocked their prayer for daily bread, and were carried to the graveyard in a coffin from which the benevolent strangers who had come to their relief had to drop them like dead dogs that they might be a covering for the next corpse in its turn:—

"This place is one mass of famine, disease, and death. The poor creatures, hitherto trying to exist on one meal per day, are now sinking under fever and bowel complaints, unable to come for their soup, which is not fit for them. Rice is what their whole cry is for, but we cannot manage this well, nor can we get the food carried to the houses from dread of infection. I have got a coffin, with moveable sides, constructed to convey the bodies to the churchyard in calico bags prepared, in which the remains are wrapped up. I have just sent this to bring the remains of a poor creature to the grave, who, having been turned out of the only shelter

*she had—a miserable hut—perished the night before last in a quarry.*¹

“The people saw the harvest they had reared carried away to another country without an effort, for the most part, to retain it. The sole food of the distressed class was Indian meal, which had paid freight and storage in England, and had been obtained in exchange for English manufactures. Under a recent law, framed with malice propense, a peasant who accepted public relief forfeited his holding; and thousands were ejected under this cruel provision. But landowners were not content with one process alone; they closed on the people with ejectments, turned them on the roads, and plucked down their roof-trees. In more than one county rents falling due in November for land, which no longer yielded food to the cultivator, were enforced in January. In the South-West the peasantry had made some frantic efforts to clutch their harvest and to retaliate for their sufferings in blind vengeance—but the law carried a sharp sword. Eight counties or parts of counties were proclaimed, and a Special Commission, after a brief sitting in Clare and Limerick, left eleven peasants for the gallows.”²

The *Nation* insisted on the duty of retaining the food in the country, and reiterated its conviction that if the National organisation was still strong and unbroken they could, and ought, to forbid exportation if Parliament would not. The philosophy of our duty was, it seemed to me, very simple. If Ireland was an integral part of the Empire, the resources of the Empire ought to be freely applied to her protection; if she was only a conquered province, she owed the same fidelity to the Empire that a prisoner owes to his jailor. But the young men were impeded at every step by the base falsehood which represented them as agents of anarchy, and Conciliation Hall was ready on the first alarm to point them out as dabbling in the blood of the people. The Parliament and the Government, the people were assured, would protect them, and Repeal could not be far distant if only they turned a deaf ear to these tempters. The young men exhausted all

¹ This is an extract from the report of W. T. Forster, afterwards Chief Secretary for Ireland, at that time a young Quaker full of benevolence and humanity.

² “Four Years of Irish History.”

peaceful means of help. We personally appealed to the young Conservatives, and Smith O'Brien appealed to the more generous landlords, to shelter their fellow-countrymen from destruction. Butt and Lefanu answered promptly, and Ferguson and Sir Colman O'Loghlen united with them and us in getting together an Irish Council with the sole purpose of inducing the Government and the people to combat the famine. But the Government were deaf, and little was effected. The Irish Council associates itself in my memory with failures sometimes ludicrous. For example, Mitchel, who became chairman of a Sub-committee of Food Supplies, proceeded with a confidence in the middle classes which was ill-bestowed. He sent a circular to the Boards of Guardians throughout the island, summoning each of them to furnish an estimate of the quantity of food produced in the district. The guardians had no training in this sort of work, and it may be doubted if O'Connell, in the height of his power, or the Local Government Board at any time, could have extracted such a return from them. What happened in this case was that not so much as one Board of Guardians in the island sent an answer to the appeal. They neither aided us nor explained their refusal, but from Donegal to the Cove of Cork ignored the application altogether. The other failure was D'Arcy M'Gee's. He took a strong interest in the Dublin artisans, and thought they might be helped by a pledge to use only national manufacture, and had his design entirely ruined by a dishonest stroke apparently intended to promote it. O'Gorman Mahon, who since the decay of O'Connell had been gradually stealing back into public life, was one of the tellers on a division, and reckoned the ayes in this fashion—"Twenty-seven, twenty-eight, twenty-nine, forty, forty-one," and so on. "By G——, sir," he whispered to M'Gee, "I have added ten to your score." M'Gee knew the value of a majority so obtained, and the project was carried no further.

Out of this friendly association, and under the influence of Smith O'Brien, no doubt, many of the gentry began to talk a sort of conditional and speculative nationality. If England did so and so, and Irish Nationalists did something else, then we should see what we should see. A few of them certainly

meant serious work, notably Ross of Bladensburg, Mr. Chetwode, a man of English birth, and John George Adair, a cultured young squire just entering upon manhood, and who seemed destined to follow in the footsteps of Arthur O'Connor and Edward Fitzgerald. But the French Revolution, when it came, extinguished this patriotism in a panic, except in the case of Adair, who persevered steadily. At a later period, however, the murder of his land agent drove him to savage reprisals, but I have never doubted that at this time he was full of the spirit which possessed his class in 1782. Ferguson's confidence in some immediate help from the gentry outlasted that of his companions. It was pathetic to witness his continual and quite hopeless efforts to inflame their patriotism, like a man labouring to kindle a *vesta* by rubbing the end where there was no phosphorus. While I still hoped in the Council I endeavoured to interest the Northern Tenant-Righters in it, but Dr. M'Knight, who was now residing in Derry, as editor of the *Derry Standard*, had no confidence in the landlords, and was not prepared, like the Southern Tenant-Righters, for a national movement. He was perhaps the most influential layman in Ulster, as he afterwards effectually proved himself; but he was the sort of Northern Presbyterian of which Englishmen know nothing. A man with a warm sympathy for the old literature of the country, with an equal contempt for greedy landlords and the retinue of "mean whites," with which the Orange lodges so often furnished them; simply an Irish Presbyterian who loved his native land heartily, but was frightened by the spectre of Popish ascendancy. His time for a public career was coming, but it had not yet come.

"DERRY, June 28, 1847.

"DEAR DUFFY,—I had written the greater part of a letter to you more than a week ago, but did not get it finished, and, more than half-ashamed of the delay which has taken place, I have to begin again *de novo*.

"Our people are *not* inclined to associate with the Tenant-Right Association any *political* object whatever, and if the Munster League advocate Tenant-Right and Repeal, their *real* objects and those which they *profess* are widely *different*,

Ours is an association of men of *all* parties, but if their wishes shall be systematically *frustrated* there is amongst them spirit enough not to die tamely. If, however, I correctly understand the terms of your note, the Landlord party, who are approximating to your views, are doing so in the expectation of *reciprocal* support. I am very sure that the Northerns would see every description of nationality everlasting d——d, which would merely transfer them from one class of social despots to another—from a *Landlords' Combination* in London to a *Landlords' Parliament* in Dublin. Daniel O'Connell, during the latter years of his life, repeatedly forsook the *people* and tried to pander to the landed aristocracy, and if his successors shall adopt a similar line of policy they will inevitably go to —pot. All black-mouthed Presbyterian as I am, I have about me, perhaps, as much of *Milesian* feeling as the bulk of my countrymen of another class ; but except for purposes of poetry I would repudiate a *Milesian* just as bitterly as a *Sassenach* landlordism, which should trample down the *masses* into veritable slavery.

“ The ‘ Irish Council’ have taken up one branch of the Tenant-Right agitation, viz., that relating to *compensation* for *improvements*, but they have still the subject of ‘ fixity of tenure’ to discuss, and if they put this upon a generous and sufficiently comprehensive basis they will deserve some credit from the country. I am glad to see my old schoolfellow, *Sam Ferguson*, beginning to ‘ look alive’ in public. He is a right clever fellow, and I hope he is succeeding in his profession. I have not seen his pamphlet noticed in the last *Nation*, and to which Chalmers refers in the *North British Review*. If he would send me a copy I would review it for him according to its merits.

“ Is there anything doing in the way of Celtic literature ? I have had no opportunity of adding to my small stock of Irish books, and with the exception of Walsh’s late work, one half of which is a slavish reprint from Hardiman, the publishers do not send me works of this description—a neglect which, on *their* part, is very absurd. At one time you hinted something about the publication of a comprehensive Irish Dictionary—I wish something of this kind was undertaken by competent hands, on the plan of the great work published by

the Highland Society of Scotland. Above all things the *ancient* dialects ought to be systematised and preserved, as their importance is *incalculable* for the purposes of comparative philology.

“We are to have another Tenant-Right Meeting on Wednesday, but it will be a *business* rather than an oratorical assemblage.—I am, dear Duffy, with sincere regard, very truly yours,

“ JAMES M’KNIGHT.”

When help through the Council became hopeless we fell back on the Confederation, and counselled the farmers to hold their harvests till the wants of their families were supplied. The harvest grown on the farm ought to feed the cultivator before the landlord or the State had any claim. If a universal determination to uphold this right sprang up it would become altogether irresistible. I will merely quote extracts from two speeches delivered on the same day ; those who need ampler details know where to find them. At a meeting of the Confederation held in April, Mitchel, who was chairman, put the case in a nutshell :—

“ If Ireland yields produce enough to feed eight millions, what particular eight millions in the world have the first claim upon it ? Now, it is fit that it should be known there are in Ireland some men at least who would solve that question in favour of the eight Irish millions, and who, if those same millions happen to be of that opinion too, will help them to make it good.”

In moving the first resolution I developed this thesis in the plainest language I could employ :—

“ England at this hour is teeming with wealth and plenty, yet it is not alleged that she possesses any natural advantages which we do not share. England does not starve. Her people do not die in myriads, or fly with averted eyes from her shore. Has our land no natural rights ? Is there some ordinance of God by which we, living in the same latitude and under the same skies, must see our people die of hunger and nakedness ! Let us not blaspheme Providence ; let us not even blame England ; the fault is not England’s, but our own. It is the right of this Irish people, and their sacred

duty, to protect themselves against all aggressors on the face of the earth. And surely the time has come, while we still suffer under one calamity and await another, to determine the cause of our misery, and to take measures for our protection. The time has fully arrived when the country should come together, by some adequate representatives, and say, in the solemn voice of a nation, 'We can endure no more, we can look on this desolation no longer ; the resources of Ireland belong to the people of Ireland, and henceforth must meet their necessities ; and this we will maintain though earth and hell say No !'"

These appeals were unsuccessful ; but every one who blames the young men for their failure is invited to put himself in their position, and say what he could have done that was better. Not only the British Government, resting on a large army, the gentry, and official classes, but the traders and shopkeepers, were opposed to decisive measures, and the persons who spoke in the name of the National Organisation were vehement in the assurance that only a little more patience was necessary, and all would be well. A gifted and patriotic Irish ecclesiastic in a foreign country uttered what may be regarded as the *morale* of the question whether the Irish were bound to die of starvation in the midst of plenty. "In a crisis like the famine (said Archbishop Hughes, of New York) the Irish may submit to die rather than violate the rights of property ; but if such a calamity should ever happen (which God forbid) the Scotch will not submit, the English will not submit, the French will not submit, and depend upon it the Americans will not submit." Help from O'Connell was no longer to be counted on. There was a great decay in his physical power, and he spoke rarely, and to little purpose. In February he went to Parliament accompanied by his son, and the remnant of the Association became Bedlamite under the control of the Head Pacifier. The country scarcely supplied Repeal Rent enough to pay the weekly expenses of the hired *claque* who usurped the places once occupied by the leaders of the people.

A gleam of hope came from an unexpected quarter. Lord George Bentinck informed Smith O'Brien that he had a plan for employing and feeding the famishing people in

Ireland which was approved of by George Stephenson and the greatest railway authorities in the empire, and by the directors of the leading railway companies in Ireland. It was proposed to make loans out of the funds wasted on useless and ridiculous roads to Irish railway companies, who would undertake to employ the labouring classes at just wages, erect substantial huts for them near their work, and carry out a wisely designed scheme of railway extension. There was no risk, for the Irish railways were actually more prosperous than the English ones, and the money now squandered would be turned to national profit. He wished it to be distinctly understood that the motion was to have no political consequences. The plan was so just and satisfactory, that Mr. John O'Connell could not take the responsibility of opposing it, but the ruck of Repeal members, with Mr. Dillon Browne at their head, supported Lord John Russell, who obtained the rejection of the plan. When his constituents at the General Election assailed Mr. Browne for this treachery to Irish interests, he declared that O'Connell had secretly counselled the course he took, but it is possible and desirable to disbelieve the statement.

O'Connell attended Parliament, his spirit deeply tormented, I make no doubt, by the calamities of the people whom he had led so long, and humiliated by the failure of his alliance with the Whigs. But it was so hard to retreat. He had accepted favours for his family and friends from the Government, and he had repeatedly pledged himself for their good intentions ; but the feeble, frigid Minister upon whom he had conferred power thought only of securing votes, and sacrificed the lives of the starving people to the interests of his commercial constituents in England. O'Connell spoke once in Parliament, and the assembly where he had dominated of old beheld a feeble old man muttering, in a voice which was scarcely audible to the reporters, on the perils of the famine—a subject on which the trump of an archangel could scarcely peal an adequate alarm. His medical advisers insisted that he should take rest in a better climate, and he set out on a journey for Rome. It was insisted at Conciliation Hall that he would soon return in restored health and vigour, and the Young Irelanders knew nothing to the contrary.

The only altogether reliable information we had was from Frederick Lucas, and he thought O'Connell was not so ill as he believed himself to be. He wrote to John O'Hagan at this time :—

“ I have seen O'Connell. He is really ill, and *supposes himself* to be gradually breaking up. He attends to politics no more than is absolutely necessary, and spends every vacant moment in prayer and spiritual reading. At the best, however, he is so bad that I really think every unfriendly allusion (even indirect) to him in the *Nation* ought in good feeling to be suppressed.”

Lucas's letter also reported some palaver of John O'Connell's about his good intentions for the future, which time proved to be entirely futile.

Lucas was willing to transfer the *Tablet* to Dublin if John O'Hagan would become his partner in the undertaking, as it needed two or more men to conduct such a journal, and one of them ought to be an Irishman. O'Hagan's uncle and elder brother would not hear of his relinquishing his profession, and the proposed partnership had to be abandoned. The impediments to Lucas's transfer of the *Tablet* to Ireland were not overcome at that time, but five years later, as we shall see.

It was in this tragic era, a few weeks after Lucas's letter, when all hope of saving the people had disappeared, that news came across the sea for which no one was prepared. O'Connell had died in a foreign city on his way to Rome. This announcement naturally created a profound sensation.

The Confederates were of opinion that they ought to remember the early career of the dead Tribune, and forget as far as it was possible the disastrous story of his later years. In this spirit the Council, who, man by man, had been ejected from the Repeal Association on false pretences, ordered that the Confederates should attend the funeral and wear mourning for a month, but Mr. John O'Connell caused their proposed co-operation to be rejected, and kept the dead body of his father unburied for three months to increase the reaction. The device was not unsuccessful; the favour of the fickle multitude came back foaming and surging like a returning tide.

Under these untoward circumstances came the opportunity to which all *Repealers* who had any confidence in constitutional methods relied for advancing the National cause, a General Election, but nothing was prepared. The long-delayed funeral kept up the public irritation, and in truth O'Connell's death had created a startling revulsion of opinion. In the towns there was an immovable party who adhered to the *Confederates*, but in the rural districts all their popularity was forgotten in a moment. The Munster peasantry, who have the romance and vehemence of meridionals, would remember only the services of the lost leader. They flew, indeed, into one of the mad rages which nations sometimes suffer for their sins. They believed that the *Young Irelanders* had killed their leader, and they would not hear of them as candidates. Meagher tried his native city, and was beaten by a nominal *Repealer*, whose public services had consisted in smuggling a dozen of his relations into the Civil Service. O'Gorman was proposed at Limerick, and his proposer, Father Kenyon, was with difficulty rescued by brother priests from the savage violence of the mob. Here and there our friends intimated that they could secure the election of a new man recommended by the *Confederation*, but that the candidates they would prefer were for the present impossible. Smith O'Brien brought us a group of young men from whom he believed much might reasonably be expected. They were Englishmen for the most part, but men of cultured capacity, and unequivocal *Repealers*. Their leader was David Urquhart, who had already addressed an English constituency as a *Repealer*. One of his aides-de-camp was Ross of Bladensburg, a kinsman of Lord Massarene and Lord Dufferin. Mr. Chisholm Anstey, a barrister of Tasmanian birth, was Urquhart's chief reliance for a Parliamentary campaign. After much consultation he was sent to Mallow, and got elected. Smith O'Brien, whose old constituency would not desert him, and this English candidate were the only members of the *Confederation* sent to Parliament.

John O'Connell and the mass of the old *Repeal Association* had no money and no suitable candidates. New men who had only joined the Association a few days and paid a subscription of £5 (known in those days as "Five-pound

Repealers") were sent to constituencies, and often succeeded by the aid of O'Connell's name. Dillon-Browne, Somers, and the old gang of disreputable Irish members came in with a rush ; and of all that O'Connell had promised to strengthen and elevate the national delegation nothing was done.

CHAPTER V

THE EDITOR'S ROOM

Sketch of David Urquhart—Wallis on Lord WallsCourt and Chisholm Anstey—Letter from Moore Stack—Lady contributors—Street ballads—Daniel Owen Madden proposes a Life of Dr. Doyle and sketches of Irish Philosophers—Letters from William Carleton—His first love—Lord Morphet's letter on his literary pension—Clarence Mangan—His troubles and repentance—Publication of “Anthologia Germanica”—His shortcomings exaggerated by himself and others—Father Kenyon's proposal of an Appeal by the Catholic Young Irelanders to a National Synod against misrepresentation—A week in London with O'Hagan and Pigot—Proposal to publish Rinuccini.

WHATEVER was attempted in public by the young men was commonly considered beforehand in the editor's room, where the Cabinet of the party met. The work for which we were more individually responsible, the literary and educational projects, were considered and revised there, and often subjected to a searching and pitiless criticism. It was said by some one familiar with these labours, that, like icebergs, two-thirds of our compass was always invisible. In the interval between the final rupture of negotiations with O'Connell and the outbreak of the still unexpected French Revolution, the work done was considerable and not unfruitful.

I can declare, for I have tried both experiments, that the responsibilities of a Minister of State does not need prompter counsel or more constant vigilance than the editor's chair in a journal so many-sided as the *Nation*.

The English party whose assistance we were promised, and one of whom we had got elected for Mallow, created hopes which in the end were imperfectly realised.

When David Urquhart came to Dublin he excited very mixed feelings. He was manifestly a man of ability, but

the effect was diminished by fantastic manners, and overshadowed by a self-esteem so prodigious that it cast an air of ridicule on whatever he proposed. An extract from a diary which I kept in those days may give the reader some idea of this strange phenomenon :—

“I called on Mr. Urquhart at Morrisson’s Hotel. He received me, arrayed in Orange silk trousers, and a caftan of some green material, and looked like an Oriental Pasha condescending to mate for a moment with the dullards of the West. A magnificent portfolio lay before him worthy of a Secretary of State. I congratulated him on the probability of his entering Parliament.

“‘Yes,’ he said, ‘if he could form a solid English party who, in addition to performing important services to the Empire, could repeal the Union, it would repay him for diverting a brief space from the serious business of his life.’

“‘You have graver business than Parliament?’ I queried, in some surprise.

“‘Yes,’ he said, ‘my business is in the generous, simple, noble East, not among the mean intrigues and cabals called Parliamentary Government.’

“‘You don’t approve,’ I said, ‘of English liberty as embodied in the will of the people?’

“‘I approve of English liberty,’ he replied, ‘as embodied in the will of the Sovereign. My late illustrious friend, William IV., contemplated, if he had been happily spared, certain changes in the system, which would restore true liberty, protected by its natural guardian, the only safe, reliable, and disinterested friend of the people, their king. It was the right of Parliament to present its opinions to the king, and it was his right to weigh them and decide.’

“I laughed, and suggested that the king would not decide, one might presume, without a colloquy with his mistresses, like some of his predecessors. What a gorgeous Council of State Charles II. might consult without quitting his salon? Or if he followed the guidance of his own noble, unaided wisdom, George III. taught us what results might be expected. His late illustrious friend was not a Solomon, but he could not fail to know by what method of government England lost the American Colonies.

“‘Oh,’ he exclaimed, ‘you are poisoned with the gas of the thing called Western civilisation, the damnable modern practice of ruling the wise by the foolish.’

“‘May I inquire,’ I said, ‘if you propose in this year of grace, 1846, to substitute the will of the queen for the will of the nation?’

“‘No,’ he said, ‘my present purpose is quite different. I hope to bring Lord Palmerston to justice. In his early and unfriended youth he was sold to Russia, and has never been able to escape from her grasp. As he grew more important he became a more useful and subservient agent. To betray England is the price of his daily bread. And he can never escape; no one thwarts the policy of Russia and lives. When a great person dies prematurely the newspapers announce “a visitation of Providence,” but a wise man murmurs “a visitation of Russia.”’

“‘How has Mr. David Urquhart escaped the poisoner’s cup or stiletto?’ I inquired; ‘he has been thwarting Russia to the best of his power?’

“‘Yes,’ he said, ‘and if I succeed my time will come. I am not yet formidable enough, but whenever I am troublesome to Russia she will disembarrass herself of me.’

“‘The remainder of your menaced life will be spent in Parliament, I suppose?’

“‘Not at all; Parliament is an episode in a greater career. When I have taught England that pauperism and public debt have come with Cabinet Governments ruling by majorities and the thing they call liberty, I shall probably have done with that business. I cannot long neglect the forty millions of men who depend on me for inspiration and guidance.’

“‘Forty millions!’ I exclaimed. ‘May an ill-informed Western inquire where they reside?’

“‘They reside in the most interesting countries in the East of Europe. Who guides the Hungarian? Lajos Kossuth, you will say. Well, perhaps so; but after Kossuth they look to me, most of men. On whom do the Poles rely? It would be difficult to name any one who unites the confidence of so many of the two parties into which they are divided as myself. The Moslems? No one can compete

with me there. The Sultan is unhappy if he acts without my advice, and when I go to Byzantium my first, my longest, visit is to the Queen Mother. When she will see no one else she sees me.'

"Good gracious!" I murmured, "there is no scandal about Queen Elizabeth, I hope?"

"Gossips will be gossips, of course; but assuredly there is no ground for scandal in the conduct of that excellent woman."

"Is that your whole *clientèle*?" I inquired.

"No," he said. "The Servians, the Walloons, and the Moldavians go to make up the forty million without counting the Druses of Lebanon, who have no reliance but on me."

"During this colloquy Urquhart kept his fiery Celtic temperament under complete control, and I tried to follow his example.

"With such allies," I ventured to suggest, "I wonder you have not struck some great stroke in the world."

"And haven't I?" he replied. "I saved England from a Chartist revolution; there would have been a great explosion, and probably a general overturn, but for my influence with the leaders."

"In that case," I suggested, "the explosion is only postponed."

"No, I am taking measures to render it impossible. When the leaders are educated they will understand they can get all they want at a cheaper rate than violence. After four years in a Workman's College they will be familiar with history, philosophy, and political science, and not likely to commit *bêtises*."

"It will be a costly experiment," I suggested, "to create, endow, and maintain such a system of education for a whole people!"

"No," he said, "they will learn all they need by conversation with me."

Mr. Urquhart uttered these marvels in a level voice, without rhetoric or emphasis; very much indeed like the ordinary gossip of a morning call. It is not a bee the man has in his bonnet, but a beehive!"

The sum and substance of Urquhartism was—Russia has

designs, these as being inimical in his view, not only to England, but to humanity all over the globe ; the aim of the Romanoffs being the restoration in their own persons of Roman universal empire, he held it to be the duty of every Englishman to trace out and expose. But he cared nothing for " motives," whether good or bad, true or false ; whether on the part of Russia herself or of her agents, avowed or occult. He dealt only with facts, with results, whether consummated or on the high road to be so, and claimed to have so mastered the knowledge of her system that he could scarcely be mistaken. The tools, he added emphatically, with which Russia works are Cabinets bought, cowed, or deluded. The most startling incident occurred as I rose to withdraw. A waiter brought in some letters for Ross, of Bladensburg, a man of fortune and character. Urquhart coolly took the letters, opened and read them. Noticing my glance of astonishment he said that his relation to his friends authorised him to treat their correspondence as his own. I murmured my thanks that I was not one of his friends, and withdrew.

Wallis, who was an *advocatus diaboli*, was determined that we should not over-value our new recruits. He wrote to me from his hermitage :—

" The accession of Lord WallsCourt and Chisholm Anstey to the Confederation appears to have created a sensation, and so far done good. But I don't think much of either of the men. WallsCourt is, I believe, no great things anyway. I saw him once buy one pennyworth of letter paper, and I thanked the gods that he was a Union peer ; and as for Anstey, I have an ineffable contempt for him. Pardon my saying so, as he is a friend of yours. There is no description of man I can so little endure. His very phiz marks him out as a pietistic character ; and as for that book which Mitchel reviewed so favourably, I don't think, judging by the extracts I have read, there ever was such trash. The man is a measureless nincompoop, a desperate, depicable donkey."

But our sympathisers at home were of more importance than any English allies, and to confirm and increase their confidence was the task nearest our hearts. O'Connell had demonstrated that the contract made in 1800 had proved a

bad bargain for Ireland. But the passion of Nationality, the love of our mother country, which is no more dependent on the balance of profit and loss than the love of the mother who cherished us at her breast, had sprung from the teaching of the *Nation*, and had spread wide among classes who scorned Conciliation Hall, and among some even who would maintain the political Union, but ally it, as in Scotland, with the profound love of country. The correspondence of the period recalls projects designed to cherish this sacred flame. Mr. Moore was the *nom de théâtre* of an actor, who made a great success in recent plays by Leigh Hunt and Sheridan Knowles, and whom Mr. Knowles afterwards assured me was the most promising actor of his day, destined, if he had not abandoned the stage, to win a foremost place. But religious scruples induced him to give up his profession, and he became known to us in Ireland as Professor of Elocution in Maynooth College, under his actual name of Moore Stack. I believe his gifts amounted to genius; certainly he moved me more, reciting a speech of Curran or Patrick Henry, or a ballad of Davis or Lefanu, than any orator at the Bar or in the Senate dealing with the most vivid actualities of the hour. I thought such gifts might be of immense service to the National cause, and my comrades put forth all their influence to organise a committee which would give him a great *début*. Professors of the Dublin University and of Maynooth College, and leaders of all the learned professions assembled in the Rotunda to hear him recite some of the masterpieces of Irish literature, and poems by the Young Irelanders living and dead. We believed a very valuable work had been done for the National cause; and that it did not disappoint Mr. Stack's expectations we may gather from the following letter:—

“Friday, Feb. 20, 1845.

“MY DEAR MR. DUFFY,—I cannot leave town without offering you such thanks as I am able for your kindly feelings and conduct towards me since the first moment I have had the happiness of knowing you. Never did I so deeply regret my inability to express my thoughts as at this instant, or feel how feebly the commonplace expressions which I can command to convey the sentiments of my mind.

It has been truly said that no metaphysician ever felt the deficiency of language more than the grateful. I have met with much kindness from many persons, but never before was it so graciously accompanied with all that could increase its value to one of my, perhaps, peculiar temperament ; and hence the warmth of my feelings. I hope and believe that I shall ever entertain as lively a sense of my obligations to you as I do at this moment. Wishing you health and every happiness, I remain, my dear Mr. Duffy, your obliged and faithful servant,

“ RICHD. MOORE STACK.”

Mr. Stack brought me a young kinsman of his, the Reverend David Moriarty, then professor in the Missionary College of which he speedily became the head, and finally an Irish bishop. Through trying and troubled times this gifted ecclesiastic never withdrew his friendship from me till we were separated by death.

Among the new recruits of the *Nation* at this time were several gifted women known to its readers as Speranza, Eva, Mary, and Thomasine. A selection from their correspondence would make a charming chapter, but this book threatens to be too big, and I can only make space for one note from the most gifted of them, which needs a liberal allowance from the reader for the perfervour commonly incident to a woman of genius :—

“ 34, LEESON STREET, Monday.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I return, with many thanks, the volume of Cromwell, which has been travelling about with me for the last four months, and shall feel much obliged for the two others when you are quite at leisure, though not even Carlyle can make this soulless iconoclast interesting. It is the only work of Carlyle's I have met with in which my heart does not go along with his words.

“ I cannot forbear telling you, now the pen is in my hand, how deeply impressed I felt by your opening lecture to your club. It was the sublimest teaching, and the style so simple from its very sublimity—it seemed as if Truth passed directly from your heart to ours, without the aid of any medium—at

least I felt that everywhere the *thoughts* struck you, nowhere the *words*, and this in my opinion is the perfection of composition. It is soul speaking to soul. I never felt the *dignity* of your cause so much as then—to promote it in any way seemed an object that would ennoble a life. Truly, one cannot despair when God sends us such teachers. But you will wish me away again for another four months if I write you such long notes. So I shall conclude with kind compliments to Mrs. Duffy, and remain, yours very sincerely,

“FRANCESCA ELGE.

“I only *read* your lecture—some time or other I would like to *hear* you.”

The same design of elevating and strengthening the National spirit was promoted at the other end of the social scale. Songs taken from the “Spirit of the Nation,” and “Paddy’s Resource,” a book half a century older, were printed and placed in the hands of ballad singers to replace their ordinary ware. Mr. Lyons, a young confederate of Cork, wrote to me at this time :—

“I beg to acquaint you that I have made arrangements with the publisher to send you one thousand copies of the street ballads in a few days, probably the end of next week. The sooner we receive your collection the better. I think we are ready here for a new edition.

“Mr. Meagher has expressed his intention of getting a similar sheet printed in Waterford; an exchange may be made with him for the Cork ballads with some advantage.”

Daniel Owen Madden, who was a contributor to Conservative periodicals in London, feared to be misunderstood if he continued to write even biographical papers for the *Nation*, but he was willing to share our literary enterprises outside the journal. He interested me as a friend of Davis, and I negotiated with M’Glashan the publication of a volume of his “Irish Miscellanies,” and considered favourably books he projected for the Library of Ireland.

“I. I would write the life of Doctor Doyle *con amore*; there would not be a sectarian word or a sectarian thought in it. Of all modern Irishmen I think him the most admirable—a far greater nature, though not a greater man, than O’Connell.

I think I would do him justice, and that my life of him would be ~~extremely~~ popular.

"2. D'Israeli, in his 'Curiosities,' says :—'I quote Dr. Arthur Browne, because an Irish philosopher is indeed a *rara avis*.'

"Now it strikes me, *non abstante* Disraelo, that 'Lives of the Irish Philosophers' would be an attractive, readable, popular, and most useful volume. I would take our most eminent names, write their lives briefly, give an account of their works, and have interstitial chapters, on topics cognate with the men selected. In metaphysics, Hutcheson and Berkeley ; political philosophy, Burke ; natural philosophy, Molyneux, Kerwin (chemist), Lloyd—intermingled with matters interstitial—(1) Introduction, with remarks, a Progress of Philosophy in Modern Times. (2) History of Trinity College—its good and evil pointed out—what it has done, and what it ought to have done. The want of moral zeal ; its not awakening a thirst for science, &c. Yet a frank allowance for the difficulties arising from a distracted country, &c. Then go down in historical order, and take the men as they come. Insert a chapter on Use of Metaphysics—prior to life of Berkeley—remind my readers that politics and patriotism did not prevent Molyneux from the noble pursuit of science ; and that the cultivation of the higher philosophy did not prevent Berkeley from practical patriotism, and from striving, according to his power, to help the people around him. A chapter on the Archæological Historians of last century, and a chapter on the Modern Philosophers—Lloyd, James M'Cullagh, and Dr. Kane.

"I would rank the secondary men together. Thus I would notice Baron Smith, Thomas Wallace, Q.C., George Ensor, in a chapter. The secondary men would not require more than long notes. Perhaps a chapter on the R. I. Academy—a popular scientific institute of Belfast and Cork.

"The Edgeworths would obtain a notice as 'educators,' and the name of Edgeworth ought for ever to be dear to us. Griffin throughout his works renders him repeated tributes of admiring gratitude.

"I take for granted that the £40, proposed for payment in the Irish Library, means £40 per volume, which is very little for books of their size. I could not embark on lives of Irish

philosophers less than a hundred guineas for two volumes. (3) Davis's works collected. These must be done by men of his immediate party—yourself, for his poetry."

Wallis, then in London, who was an indefatigable projector, planned an edition of Davis's works in five volumes, which he was willing to edit, and would certainly have edited with good judgment and scrupulous care. It is useless now to set out his plan in detail, but this fragment of his letter on the subject will be still interesting :—

" If James Duffy, or M'Glashan, or both of them, will become the Dublin publishers, I would also take proper steps to get a publisher here who would forward the sale of the work in England.

" One hundred subscribers at £1 would surely not be much to expect, and it would be enough to begin with, *i.e.*, it would cover probable loss. But I have another notion which I must not forget. I never approved of your apparently making James Duffy a present of the copyright of the poems ; and though I saw a note of yours implying such a donation, I hold the gift to be null and void. Duffy and M'Glashan shall publish for love, *and their commission*, or they must not have me as editor. No ! I say this is, in its way, a permanent little property, likely for some few years, if Irish politics retain their interest, to yield a return. Nothing grand, but still something. Davis's family don't want the proceeds. You, as proprietor of the *Nation*, I conceive, waive your claim. I say, after paying all expenses, let any profits the work may produce be vested in trustees (Hudson, yourself, and another), and let them be applied annually in Premiums, to be called '*The Davis Premiums*,' to be given to the best proficients in Irish, entering the four Irish Colleges which are to be."

But to find a publisher in Ireland who would share the responsibility of five volumes proved impossible, and even Dillon thought the project ill-timed :—

" I have had a letter from Dillon (Wallis wrote later) in which he declares himself quite opposed to bringing out an edition of Davis's works at present, his chief reason being the inability of readers to buy and of friends to subscribe."

William Carleton came to the editor's room once a week for a friendly talk, and had seldom occasion to write except

when the task of supporting a large family on the meagre profits of books published in Ireland proved impossible without the aid of his friends. To live by literature in a country where literature is the luxury of a class, not the recreation of a people, was a hard task, and when the middlemen of literature scarcely exceeded two or three, the sensitive immethodic man of letters stood at a painful disadvantage. From my first settlement in Dublin I had known him well, and aimed constantly and not unsuccessfully to restore him to his natural relations to his own country and people from which bigots had alienated him. After the lapse of a generation he made a visit to his native town, and it was pleasant to find the life of the man of genius not only cheered by a cordial reception but illuminated by a few gleams of romance, which brought him face to face with his youth. He wrote me from Clogher :—

“Nothing can surpass the attention I am receiving from all classes and creeds, from high and low. As soon as I return I shall publish a narrative (in the *Nation*) of my visit, my impressions, &c., in all senses and in all moods—on returning after twenty years to my native place. I have made a most singular and bitter discovery here. A girl—a namesake of your own (Anne Duffy)—with whom I fell in love at fourteen, and loved until I was eighteen (I think I never loved seriously since), has now acknowledged to me with tears that the love was mutual. I had never disclosed my passion to her—and her acknowledgment now proves that there never was or can be any true love but *first* love. My heart is bursting and my eyes are overflowing while I write to you, and I feel that this bitter discovery has cast a gloom over my whole future life and filled my heart with a bitterness that will never, never be removed. Oh, great God ! why did I not know it in time ! You could not dream of my misery ; I feel as if my very heart were broken and the span of my life shortened by this most extraordinary but dreadful discovery. She made the acknowledgment with tears and sorrow and the bitterest agony. I have much to tell you when I see you.—Ever, my dear Charles, faithfully yours,

“W. CARLETON.”

Many letters of this time relate to his claim for a literary pension, with which I cordially sympathised. While taxes paid by the Irish people are applied to such a purpose, it is just and reasonable that a fair share should go to Irishmen of letters, but a fair share has never gone. Thomas O'Hagan and Mr. Stewart Blacker, a Conservative gentleman, organised a committee on which the most distinguished men in Ireland served, but they were too far away from the field of political action to influence Lord John Russell, who admitted that the claim was a good one, but pleaded it was anticipated by superior claims. Carleton was not disposed to make allowance for the difficulties of the case, and insisted they ought to give way to justice, which, unhappily, is not their common practice. He obtained at last the goodwill of an English official, which was of more practical service to him than any combination of Irish rank and capacity.

“MY DEAR CHARLES,—I received the following letter this morning from Lord Morpeth—

“May 8, '47.

“SIR,—Though your fame is by no means confined to Ireland, yet I think whenever the application is made to the Prime Minister it will come with most force in the shape of a representation from Ireland in behalf of one of her most successful, though, it appears, very ill-requited authors. Whenever that application is made I should like it to be accompanied by this humble testimony of mine to its propriety, and the honour it would confer on the person who gives it.—I have the honour to be, sir, your very faithful servant,

‘MORPETH.’

“The above was in reply to one of mine in which I stated my own claims in language that startled and agitated myself when I read it over after I had written it. I don't think ever I wrote so powerful a production as the letter I sent him. One of the expressions was ‘I have risen up from an humble cottage and described a whole people.’ I think, however, that matters are in something like a good train at last—thanks to whom? to one who is deeply indebted to your kindness, my dear Charles, and that is your faithful friend,

“W. CARLETON.”

The pension did not come immediately, but it came at last, and brought some tranquillity to a life in which great genius was repressed by constant cares and anxieties. In a Life of Carleton¹ recently published I find a letter which I wrote him at this time. I was in the habit of sending him a free copy of the *Nation* as a testimony of goodwill. It failed to reach him on one occasion, and he assumed that I had stopped it to punish some recent offence which I have forgotten, and wrote to me in a fury. I replied, disposing of the cause of quarrel peremptorily :—

“ I never stopped your paper—never dreamed of stopping, and never intend to stop it. If I were displeased with you, I would not resort to so shabby a means of annoyance ; on the contrary, that is the very time I would be most careful not to remind you of a trifling favour of this sort.”

After dealing with the practical question, I probably fell upon him *à l'outrance* for his insensate rashness. The man of genius repented his violence, and I replied :—

“ My DEAR CARLETON,—You push my words past their legitimate meaning, and I probably wrote them stronger than I felt. For I was deeply wounded that you should treat me as if I were M'Glashan or James Duffy, or Fardorougha. . . . Still, my friend, there is a basis of truth in them. In a gust of passion you are one of the most unjust of men, and shut your eyes to everything but your wrath. That is one side of the account, but only one. No friend was ever firmer in adversity, not swayed a hair's breadth by fear, favour, or worldliness—utterly ignoring all the small, shabby motives that influence common men, impregnable against all things but the tempestuous fury of your own passion. You should be able, if anybody could, to make allowance for my position ; but you were as merciless as Skinadre, and I had not the soft word that turneth away wrath, but was as angry as yourself. Well, well, with all our mutual sins, neither of us will find easily a man who likes him as well, and has been as ready to proclaim it in the face of friends or foes, as the man he was angry with last week.—Always yours,

“ C. G. D.”

¹ “Life of William Carleton.” By W. J. O'Donaghue. London : Downey and Co.

Clarence Mangan was a man of as undoubted genius as William Carleton, and paid the same penalty. He led a life of industry and privation which the crowd to which genius is a puzzle would have honoured if it had not been associated with a weakness which completely mastered him at times. After such a misadventure he came to me in deep distress. I promised that a few friends would find him an adequate income for six months if he would pledge himself to refrain from intoxicating drink for that period. He was quite willing to promise, and honestly designed, I have no doubt, to keep his pledge, and we hoped that if such an experiment proved successful he might be finally rescued from the fiend.

"9, PETER STREET, 8th June.

"MY DEAR DUFFY,—May God for ever bless you ! I know you too well to suppose that you are one to keep the word of promise to the ear and break it to the hope.

"You spoke of getting up as much for me as might pay for half a year's board—though I consume, God knows, very little food indeed. Suppose you were to say a quarter's, instead of a half year's, and allow me the difference in hand to enable me to dispose of my poor half broken-hearted brother, and to settle with my landlord withal. If you do this you will rescue me from the depths of despair. M'Glashan has an Anthology (an Irish one) of mine in his hands, and he owes me about £2 on them. But as they have not yet appeared (though the Anthology is in type) I have an utter repugnance of asking him for any more money. I paid *him* the £7 10s. which he granted me at the same time with your liberal loan. Would to God that I had worked as zealously since for you, my best, my truest, my noblest-hearted friend ! But I will yet retrieve the past in this respect, or may my name be blotted out for ever from the page of the Book of Life ! To the point, however. I have, in my despair, begun a Polyglot Anthology, which I calculate on finishing within a week (for I translate at the rate of about eighty lines a day) . . ."

The end of this letter is missing, but no trafficking with Mr. M'Glashan was necessary to secure him the interval of

tranquillity he sought. Poor forlorn man of genius, there were friends who loved him better than he loved himself.

“9, PETER STREET, 7 o'clock, Saturday Morning.

“MY DEAR DUFFY,—You know well that your right to the ‘Echoes’ is indisputable. If I fancied you did not, I could demonstrate your error by a few figures, arranged ‘according to Cocker.’

“But I also know your generosity. It amazes me: by my soul, it does! If you can derive any satisfaction from knowing that it has given a new impetus to my determination to devote myself almost exclusively to the interests of my country in future, I shall feel the less remorse for having so monstrously trespassed on you.

“Something too much of this, but now ‘tis past.’

“Did it ever occur to you that Maturin’s ‘Milesian Chief,’ the most intensely Irish story I know of—might be brought out in a cheap form to advantage? Did you ever hear of Gamble, the author of ‘Northern Irish Tales’? He made a powerful impression on me when I luxuriated (*a la* Werter) in my teens. His narratives are all domestic and exceedingly melancholy. Something might be done with him, too.

“I told you that I had written a tale for Martin Keene’s Magazine. I have translated a small ballad from one of Müller’s ‘Greek Melodies,’ and have thrown it into several stanzas. It is, however, ‘all one in the Greek.’

“There is a poem of mine in Bull’s printing office these twelve months—about three hundred lines or so. Only think of M’Glashan’s neither printing that nor giving it back to me! It was set up—for I had a proof—and yet— But no matter!

“I would express to you, my dear friend, my sincere regret that you are compelled to devote such a large proportion of your journal to ‘frothy speeches’ (I quote the words of your own paper). Believe me, that until you remedy this defect the great mass of *earnest* readers will peruse even the *Nation* with some degree of apathy and indifference.—Ever yours faithfully,

“J. C. MANGAN.”

Mangan had a passionate admiration for Swedenborg, and he finally sent me one of his books ("Heaven and Hell," I think), with a letter, exhorting me to study it, too long for publication here.

The unhappy man of genius, whose will did not always prove faithful to his good intentions, fell into new troubles, and at length I received this poignant letter from him :—

"**MY DEAR DUFFY**,—I am utterly prostrated. I am in a state of absolute desolation of spirit.

"For the pity of God, come to me. I have ten words to say to you. I implore you to come. Do not suffer me to believe that I am abandoned by Heaven and man.

"I cannot stir out—cannot look any one in the face. Regard this as my last request, and comply with it as if you supposed me dying.

"I am hardly able to hold the pen, but I will not, and dare not, take any stimulants to enable me to do so. Too long and fatally already have I been playing that game with my shattered nerves. Enough. God ever bless you. Oh, come ! —Ever yours,

"**J. C. MANGAN.**"

The letter contained this document—

"For Charles Gavan Duffy, Esq.

"I, James Clarence Mangan, promise with all the sincerity that can attach to the declaration of a human being, to dedicate the portion of my life that may remain to me to penitence and exertion.

"I promise in the solemn presence of Almighty God—and, as I trust with His assistance, to live soberly, abstemiously, and regularly in all respects.

"I promise in the same presence that I will not spare myself—that I will endeavour to do all the good within my power to others—that I will constantly advocate the cause of Temperance, the interests of knowledge, and the duties of patriotism ; and, finally, that I will do all these things irrespective of any concern personal to myself, and whether my exertions be productive of profit and fame to me, or as may happen in the troublous times that I believe are at

hand, eventuate in sinking me still lower into poverty and (undeserved) ignominy.

“This declaration of my intentions with respect to my future purposes I give to Mr. Duffy. I mean with his permission to send similar declarations to my other literary friends, varying the phraseology of them only as his prudence may suggest.

“JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN.”

I besought James M'Glashan, who, in the *Dublin University Magazine*, had got the profit and *éclat* of Mangan's best writings for many years, to encourage him in his new departure by publishing an edition of his poems, and giving him some advance upon them. After protracted negotiation I only obtained his consent by giving him a cheque for £50, to be repaid by copies of the proposed work for my friends, and the “*Anthologia Germanica*” was published. Mangan was eager to express his gratitude by becoming a member of the Irish Confederation ; but I discouraged the proposal. His fantastic dress and eccentric habits made him unfit to mix with the crowd, and his only settled income arose from work done in preparing a catalogue of Trinity College Library, which would probably be forfeited if he became a member of a political association.

Poor Mangan confesses his shortcomings with the frankness of genius ashamed of itself, and his generous exaggeration has been made the subject of ignorant misconceptions which class him with Savage and Dermody, but whatever his secret sins might be he demeaned himself in public like a gentleman. I knew him intimately for more than a dozen years, saw him at all hours, and under all circumstances, and never once when he was not master of himself.

A practical proposal of considerable importance came from Father Kenyon. To check the flood of misrepresentation he suggested that the leading Catholic Confederates throughout the country should publish a declaration of their opinions, and a frank exposure of the calumnies to which they were subjected. While the project was under consideration he gave it a new and practical application by suggesting that it should take the shape of a memorial to the Catholic bishops assembled in National Synod, calling for their protection

against the abuse of episcopal and ecclesiastical authority. In the autumn he wrote to me :—

“ Dr. William Griffin, Alderman O’Hara, and I, have just had an interview with Dr. Ryan, Bishop of Limerick (I having been deputed to that end by the Sarsfield Club, and they, chancing to be here, joining me), for the purpose of obtaining his countenance to our proceedings and his support in certain respects, which I need not here particularise. We failed in our direct purposes, but have opened out a prospect of advancing our cause that has astonished us at once by its unexpectedness and promise. It was Dr. Ryan himself that put us on the track, and I hasten to direct your attention and to engage your research and labour in the project.

“ When the Irish bishops assemble in Synod next November, we Irish Catholic Confederates ought to appear by memorial before their tribunal for the purpose of seeking just redress at their hands from the calumnies and tyrannies that have been practised against us. We are also to solicit judgment upon the evil influence upon our religion of the tactics of the Hall, and of the support, which these tactics have obtained from individual priests and prelates.

“ Doctor Ryan, for one, promises to speak up for us then, although he will not now pronounce publicly upon the prevailing differences.

“ Now, here is a magnificent hope to realise. Might we calculate upon a synodical decision in our favour?—or at least upon such a decision as would suffice to dispel the false pretension of the Hall that the Irish hierarchy are with them? Certainly, I say, the latter; possibly, at least, the former. Doctor Kennedy, of Killaloe, will go with us altogether, and I calculated upon, and, in fact, if our memorial is well planned and skilfully worded I will not despair of a complete triumph.

“ I advise you to communicate at once upon this *most important* movement with such friends of influence as you may have through the country, and in particular with Doctor Daniel Griffin, of Limerick. The *only* stronghold of the Hall lies in their admixture of the priestly influence with their proceedings, and I have no earthly doubt that this admixture will be condemned by the synod as of pernicious influence if its nature and effects be but fairly, calmly, and

respectfully brought under their notice. As a matter of course, all *official* interference of priest or bishops against us will be condemned also. And these results will suffice for us : because if once the people are permitted to reflect upon the merits of our cause, the delusion under which they labour must vanish ; and they will be driven to think on the merits when priestly support, on which alone they now pillow their consciences, shall have slipped from under them."

The project was finally carried out, but without any result worth pausing upon.

This was the editor's room in 1847. The tumult of passion on a battle-field scarcely transcends the torpor of ordinary existence more than the vivid sense of life which beats in the pulses of men who hope to accomplish memorable changes. There was no rivalry among the young men, not only because there was a spirit above personal aims, but because every man's place was ascertained and acknowledged. He had had a free field, and *faisait son fait* according to his gifts. If he did new and unexpected work, as sometimes happened, it was credited to him with no more cavil or contumacy than a sum placed to one's credit by his banker.

My health, which was never robust, gave way under the long strain of responsibility, and I was ordered a few weeks' rest. I projected taking it in the North of England, but a strong remonstrance from my colleagues in London altered my determination, and I made my way to them.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,—You are ill, and out of spirits ; won't be in Dublin for a week, and are within an hour's journey of this. Now listen to me. Put that trash about idling us *out of your head*. Come here. I have a great deal to say to you. Pigot has a great deal to say to you. Lucas has an enormous deal to say to you, and you have, or ought to have, a vast deal to say to the 'True Thomas.' Indeed if it were for nothing else but to get a cup of tea from Mrs. T. T., you ought not to hesitate. You sha'n't idle us. I will work in Chambers every day till three or four. In the meantime you may be with Lucas a-sauntering through the National Gallery, or collecting books from your friend Peitheram in Chancery

Lane. And even if you do, I have a considerable time before me here. I have not much to reproach myself with since I came, and it would be a miserable martinet exactitude, not a good healthy working instinct, that would fear a week's visit from a friend. Come ; we shall have many a good laugh at our friend Tierna's¹ portraiture, and what is better we shall laugh with him at himself. I tell you half an hour's conversation is worth a ream of correspondence. The promised answers shall be communicated verbally.

“ I say all this with of course the reservation that coming here will benefit your health, but I am strongly of opinion that it will. In the first place, any change of air is good ; secondly, your spirits will be raised, which you know will re-act strongly on your body ; and thirdly, I have come to the conclusion that London is absolutely and positively a healthy place ; I have not had the shadow of a cold since I came here, and David Pigot, who is delicate, enjoys far better health than he did in Dublin.

“ John Pigot, I need not say, joins his earnest entreaty to mine. It would be a matter of repentance to us all the winter if any notion about idling us deprived us of the pleasure of seeing you, and deprived you not only of the pleasure of seeing us, but of seeing others whom you must like to see.—Believe me ever, &c.,

“ JOHN O'HAGAN.”

“ I also certify to the healthiness of Babylon—to the steadiness undisturbable of us students therein, and to the falsity, absurdity, stupidity, and John Bullishness of Mr. Duffy's martinet exactitude.

“ Seriously, dear Duffy, I have much to discuss about Davis, which an hour's talk will expedite better than a year's writing.—Your friend,

“ J. E. P.”

I passed a week in London, which yielded all the enjoyments and benefactions my friends anticipated.

The Confederation started with a secretary whom, after my return, they were glad to replace by inducing D'Arcy M'Gee

¹ Tierna was the title given to Pigot in a then recent novel called “ The Falcon Family, or Young Ireland.”

to accept the office. John Pigot, who thought his acceptance a stroke of good luck, wrote to me on the subject :—

“ MONDAY, 5th July.

“ MY DEAR DUFFY,—Thanks for speaking to M'Glashan for me. Tell him in return that I am obliged, and will prepare the Memoir of MacDowell in the course of the summer, for any month he thinks fit.

“ I heard from Bindon on Saturday of M'Gee's acceptance of office, and without any slight of Hamill I may say it was the pleasantest news to me of the Confederation since that body got born. You know I have been some months wishing just that *M'Gee* could have been induced to do this work ; and especially that to have a man of such past and prospective reputation and achievements, literary and other, in this post, reflects on us all a sort of credit and raises the respectability of the body. This above and besides the certainty of having the business rightly done by hands so competent for business. I think we should all be heartily obliged to him for assuming the secretaryship, and I wish you would express to him for me my share of the obligation. It has besides every way increased my respect for and opinion of the man. In haste.—Ever yours truly, “ J. E. P.”

A little later he wrote on another subject which interested me for Davis's sake and Ireland's :—

“ WEDNESDAY, March 3, 1847.

“ I have just had a note from Mrs. *Hutton*. It seems that poor Davis had been very anxious to have Rinuccini's ‘Embassy to Ireland, from 1645 to 1649,’ translated from the Italian (*for a volume of the Irish Library*), and Miss A. H. has been accordingly translating it (I suppose Davis would have printed and edited it, as far as necessary), and she asks me if it would be a suitable thing to do. Now if the Library was going on, nothing could be more suitable, and doubly so after the article in the *Dublin Review* a couple of years ago upon Rinuccini's papers. So I have answered Mrs. H. by telling her how the Library is situated, and saying that had the translation been in *time*, I was convinced it would have been most acceptable for your purpose.

“ I added that I would write to you to find how it could be done.

“ Now, here is what I want :

“ If late for a regular volume, to print the translation, as I have suggested, in the course of summer or autumn. It will sell, I am convinced ; but, in case of any *doubt*, I would be responsible for expenses myself sooner than not gratify Miss H. in this matter.

“ But as you are ‘well *up*’ in the history of 1641, and subsequent years, would you write a proper preface or introduction ?

“ Let me hear from you on that.”

In a letter to John O’Hagan at this time, one may find what, perhaps, the sympathetic reader will discover throughout the entire chapter, some light on the *vie intime* of these young men :—

“ Have you been at Coger’s Hall. There, or at some debating society, you ought to get some training you will never consent to give yourself where you are known. But who knows you in London ? Discipline is as essential here as at Athens, and this, as William says, is the way to cultivate our waste lands. Some of the Maynooth Professors offer to join us in a new periodical, the proprietorship and control being divided between us. I will write you particulars by and by. But the perpetual menace of the famine made attention to any other subject only transient. Men still come back to the question, How can we save our people ? ”

CHAPTER VI

CONFLICTING POLICIES

Important National Meeting in Belfast—Significant letter from Fintan Lalor proposing a new policy—Doheny visits and describes Lalor—Effect of Lalor's letter on the Confederates—O'Brien's apprehensions—Mitchel objects to the introduction of these opinions into the Confederation—O'Brien authorised to draw up a Report on the best means of repealing the Union—Mitchel's criticism of it—Lalor summons a meeting of farmers, but is defeated by William Connor, the "Farmers' Friend"—Mitchel adopts Lalor's principles, but refuses to apply them immediately—Lalor scoffs at delay, and Mitchel finally declares the new opinions ought to be taught in the Confederacy—My Report on the ways and means of establishing an Irish Parliament considered by the Council—Opinion of the Confederate leaders—Its influence down to the present day—Evidence of Mr. Parnell—Mitchel quits the *Nation*—His parting letter to me—Foundation of the *United Irishman*—Public controversy in the Confederation—All the leaders declare against Mitchel's policy, and the meeting condemns it by a decisive majority—He and Reilly retire from the Confederation.

ALL proposals designed to arrest the famine or to stimulate the people in the last extremity of national disaster to protect themselves had totally failed ; and there was nothing in reserve in which to place solid confidence. O'Brien was still persuaded that the gentry—who were disgusted by the wanton waste of national resources and the driftless measures of the Administration—would declare themselves for self-government in decisive numbers if their fear of the democracy could be allayed. But his hopes were not largely shared by the Confederates. The need was deadly, and help of any sort was far away. John Martin had a rooted confidence in his friends and neighbours, the Ulster Presbyterians, and procured a public meeting in Belfast to receive a deputation from the Irish Confederation, which in tranquil times would have been regarded as a signal success. Several influential merchants, a

multitude of Protestant artisans, and Orangemen in considerable numbers, attended, and the young orators were courteously and even generously received in a place where five years before the appearance of O'Connell had threatened civil war. It was a hopeful sign for the future, but the need could not wait for any future. The people could be saved if we got control of our own resources, and we were in a state of national disaster when ends that seemed remote or impossible were sometimes accomplished in a day by a divine frenzy of impatience. We had pledged our lives to the deliverance of Ireland, but the conditions of the problem were constantly changing, and it had become necessary to inquire anew how the thing was to be done. The people could be saved if Ireland had the control of her own interests, and if we could not obtain that control the outlook was tragic. I mooted to some of my colleagues the necessity of carefully considering the plans that were floating in our minds and reducing them to writing that we might test their feasibility.

The desire for such a skeleton map of our route was stimulated by an altogether unexpected event. I received a letter of singular originality and vigour from a correspondent personally unknown to me broaching such a plan, which wanted nothing but feasibility to be acceptable. The writer was James Fintan Lalor, son of Patrick Lalor, of Tinnakill, well known at that time as the author, or at any rate the chief promotor, of the Anti-Tithe movement, which had spread over the entire island a few years earlier. James Lalor was entirely unknown in politics, but he announced himself with a voice of assured confidence and authority. The Repeal movement conducted by O'Connell, he declared, was base and dishonest to the core, and if the Confederation was to be only an honest and respectable copy of the Association it would never accomplish its purpose. There was neither strength nor even a disposition in the country to carry Repeal, but it might be carried even in its most perfect form of national independence if it were associated with another question.

"A mightier question," he added, "is in the land—one beside which Repeal dwarfs down into a petty parish question ; one on which Ireland may not alone try her own right but try the right of the world ; on which you would be not merely an

asserter of old principles, often asserted, and better asserted before her, an humble and feeble imitator and follower of other countries—but an original inventor, propounder, and propagandist, in the van of the earth, and heading the nations ; on which her success or her failure alike would never be forgotten by man, but would make her for ever the lodestar of history ; on which Ulster would be not ‘on her flank’ but at her side, and on which, better and best of all, she need not plead in humble petitions her beggarly wrongs and how beggarly she bore them, nor plead any right save the right of her **RIGHT**.”

He regarded no other question as of any value.

“ **Repeal**,” he said, “ may perish with all who support it sooner than I will consent to be fettered on this question, or to connect myself with any organised body that would ban or merge, in favour of **Repeal** or any other measure, that greatest of all our rights on this side of heaven—God’s grant to Adam and his poor children for ever, when He sent them from Eden in His wrath and bid them go work for their bread. Why should I name it ? ”

On the method of accomplishing this stupendous purpose he was not specific, but he laid down general principles, which would clear the field of impediments to any adequate method.

The pledges which many of the Young Irelanders, especially Mitchel, had given to employ only legal means he treated with scorn.

“ As regards the use of none but legal means, any means and all means might be made illegal by Act of Parliament ; and such pledge, therefore, is passive obedience. As to the pledge of abstaining from the use of any but moral force, I am quite willing to take such pledge, if, and provided, the English Government agree to take it also ; but ‘ if not, not.’ Let England pledge not to argue the question by the prison, the convict-ship, or the halter ; and I will readily pledge not to argue it in any form of physical logic. But dogs tied and stones loose is no bargain. Let the stones be given up ; or unmuzzle the wolf-dog. There is one at this moment in every cabin throughout the land, nearly fit already to be untied—and he will be savager by and by. For **Repeal**, indeed, he

will never bite, but only bay ; but there is *another* matter to settle between us and England."

He demeaned himself to the end of this memorable letter like the Sibyl proffering the inestimable books to a people to whom they brought the only chance of salvation.

"Is there any apology required for addressing you in this manner ? I don't know. Perhaps I have no right—though I have been a Seceder since I ceased to be a child. I owe to you some gratitude. *You have given me a country.* Before your time I was an alien and an exile, though living in my own land. I hope you won't make me one again."

There was nothing that repelled me in this startling programme. If by the method proposed, or by any other method, the people could be saved, and the sceptre of authority replaced in the hands of Ireland, it would be thrice welcome. I circulated the letter among my colleagues, and invited Lalor, instead of addressing himself to my private ear, to broach his theory in the *Nation*, and let the country judge of it. In our unhappy case his proposal was, good or bad, not in proportion to its natural equity (there were already too many acknowledged equities which could not be enforced), but in proportion to its power of getting itself accomplished. He accepted my counsel, and addressed himself first to the landlords. He painted in glowing colours the position they might attain in Ireland if they resolved to do solid justice to the tiller of the soil.

"Ireland is yours for ages yet, on the 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 very existence on English support, which England soon may 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."

And he warned them of the perils which he undoubtedly believed would attend their refusal. A section of them, he assumed, had already practically refused.

"And so, it seems, *you* have doomed a people to extinction, and decreed to abolish Ireland ? The undertaking is a large one. Are you sure your strength will bear you through it ?

Or are you sure your strength will not be tested ? The settlement you have made requires nothing to give it efficacy, except the assent or acquiescence of eight millions of people. Will they assent or acquiesce ? Will Ireland at last perish like a lamb and let her blood sink in the ground, or will she turn as turns the baited lion ? Your path of safety as well as of honour is now the public highway. No bye-way of your own will carry you through the perils that beset, and the greater perils that are before you."

In another letter he addressed himself to the people, and describing the means by which he believed they might secure their national rights, he did not advise insurrection in which they could not hold their own against the army of occupation.

"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 an engine, to some other question strong enough to carry both itself and Repeal.

"But there was another class of means and mode of force which might be employed, he would call it Moral Insurrection, because its action would be defensive, not aggressive. It was based on the principle that every nation of men is owner of itself, and can never of right be bound to submit to be governed by another people, and that a nation was entitled to assert this principle by refusing obedience to usurped authority, and maintaining and defending such refusal. But how was it to shape its disobedience so that it might be successful ? It must select *one law* for disobedience, because it was impossible successfully to refuse obedience to the entire code of the dominant country ; this one law must be essential to Government, must form no part of the Moral Code, and must be easily resisted and hard to enforce. Could any such law be named in a country where there were no direct taxes ? The one impost that could be refused he indicated as *rent*, and this was a contest for which an army would be found in the agricultural population. He entreated

the Confederates to fall back on this measure. 'By one move alone you can meet and match—and by that same move you will checkmate England.'

Doheny, who lived in a neighbouring county, visited Lalor, and found the dogmatic, domineering tribune a deformed man, lame, deaf, near-sighted; and when his emotion was vivid almost inaudible from passion. "I could not be persuaded," he wrote to me, "that I had before me, in the poor, distorted, ill-favoured, hunchbacked creature, the bold proounder of the singular doctrines in the *Nation* letters." But his intellectual thews and sinews were in excellent condition, and it was by them he must be judged.

The letters made a profound impression on the Confederates generally, and especially on Father Kenyon and Mitchel. Mitchel was much perplexed; the theory of moral insurrection looked feasible and was abstractly just in a country where the people were perishing of hunger among food which they had created, but it flatly contradicted the doctrines he had been preaching since he came into public life. He had outrun and amazed his comrades by the declaration that he would feel it his public duty to arrest and hand over to justice any one whom he discovered mooted the question of physical force in the popular organisation. And later he had discriminated his opinion from Meagher's, who would not repudiate a resort to arms in all contingencies, by declaring that for his part he did not intend to employ force for the deliverance of Ireland in the present, the future, or the paulo-post future. He had much confidence in O'Brien's power to draw a section of the gentry into our ranks, and he declared that to introduce Lalor's doctrine into the Confederation would be as manifest a violation of good faith as were John O'Connell's sectarian harangues in Conciliation Hall. He wrote to O'Brien in this sense, admitting that he was attracted by these new opinions, but determined to resist their introduction into the Confederation:—

"I received your letter," he wrote to O'Brien, "re-enclosing those of Mr. Kenyon, Lalor, and Trenwith. And I need hardly repeat what I mentioned to you before, that my views of those gentlemen's doctrines entirely agree with yours, so far as the practical interference of the Confederation is

concerned. And to that effect I have expressed myself in my replies to all three. As to the abstract justice of the case indeed, and the ultimate settlement of the tenure question, which should be kept steadily in view, my doctrine is nearly identical with Lalor's. And if Ireland were now *sui juris*, I should give all the help I could to any fair movement to realise and give effect to those doctrines. And in the meantime I hold it to be no more than bare honesty on my part, and on the part of those who think with me, to say what we think on those points. . . . I also have full confidence in the principle of the Confederation, and mean to work steadily in accordance with it. The expostulations of my correspondents have not at all converted me ; on the contrary, I hope yet to convert them—at least, two of them—not from their theories, but from their scheme of practically carrying them out ; and I hope to see Lalor and Father Kenyon (neither of whom we can afford to lose) working cordially with us yet.”¹

In O'Brien's opinion these doctrines, whether just or unjust, would dissipate all hopes of winning any section of the gentry, and I gathered from the tone of his private correspondence that it would be a comfort to him if he could retire with honour from a contest growing hopeless. In reply I insisted that there was no course for any of us but an onward one. We had broken with O'Connell for abandoning the cause, and under the circumstances could we follow his example ? But we might make our course clear and hopeful by having that done on which we had already agreed in conversation, by formulating the plan on which we relied for restoring the Irish Parliament. When O'Brien came to town, the question was formally raised, and the Council directed that a Report on this subject should be prepared. It was not to deal with the famine, but exclusively with the question of how the end to which we were pledged of restoring the Irish Parliament might be accomplished.

The task was entrusted to O'Brien. His Spartan integrity and veracity made it certain that he would rely on no placebo, but specify the exact truth of facts and principles. After a couple of weeks he sent me the rough draft of his *projet*.

¹ Cahirmoyle Correspondence in the possession of Mr. O'Brien's son and successor.

It was less satisfactory than I had expected, and Mitchel wrote to him :—

"As to your Report on the means by which the Union may be repealed Duffy and I have read it together : and we both think such a document ought to be more *specific*. Indeed, I begin to be sorry we promised such a programme of Repeal at all, because revolutions of that kind never transact themselves according to programme. Your idea in drawing up this seems to have been that the only thing specific we can point out is the mode of bringing up the public mind to a state of preparedness, and keeping it there, so as to be eager to seize any opportunity. But Duffy says what he had in his mind when he promised (in the Organisation Report) a Report on this subject was that we should have some rational answer to give to practical but timid people who ask *how* we meant to repeal the Union. Now, I think, if such an answer be attempted at all, it must develop not one sole plan followed out to the end, but three or four of the possible and probable series of events which may eventually lead to the result. It must show (for one way) how a Parliamentary campaign conducted honestly and boldly might bring the state of public business in Parliament to such a position that Repeal would be the only solution,¹ for another way, how systematic passive opposition to and contempt of *law* might be carried out through a thousand details so as to virtually supersede English dominion here, and make the mere Repealing statute an immaterial formality (this, I may observe, is *my way*)—and for a third way, how, in the event of a European war, a strong National party in Ireland could grasp the occasion to do the whole work instantly, with perhaps half a dozen other contingencies and their possible use. It should also show how, and to what extent, all these methods of operation might be combined. I think such a paper could be drawn up so as neither to be dangerous in point of law nor futile from vagueness, and might really shed some light on the dubious road we have to travel. It is not very clear to me that it is wise to attempt such a thing, but certainly we do not like *this* Report as an exposition of Confederate policy. If we could

¹ This was the method I had insisted on—C. G. D. "Cahirmoyle Correspondence."

avoid the necessity of furnishing a scheme of repealing the Union altogether, it might be best of all. Such a document at best would be little other than a mark for criticism to the sneering enemy."

At the same time I wrote to O'Brien :—

"Your Report would make a useful lecture, but my notion of the document required is one which would be as exact and comprehensive as one of Napoleon's plans of a campaign, sent to a particular general to fight it out. And even if we did not publish it I hold it to be essential to have such a document drawn up, after mature consideration and discussion. . . . Men never get even their own ideas clearly before them till they have written them out. What is best to do, perhaps, is to discuss our policy thoroughly when you come to town, and then to draw up the document for our future guidance. . . . Lalor proposes one plan. We must answer that, not by a series of plans, but, if possible, by one other and more practical measure. If there be no such answer we are ploughing the sea ; but assuredly there is."

In the end the Council committed the task of preparing the Report to me, and, when it was produced some weeks later, I must speak of it somewhat in detail, as that document not only signally influenced the course of the Confederation, but influenced in a notable manner the public policy of Ireland from that period to this.

Lalor grew impatient of the hesitation which the Confederates who agreed with him continued to exhibit, and he summoned a public meeting of farmers to consider their position. Unfortunately he altogether wanted the physical gifts which control a multitude, and he was encountered by William Connor, then known as the Farmers' Friend, who scorned his abstract theories and insisted that all that was wanted was valuation of rents and perpetuity of tenure. The farmers leaned to what they regarded as the more practical proposal, and Lalor received the first of many painful lessons how little his southern peasants realised the vision he had conceived of savage wolf-dogs ready to be unmuzzled.

But in the meantime his opinions were gathering force among men of ardent disposition. Mitchel wrote to him that he fully adopted his principles except in the method and

time of applying them.¹ On these points he used the arguments which he had promised O'Brien to employ. But Lalor scoffed at delay and compromise. If his opinions were good they were good at that time and place. And he pricked Mitchel with the contemptuous criticism which, to a man of his nature, was hardest to bear.

"The question of time (Lalor wrote to him), is everything. I want a prepared, organised, orderly, and resistless revolution. *You* would only have an unprepared, disorderly, and vile *jacquerie*. You plead against locking the stable door until the horse has been stolen, or is about to be stolen. But the lock and key have yet to be forged. You won't help to forge them. But you may possibly overtake us and help to see the door locked by others. Good. . . . Ireland was ready to strip for battle, and none flinched but the fire-eaters."

At length Lalor, aided by Kenyon, prevailed, and Mitchel declared that the Confederation and the *Nation* ought to pronounce for the new opinions. In one day he changed the practice and policy of his life as completely as a man does who substitutes a military uniform for the vest and paletot of a civilian, and his recent promise to O'Brien not to intrude Lalor's opinions on the Confederation was soon abandoned. His change of policy was ill received by his comrades. The Council of the Confederation were still as opposed as he himself had been some weeks earlier to breaking faith with their supporters, and as regards the *Nation* I placed a distinct limit on the extent to which it could be introduced there. I was content that Lalor or Mitchel or Kenyon should advocate their opinions in letters bearing their own signatures, but in leading articles or literary criticism they would make me and others, who did not agree with them, morally responsible for them, and this I could not permit. In this personal narrative my share in the transaction must be made plain and intelligible. My opposition to Lalor's policy was based not on moral but strictly on political grounds.

¹ "I see no reason to prevent me from mentioning that, in about a month from the date and delivery of my paper, I received a letter from John Mitchel stating that, on perusal and consideration of its contents, he had fully adopted my views, and that he meant to act on them as soon as occasion should fit and serve."—J. F. Lalor to the Confederate Club, June, '48.

I believed it had not the slightest chance of success. His angry peasants straining to break their chains were creatures of the imagination. The actual peasants had endured the pangs of famine with scarcely a spurt of resistance. They had been taught by O'Connell that armed resistance to authority was justifiable under no circumstances ; while they were perishing in every county in the island they were still taught that submission was their duty, and they submitted and died. Pauper alms carried to their homes, pauper works, which even to their eyes were worthless, further demoralised them, till the spirit of manhood was almost extinct. Mitchel had never been in Munster or seen the peasants on whom we were bid to rely, and his sincere patriotism and courage were not fortified by practical capacity or the inestimable faculty of knowing what can be accomplished. In all his public career, which from this time till his death, more than thirty years later, was conducted in the sunshine, it will be impossible to find one practical suggestion of any value. Of eloquence and enthusiasm he had much, but of the capacity which measures the sure road to success in any enterprise not a scintilla.

If we made this experiment which he approved, at what a prodigious cost we must make it ? Not only O'Brien's hope of winning the gentry must be abandoned ; that was little ; but O'Brien himself and the cultivated classes represented by Ferguson and O'Loghlen, who governed themselves by judgment and conscience, and whose aim was to revive the entire Irish nation, would certainly leave us. We should have broken faith with our friends of every degree, and the lesson of integrity and veracity, which we had taught as guiding maxims to the new generation would have lost their meaning. Without the men of mind, success in reviving the Irish nation was entirely impossible ; without that class no successful revolution had ever been made. In America, in France, in Greece, and in Belgium men, trained to think, stood at the head of the revolution, and brought it brains and guidance. A rising of peasants, or of an urban populace, was like a fire made of brambles and shavings ; it speedily burnt itself out. And the case was not one which admitted of compromise ; if the policy did not lead to success it led to speedy and cer-

tain ruin. But if we did not accept Lalor's dazzling theory, what were we to do? I insisted that in rejecting it we were bound to substitute a better one for it, and as the plan which I had been directed to draw up was now ready, I proposed to submit it to the Council of the Confederation. A meeting was summoned, and members at a distance warned of the vital importance of the occasion and urged to attend.

Dillon, O'Hagan, and I had long conferences with Mitchel. We were persuaded he was going to destroy himself and probably the public cause, and as we had a sincere affection for him we spared no pains to bring him to reason. But he would not yield. If he could not preach Lalor's theories in the journal and in the Confederation he would establish a weekly paper in Cork or Belfast, where he would be free to pursue his policy to the end. John Martin came much to me on the same business and as a general peacemaker.¹ But as he did not agree with the new policy, and only argued in the name of what he called free opinion that Mitchel ought to be allowed to have his way, he wasted his time. To allow him to have his way was to permit the people to be taught with my sanction that the sure road to liberty was the refusal to pay poor rate, for he had modified Lalor's proposal to refuse the payment of rent (the income of the landlords) into the prodigious absurdity of a refusal to pay poor rate destined for the support of the suffering poor. During these negotiations Mitchel tried my spirit sorely by writing for the *Nation* opinions which he knew I would not sanction. In one article he defended the perpetual slavery of the negro, and in another objected peremptorily to the emancipation of the Jews. He had learned these opinions from Thomas Carlyle, but they made a strangely unsuitable equipment for a spokesman of Irish liberty. I struck these professions out of the

¹ At the same time Martin wrote to O'Brien:—

"I do not see how Mitchel can remain in Dublin. He will not dream of starting a paper in opposition to Duffy—that is, a weekly paper. There is talk of getting a daily paper established as a shareholding concern with him for editor, and that he should be entirely uncontrolled save by the interference of a committee at the end of each year, to dismiss him if thought advisable. But he won't conduct any paper except one which shall be his own property. Therefore he must go to Belfast or Cork, and there try to establish a new weekly Mitchelite paper. I wish he were fairly started in this new undertaking. It may give new life to the National cause. . . . Mitchel and Duffy are still the most cordial friends."

article, but it was manifestly impossible to go on together, and we agreed to separate. It was in these terms Mitchel took leave of me after nearly three years' association :—

“ I do not blame you in the *slightest particular* ; and, moreover, I am quite certain I could not have worked in subordination to *any other man alive* near so long as I have done with you. And lastly, that I give you credit in all that is past for acting on good and disinterested motives, with the utmost sincerity, and also with uniform kindness to me personally.”

All the public proceedings which ensued, down to the defeat and dispersion of the Young Irelanders, followed in quick succession to the differences which had thus arisen between Mitchel and me. From that time we pushed, each of us to the best of his ability, the policy on which he relied. The reader who follows out this narrative will be in a position to judge for himself. But the weights and scales of his criteria ought to be accurate. I aimed to be a statesman, and I may be justly reproached for having fallen short of that ideal ; but it would be strangely unjust to reproach me with not being a demagogue, a career which was odious and impossible to me. In the private letters of the period, where the Confederates expressed their most secret convictions, the new departure was treated with scorn. “ The peasantry of Munster,” said Meagher, “ know as little of Mitchel as of Mahomet,” and to O’Brien he wrote :—

“ I feel—in my soul I believe—that an unconstitutional mode of action would not in present circumstances succeed. I am convinced that the only mode we can adopt, the only policy which we can successfully conduct, is the constitutional policy advised by Duffy. And yet, when I see the tyrannical spirit of the upper classes, the Government, the Parliament, when I mark the glee with which they hail the coercion measure now in force ; when I find the most peaceful districts in Ireland proclaimed, and have in our very streets and towns the most insolent display of artillery and police and dragoons ; when I see all this, and observe that, moreover, there is not the least change of spirit among the gentry—no generous national sentiment stirring among them—but on the contrary a vile thankfulness to that country for

its 'protection,' which last year cuffed and spat upon them ; when I see all this, my heart sinks under a weight of bitter thoughts, and I am almost driven to the conclusion that it would be better to risk all, to make a desperate effort, and fix at once the fate of Ireland."

Pigot, to the same correspondent, declared that Mitchel's policy was insurrection, without its courage or its resources. O'Gorman said he would prefer quitting the Confederation rather than be held responsible for this perilous folly. "I am now inclined," he added, "to desire a public discussion. I would not suffer myself long to rest under the imputation of holding opinions so dangerous." How little our objection to the new policy arose from undue sympathy with the class it threatened may be estimated from the terms in which I wrote to O'Brien :—

" If you or any one else can induce the gentry to make common cause with the people we all may be saved ; if not, if they go on maintaining English dominion, which robs us now of our daily bread (in addition to its old hereditary sins), neither God nor man will tolerate them.^x

Up to this time there had never been any jealousy or intrigue in the party ; the young men had faced danger together gallantly, and loved each other for the memory of the dangers they had passed. They had feasted and rollicked together, and the *camaraderie* was perfect. In ordinary circumstances one could have confidently spoken for them all ; but here were propositions more offensive to good sense and honour than the Peace Resolutions, and which were equally impossible to accept. It was a painful task for intrepid, high-spirited young men to tell the people that a daring proposal was mere folly. As it was dangerous as well as daring a cynical reader may assume that their motive is not difficult to surmise ; but oh, cynical reader, six months had not elapsed, as we shall see, till every one of these young men was staking his life in the Irish quarrel.

When Mitchel retired from the *Nation* he established the *United Irishman* in Dublin. The new journal indicated its policy by a motto from Wolfe Tone, announcing that if the men of property would not help the cause, recourse would

^x These letters are extracted from the Cahirmoyle Correspondence.

be had to a worthier class—the men of no property. Its bold and defiant tone attracted wide attention. Mitchel adopted Lalor's theory, with an exception, indeed, which amazed those who were familiar with its genesis; there was not the slightest allusion to the existence of the author from whom it was derived. After a time it became known that Mitchel had invited Lalor's assistance in his journal, and that Lalor had refused to act with him. He was indignant that Mitchel had announced, as if it were his own, the policy borrowed from him. Whilst the *United Irishman* existed the name of James Lalor was never mentioned in it; on the contrary, the new proposals were habitually spoken of as "my policy," "the policy of me, J. M.," to the wrath and rage of the solitary recluse at Tinakill. But Lalor's bitterest complaint was not that Mitchel had appropriated his plan, but that he had rendered it futile and ridiculous by applying it to a wrong purpose. Had these two men been able to work together cordially and sincerely they might have produced memorable good. Lalor was a profound and original thinker, gifted with a masculine eloquence, pervaded by a sense of reality singularly persuasive. He had announced principles which, though they did not furnish a present remedy for the devouring famine, were worthy of being conscientiously investigated. But to interpret them to the industrious classes, who are taught chiefly through the ear, was a task for which he was altogether unfit. Deaf, near-sighted, husky, and almost inaudible, his only tribune was the newspaper. Mitchel, on the contrary, had a handsome presence and pleasing manners. His style was less vigorous than Lalor's, but it was more graceful and cultured, and with practice he became a ready and fluent speaker. He had told Lalor at the outset that he accepted his opinions. Had he told the same to the people, and frankly advocated the doctrine of the master like a loyal and affectionate neophyte, the result would have been widely different, for in practical affairs Lalor had singularly sound judgment—to ignore the master, and to set up for himself with a totally inadequate capital of practical sense, was a fatal mistake.

On the day fixed for considering my Report on the Ways and Means of obtaining an Independent Irish

Parliament the leaders of the Confederation were in their places.

The problem referred to me was not how to abate the famine, but by what method, if any, the Irish Parliament could be re-established, and the control of their own affairs restored to the Irish people. Could the thing be done at all, and, if so, how and when? No short cut or *coup de théâtre* was expected, but such a deliberate survey of the route as might have preceded the first Repeal meeting.

The Report¹ had a wide field to cover, but I will endeavour to extract its essence in a few paragraphs.

Since the death of O'Connell there was no AUTHORITY in Ireland recognised by the whole nation and able to counsel it successfully; but to a national movement which would succeed, such an authority was indispensable. I was persuaded it might be re-created; not in the old shape, but in a shape as effectual. A small number of able and honest men, who devoted their lives to the purpose, might constitute the nucleus from which such a power would grow. They would win authority in the most legitimate way by deserving it. The first condition of success was that they should be governed not only by fixed principles but by a scheme of policy carefully framed and deliberately worked out to the end. The sudden explosion of an outraged people has sometimes given liberty to a nation; but mere turbulence or agitation, with no definite scheme of action, never. The Repeal Association was a disastrous example in later times; it was like a great steam power which turned no machinery.

The first agent we wanted was a Parliamentary Party. It need not be a large party, but it must include men trained in political science, and familiar with the past and present of Ireland, and who would devote themselves to the task till it was accomplished. The House of Commons is a platform which all Europe looks upon, and the Irish Party must teach all Europe to understand the iniquity of English government in Ireland in the way they understood the case of Italy or of Poland. This course would not only revive the sympathy of

¹ Report on the Ways and Means of Attaining an Independent Irish Parliament. Dublin: Printed for the Irish Confederation by James Charles, 61, Mary Street. 1848.

foreign nations, but win that of just Englishmen ; and, still better, would gain the trust of the Irish people by effectual work done on their behalf. In an assembly so divided as the British Parliament, against party leaders so weak as those who governed England in our time, such a league would be formidable. A score of Irish members of adequate capacity and character might rule the House. No previous failure counted for anything against this project, because there never had been such an Irish Party in the British Parliament. For it must be distinctly understood that it was not by consent of Parliament, but in spite of it, not by its grace and favour, but because of its utter impotence against the right, vigorously asserted, that we would succeed. This Irish Party must be kept pure and above suspicion by a pledge never to ask or accept favours for themselves or others from any Government, and must exhibit no preference between Whig and Tory. Whoever could help Ireland were their friends. Such a Party encamped within the walls of Parliament, would, in the language of a high Conservative authority, be "more formidable than armed insurrection."

For success it was altogether indispensable that they should be the authentic representatives of the Irish nation, and their main business would be to increase and fortify national opinion at home, from which their authority would spring. The Confederates at home must labour to secure the election to the corporations and boards of guardians of men of trust, intelligence, and perseverance. These representative bodies might act as local Parliaments, and supply as far as possible by counsel and guidance the present want of a Legislature. Ireland had never since '82 put forth systematically the power that lies in the awakened public spirit of a nation to *help* itself. That power might be developed as effectively in great industrial and commercial efforts, or in conquering natural impediments to prosperity, as in war. So it was in Holland, so it was in Canada, so it was in some of the States of America. Such a public spirit would have saved us from famine in 1847 ; it might lay the basis of a new social system in 1848. The power of the organisation should be also constantly directed against foreign institutions. The numerous commissions of foreigners who pretended to transact Irish

business should not only be incessantly watched and controlled, but as many of them as possible superseded by voluntary boards composed of Irishmen.

If these powers were wisely used, hurting no Irish interest, some of the grand juries would be won to the same views as they had been in '43. Ulster would probably follow, for with the North nationality was only a question of time and securities.

When the representatives in Parliament had made the case of Ireland plain to all men, and when the organisation at home had been so successful as to raise these representatives, however few in number, to the undeniable position of the spokesmen of a nation, it would be their right and duty (as it was demonstrably within their power) to stop the entire business of the House of Commons till the Constitution of Ireland was restored. But this was a measure which, to be successful, must be taken on behalf of a nation. It must have the authority of an outraged nation to justify it, and raise it above the tactics of mere party strife, and the strength of a banded nation to maintain it if it were violently suppressed. For from such a position there seemed but two outlets—that of concession to Ireland, or the forcible ejection of the Irish representatives from the House of Commons. If the former, our end is attained ; if the latter, let the rejected members fall back upon the banded and organised people whom they represent.

In a crisis like this a great Council of the Nation, consisting of all the elected representatives of the people in Parliament or in local institutions, must be summoned. Such a Council would naturally demand the restoration of the Irish Parliament. A like demand was conceded without parley in 1782, and it still must be conceded whenever it became undeniably a national demand. But if not, the people would again have an authority created by themselves, and they would adopt any measure which it counselled. The English Minister would probably capitulate, as Peel capitulated to Canada in 1842. If not, a nation of seven millions united in a single purpose, and guided by trusted counsellors, would know how to enforce their will.

Under the present circumstances of the country this was

our policy to win an independent Parliament for Ireland. If there were any shorter road open to a people so divided and broken as ours, I did not know it. For to create not merely a vague desire, but a confident trust, in our ways and means was a necessary preliminary to success. We must choose our path once for all, and if it was not the right path, remember that every step was a step astray.

The Council occupied themselves with this report for several days, the opposition to it being represented by Mitchel and Reilly. It is enough now to say that every man of note on the Council accepted the report as adequately representing their opinions.¹ Mitchel proposed as a substitute for it what was in effect Lalor's scheme of moral insurrection, though he did not give it Lalor's name. Half a century has since elapsed, during which Ireland has been deeply distressed and discontented, but no province, county, parish, townland, or single farmhouse has tried the plan on which Lalor and Mitchel relied. On the other hand, whatever has been gained for the people, the first recognition of Tenant Right by the House of Commons won by the Tenant League of 1852, and the Fixed Rent and Fixed Tenure won twenty years later by the party organised by Mr. Parnell, were won on the fundamental principles of that report. Into the first Parliamentary Party of independent opposition I carried these principles, and the second party, as its leader frankly declared, borrowed them from the leaders of 1852.²

¹ Jan. 17th : Special adjourned meeting of Council. Mr. Duffy's Report ; several clauses adopted.

Jan. 21st : Further adjourned meeting. Mr. Mitchel moved that the principal paragraph be omitted. *Ayes*—Mitchel, Reilly, P. J. Barry, James Cantwell, Philip Gray, and Byrne. *Noes*—Meagher, O'Gorman, Pigot, Dillon, John Williams, Doheny, Dr. West, M. R. O'Farrell, Michael Crean, Hollywood, Taaffe, Condon, M'Dermott, Dangan, and the mover. —Minute Book of the Irish Confederation.

² "Mr. Asquith : Do you remember the passing of the Ballot Act in 1872 ?

"Mr. Parnell : Yes. The passing of the Ballot Act in 1872 was the first public event which more intimately directed my attention to politics. I thought that, arising out of the passage of that Act, the political situation in Ireland was capable of very great change. I had some knowledge—not very deep knowledge—of Irish history, and had read about the Independent Opposition movement of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy and the late Mr. Frederick Lucas in 1852, and whenever I thought about politics I always thought that that would be an ideal movement for the benefit of Ireland. Their idea was an independent party reflecting the opinions of

Before my Report passed entirely through Committee O'Brien was of opinion that it had become necessary to carry the question before a public meeting of the Confederation, which must make a choice between the principles on which it was founded and the new opinions which it was proposed to teach it. A day was accordingly fixed, when the question was fairly and frankly debated.

O'Brien opened the debate with moderation and dignity. He repudiated Mr. Mitchel's policy in the first place, because it would be fatal to the interests of the people it proposed to serve.

"At the outset it was destructive of the poor ; for, if the poor rate was not paid, how could they be fed ? To use the Confederation for preaching this policy would be to make it the instrument of increasing the deaths by starvation by hundreds of thousands. The people were advised to procure arms ; but under English law it was an offence punishable with two years' imprisonment to possess arms in a proclaimed district ; and there were six counties already proclaimed. It would be proper for those who gave this advice to try the experiment themselves, and not leave it to be made by helpless, uneducated men, for if the advice were acted upon the end would inevitably be a massacre. And let it be remembered that to preach this policy in the Confederation would break faith with their own members. The Confederates, in answer to opponents, had repeatedly and solemnly denied, in the face of God and their country, by speeches and by specific resolutions, that it was their intention to have recourse to insurrection. If Mr. Mitchel thought that a different policy ought to be now adopted by the country, it was open to him to invite those who agreed with him to form an association for this purpose, but it was not open to him to use the Confederation, which had obtained support by professing constitutional doctrines for a directly adverse object.

the masses of the people ; acting independently in the House of Commons, free from the influence of either English political party ; pledged not to take office, or form any combination with any English political party until the wants of Ireland had been attended to. The passing of the Ballot Act rendered this possible in my judgment, because for the first time it enabled the Irish electors to vote free from the coercion of the Irish landlords."—Vol. vii. Official Report of the Parnell Commission.

Mr. Parnell was examined on April 30, 1889.

“How, indeed, could the organisation exist at all with opinions so conflicting? If he and his friend, Mr. Ross, of Bladensburg, who formed a connecting-link between North and South, were sent to Newry as a deputation to convince the friends of order in Ulster that they would forfeit none of the interests they held dear by joining the Confederation, were they to be told at the same time by Mr. Mitchel that there could be no combination of classes, and that they must prepare for guerilla warfare?

“Between these courses of action the Confederates must choose, for they were totally incompatible with each other. Their decision would determine whether he and others could continue to be members. He concluded by moving a series of ten resolutions, of which this was the keynote:—‘That this Confederation was established to attain an Irish Parliament by the combination of classes and by the force of opinion, exercised in constitutional operations; and that no means of a contrary character can be recommended or promoted through its organisation while its present fundamental rules remain unaltered.’

“John Pigot seconded the motion, because he believed the good faith of the body was pledged to such a disavowal.

“Mr. Mitchel’s reply was far from being an answer to this serious impeachment. The rules of the Confederation, he said, no doubt declared that the members were to attain their ends by ‘force of opinion’ among other agencies; but what did opinion mean? Must it be always legal, always peaceful? They were told, indeed, it was opinion and sympathy, and other metaphysical entities, that rescued Italy, and scared Austria back from Ferrara without a blow. Yes, but it was opinion with the helmet of a National Guard on his head, and a long sword by his side; it was opinion standing, match in hand, at the breech of a gun charged to the muzzle. . . . To Mr. O’Brien’s objection, that to admit his doctrine would be to break faith with certain Confederates, he replied that, by adopting the proposed resolution, the meeting would break faith with him and others who never would have consented to be limited to constitutional action. He had no faith in a Parliamentary Party. After describing the repeated attempts to obtain a combination of classes, which had all failed, he

concluded by moving an amendment declaring that the Confederation did not feel called upon to promote, or condemn, doctrines promulgated by its members in letters or speeches, because one of the fundamental rules specified that no member should be bound by any proceeding of that character to which he had not given his special assent."

The controversy is fully epitomised in another work¹; here it will be only necessary to recall the carte and tierce of debate; the points where weapons clash or a palpable hit is made.

Michael Doheny, afterwards one of the founders of the Fenian societies in America, who certainly did not want pluck or sympathy with daring enterprise, repudiated the new policy, because it lacked all possibility of success. Let the people resist the collection of rates armed with muskets and pitchforks, and they would lay their bodies on their fields, or if they had a momentary success deliver them to the gibbet. The peasantry had not arms, but if they had, why conceal the fact that the majority of them would use them not for the Confederation but against it?

P. J. Smyth, who afterwards rescued Mitchel from his jailors in Tasmania, scoffed at his proposal. They were asked to rely on a single class, and that one the lowest of all—on men directly under the influences which impelled the mobs of Limerick and Kilkenny and Belfast to assail the Confederates. How could even this class be reached? With the upper and middle classes in hostility, as well as the priesthood, it would be impossible by speaking or writing to induce a single parish in Ireland to rise in insurrection.

D'Arcy M'Gee opposed the new policy, not because it was treason against the law, but because it was treason against common sense. Opinion, they were told, to be successful, must be armed, if so it was very successful in Ireland. They were ruled by opinion represented by Sir Edward Blakeney with the *bâton* of Commander-in-Chief in his hand. But *not* such was the opinion which had conquered the world. What was the fashion of Paul's sword or Peter's cuirass? In what sort of armour did Leo confront Attila? With how many legions did St. Augustine convert Africa to the faith? Mr.

¹ "Four Years of Irish History."

Mitchel denied that he was for immediate insurrection, but what did that denial mean? If the Lord Lieutenant proclaimed a district and ordered the arms to be given up, if they were not given up the police and military would be called out. Mr. Mitchel says, in such a case, the people must sell their lives as dearly as they can. This was immediate collision. Were the men so incited to resist to be left to their fate? Surely not; they must be supported, and this was immediate insurrection. The union of classes was denounced as absurd and impossible, but in our history the one problem which had engaged the constant meditation of Irish patriots was to combine classes, not to divide them. "To combine classes Roger O'Moore embraced Preston of Gormanstown on the summit of Knocklofty in 1641—to combine classes Sarsfield rode from Limerick town to Galway Garrison to bring back Tyrconnell—to combine classes Henry Grattan sent the resolution in favour of Catholic Emancipation to the Convention of Dungannon—to combine classes Wolfe Tone, a Protestant, became secretary to the Catholics of Ireland—to combine classes O'Connell drank 'the glorious, pious, and immortal memory of William the Third'—to combine classes Thomas Davis thought, laboured, and lived."¹

Michael Crean, an intelligent artisan, much respected in the Confederation, inquired how the arms on which we were invited to rely were to be procured. Were men to be told to buy guns who could not buy a loaf to save their lives?

Mr. Ross, of Bladensburg, illustrated from recent foreign history the peril of preaching hostility to classes in a national struggle. Austria stimulated the Polish peasantry of Galicia into butchering the Polish nobles, and then trod both into a common ruin.

T. D. Reilly briefly supported the amendment. He was not going to begin an insurrection as soon as suggested, but he was determined to found rifle clubs.

¹ It is worth noting that Lalor was far from agreeing with Mitchel on the conduct of the Confederation with respect to the Nationalist gentry. Speaking of the reluctance of the Young Irelanders to give up all hope of aid from them, he afterwards (in July, '48) wrote: "Who imputes blame to them for this? Whoever does will not find me to join him. I have no feeling but one of respect for the motive which caused their reluctance and delay."

The meeting consisted almost entirely of young men or men under forty, students, artisans, tradesmen, and professionals. But they had been trained in respect of fair play and common sense, and they rejected the amendment by a decisive majority.¹ Mitchel retired from the Confederation, accompanied by Reilly alone, and for a time the controversy left him the most disabled and discredited politician in Ireland. He had pluck, men said, and rhetorical power, but not a tittle of the supreme faculty which estimates forces accurately, and encounters difficulties successfully, called in its most modest form good sense.

The controversy furnishes a more effectual test of the character of the Confederates than the conflict with O'Connell, or perhaps any other transaction in their career. It is so easy and so pleasant to declare for measures which look daring, and so painful to say "No" to what is described as the only remedy for a manifest wrong, but they had the courage to be simply just.

¹ The numbers were 317 to 188.

CHAPTER VII

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES IN IRELAND

First meeting of the Confederation after the French Revolution—Smith O'Brien's speech at second meeting—Proposal to obtain arms and officers from France and America postponed—Union of Irish parties recommended—Dillon and Duffy's conference with Mitchel—He declares for a Republic—Deputation to Paris—O'Brien's fear of anarchists—Samuel Ferguson's policy—Lord Clarendon's enmity to me—Dr. Evory Kennedy and Pierce Mahony—Dillon and O'Hagan on the policy of the Confederation—Prosecution of O'Brien, Meagher, and Mitchel for sedition—The Chartist discontent—Their great petition and its fate—French and Irish types of revolutionists—Continental tourists in Ireland—Arrest of Doheny, M'Gee and Meagher—Proceedings at Waterford—The Limerick *soirée*—O'Brien's threatened retirement—Treason Felony Act passed—The Creed of the *Nation*—O'Brien's letter on the subject—Arrest of Mitchel for treason felony—His trial and conviction—A rescue considered impossible—Father Kenyon and T. B. MacManus appeal to me—Delegates sent to Paris and the United States—Conference between Young and Old Ireland—Resolved to dissolve the existing associations and found a new one—Mr. John O'Connell at the last moment deserts—The Government determines to arrest the leaders, suppress the clubs, and suspend the Habeas Corpus Act.

WITHIN a month of the Confederation debate an event occurred wholly unforeseen by either party to that contest, but destined to move both profoundly. Paris, the ganglionic centre from which European opinion so often radiated, was again in revolution; forthwith the king fled to England, and immediately a Republic was proclaimed, with some of the Frenchmen best known to the world at its head. A spasm of sympathy and confidence passed over the civilised world, and was nowhere more intense than in Ireland. Ledru Rollin and other members of the Provisional Government had proffered officers and arms to Ireland less than five years

earlier ; the flag of the new Government was the same that a French fleet had unfurled in Bantry Bay, the same under which a French general had scattered the British forces at Castlebar, the same under which an Irish brigade had fought on so many fields for the last half century, and it was naturally dear to Irishmen. We saw France indeed under a strange glamour in that day ; a French *ouvrier* seemed to us a palladin in a blouse, a French soldier a missionary of liberty, and a Republican statesman the friend of universal deliverance for the oppressed. Before the news reached Dublin, one of the ordinary meetings of the Confederation had been summoned, and at that meeting it was altogether impossible to postpone welcoming the good tidings. My principal colleagues were absent at an election where Meagher contested his native city, and I had the undivided responsibility. The chair was to be occupied by a recent recruit, Lord Wallscourt, a man engrossed in social questions, and who saw in the great event only a better chance for the organisation of labour. What ought the Confederates to do ? It seemed to me that we had no honourable choice. In the recent controversy we had declared that we would joyfully embrace any chance of fighting for Ireland in which not a class but the country could unite, and here the occasion had come, or it would never come in our life-time. I spoke in this sense, declaring that we had long anticipated the happy chance when Ireland would be delivered from her bondage, and to my thinking the time was now near at hand. In the *Nation*, where I was entitled and bound to speak without reserve, and where I committed nobody but myself, I said in the ensuing number :—

“ Ireland’s opportunity—thank God, and France—has come at last ! Its challenge rings in our ears like a call to battle, and warms our blood like wine. It demands of us what mission we have to entrust to its ministry, so often and so fervently evoked. We must answer if we would not be slaves for ever. We must unite, we must act, we must leap all barriers but those which are divine ; if needs be, we must die, rather than let this providential hour pass over us unliberated.”

When my friends returned to town I urged on them

the measures which the occasion required. Feuds in the National Party ought to end at once. It was only through unanimity and the enthusiasm of a whole nation that we could hope to succeed, and they must be got at all price. It was not difficult, I hoped, for Ireland was electrified by the tidings that every post brought from the Continent of insurrection against misgovernment, and what was impossible yesterday seemed possible and apparently easy to-day. The whole of the Confederate leaders in town agreed to this policy.¹

Sir Colman O'Loghlen and Dr. Gray undertook to obtain a conference of the Old Irelanders, and I agreed to move in the Confederation that Mitchel and any who retired with him should be invited to return, and Dillon suggested that he and I should have a conference with Mitchel on ways and means. The Confederate leaders were of opinion that the occasion was as propitious as we could ever hope it to be. Pius IX. at that time stood at the head of a movement for wise and moderate reforms throughout Europe, and the Catholic Church in Ireland and elsewhere might be counted on to move with him. The English Government were at the moment engaged in negotiations with Naples to obtain for Sicily the identical concessions Ireland was asking for herself, and it might be assumed that it only needed an impulse sufficiently peremptory to induce her to concede to Ireland what she urged Naples to concede to Sicily. In England

¹ O'Brien delayed coming to town from a determination to allow the Confederates to choose their own course, but he protracted this generous reserve to a dangerous extreme, and I besought him to come to the Council without delay. "There will be an outburst sooner or later, be sure of that, but unless you provide against it, it will be a mere democratic one, which the English Government will extinguish in blood. Or if, by a miracle, it succeeds, it will mean death and exile to the middle as well as the upper classes. As Ireland lies under my eye now I see but one safety for her—a *union* of the Old and Young Irelanders, an arraying of the middle class in the front of the millions, and a peaceful revolution, attained by watching and seizing our opportunity. By peaceful I mean without unnecessary or anarchical bloodshed. It *may* be won without a shot being fired. But trust me, if there is no such junction, and if things are let to take the course they are tending towards, we will see the life of the country trampled out under the feet of English soldiers, suppressing a peasant insurrection; or you and I will meet on a Jacobin scaffold, ordered for execution as enemies of some new Marat or Robespierre, Mr. James Lalor, or Mr. Somebody else. It is the fixed and inevitable course of revolutions when the strength of the middle classes is permitted to waste in inaction."—"Cahirmoyle Correspondence" (Duffy to O'Brien).

there was wide and deep discontent, which had broken into ferocious riots in some of the great towns, arising from the denial of the Chartist claims by Parliament. Nearly half the British army consisted of Irishmen, and for several years military correspondence had led us to hope that the Irish soldiers would do what the soldiers of struggling nations before and since have done whenever a national contest arose—rejoin the flag of their country. Before the conference with the Old Irelanders in Dublin took place, popular meetings were held in the great towns of Leinster and Munster, at which Nationalists of both sections declared that immediate union was the most urgent and vital of questions, Maurice O'Connell, who under many weaknesses had the heart of a genuine Nationalist, expressed the hope that no Government would be sufficiently insane to urge constitutional opposition into armed resistance, and to absolve nations from their allegiance by compelling them to self-defence.

At the next meeting of the Confederation Dillon insisted with great vigour on the policy of conciliation, and Smith O'Brien, who returned from London to attend, spoke for the first time since the great transaction in Paris. He had never before promised speedy success, but he declared that with courage and discretion the end was within view. Discretion was indispensable ; if an outbreak took place at present the Government would put it down in a week. The union of parties and the organisation of the country were the business of the hour. As the amalgamation of the two existing societies was a clumsy and difficult process, he suggested that without amalgamation they should elect a joint committee which could consult upon all important occasions. If this proposal were not acceptable, the entire Repeal Party might take up a favourite project of O'Connell and elect a council of three hundred. It ought to represent both sections of the National Party authentically and be able to speak on behalf of the entire country. They must fraternise with the English Repealers and with the French people. The Confederation would probably send a deputation to the United States and recommend the formation of an Irish brigade there which might serve hereafter as the basis of an Irish army.

In our private consultations we urged on O'Brien the necessity of providing arms, money, and a few trained soldiers, and those we must seek in France or America, but he entreated us not to be impatient. He was still persuaded that a section of the gentry, large enough to complete the national character of our movement, would declare for self-government, and give it a new security for success, but he could not invite gentlemen to do so if we had entered into a negotiation to commit high treason. What we needed was an unbroken national party large enough to employ the opportunity which Heaven had sent us. A committee of citizens composed chiefly of men who had taken no recent part in politics met nightly, and Dillon, who took a large share in their deliberations, was persuaded they would be effectual agents of reunion. A number of medical students, moved, one may surmise, by the example of the Polytechnic students in Paris, determined to insist on a move in advance. Several of them were young men who ripened into professional success. The ablest and most resolute was Thomas Antisell, afterwards a distinguished chemist in the United States. Williams (Shamrock) brought enthusiasm and literary ability to the experiment, and all the young men excellent intentions; but there was not among them any of the practical sense which compares means with ends, and makes sure their designs shall not topple down from any fatal incompatibility between them.

The news from the Continent greatly aided the policy of conciliation; the discontented were everywhere lifting threatening hands against their rulers. When the conference with Mitchel took place he met us accompanied by Reilly. Never was man so metamorphosed; he used to be a modest and courteous gentleman, now he demeaned himself as if the French Revolution and the new opportunities it furnished were his personal achievements. His policy, he affirmed (for by that name he now called the plan of Fintan Lalor), was demonstrably the right one, and carried to its natural issue must succeed. When we spoke of the need of providing leaders and arms, he replied that there were arms enough in the country; and as for leaders, a people must find their own leaders. They only needed

a prize worth fighting for, and he would show them such a prize by proposing to found an Irish Republic.¹ To Dillon and myself it seemed plain that the accidental explosion of a French Revolution in February had not made his proposal in January of a peasant war any way more reasonable, and his extravagance was again likely to damage the public cause, for the suggestion of a Republic would drive off the Old Irelanders friendly to reunion as effectually as his former policy had driven off the middle classes. It was plain he was determined to take an individual course and preach an individual policy. He did so, with the result of creating a profound impression, and attracting universal attention upon himself. He warned the Lord Lieutenant that the Government must destroy him, or he would destroy them. He scoffed at State trials, and assured the Government that jurors would no longer convict; he disparaged preparation as needless, as the people were ready and eager to begin. The country was like a mine which only needed a fusee to explode it.

It was determined to send a deputation to Paris on the part of the Confederation to congratulate the French Republic, and O'Brien consented to put himself at its head. His colleagues were Meagher, O'Gorman, and an intelligent silk-weaver named Hollywood, appointed in recognition of the place Albert-Ouvrier occupied in the Provisional Government. But O'Brien went on the mission perturbed with apprehension that the cause might be wrecked in his absence. His position was indeed pathetic, nay tragic. A gentleman of distinguished birth and liberal fortune, who was prepared to stake all he was possessed of in the interest of his native country, found his hopes of success crossed by projects which

¹ Mitchel's Republicanism was an altogether unexpected development. In answer to a suggestion in *Fraser's Magazine* that the Young Irelanders were Republicans, he had written in complete contradiction:—"Be it known to *Fraser's Magazine*, and all Cockneyland, that those persons are not Republicans; that theories of government have but little interest for them; that the great want and unvarying aim of them all is a National Government, no matter what may be its form; that those of them who may be democrats in abstract principle, yet prefer an oligarchy of our own aristocrats to the most popular forms of rule under foreign institutions and foreign governors; that those of them who are aristocrat in feeling are yet ready to say, 'Give us our own democracy to rule over us before the haughtiest peerage of another nation.'"

he believed impossible, resting on means which he considered disgraceful.

By this time an article in the *United Irishman*, probably written by Reilly, recommending that vitriol should be thrown on the soldiers whenever a rising should take place, was widely quoted in the English newspapers, and in the ordinary spirit of faction attributed to the entire National Party. The night before he left London for Paris, O'Brien wrote to me :—

“ I find myself connected, in the opinion of those who view things at a distance, with the proceedings of Mitchel, who is regarded as a ‘ bloodthirsty villain ’ by many who do not know his good qualities. As regards myself, painful as is this circumstance, I am contented to endure it ; but I cannot, without the deepest regret, perceive the injury he has done and is daily doing to the cause of Repeal. It is because I fear that he will ruin the Confederation that I now write earnestly to exhort you not to allow him to plunge it into new difficulties.”

I kept the Confederation in harmony with O'Brien's policy during his absence, but the *United Irishman*, over which I had no control, fell into new extravagances. The story of the deputation has been told elsewhere, and does not much concern me here. When they returned we applied ourselves with steady diligence to the policy of conciliation and popular organisation. A striking evidence of the authenticity of O'Brien's reliance on help from the middle classes came to encourage us. A Protestant Repeal Association was founded with Samuel Ferguson, a man of conspicuous honour and ability, at its head. He was the mouthpiece of opinions very welcome to the leading Confederates, but irreconcilable with the policy of the extreme party.

“ God forbid,” he said, “ that a drop of Irish blood should be shed in vindicating any Irish right unless the Irish people be unanimous. And if you would make them unanimous, respect the opinion of your neighbours, and seek not by terrorism to compel any man to come into your ranks till his own conviction assures him he ought to do so.”

Great efforts were made to bring in the representative men of the Conservative Party to this new organisation, but with

only limited success. The most conspicuous of them¹ stated his objections in terms which implied his rooted suspicion of a generous people who are among the most placable of mankind. "Duffy," he said to his correspondent, "is no bigot, but he must know well that he could not find ten men of his own creed in Ireland who would be as tolerant as himself. He may be enthusiast enough to believe it possible that he and his handful of allies could protect religious liberty in a Parliament of priest-selected members; but it is the dream of an enthusiast. He and his friend would be the first victims."

In my old age, when I have seen much of men, and have learned to measure probabilities with caution, I am persuaded the Protestant and propertied classes in Ireland would have made the best bargain that ever was open to them if they had frankly joined hands with the Catholic people in 1848. Though the leaders did not join us, a considerable impression was made on the middle class. A deputation from Ferguson's society was well received in Belfast and other Northern towns. In Lurgan the Tenant Protection Society adopted a petition for an Irish Parliament, and in Antrim nine-and-twenty Orangemen were expelled from their lodges for disobeying an order forbidding them to consort with Repealers, Popish or Protestant. In Dublin the Protestant operatives, led by the Rev. Thresham Gregg, only rejected by a small majority a resolution in favour of the new organisation; and from Belfast my friend Dr. M'Knight assured me that the Presbyterian Tenant-Righters of Ulster would give the Government no assistance against the Nationalists.

Lord Clarendon, the Lord-Lieutenant at this time, was a man who had spent his life in subordinate employments in Spain and Ireland, till his brother's death opened the way to a peerage. His subsequent experience lay altogether among the cautious movements of diplomacy, where men are trained to understate and minimise their intentions, and he was persuaded Mitchel would not have employed the language of menace and exasperation he used week after week unless an insurrection was ready to break out. He assumed, indeed,

¹ The Rev. Mortimer O'Sullivan.

that St. Patrick's Day, a date only a month after the explosion in Paris, was fixed for a rising in Dublin. Under this impression he occupied all the strategic points in the capital with soldiers, and kept the students of Trinity College, the officers of the Bank of Ireland, the clerks and tide waiters at the Custom House, under arms during the night. It was not a surprising inference from the language of the *United Irishman*, but it was an altogether mistaken one. The little group of fanatics who were proclaiming immediate war *à l'outrance* had not provided so much as a basket of cartridge or a barrel of pike heads to begin the fight. I soon came to learn that Lord Clarendon honoured me with peculiar attention, which gradually grew more active and intense. I may notice one or two of the earlier incidents ; the later ones will be dealt with hereafter. Among notable men in Dublin at this time there were three brothers named Kennedy, descendants of the old sept of O'Kennedy, but whose ancestors had reconciled themselves to the dominant Church and Government. Tristram was principal of a school of law and agent of the Marquis of Bath's estate in the county Monaghan, an office which he performed so humanely and discreetly that he was sent to Parliament in the popular interest a few years later than the period we have now reached. Colonel Pitt, the eldest, was a soldier who had served with distinction in India ; and when he came home was so disgusted with the agrarian system he found in operation in Ireland that he relieved his heart by a pamphlet, whose purpose may be discerned from its title, "Instruct, Employ ; Don't Hang 'Em" ; but in this year it was whispered, and the whisper proved to be well founded, that he had become an agent to the Castle to furnish arms to the Northern Orangemen to be used against the Nationalists. The third brother was Dr. Evory, a fashionable accoucheur and a Court physician.¹ The doctor was announced in the editor's room one afternoon, and called, he said, to have a little talk on current events. He had no intelligible business

¹ Later, when Dr. Evory Kennedy became candidate for his native city, Londonderry, he was made the subject of an epigram worth recording :—

"Evory for Derry, woe, and shame, and pity ;
An accoucheur—and for the Maiden City."

there, but I soon discovered he came on a special mission. After a disquisition at large he took occasion to say that the Lord-Lieutenant, who was a man of philosophy and penetration, often told him how clearly he discriminated between statesmen who aimed to bring about constitutional changes by constitutional means, even though they included the means which brought in the House of Nassau and the House of Hanover, and Anarchists who loved terrorism and violence for their own sake. He recognised me as belonging to the former class. I interrupted him with a bantering laugh, and told him I was very busy just then, but as soon as I had leisure I would inquire what weakness or folly I had committed that had rendered me liable to the favour of the Earl of Clarendon. At a Lord Mayor's dinner shortly after Pierce Mahony, known in those days as the Prince of Attorneys, exhibited a strong desire to discuss some question with me, and kept parading me about for a time, and then made a full stop. A little crowd of aides-de-camp and the like suddenly dispersed, and I found I had been inveigled into a position fit for my personal inspection by the Viceroy. My appearance must not have been satisfactory to his Excellency, for I heard from time to time in the subterranean whispers in which Court secrets escape that I was to be made an example, and he spared no pains in the end to accomplish that result; but the most shocking example the era has yielded was a Viceroy who entered into friendly and familiar relations with the editor of the *World*, a journal living by hush-money and private slander.¹

The best men in the Confederation thought it their first duty at this time to make the real aims of the body clear and certain, a purpose which a single extract from the history of the period will sufficiently illustrate:—

¹ There was a newspaper in Dublin named the *World*, living by blackmail extorted from the weak and the criminal, and all the base arts with which the *Satirist* in London had made man familiar. Its character was so well known that the editor had been convicted and sent to jail for attempting to obtain hush-money. With this person, whom the Crown Counsel afterwards described as "a hang-dog looking wretch," an "assassin of character," and "one of the basest of mankind," Lord Clarendon entered into personal negotiations. He admitted him to confidential interviews, gave him money, and furnished him with hints for turning French politics to account in assailing the Young Irelanders in articles afterwards quoted in England as the testimony of an impartial writer.—"Four Years of Irish History."

"At a meeting in the beginning of April, Dillon directed public attention anew to our actual aims. There were Republicans in the Confederation, but it ought to be clearly understood that the object of that body was not the establishment of a Republic, but the Legislative Independence of Ireland ; nor was its policy agrarian insurrection, but the creation of a Council of Three Hundred to represent the entire nation ; and armament was recommended that the people might be in a position to defend their rights from aggression. Mr. John O'Hagan, in the only public speech he delivered in that era, seconded Dillon's purpose. He moved a resolution repudiating the statement of Lord John Russell that the Confederation promoted social disorder, or desired violent separation from England. Their aim was the Legislative Independence of Ireland, and thereby the attainment of social order, and they desired that such independence might be attained, if possible, without war. For his part, he advocated this policy because he detested anarchy from his soul. But starvation, rack-rents, and eviction, the absence of trade and manufactures, a government without root or base in the confidence of the people, was not social order. The bloody three-act tragedy so often performed in this unhappy country—the peasant flung out to perish by the wayside, the landlord murdered, the assassin dying on a gibbet—was not order, but anarchy."¹

Lord John Russell declared in the House of Commons that never had treason so naked been spoken in any country as in Ireland of late, and as a necessary sequence State prosecutions were ordered. I have postponed noticing that before the mission to France O'Brien and Meagher were indicted for recent speeches, and Mitchel for writings in the *United Irishman*. Had Mitchel's doctrine, that Dublin jurors would no longer convict at the instance of the Crown, been well founded, here was an opportunity for a signal triumph ; but he pleaded what is called a "dilatory plea," and postponed his trial, which in the end never came off. Meagher and O'Brien closed with the prosecution. In each case one juror refused to convict and a second trial was threatened. Meagher and O'Brien gave bail to appear when called upon,

¹ "Four Years of Irish History."

and proceeded to Paris to fulfil their mission to the Provisional Government.

At the same time the British Cabinet had grave troubles at home. There was no country in Europe where the revolution in Paris wrought more startling changes than in England. The working classes had been long discontented, and the mass of them organised as Chartists claimed to exceed the population of Scotland. Their discontent, which had been chiefly declamatory, now took the most menacing shape. They had before forbade anti-Corn Law meetings, and occupied churches to the exclusion of the congregation ; they now spoke openly of arms and menaced an attack on London.¹ Their wrongs and the redress they sought were set out in a petition, the signatures to which were said to outnumber the male population of London ; but some of those signatures proved to be fictitious or burlesque, a discovery which seriously diminished the importance of the document. It was determined to present this huge petition to Parliament, and to escort it to Palace Yard by a muster of the Chartists of London and Middlesex. The Government forbade the procession, and enrolled an army of special constables to co-operate with the police and military in resisting it. Feargus O'Connor advised submission to the authorities, and the effect was like the Clontarf retreat in Ireland five years earlier ; the confidence of the Chartists was dissipated, and in a moment their movement lost its strength and terror. The Government, which had been much perturbed, was now jubilant and contemptuous of opposition. It was at this time O'Brien returned from his deputation to Paris, and when he attempted to tell the House of Commons the history and moral of that enterprise he was received with jeers and insults. The young bucks of the army, who are always the most unmannerly of opponents, distinguished

¹ Here is a specimen of a fine, fierce, democratic ballad by Mr. W. J. Linton, which interpreted the spirit of the times :—

“ Up ! up ! ye English peasantry for whom Wat Tyler bled.
Up, city serfs, whose sturdy sires Cade and Ardcamber led.
Up, up, if ye be Englishmen, be mindful of the day
When Cromwell strode o'er Worcester field and scared a king away.
Though Kett and Cade, and Tyler failed the ‘ crowning mercy ’ came,
Hurrah ! for England’s stalwart ones, your fortune be the same.”

themselves on this occasion. O'Brien retired from that scene of riotous disorder, persuaded that there was no longer any hope of a peaceful settlement with England. Mitchel continued to summon the Government to an immediate surrender or an immediate conflict, but the policy of the Confederates was conducted in a different spirit. The union with the Old Irelanders advanced, clubs were founded in many new places, and the project of a Council of Three Hundred, in which both parties would be fairly represented, and which would speak with authority, was pressed on.

Lamartine's "History of the Girondists" was widely read at this time, and one of the survivors of that prolific era reminds me how speculative persons insisted that they could discover among Irish Celts the identical types Lamartine had exhibited among the Gallic branch of the race. "Lafayette, the gentleman of ancient lineage and generous nature, become a leader and spokesman of the suffering people, did he not live again in Smith O'Brien? Vergniaud, the son of a provincial *bourgeois*, raised by his splendid gifts to be the orator of his race, was it not an earlier Meagher? Robespierre, the country lawyer, accepted as their chief by the Jacobins of Paris, because he was always more Jacobin than they, was it not Mitchel? Was not Dillon the prudent, the steadfast Brissot; Dillon's father-in-law, William O'Hara, marvellously youthful and resourceful under his grey hairs, was Dumouriez; John Martin, the honest, simple Mayor Bailly; M'Gee, Camille Desmoulins; and Duffy, who organised the movement in his closet, Carnot." But woe is me! there was one fatal difference, none of these accomplished the work which made the names of their prototypes immortal.

The state of Ireland excited lively interest on the Continent, and many French and German tourists might be encountered in the country this year, and some English philosophers who were persuaded they could master the Irish problem from the sunny side of an Irish jaunting car. Among visitors of a better sort was M. John Lemoinne, of the *Journal des Débats*, afterwards an academician and a senator. He brought me an introduction from Frazer Corkoran, the Paris correspondent of the *Standard*, an Irishman and crypto-

Nationalist. M. Lemoinne was a strong contrast to our ideal of a political Frenchman—placid, circumspect, and deliberate, he looked like an Englishman draped by a French tailor.

O'Brien determined to make a tour of Munster to judge of the spirit of the people. He was received everywhere with boundless enthusiasm, which was interpreted in that day of revolutions as a pledge of battle. Meagher and Doheny held a monster meeting at Slievenamon, and exhorted the people to prepare for a conflict.

M'Gee, Doheny, and other Confederates were arrested for the share they had taken in these meetings, but admitted to bail. Meagher was arrested in his native town, and the mass of the population turned out to rescue him. The long bridge which spans the Suir was barricaded, and the Club men entreated him to give the signal for immediate resistance ; but Meagher insisted that they should wait for the advice of the leaders in Dublin. No place could be more unsuitable than Waterford to begin an insurrection ; it is divided by a navigable river which was at that moment occupied by three war steamers, which could shell any part of the city at discretion. But the popular feeling in Munster was growing more high and confident, till it was checked by a disastrous transaction.

Before O'Brien started on his Munster mission, it had been proposed in the Confederation that Meagher and Mitchel should accompany him. O'Brien told Mitchel frankly that he could not possibly accept his co-operation, as their intentions were widely different, and Mitchel admitted his right to object, and announced that, under the circumstances, he would not go to Munster. While O'Brien was pursuing his mission, a *soirée* of Nationalists was projected at Limerick, and when O'Brien arrived, he found Mr. Mitchel in attendance. He was deeply offended, and proposed to retire immediately. Mitchel said he had been invited by the promoters of the *soirée*, and he did not consider himself prohibited from accepting such an invitation by the agreement not to accompany O'Brien. To the Limerick people, who were largely leavened with Old Irelandism, it proved that Mitchel, who had written savagely about O'Connell, was peculiarly odious, and they determined, it was said, to burn

the edifice where the *soirée* was held, to drive him away. Stones began to rattle on the roof and the door, and a serious riot seemed inevitable. O'Brien, who had long been the most popular man in Limerick, ordered the door to be opened, and presented himself, with a view to allay the storm. In the darkness and confusion, and probably under the exasperation of political fury, a stone was thrown, which wounded him painfully in the face. As soon as the mischance was discovered, an escort of twenty men was selected from the crowd to see him safe home. But his sensitive honour and self-respect had been wounded more acutely than his visage, and next day he announced his intention of retiring from public affairs till the Irish people would altogether abandon their senseless feuds.¹ No man at that time was so important to the cause as O'Brien. If he retired, the negotiations with Conciliation Hall, which had been protracted but not abandoned, would probably fall through, and the middle class, who justly regarded a man of his character and position as a security against insensate projects, would be panic-stricken. The leading men among his constituents besought him to withdraw his resignation, and letters and addresses to the same effect came from all parts of the island, but for a time in vain. While these transactions were happening in Munster, the Treason Felony Act came into operation. It was passed with the speed of an express train, and suppressed liberty of speech and liberty of the Press in controversies on the Irish Question. Sedition, spoken or written, hitherto punishable with a short imprisonment, was transformed into Treason-Felony, punishable with penal servitude for life, or periods of long duration, at the discretion of the court. Had it existed in O'Connell's time, he might have been deported to Botany Bay for the Mallow Defiance. It forbade "open

¹ The effect the transaction produced on generous minds was symbolised in a letter from "Speranza" :—

"What," she wrote to me, "can be done with such idiots and savages but leave them to John O'Connell, a traitor and a coward, and their suitable leader. This noble Smith O'Brien, who has sacrificed *all* for the people, and who could gain nothing in return, for no position, however exalted, could add to his dignity, whose whole life has been a sacrifice for his country—a self-immolation, and this is the man who has to be guarded by *English* from *Irish* murderers! I cannot endure to think of it. We are disgraced for ever before Europe, and justly so. Adieu."

and advised" speaking on public interests with an exasperating defiance which made such speaking, at all hazards, a duty. I determined in such a crisis to reiterate, with unequivocal plainness, the ends we sought and the means we employed, and carried out my purpose in a long and deliberate article entitled the "Creed of the *Nation*," afterwards circulated as a Confederate tract. An unexpected consequence which it produced, makes it necessary to give some brief *précis* of it here:—

My opinions, I said, were misrepresented by Cabinet Ministers and official journals, and I was determined to set them out in terms which could not be mistaken. The *Nation* was a National, not a Jacobin, journal. To me liberty has still meant more light, more order, more justice. It typified a higher moral and social condition of existence. I should never consent to dwarf it down to the selfish scheme of a class in society, or the pedantic theory of a sect in politics. Revolution I regarded as inevitable—all the signs that foreboded it in history, all the wrongs that justify it, existed in Ireland at that moment.

I love peace, I fear disorder—I hate anarchy; but the sudden and violent remedy of an hour, though it pain us to the quick, is better than the perpetual helplessness of disease. If this is our only resource, let it come. It is just and well-timed; for of all nations that have arisen for their liberty, and achieved it among the plaudits of mankind, there is not one which suffered so deeply, or won the right of resistance by a patience more forbearing and protracted than our own.

But let it be understood that what the Irish people claimed, was just and eminently reasonable, and ought to be conceded without a physical conflict.

An Independent Parliament, elected by the widest possible suffrage, a Responsible Ministry, and a Viceroy of Irish birth, will content the country; and they will defend such a settlement against all aggression from without or from within. Such a Parliament would inevitably establish Tenant Right, abolish the Established Church, providing for existing interests, and endeavour to settle the claims of labour upon some solid and satisfactory basis. But one step further in the direction of revolution I do not believe it would go.

The Confederates desire a revolution, not of vengeance, but of restored rights, won by negotiation if possible, and if impossible, by the sword of the patriot, not the bludgeon of the assassin.

I maintain that such a settlement, made by negotiation between the two countries, would preserve all the existing rights that ought to be preserved, and would promise permanence, as far as any settlement could in such a stormy era of human affairs.

I would prefer it, I said, to a republic won by insurrection. I am deeply convinced a large majority of the *Repealers* of Ireland share this feeling. And why? Not from any unmanly abhorrence of war, which is noble and glorious waged for one's country, but because insurrection would plant deadly animosities between men of the same Irish race, and because the sudden transition of a people from Provincialism to Republicanism, passing through no intermediate stage, is an experiment for which we are not fit.

The condition of the country at the moment, I insisted, was desperate. Lying under the same sky as England, as fruitful in soil, and as fit for commerce, why was one a beggar and the other a millionaire? Was the cause any other than misgovernment, forced on us at the point of the bayonet?

A famine which fell upon Europe tested this system of foreign government to the core. Every state in Christendom, from the Great Powers to the pettiest dukedom in Italy and Germany, protected its people from starvation, for the rulers were of their own blood and race. Here the revenue of three years was squandered in one, in ignorant and audacious experiments, made in defiance of counsel and remonstrance from all classes of Irishmen.

The most destructive wars, the inhuman massacres whose memory appals mankind; the scourges of God, the plague and the cholera, never desolated a nation like this famine. Men fell dead daily in the streets and by the wayside, and were flung coffinless into the earth. Whole districts were swept bare as a desert of human life. Men fled from it into exile, dying in multitudes on the sea, or perishing in foreign countries, till a new plague sprung from the stench of their

unburied corpses. A population larger than that of some Free States of Europe was destroyed by these inhuman deaths.

The Prime Minister of England, looking upon the desolation which has made our country a graveyard and a lazaret house, tells us that he will resist our just claims for the management of our own affairs with the sword of the Empire. How can we answer but with the sword of Ireland? If famine has weakened the right arm of the people it has not paralysed His arm who rules the destinies of battles and fights by the side of the oppressed. Shall we tamely submit to see the last remnant of the Irish race and name sacrificed to the greedy and insolent spirit of English dominion? With God's blessing, no. We will sustain our natural right to this island against all enemies. All Ireland, from sea to sea, is arming and organising to uphold and enforce this right. The example of popular success throughout Europe, the threatening aspect of foreign nations, the sympathy of the English masses, and the triumphant justice of our cause may give us a peaceful victory. Heaven send it! But if not my conscience is clear that we are able and entitled to take it. This is my belief. I seek no ingenious form of expression to shroud the naked thought. If we cannot save our country by peace, I am for war. And that we may save it by peace or war, I am for the universal arming and organisation of the people.

This was the concluding paragraph:—

“This was the creed of the *Nation*. I am entitled to answer for myself and my fellow-labourers alone; but I believe it is substantially the creed of the Irish Confederation. They do not demand Republicanism—they demand the legislative independence of Ireland, and will guard it jealously if it come by free negotiation. If independence must come by force, a Republic is inevitable and welcome. But in a free Parliament or a free Congress the rights of private property, the just rights of every class in the State will be sacred. I proclaimed at the opening of this movement, and I will practise to the end of it—to the last throes of revolution—a national amnesty; full forgiveness of the past—the quarrels of yesterday, the quarrels of three hundred years.”

I had liberated my mind, it might be at the penalty of

transportation, for the new Penal Law was now in operation, but at any rate the ends for which I and my friends contended were placed full in the sunlight.

In a day or two O'Brien sent me the glad tidings that he withdrew his resignation, and he requested that the subjoined note might be published in the *Nation* :—

“ DUBLIN, May 2, 1848.

“ MY DEAR DUFFY,—I have read with extreme pleasure your letter which appeared in the last publication of the *Nation*, under the designation of ‘The Creed of the *Nation*.’

“ Without venturing to speak on behalf of other Confederates I think it right, under present circumstances, to state that I am fully prepared to hold myself responsible, both morally and legally, for the sentiments contained in that letter.— Believe me, yours very truly,

“ WILLIAM S. O'BRIEN.”

Mitchel and Reilly retired from the Confederation in deference to O'Brien's feelings, and returned to it no more.¹

The failure of the prosecution against O'Brien and Meagher, and Mitchel's postponement of his trial by a legal device, enraged the Government, and they arrested Mitchel on the 13th day of May, to answer an indictment for treason-felony under the new Act. I have written in elaborate detail the history of this State trial,² and a single extract and brief *précis* will suffice here :—

“ Two successive victories begot extravagant hopes, and the bulk of the Confederates were confident that he could not be convicted. But this was counting without the sheriff's office, and forgetting the special prejudice which Mitchel's extreme opinions excited.

¹ During the brief existence of the *United Irishman* I had great reason to complain of Mitchel's conduct towards me. But controversy between us would have rent the Confederate party into fragments, and the consequences of the controversy with O'Connell were before my eyes. Dillon and Meagher besought me not to endanger the cause, and I was silent under exasperating provocation. In this personal narrative, however, it is essential to speak of these facts, but it will be more convenient to do so at the era when Mitchel returned from Tasmania and provoked a controversy and was able to defend himself.

² “ Four Years of Irish History,” bk. iii. chap. ii.

"In the Council there was deep anxiety and alarm. They felt that the Government could not afford to be defeated again, and defeated by a man who had so often predicted this disaster. The question was, how could it be averted? To inflame opinion till it grew red-hot against the base practice of jury-packing might alarm the class of jurors upon whom the Castle counted. A great open-air meeting of Confederates was summoned for this purpose, and the general body of citizens met in the Royal Exchange with a similar object. It was necessary to consider at the same time what was to be done in case of a conviction. A small minority of the Council thought preparations ought immediately to be made for a rescue. If the Government could carry off a man who had so completely identified himself with the revolution it would greatly dishearten the people. It was determined to ascertain the wishes of the clubs and their state of preparation.

"When we took stock of our resources, it appeared that Dublin city and county had thirty clubs, numbering from two hundred to five hundred members each; other cities were about as well provided; but though an agrarian revolution had been constantly insisted upon as the road to liberty, there was not one club in the agricultural districts. Lalor assumed, indeed, and Mitchel after him, that the trampled peasantry were as ready for insurrection as gunpowder for the match, but this proved to be a rash and fatal assumption.

"It was easy, at the same time, to count the muster-roll of our antagonists and note their elaborate precautions. There were ten thousand troops in the city, perfectly armed and equipped, and nearly forty-thousand in the country; all the strategic points were occupied and fortified. There was not a week's supply of food in Dublin, and all the food in the island, except what was growing in the soil, was in warehouses where the English army could reduce it to ashes in four-and-twenty hours. But the chief difficulty of a rescue was one created by Mitchel himself. He had scoffed at the necessity of systematic preparation, and there was no dépôt of arms or ammunition. He had declared a leader would come with the necessity, and there was no officer among the Confederates who could take charge of a company. Some of his partisans

had arms, and were perhaps provided with ammunition for a day or a week ; but a man who sympathised with him declared that they did not know, with certainty, where to lay their hands on the first wheelbarrow and pickaxe to throw up the first barricade. Money is the sinews of revolution even more than of war ; if the ordinary method of supplying food were interrupted, a famine would ensue in a few days, and it was certain the ordinary method could only be maintained by paying for necessary articles at least the usual price. But those who insisted on immediate revolution had no funds whatever.

“ Meagher and O’Gorman made a personal inspection of the Dublin clubs with a view to determine whether, as far as they were concerned, a rescue was feasible. They sought information from all sources, and they arrived at the conclusion that the people were unprepared, unorganised, unarmed, and incapable of being even roughly disciplined for such an attempt. In truth, the insensate policy of deriding preparation had borne its natural fruit—no one was prepared.

“ O’Brien and Dillon were convinced before this survey of the clubs that a rescue could not be undertaken without ruin to the cause. It was now May, and they hoped to secure a general and simultaneous rising in the autumn, when the new food supplies would be available, and farm labourers could be withdrawn from their ordinary employment without public disaster, and when a union of parties, perhaps of classes, was attained, and funds and munitions of war provided. They now took, frankly and unreservedly, the ground that no such attempt must be made.”

After a single week’s imprisonment Mitchel’s trial took place, which I have described elsewhere.¹ The Government had packed this panel with such skill that before forty-eight hours had elapsed their warship was carrying him to penal servitude. When his sentence was pronounced the wrath and rage of his friends caused the judges to fly in a panic from the court, but no rescue was attempted, and disappointed expectations chilled and irritated public opinion.

Next day Father Kenyon, accompanied by my friend T. B. MacManus, and another gentleman from the North of England,

¹ “ Four Years of Irish History.”

came to my residence to demand what could be done for the cause. I replied that the delay of preparation had nearly ruined our chance, but we still might and ought to make the preparations which Mitchel had derided. We ought to send to France for officers and arms, and to America for officers and money. MacManus promised that he would seize a couple of the largest Irish steamers at Liverpool, load them with ammunition and arms from Chester Castle, where there were supplies for an army. It was agreed to hold a conference, to which I undertook to bring two of the Confederate leaders, and Father Kenyon two of the extreme party.

At the conference Kenyon, Martin, and Reilly represented one section—Dillon, Duffy, and a gentleman whom I refrain from naming, the other. Then and there, for the first time, measures were taken to obtain money, arms, and officers from abroad, to make a diversion in England, and procure the co-operation of the Irish residents there, and to prepare particular local men to expect the event.

We communicated to O'Brien that some precautions were taken without specifying them. It was a secret relief to men who loved him, and made full allowance for the peculiar difficulty of his position, that they could take this risk wholly on themselves. Enough was said to keep good faith; not enough to create responsibility. Of the three agents chosen for America and France two are still living. One was chosen by Dillon, the other was Martin MacDermott, who went to Paris; the third was William Mitchel, brother of John Mitchel. Mitchel's nearest friends, indeed, entered into the task of making the preparations which he had derided, and Lalor, who had held aloof from Mitchel, now assumed the lead in the new journal,¹ and insisted there week after week that nothing must be undertaken without careful preconcert:

"Two or three signal facts will enable us to gauge the hopes and fears of the hour. On the one hand, the Chartists sent to Dublin Mr. Leech, of Manchester, and Mr. Kydd, of Glasgow, to promise immediate co-operation whenever a blow was struck. On the other hand, Lord Clarendon sent his children

¹ John Martin, from fidelity to his friend, established a journal called the *Irish Felon* to carry on the teachings of the *United Irishman*.

to England for safety, and the *Times* made arrangements for receiving its expresses by way of Cork and Bristol in case Dublin should fall into the hands of the Confederates."

And what at the time seemed more hopeful, the long-delayed Conference between Old and Young Ireland, met at the *Freeman's Journal* office daily for a week, and agreed to the terms of a compromise. It was determined to dissolve the two Associations, and create a new one to be called the Irish League. The Committee of the Repeal Association and the Council of the Confederation accepted the terms, and ordered that public meetings should be called to confirm them.

When the proceedings had reached this stage Mr. John O'Connell, who was one of the delegates, astounded us by a new difficulty. He had received a warning that he was on a wrong path from a person "whose importance could not be overrated"; and he required a fortnight for further consideration, and to ascertain the opinion of the country. A fortnight wasted at such an era was a grievous loss; but the Confederates bore it good-humouredly. They utilised the interval in founding clubs; as clubs—so it was conditioned—were to be kept entirely separate from the League. How Mr. John O'Connell employed it is a matter of conjecture; but at the close of the fortnight he announced that he would not join the League, but retire for a time from public life. He was charged at the moment with being a tool of Lord Clarendon's to keep separate the priests and the Confederates; but it is possible that he was merely influenced by doubt and trepidation, for his mind was as unsteady as a quagmire. The June revolution in Paris, in which a hundred thousand workmen rose against the Republic which they had created, the murder of the Archbishop of Paris engaged in a mission of peace, the scorn of the Pope's concession in Italy by men who would hear patiently of nothing but a republic, alienated the clergy and the middle classes throughout Europe, and enabled the Castle Press to predict what enormities Smith O'Brien and his Associates had in view. But the Confederates pursued their task persistently; each of them undertook to organise a district of the country into clubs, and the first meeting of the Irish League was fixed to be held in July. But the Government, encouraged by the state of public

feeling and the failure of complete union, resolved, as we now know, to strike three heavy blows in succession—to arrest the leaders, to suppress the clubs, and to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act. My arrest was the first that took place.

CHAPTER VIII

MY IMPRISONMENT IN NEWGATE

My arrest—Proposed rescue, which I forbade—John Martin in prison—Conferences with O'Brien and Dillon—Articles written in prison and Parliamentary explanation of the same—Conference of Confederate leaders in Newgate—First meeting of the Irish League—Proclamation against the possession of arms—Habeas Corpus Act suspended—M'Gee despatched to Scotland—Meagher and Dillon join O'Brien in the South—*Facta Alea Est* and *The Tocsin of Ireland*—Seizure of the *Nation*—Defeat and arrest of O'Brien—Martin's trial—O'Doherty's—Williams'—Clonmel Trials and the conviction of O'Brien, Meagher, and their associates—Richard Barrett's disgraceful slander published in the *Daily News*—Correspondence of John O'Donaghue and John Flanney on the subject—My letter found in O'Brien's portmanteau and Solicitor-General's misrepresentation of it—John O'Connell and the State prisoners.

ON the evening of Saturday, July 9,¹ I was arrested. The business opened with an incident in which I was put to a ludicrous disadvantage, and it would be a shame to suppress it. I was returning on foot to Merton, my residence in the suburbs, when a cardriver, whose vehicle was drawn up close to the side-path, whispered to me with a pallid face, "Look at that fellow opposite, standing by the covered car; he is a detective from the Lower Castle Yard." "Well," I said, "suppose he be; what are you shivering about? I am not sure that I ever saw a detective before; I will cross the road and have a look at him." When I reached the far side the detective approached and inquired respectfully if I was Mr. Gavan Duffy. "Yes," I said, "I am; but how does that concern you?" "Why, sir, in that case I have a warrant for your arrest, and orders to convey you to Newgate." The officer, who was not at all disengaging, handed me into his vehicle, and at my request drove to my house, which was

close at hand. I took leave of my wife and children, and gave whispered directions how a tin box containing papers which were precious, but not dangerous, was to be disposed of, and set off with the detective and a brace of his comrades, who had suddenly appeared. It was necessary to report the arrest at College Street Police Office, and there I learned that the *Nation* office was in possession of the police. The news of the arrest spread like a flame; the police office was soon crowded with men of the middle class, who could scarcely be refused admittance, and in the neighbouring streets was an impatient crowd. When the police formalities were completed I was placed in a strong prison van, and we set off for Newgate. It was necessary to proceed at a foot pace, as all the neighbouring streets were now occupied by an angry multitude. As we passed the *Nation* office a loud shout was raised of "Take him out! take him out!" D'Arcy M'Gee mounted the steps of the van and whispered, "We are ready for a rescue." "No, no," I said, "a rescue will be only a street riot, unless we can take Dublin from the garrison this night, and hold it afterwards, and you know we can do neither. You must wait for the harvest." The clamour and obstruction still continued, and in Capel Street the detective officer in charge of the van said to me, "If the crowd lay hands on the horses or the van we must use force. Will you not advise them to desist?" I addressed them from the door, entreating them to be patient, and rely on their leaders. At length we reached Green Street. I was hurried into the prison, and the great iron-bound door closed between me and the busy world. My liveliest feeling was satisfaction that blood had not been shed in a bootless conflict.

Next morning I met Martin and Williams, who had also been arrested, and with them Kevin O'Doherty, a young medical student whom I saw for the first time, and I learned that he was the registered proprietor of a new journal called the *Tribune*. We got the best accommodation the Governor had to give, the prison being under municipal control, and the best, sooth to say, was odious, Newgate Prison having been long condemned as insanitary. We agreed to mess together at the outset, our meals being supplied from a neighbouring hotel.

Martin was an upright and honourable man, abundantly gifted with amiable qualities, but possessing no remarkable intellectual gifts, unless a tenacious will and steadfast endurance for the sake of justice, which had their root in his moral character, may be considered intellectual gifts. He comported himself with quiet dignity like one ready for either fate. Some of his characteristic sayings are apt to recur to my memory when I think of that eventful time. His three fellow-prisoners were Catholics, and the first day we messed together one of them said the ordinary Catholic grace after meat, ending "May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace." "Aye," interposed Martin, "and the souls of the unfaithful too, poor fellows!"

Our personal and political friends came to us next day, and every day, without let or hindrance, and Martin and I had conferences with O'Brien, Dillon, and the other leaders on the course proper to be pursued. Our trials were to be postponed as long as practicable, but if the delay did not extend to three months, which seemed impossible, we must take our fate and trust that a revolution might bring us back to Ireland. There was promise of a plentiful harvest when it ripened, and we must not allow it to be carried away—"As God had been bountiful man must be brave."

The *Tribune* stopped immediately, but the *Nation* and *Irish Felon* were issued as usual, and Martin and I edited them, dating our articles from Newgate Prison.¹ The aim we had most at heart was to make sure that the sacrifice we must make should not be made in vain. We desired to take counsel not only with the friends at hand, but with the friends at a distance, on the duties of the near future. We summoned our chief adherents to Dublin by special messengers, and

¹ The upshot is highly characteristic. After some weeks the fact that articles were written from the prison attracted attention in England, and finally the Government were questioned in the House of Lords how they came to permit such a practice. Lord Lansdowne was instructed to reply that the prisoners had not been permitted to send out any correspondence, and that the signed articles were written outside, and the prisoners' names appended for the political effect. This statement, in which there was not a scintilla of truth, throws a lurid light on the method in which Irish news is cooked for Parliament. It will complete the story to state here that the Government, who declared we had not written the articles in question, placed them in the indictments on which we were tried, and one of them furnished the main evidence on which Martin was convicted.

appointed a day for a confidential conference. The men who take the first plunge in perilous enterprises seldom escape the experience which befell us. Our closest associates came promptly, but the gushing sympathisers who crowd the platforms of a popular party began to drop off like leaves in autumn. The value of such a story as this is the moral it teaches, and it is worthless unless it be illustrated by examples. The people are fond of lords, and Young Irelanders had two lords among their sympathisers. Lord Cloncurry debated their policy frankly over his dinner-table, and generally favoured the most extreme proposals. But he never held out any hope that a man who had been a State prisoner half a century earlier was prepared to begin the rebel's stormy life anew in his declining years. Lord Wallscourt was a younger and more vigorous man. He was a social, as well as a political, reformer, and was a leader among the cosmopolitan societies in Paris, which were busy with experiments for framing the world anew. He had held language which induced us to hope for his aid, and I summoned him to Dublin. He made objections which were not ill-founded, but which were certainly "ill-timed, and ought to have been heard of at an earlier date. He was a soldier, he said, and every soldier knew that the first condition of success in a campaign was that the men should stand shoulder to shoulder, but peasants would never stand shoulder to shoulder, but be scattered by artillery like a flock of crows. He assured me that for his part he had always been for peaceful methods, and I do not think I ever saw him again.

Father Kenyon was a man of far higher national importance. He had won popular confidence by vigorous and fearless utterances, and he had committed high treason with the leaders in sending missions to France and America for military assistance. Under these circumstances we had good reason to count on his prompt attendance, but he excused himself and kept within the shelter of his presbytery till the contest closed in the ruin of his associates. Only the result of the conference need be stated. The honour and interest of the country compelled an appeal to arms. To organise the people into clubs was the most pressing work, and the news from our agents in France and America would fix the

date for beginning, which must not be earlier than the harvest.

At this time the prisoners had no more hope of escaping by the aid of a jury than by the wings of an eagle. They made no preparation for defence. Williams, who was naturally precipitate, distributed his personal effects among friends. I allowed my library and pictures to be sold by auction in the interest of my family, as conviction would vest my property in the Crown; and Martin, who was largely dowered with the quiet courage of endurance, tranquilly awaited the result which he regarded as inevitable.

Immediately after my arrest the first meeting of the Irish League was held. It represented both sections of *Repealers* adequately, with the notable exception of Mr. John O'Connell, who betook himself to Paris, and was heard of no more till the trouble was over. The League proclaimed the policy of organisation and conciliation, for which it had been founded, but before it could hold a second meeting measures were taken to render its labours abortive.

The Government struck two sudden strokes, which changed the aspect of affairs, like strokes struck by the sword of Harlequin. They issued a proclamation directing a strict search for arms, and they carried in one day a law suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act in Ireland. When the *Habeas Corpus* Act is suspended personal liberty is at an end, and the Government arrest whomsoever they choose.

When the news was telegraphed to Dublin the leading Confederates then in town held a hasty consultation. They had to determine between immediate arrest and an insurrection without waiting for the harvest or the assistance from abroad; they determined on the latter. M'Gee was despatched to Scotland, where the Confederates thought arms, recruits, and a steamer to carry them to Ireland might be obtained, and the others determined to join Smith O'Brien, who was then in the South, completing his tour.

In the evening a confidential messenger from Dillon brought me the news that the Confederates determined to hold Kilkenny and establish a Provisional Government, or if this proved impracticable to raise the neighbouring counties containing the flower of the Southern Nationalists, and take

the field. This news Martin and I were requested to announce to Confederate councillors in Dublin, and to communicate to the leaders of clubs and such other persons as we considered trustworthy. We sent immediately for a dozen men, chiefly the staff of our journals, through whom these instructions could be carried out. The persons fit to be trusted with the news raised serious questions on which we were not always of one mind. Some thought Dublin ought to be attacked ; the fall of the Castle would awaken the most sluggish district in the island. Others contended that the leaders ought to permit themselves to be arrested under the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, which only involved a temporary imprisonment. But all controversy was terminated by the news which arrived the second day that Smith O'Brien accepted the programme of the leaders who joined him from Dublin and would take the field. It was a spectacle strangely out of harmony with the sceptical scoffing generation in which it befell. A gentleman of mature years, of distinguished lineage and station, the descendant of a great Celtic house, the husband of a charming wife, the father of a household of happy children, a man rich in the less precious gifts of fortune called opulence, staked his life to save his race from destruction. The chance of overthrowing the rooted power of the British Empire by insurrection was manifestly small, but a profound sense of public duty made him accept it with all its consequences rather than acquiesce dumbly in the ruin of his people.

The writers of the national journals immediately left town, mostly for Kilkenny, by circuitous routes, for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act rendered them liable to immediate arrest. A few concealed themselves in Dublin, awaiting a move in the metropolis. Martin could no longer bring out his newspaper ; Lalor, the leading spirit, was arrested, and the other contributors were in the South or in concealment. I should have found it equally impossible but for the generous help of two noble women. Margaret Callan, my cousin and sister-in-law, who had been a contributor from the outset, undertook the editorship, and Miss Elgee ("Speranza") promised a leading article suitable to the occasion, and provided one which might be issued from the

head-quarters of the national army. It can no more be judged by detached fragments than a stately edifice by the coping stone, but some specimens are necessary to this narrative :—

“FACTA ALEA EST.

“‘We must be free !’ In the name of your trampled, insulted, degraded country ; in the name of all heroic virtues, of all that makes life illustrious or death divine ; in the name of your starved, your exiled, your dead ; by your martyrs in prison cells and felon chains ; in the name of God and man ; by the listening earth and the watching Heaven, lift up your right hand to heaven and swear by your undying soul, by your hopes of immortality, never to lay down your arms, never to cease hostilities, till you regenerate and save this fallen land.

“It cannot be death you fear, for you have braved the plague in the exile ship of the Atlantic, and plague in the exile’s home beyond it ; and famine and ruin, and a slave’s life and a dog’s death ; and hundreds, thousands, a million of you have perished thus. Courage ! You will not now belie those old traditions of humanity that tell of this divine God-gift within us.

“Opposed to us are only a hired soldiery and a paid police, who, trained machines even as they are, yet must shudder to pursue the horrible task of butchery under the blasphemed name of duty to which England summons them. Brothers many of them are of this people they are called upon to murder—sons of the same soil—fellow-countrymen of those who are heroically struggling to elevate their common country. Surely whatever humanity is left in them will shrink from being made the sad instruments of despotism and tyranny—they will blush to receive the purchase money of England which hires them for the accursed and fratricidal work. Would a Sicilian have been found in the rank of Naples ? Would a Milanese have been detected in the fierce hordes of Austria ? No, for the Sicilians prize honour, and the stately Milanese would strike the arm to the earth that would dare to offer them Austrian gold in payment for the blood of their own countrymen. And Heaven forbid that in

Ireland could be found a band of armed fratricides to fight against their own land for the flag of a foreign enemy.

“There are terrible traditions shadowing the word *Liberty* in Ireland. Let it be our task, men of this generation, descendants of martyrs and sufferers and heroes, to make it a glad evangel of happiness—a reign of truth over fictions and symbols—of intellect over prejudice and conventionalism—of humanity over tyranny and oppression.”

I contrived to smuggle out of prison, where the discipline had suddenly become vigilant, another appeal to the people printed in the same number :—

“THE TOCSIN OF IRELAND.

“Ireland is, perhaps, at this hour in arms for her rights ; in arms for the rights so patiently solicited, so perversely refused, so tyrannically trampled upon.

“The rights which she sought in vain to purchase with her tears ; which she springs up at last to purchase with her heart’s blood only when the sacred character of manhood, without which our life is lower than the dog’s or the slave’s, is trampled under the feet of her foreign lords.

“It is her last resource, long evaded, long postponed ; the bitter cup which Heaven would not permit to pass away from her ; and now, in the face of Europe, in the face of America, in the face of our kindred and our race, in the face of our Great Creator, we declare that this war is **JUST** and **NECESSARY** ; that men may enter upon it with a free conscience, and a full assurance that it is Heaven’s work.

“*We fight for liberty to live.* Hundreds of thousands of Irishmen would again die in the tortures of famine ; hundreds of thousands of Irishmen would again fly over the wide sea to perish of unknown horrors in the swamps of Canada and the woods of Michigan, if we bowed our necks to the Parliament of England at this hour.

“We fight because there is no remedy but the sword ; because in this island, so favoured by Heaven, our traders have been made bankrupts, our peasantry have been transformed into hideous paupers, our gentry have been erected into a hostile garrison, and our educated classes corrupted

into stipendiaries and arch-detectives, by the diabolical arts of England. Because the seeds of hatred between creed and creed, between class and class, between man and man, have been studiously sown by her hand to the ruin of our strength and of our honour. Because we have been an exception to the nations of the earth. Throughout all Europe there was scarcity in the past year, in Ireland alone there were famine and death. Throughout all Europe there have been concessions to the will of the people ; in Ireland alone was there insolence for concession, and tyranny for justice. We fight because we are denied peace, except at the price of dishonour ; because the men who have abandoned the enjoyments of wealth and civilisation to fight in the ranks of the people are doomed to the prison, perhaps predestined to the grave of Tone and Fitzgerald, if the people permit them to fall into the hands of the enemy. We fight, because the honour, the interest, the necessity, the very existence of this ancient nation depends upon our valour and devotion at this hour. If we cower, if we flinch, if we falter, the hopes are gone for which our fathers and our fathers' fathers gave their life's blood. Gone in the stench of dishonour and infamy that will cling to it for ever.

“There is no neutrality now. You must choose your side, and choose quickly. If you love famine, stripes, and dishonour ; if you are prepared to abandon your arms and your liberty, join the red ranks of England ; if you love justice, if your heart warms at the memories of the dear land, if it swells with the hope of her deliverance and her glory, God bless you, your side is with your country—your rank is beneath the green banner of Ireland.

“Let no man who has stimulated the quarrel by word or deed presume to hold back now. If he does he is accursed—

“Earth is not deep enough to hide
The coward slave who slinks aside ;
Hell is not hot enough to scathe
The traitor knave who'd break his faith.”

“But if we succeed—when we succeed, did God ever bless men with so intoxicating a triumph as will be ours ? To see our nation arise again like a young queen proud and happy. To see prosperity run like fresh blood through all the veins

of society. To see our Irish race year after year growing more prosperous, more manly, more virtuous. To see the green banner that we love still floating before our eyes like the star of our destiny. To see all the Irish race, without distinction of class or creed, united in love, and ready to maintain the rights of our ancient land against all mankind. Oh, God grant it. God send it soon, though our blood be part of the price to purchase that immortal treasure of liberty."

This was the programme of the Young Ireland Party. We aimed, at least, that the conflict should be a generous one, in which no man of honour need shrink from taking part.

The *Nation* was printed and ready to be despatched to the country, when the police pounced on the office and seized the entire issue. They took possession of the MSS. from which it was set, and the types which printed it, and arrested compositors and machinists. The effect was complete ; no national journal any longer existed in the capital.

For a week not a glimmer of light came from Kilkenny—a week the torture of which can only be estimated by counting the hours and minutes of which it was composed. The Dublin newspapers did not furnish the smallest information on the position of our friends, and no letters reached us. On the third day we despatched a messenger not likely to be suspected of sympathy with the Confederates, but all travellers were watched, and he returned without having made his way to O'Brien. We debated the possibility of escaping from Newgate and joining our friends, but the difficulties seemed insuperable. In this extremity two young girls, who were persuaded that their sex and social position would amply protect them, volunteered to make their way to the Confederate leaders, to whom they were well known, and bring us reliable news.¹ The temptation to accept the offer was very great, but they were young, attractive, and inexperienced, and I could not consent to send them into a district probably occupied by soldiery, or perhaps the theatre of civil war.

¹ Of these two heroic girls, one died since I commenced this narrative, an honoured matron in Belfast ; the other is happily still living a Dominican nun, in a convent in New Zealand.

At length disastrous intelligence arrived ; T. D. Reilly had returned to town disguised as a groom in charge of horses, and was about to fly to America as from a cause altogether lost. A few days later we learned that Doheny and MacManus were in the Galtee Mountains attempting to rally their followers there ; that Meagher and Dillon were in Tipperary or Waterford, vainly striving to raise the country, and that Smith O'Brien had made an unsuccessful stand at Ballangarry. A little later he was arrested at Thurles, and all was over.

At that time I thought I had suffered the sorest calamity that fortune could inflict, but a worse remained behind. Authentic news came to us from without that many of the ignorant populace in Dublin whispered that Smith O'Brien had deliberately betrayed them to make a real insurrection impossible. The police were probably responsible for this invention ; but Old Ireland prejudice welcomed it, and it was for a time successful. For the first and last time in my life I flung myself down in despair, and declared that such an insensate multitude could not be saved.

Immediately after O'Brien's arrest the trial of the prisoners in Newgate commenced. We were brought into court together, and I was first put forward to plead, when a junior counsel rushed breathlessly into court with instructions from the Castle for the Attorney-General. I was ordered to be put back, and my counsel, after a pause of bewilderment, learned that Lord Clarendon had determined to send me to trial for high treason with O'Brien and his associates, and I was sent back to Newgate. Mr. O'Doherty's trial immediately proceeded. An article in his own handwriting was the most dangerous fact in the case,¹ but no one would help the Crown to prove it. Mr. Butt insisted that it had not been brought home to the prisoner's knowledge, which was necessary to create the offence charged in the indictment, and his contention, strengthened by the youth and frankness

¹ The article most relied on was an offence against common sense rather than against "Our Lady the Queen." It was a weak and incoherent echo of the *United Irishman*. The writer disregarded a union of Repealers ; he objected to any negotiations with the imbeciles and traitors of Burgh quay, and had no confidence in the proposed Irish League ; the people were long and fully prepared for a struggle, and Meagher was invited to put himself at the head of the clubs and begin.—"Four Years of Irish History."

of the prisoner, not yet of age, prevailed with some of the jurors, and they could not come to an agreement. Mr. O'Doherty was not discharged, but sent back to prison. It was soon intimated to him that if he pleaded guilty he would not be called up for judgment. He refused, and was ordered to prepare for a second trial. The trial of John Martin followed. His defence was an exposition of his opinions as they were known to all his associates. He was not the spokesman of a class, but desired the independence of Ireland for the benefit of all the people, landlords, clergymen, and judges included. He did not desire war or violence, but the repeal of the Union, and had quite recently stated these opinions at Newry in a speech which was proved. The articles of Lalor, Reilly, and Brenan, for which he was responsible as registered proprietor of the *Irish Felon*, it was contended, did not express his opinions and intentions, and ought not to be used against him. This improbable defence was substantially true. Mr. Martin desired a peaceful solution of our troubles, but did not, and probably could not, control the opinion of his fiercer contributors.

The jury convicted him chiefly for an article written in Newgate, and bearing his own signature, in which he recommended the clubs not to give up their arms, the possession of arms being a constitutional right.

On the ground that this article was written in prison, and under excitement, the jury recommended him to mercy, and the Court, in complete disregard of the recommendation, sentenced him to the enormous punishment of fourteen years' transportation. O'Doherty's second trial immediately followed, and for a second time the jury disagreed. It was expected that he would now be set at liberty, as he was a mere youth, and of no political importance, but he was again sent back to prison. Williams alone was acquitted, and for weeks before his trial he and his fellow-prisoners knew that this result might be counted on. His father was a close friend of Mr. Kemmis, the Crown Solicitor, and that official told him, in confidence, that there was only one serious item of evidence against his son, the MS. of one of his articles, but he would render it worthless by pinning it between two other MSS., in a manner that would conceal it

from the witnesses. This was duly done, and the grey-haired official who had managed State trials in Ireland for a lifetime, superseded judge and jury, and disposed of the prisoner's fate at his proper discretion.

A Commission was appointed to sit at Clonmel for the trial of the prisoners charged with high treason. I received no notice of trial, and it was only after a bewildering delay my counsel discovered the reason. When high treason is charged, an overt act must have been committed in the place where the case is tried. Had the number of the *Nation* containing the "Tocsin of Ireland" arrived at Clonmel, that would have amounted to an overt act. But a single copy was not permitted to reach the post-office, and by this successful *razzia* the police made the trial for high treason impossible. After the Commission had opened, however, a slander was published which, if it could only succeed in getting believed, would damage Nationality worse than my conviction. The *Daily News*, a Whig organ in London, bound to be well informed in such a case, made the following announcement :—

"DUBLIN, September 26.

"A most startling and significant conclusion arrived at by one of the parties accused of high treason, and not on the trial at the Commission, has come to my knowledge to-day. It is of so extraordinary a nature that I should not alone hesitate to state it, but should meet it with positive disbelief, if my authority was not such as to leave no room for doubt. My information is this—Formal notice has been this forenoon given to the Government that the great literary leader of the Confederate movement—the great concoctor of its plans, the great architect of its organisation, he who was the life and soul of the party, the organiser of the clubs, the suggestor of ambassadorships and solicitations of foreign aid—in fact, the head and front of the *Nation* has this day caused it to be announced to the Government, through his solicitor, that he does not intend to put the Government to the labour of a prosecution in this case, but that he is prepared to plead guilty to whatever indictment the Crown may prefer against him, throwing himself on the mercy of the

Executive, to dispose of him as may seem fitting in the case of one who does not even question its authority, much less offer any opposition to its paramount operation. The time of making this submission is not less extraordinary than is the fact that it has been made. The influence which it must have upon the approaching trials must be very great, and that influence it will be impossible to avoid if, as I believe, the fact itself will be publicly announced to-morrow in the public journals. Mr. Duffy's submission having been but just communicated to me, I have no further time to dwell on it at present."

I would rather have forfeited my life than endure this charge in silence ; but all communication with the outside was now strictly prohibited and sedulously guarded against. By the aid of one of my counsel, however, I was able to send a note to the *Freeman's Journal*, denouncing the falsehood with not unjust indignation. Who was the slanderer ? That was what was fiercely demanded. The correspondent of the *Daily News* was understood to be Mr. John O'Donaghue, a barrister, and one of the conductors of the *Freeman* known to me for many years. My indignation against him was vehement, and it quickly reached him. Mr. O'Donaghue immediately wrote to me denying that he had any share in the infamy :—

"I heard (he wrote) last night for the first time, with surprise and regret, that you attribute to me a recent paragraph in the *Daily News*, which called forth your justly indignant reply in the *Freeman's Journal*. I neither wrote, suggested, nor saw that paragraph until it appeared in print, and when I did, condemned it in common with every manly and honourable mind."

At length the agent and the original author of the slander were unveiled. Mr. John Flannedy, editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, wrote me that he had been inveigled into making this statement by the positive assurance of Richard Barrett, editor of the *Pilot*, a journal then in *articulo mortis*, that he had the fact from the High Sheriff :—

"I was leaving the *Register* office when Mr. Barrett called me behind the counter where Taaffe stands, and in Taaffes'

presence (they had already been speaking on the subject) Mr. Barrett made the statement to me that you had that very morning sent in to the authorities your submission ; that you had sent it through the High Sheriff, as the formal channel of conveyance, and that he had the information from the High Sheriff. He said I was at liberty to make the statement in my communication with London, but not speak of it out-of-doors, as he intended to use it himself in his publication on the next day, Wednesday. . . . What my feelings were when I found that I had been imposed upon, what they continue to be, and ever will continue, I shall not attempt to describe. . . . What you shall be disposed to think of such an explanation of what was a great wrong done you by one on whom you had years ago conferred a great, the greatest favour, for reputation was at stake in it, I shall not presume even to think."

Richard Barrett, the "Dear Barrett" of O'Connell's public correspondence, the State prisoner of '44, was a man whose name made everything plain ; he was and had habitually been a liar by profession. My friends were enraged with the O'Connell family, who must, they believed, have unmuzzled their bulldog. But I have no doubt Mr. Barrett was privateering on his own account. He had begun life as a Castle pamphleteer, and then deserted to O'Connell, but being now without a patron he returned to his original pursuit. A little later he published a brochure entitled, "The History of the Irish Confederation," a manifest Castle pamphlet, consisting mainly of statements about me as authentic as his communication to the correspondent of the *Daily News*. The fact most noteworthy in this transaction is the conduct of Lord Clarendon. The reader will not, I trust, suppose that after fifty years I retain any heat on the subject ; but the government of Ireland at that time will be imperfectly understood without noting the conduct of the Chief Governor. The reader, I do not doubt, will be pleased that I found an opportunity of vindicating myself from so foul a charge. Not so Lord Clarendon. He wrote with his own hand to the Prison Board complaining that I had been permitted to send out such a letter, adding the malign suggestion that by doing so I had violated my personal engagement not to communi-

cate with the Press. The new invention would, doubtless, have found its way speedily to the official journals but that I claimed my vindication from the Prison Board. They informed Lord Clarendon that they had requested me a month earlier, on instructions from the Castle, to make such a pledge, but that I had positively refused as an untried prisoner to give any sort of undertaking. The Chairman of the Board suggested there ought to be much allowance for the Lord-Lieutenant. The fact of my correspondence with newspapers would be commented on in Parliament, and what was his Excellency to say? "Say," I rejoined, "why say again through Lord Lansdowne what he said before, that the letter was written outside the prison, and my name forged to it?"

Lord Clarendon was very indignant, and his Crown lawyer found an opportunity of gratifying his animosity against me. In Smith O'Brien's portmanteau a letter of mine was found which he had forgotten to destroy, and on the strength of that document the Solicitor-General affected to treat him as an unfortunate gentleman deluded into ruinous courses by a "diabolical tempter." Here is the diabolical temptation in question. It represents very accurately my position in that trying time. I thought we were bound to call the country to arms, formidable as the difficulties were, because a refusal would cover Ireland with contempt before America and Europe, but that no pains ought to be spared to make the revolution an honourable and magnanimous one:—

"I am glad to learn that you are about to commence a series of meetings in Munster. There is no half-way house for you—you will be the head of the movement, loyally obeyed, and the revolution will be conducted with order and clemency, or the mere anarchists will prevail with the people, and our revolution will be a bloody chaos. You have at present Lafayette's place—so graphically painted by Lamartine—and I believe have fallen into Lafayette's error, that of not using it to all its extent and in all its resources. I am perfectly well aware that you don't desire to lead or influence others—but I believe, with Lamartine, that this feeling, which is a high personal and civic virtue, is a vice in revolutions. One might as well, I think, not want to

influence a man who was going to walk on thawing ice, or to cross a fordless river, as not to desire to keep men right in a political struggle, and to do it with might and main. If I was Smith O'Brien I would shape out in my own mind, or with such counsel as I valued, a definite course for the revolution, and labour incessantly to develop it in that way. For example, your project of obtaining signatures to the roll of the National Guard, and when a sufficient number were procured, and not sooner, calling the Council of Three Hundred, was one I entirely relied upon. But it has been permitted to fall into disuse, and could scarcely be revived now. The clubs, however, might take the place of the National Guard, and the proposal in your letter on Union of a definite number of clubs being formed would suit as well, if it were vigorously and systematically carried out—each day adding an item to it, and all the men we could influence employed upon it. Forgive me for urging this so anxiously upon you, but I verily believe the hopes of the country depend upon the manner in which the next two months are used. There is not a town in which you could not find a band of missionaries to organise the neighbouring counties—every club has its active men fit for this work—and it is only by applying all our force to it that we will succeed."

It was held by lawyers of moderate temper that since the era of the Stuarts so shocking an outrage had not been committed in a court of justice as the Solicitor-General's speech.

O'Brien was not a man to permit brutality, which pretended to favour him at the cost of one of his friends, to pass in silence, and the following dialogue took place, highly characteristic of both the interlocutors :—

"The Solicitor-General (Mr. Hatchell) : I wish Mr. O'Brien had not listened to this diabolical tempter, who was pressing him to his destruction.

"The Prisoner (Mr. O'Brien) : It is not fair to speak of Mr. Duffy in this manner in his absence.

"The Solicitor-General : I do believe Mr. O'Brien was unwilling to take this step. His honour, his position, his feelings, his education were against it, but he was urged on by bad advisers. I regret——

"The Prisoner : I must say that it is wrong, at the time that that gentleman himself is awaiting his trial, to take this opportunity of prejudicing the public mind against him. I beg most distinctly to repudiate any such observation of the Solicitor-General."

The prisoners at Clonmel were all convicted, and were sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. They sued out a writ of error on technical grounds which was decided against them, and Lord John Russell then announced that the Queen would commute their punishment to transportation for life. But under the law then in existence the assent of the prisoners was necessary to this modification of their sentence, and they positively refused assent, preferring death to perpetual transportation. The deadlock was terminated by the passage of a marvellous Act of Parliament to enable the Queen to pardon prisoners without their own consent.¹

¹ While the fate of the prisoners was still in doubt Mr. John O'Connell ventured to interpose his good offices and received a contemptuous rebuff.

"RICHMOND BRIDEWELL,

"JOHN O'CONNELL, Esq., M.P.

"Jan. 12, 1849.

"SIR,—Having lately seen in the newspapers two letters bearing your signature, in the first of which you misrepresent and insult the State prisoners who have now no opportunity of replying to your aspersions, and in the second of which you profess to claim for them merciful consideration, we cannot refrain from telling you that though perfectly contented to pass over the former in silence, we cannot tolerate with the same equanimity your affectation of pity. We therefore sincerely deprecate any intervention on your part in regard to the penalties which it may be our lot to suffer for having endeavoured to serve our country.—We remain, Sir, your obedient servants,

"WILLIAM SMITH O'BRIEN,

"THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER,

"TERENCE BELLEW MACMANUS,

"PATRICK O'DONOHOE."

CHAPTER IX

STRUGGLE WITH LORD CLARENDON FOR LIFE AND LIBERTY

Malice of the Government Press—Letters of an Irish Priest—Official notice to the Attorney-General and to the Sheriff against jury-packing—The Brothers Moran—“Creed of the *Nation*” suppressed—Determined to baffle and defeat the State prosecution—Policy of my counsel—Trenchant address to the Lord-Lieutenant against jury-packing—His reply dissected by the Irish Priest—Letter to Richard Sheil—Letter to T. B. Macaulay—Martin Burke and Mrs. Martin Burke—John Martin’s opinion of my defence—My refusal to sanction Father Mathew’s Defence Fund—The *Irishman* started as a pseudo-*Nation*—Tranquillity in Newgate—Letter from John O’Hagan to John Dillon on the condition and prospects of Ireland in 1849—Isaac Butt’s design to enter Parliament—Meet Lalor for the first time—His policy—His release from prison—Subsequent letter from him—Letter from William Fagan on the intentions of Lord Clarendon.

I WAS the last of the State prisoners; the others had been snatched away one after another like the companions of Ulysses, and my turn was at hand. The situation was aggravated by the policy of the Government officials and the Government Press. I was greatly moved by the brutality of the Solicitor-General at Clonmel, and the official Press assailed me every week, and many times in the week, misrepresenting my character and policy with deliberate malice. A single paragraph from a letter of “The Irish Priest”¹ will help the reader to understand what I had to endure. Speaking of the *Evening Post*, the organ of the Irish Government, he said :—

“Three times a week these foul and fetid jaws were opened to vomit forth such abominable slanders as modest men could sometimes hardly read without a blush, and timid men with-

¹ The Irish Priest was Dr. Murray, a Professor of Theology at Maynooth. I had known him since my residence in Belfast. He did not always approve of the policy of the *Nation*, but he never failed to be a loyal and steadfast personal friend. He was a powerful and accomplished writer, and a man of matchless civic courage.

out a shudder. If a convent were sacked in one place and its inmates violated ; if a church were desecrated in another place ; if in another a man's brains were dashed out or his throat cut ; if anywhere some blasphemy uttered or some theory of organised plunder advanced—if there occurred an anti-social commotion among the *canaille* of the faubourgs or clubs of Paris, straightway these men, locked up in jail, were marked as the men who designed to introduce the same system and enact the same horrors in Ireland ; straightway the Castle witch sent forth a direful howl and stretched out her long, brown, skinny arms to protect the altars and the homes of Irishmen from the demon assaults of Duffy and Meagher and the rest. The effect produced was really tremendous. The belief became very general among the readers of the Orange papers and the *Evening Post* that such must be the facts regarding the prisoners ; they were stated so confidently, so circumstantially, so constantly."

One of the special lies that stung me floats still in my memory. Two young men named Moran were arrested for assaulting a policeman with a pistol and dagger, and the case was painted as one of shocking meanness and atrocity. It was immediately reported, at a safe distance, in the English papers, that they were well-known contributors to the *Nation*. By and by the "Morans of the *Nation*" became their ordinary title. I had never seen them, I had never heard of them, or from them, in my existence. They were as foreign to me as Prester John. How many of my jurors came into court believing them to be my colleagues and associates ?

When these slanders were occupying every journal the Government could influence, my friends got the "Creed of the *Nation*," which was at this time an available brochure, sewed in among the advertisements attached to the *Dublin University Magazine* that it might vindicate the character of the Confederates among cultivated Unionists. It was merely setting up a finger post, but it was too much for the patience of the Castle. Colonel Browne, the Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, ordered it to be torn out, and Mr. M'Glashan obeyed the order.

In the silence of my prison, meditating on the case, I was seized with the idea that there were two things I could do

and ought to do. I might set my character fairly before all whom it concerned to understand it, and I might expose the base devices employed in the trials already held. Whispers continued to come to me of the peculiar enmity with which Lord Clarendon regarded me, and, meditating on the probable consequences I had to encounter, I suddenly determined to enlarge my design from a vindication of my character to a defence of my liberty and future life. Mr. Mitchel had warned the Viceroy that one of the two must be overthrown, and the stroke unhappily had fallen on the wrong one. The Confederates had frankly staked their lives in an attempt which the people did not support, and they necessarily failed. But was it not possible for me to do something rarer, to baffle and perhaps beat them in their dens of law, where juries were unblushingly packed and justice shamelessly parodied? I had been called the organiser of the party, and I resolved to strain every faculty to compass this work.

The story of my imprisonment and of the numerous indictments and trials which followed it, the protracted struggle and final defeat of the Government, have been told elsewhere in detail,¹ and I shall not repeat it here. But to preserve the continuity of the present narrative, I must fly through the principal events of that era, and fix their chronological relation to the story still untold.

In the end I was the only prisoner not convicted (except Williams, let off by the connivance of the Crown Solicitor), and I now propose to make the reader understand how this marvellous result was brought about.

A consultation with my counsel was held in prison. The leader, Mr. Butt, to great rhetorical powers added a close familiarity with the law of State prosecutions, and a lively sympathy with the National party, which now for the first time he avowed. The juniors were my friends, Sir Colman O'Loghlen and John O'Hagan, who bent their whole powers to second the leader.² The skill and assiduity of my counsel would count for much, but I felt that something more was

¹ "Four Years of Irish History."

² My earliest friend, Thomas O'Hagan, Q.C., came to me in Newgate immediately after my arrest to say that a retainer had been sent him by the Government for the Green Street Trials, but that he had returned it, refusing to appear against me or any of my companions. Under the circumstances he could not hold a brief for me.

necessary, for their skill and assiduity had not saved the prisoners already tried. I determined to carry the contest before the large court of popular opinion and to make it disagreeable and dangerous for the Executive to destroy me by the base methods they had employed against my colleagues. What I had to fear was a packed jury, that is, a jury composed of the political enemies of the prisoner. Up to the Solicitor-Generalship of Sir Michael O'Loghlen, a few years earlier, in political cases Catholics were universally excluded from juries, and with the Catholics those Protestants who were called liberal because they desired to abolish the penal practices which had outlived penal laws. O'Loghlen suspended the system, but in the O'Connell trial in 1844 Irish Tories revived it, and tried the Catholic chief of a Catholic nation by a jury and a court in which there was not a single Catholic. The Whig statesmen then in Opposition denounced this transaction unsparingly. Macaulay, who had the habit of laying his finger on the weak point, reminded the House of Commons that the law humanely provided that an alien must be tried by a mixed jury, half being foreigners, but an Irish Catholic in Ireland was tried by a jury composed exclusively of his opponents. The Catholic Bar in Ireland, which had become numerous, followed this lead, and held an aggregate meeting to denounce jury-packing, in which Richard Shiel took a leading part. It was less than four years since these things had happened, and the Whig orators were now Ministers of the Crown. The Irish barristers were its law officers, and credulous persons were confident that under such a *régime* political prisoners contending for changes in the Constitution would receive fair trial. But a fair trial was a phenomenon unknown in Ireland.

Mr. Martin, Mr. Williams, and Mr. O'Doherty were already tried, and every Catholic juror who took the Testament in his hand to be sworn, was ordered to stand aside by the Crown Solicitor, acting under the direction of the Attorney-General, Mr. Monahan. The old system, as it was administered in the darkest days of Protestant ascendancy, was revived by Catholic lawyers acting under the orders of Whig Ministers.¹

¹ The Attorney-General's antecedents must have made the task odious

It was plain to me that unless I could stop this practice the result was foredoomed. Rumours reached me through my counsel that my conviction was essential to the happiness of persons in authority, and that no stone, and no reversible coat, would be left unturned to obtain it. To defeat the jury-packers would revive the public spirit like a battle won in the field. My counsel were determined to exhaust the resources of the law in impeding and barring the prosecution wherever the Crown employed illegitimate methods, but the political part of the contest lay outside their domain, and to that I applied myself. This policy was beset with difficulties. To get the misfeasance of the Administration exposed seemed nearly impossible. The journals which had narrowly escaped prosecution were naturally the most timid and cautious, and as the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended the editors could be sent to prison at the pleasure of the Castle. Frederick Lucas in the *Tablet*, and "An Irish Priest" in the same journal, in letters of singular force and lucidity, enlightened opinion wherever the *Tablet* circulated, but there was silence in Dublin. Meditating on the difficulty in prison, I thought of a device which proved very successful. I drafted a notice to the Attorney-General, in which, after insisting on a prisoner's right to a fair trial, I recited in careful detail what had been done by his orders in the trials already held, and warned him that I should not consider a trial by a jury fabricated by the Castle the fair trial I was entitled to by law, but a manifestly foul trial, and a fraud on the administration of justice.

This paper, which carefully preserved the form usual in legal notices, and was studded with facts, was copied widely to him. He started in life with advanced opinions ; at a Bar dinner where the Duke of Wellington's health was proposed, he turned down his glass to testify his hostility to a bad Irishman. He had been busy in '44 in the movement in reprobation of jury-packing. And now he was required to do all he had denounced as infamous. He was a man of considerable rough vigour, and acquainted with all the practices his position required him to know. The Solicitor-General, who had been suddenly shoved upwards from the tail of the profession, and finally—

" For some gracious service unexpressed,
And by its wages only to be guessed"—

created Solicitor-General, was a man without culture, professional knowledge, or the bearing of a gentleman.

by the Press, and became familiar to journalists in both countries. I addressed a similar notice to the Sheriff who had framed the panels, specifying the Catholic and Liberal Protestant jurors whom he had omitted or postponed, pointing out the duty the law imposed upon him, and his shameful violation of it. The effect upon public opinion was considerable. Many Irish towns, among them my native town, spoke in the most decisive tone, demanding if this was the justice the Whigs desired to maintain in Ireland. The Irish electors in various English boroughs instructed their representatives to inquire whether they approved of the judicial system established in Ireland, and if not what they would do to control it? At last the smiling complacency of the Irish members was ruffled by so much clamour, and they sent a deputation to Lord Clarendon, then on a visit to London, to ascertain if the business could not be managed a little more decently, or at any rate a little more discreetly.

The Archbishop of Tuam suggested that the country should have an opportunity of expressing an opinion on these practices. A memorial to the Lord-Lieutenant was drawn up by the "Irish Priest," and revised by my counsel, which for unequivocal plain speaking resembled one of the trenchant addresses sent by the Corporation of London to George III. A single paragraph will sufficiently indicate its spirit:—

"Let your Excellency bear in mind that deeply at the root of the deadly hatred of English domination that festered in the hearts of the great mass of the Catholic population since that domination was first established over them, lies a feeling of *utter distrust, and, in State Trials, of utter despair of an impartial administration of law.*"

In a brief time, in a country disheartened by famine and failure, it received more than forty thousand signatures, and the signatories included the men of foremost rank in the Church and in the professions. I advised that this address should be presented to the Lord-Lieutenant by a deputation whom he could not venture to treat with disrespect. This was done accordingly. Lord Clarendon read his reply with a manifest consciousness that he had a nation for an audience. It was elaborate and circumstantial, but absurdly fallacious. He had no control, he affirmed, over the Sheriff whose panel was

assailed. Such a principle as excluding Catholics from juries had never once been propounded. If Catholics were set aside so also were Protestants, and more Protestants, he triumphantly added, than Catholics. The deputation were dumb from etiquette, but when these plausible propositions fell under the review of the "Irish Priest" they were pounded into dust. "He had no control over the Sheriff," but did he not select and appoint that officer, and was not the appointment transferred by Act of Parliament from the Dublin Corporation to the Viceroy precisely for purposes like these? Such a proposition as excluding Catholics had never been propounded. The complaint was not that it had been propounded, but that it had been practised at every single trial at Clonmel and Green Street. More Protestants than Catholics were set aside. "In the name of common sense (remarked the rigorous controversialist) what has this to do with the grievance complained of? Our grievance is that Protestants *alone* are thought fit to serve on juries. What matters it how many Protestants are *excluded*, if *none but* Protestants are *included*? 'The Attorney-General excluded more Protestants than Catholics.' Why, my lord, the objection was not that Catholics were excluded, but that *all* Catholics were excluded; that this was done systematically; that jury after jury was empanelled, and not one Catholic was allowed to remain on the jury."

Public opinion was now thoroughly roused, but it is possible that the policy of the Government was influenced at least in an equal degree by another and different stroke. Richard Sheil, whom I knew of old in Irish affairs, and who had been a leader of the movement against jury-packing in 1844, now held office in the Whig Government, and I determined to bring his professions and practice face to face. I wrote him this note:—

"I have just risen from re-reading your speech at the meeting in January, 1844, when all the Catholics were struck off the jury in the case of 'O'Connell and Others,' and I cannot resist the impulse of writing to you. Among these obscure and anonymous 'Others' I, as you know, was one; and the day on which that speech was delivered I did not conceive it to be in the whole range of human probabilities

that at a future trial I would have to apprehend a similar wrong from a Ministry of whom you were one. But so it stands. Mitchel, Martin, and O'Doherty, who have been already tried and convicted, were tried by juries on which there was not so much as one Catholic. And a similar one is predestined for me a week hence. Now, I am curious to know what you, Richard Sheil, the Catholic champion (of whom I have still certain boyish recollections not altogether effaced), think of this business? It will save you the embarrassment of weighing all the ingenious excuses for putting aside the particular Catholics in my case, which doubtless will be forthcoming at the proper time, if you consider the question now in the abstract, when the jury is not sworn, nor the panel so much as arrayed. For I forewarn you that it is determined to allow no Catholic on my jury—not one; no more than if John Keogh and all succeeding Catholic agitators had never existed. This is the fact we have to deal with in this nineteenth year after Emancipation.

“Perhaps a poor prisoner under the ban of the angry law has no right to trouble your repose with disagreeable questions. I trust, however, you will not think so; for I forewarn you that I promise myself an answer now or at some other time and place, when it will be still less agreeable to be questioned on this matter. Pack they my jury never so securely, you and I will meet again, where a thousand echoes will take up my question and repeat it in every tongue that has syllabled the name of Richard Sheil.”

Mr. Macaulay, who was now a Cabinet Minister, had been emphatic against jury-packing four years earlier. The first volumes of his “History of England” were just published, in which he made execrable the jury-packing under James II. I thought it would be reasonable and pleasant to make the great Whig enemy of injustice compare what was done by Tories in England in the seventeenth century and by Whigs in Ireland five generations later. I enclosed the panel prepared for my trial, and bade him remark that it had practically the sanction and authority of the philosophical historian of the Jacobite era, who was also a Cabinet Minister. I was somewhat known to Mr. Macaulay; in 1843 he had done me the favour of sending me the three volumes of his essays with a

friendly letter, and I might reasonably conclude that subsequent events had scarcely permitted me to vanish out of his memory. The panel contained this agreeable array of my peers and neighbours indifferently chosen :—

“The jeweller of the Lord-Lieutenant, the hairdresser of the Lord-Lieutenant, his Excellency’s shoemaker, the chandler to the Chief Secretary, the bootmaker to the Commander of the Forces, the engineer to the Drainage Commissioners, the cutler, grocer, and purveyor to the Castle ; the saddler and seedsman of a former Lord-Lieutenant, three Government contractors, a compositor in the College Printing Office, two vicars choral of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, the auctioneer to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, and the Consul of King Ernest of Hanover.”

This model panel, which contained but twenty Catholics, who, by their position on it, were likely to be called upon before a jury was sworn, contained nevertheless eleven Englishmen or Scotchmen, and one Frenchman ; and, though there were four thousand qualified persons from whom to select, it contained thirty jurors either challenged by the prisoner or set aside by the Crown on recent State trials.

There are critics, I make no doubt, who will consider these inquiries into the religion of jurors petty and sectarian ; for is not a juror sworn to do his duty, whatever may be his creed ? Quite so, but if the Stuarts had tried the seven bishops in Middlesex by a jury on which no Church of England Protestant was allowed to sit, or Balfour of Burleigh in Midlothian by a jury to which no Presbyterian was admitted, is it not reasonably probable that English history would have something to say on the subject ?

These exposures made it discreditable and dangerous to array another jury on which there was no Catholic. A Catholic must be found, but the officials in the Sheriff’s Office were confident they could find one who would do their work as submissively as an alderman of Skinner’s Alley. Their choice fell on Martin Burke, the proprietor of an hotel frequented by the gentry, and a man long accustomed to consult their wishes. He was a Catholic by birth and practice, but he was what was called a prudent man—one who had never taken any part in Catholic agitation. I have described else-

where¹ how I stubbornly resisted the advice of my friends and the decision of my counsel to object peremptorily to Mr. Burke when he was called, but I have not hitherto disclosed the grounds of my confidence in the suspected juror. The night before the trial Mrs. Burke called on my wife at Merton, and admonished her not to permit her husband to be objected to. "His daughter and myself," she said, "will take our seats in the gallery opposite him, and if the evidence enables an honest man to find a verdict of acquittal he need not return home if he goes against Mr. Duffy."

Mr. Burke was firm for an acquittal.²

It may be assumed that these exposures and this *coup manqué* made a recourse to the old system impossible and effectually secured my escape from conviction. They contributed largely to both these ends. But at least half my success was owing to Lord Clarendon's enmity and the illegitimate measures his law officers took to gratify it. I shall return to the theme presently, but I desire in the first place to pause for a moment on some transactions which occurred between my first trial and the final one.

John Martin, though a convict awaiting transportation in Richmond Bridewell, entered warmly into the spirit of this defence:—

"I was and am proud of your 'Notices.' I feel that the plan of defence adopted or permitted by the rest of us was not only wanting in provision for resisting the main body of the enemy's force—his jury-packers—but also wanting in moral dignity and suggestive of moral injury to our cause.

"Now, you may recollect, to my shame, that I have all along been talking mighty big about real constitution and real law, and yet I was too lazy and too cowardly to act in accordance with my own principles when I was to be put upon the country. But you, whom I used to scold for not fully agreeing in my doctrines about 'law' and 'constitu-

¹ "Four Years of Irish History," chap. x.

² Mr. Burke proved not only a steadfast juror, but a constitutional student of uncommon force. Lord Brougham attacked him savagely in the House of Lords, and he replied in a letter vindicating the rights of a juror with notable knowledge, vigour, and courtesy. Cynical writers indeed suggested that Mr. Butt could not have done the work better. And perhaps he could not.

tion,' are taking the manlier, more citizen-like, and, may Heaven grant ! the more effectual course of proceeding. . . . And though you know, Duffy, that I am so unfortunate as to differ from you on many points of policy, and upon at least one serious matter of personal feeling, I am proud to acknowledge in you, after glorious Davis, the father of the Irish National party and the chief writer of the party. But for the *Nation*, which your generous boldness and your fixedness of purpose and your able pen have maintained for the last six years as our standard and rallying point of patriotism, every one of us Confederates—even Mitchel—would have remained in dull, hopeless obscurity."

In the eighth month of my imprisonment, when my funds were nearly exhausted by a protracted contest with the Treasury, and no more funds could come in—as the Post Office sent all letters addressed to the editor of the *Nation* to the Castle, and prohibited my trustees from holding communication with me on the business of my personal property'—Father Mathew became apprehensive that I might be sacrificed for want of money to prolong my defence. This gracious friend, who had refrained from all participation in politics, communicated with a few persons of influence, and established a committee to collect a fund for this purpose. I first heard of this proposal by an announcement in the Press of a meeting of the committee at the Shelbourne Hotel. I did not doubt that the action was wise and generous in the abstract—many prisoners before and since have received such aid without discredit—but the management of the Repeal Funds created such distaste and even disgust with the manipulation of public money, that I was resolved I should never be the object of any pecuniary tribute whatever. I wrote to Father Mathew beseeching him not to proceed; his success, I assured him, would humiliate me. Enemies were free, if they thought fit, to affirm that I was an unprofitable servant of Ireland, they

" DUBLIN CASTLE, 25th September, 1848.

" SIR,—I am directed by the Lord Lieutenant to acknowledge the receipt of the letter of the trustees to the estate of Mr. Charles G. Duffy of the 20th instant, and to inform you that their request cannot be complied with.

—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

" THOS. REDINGTON.

" Mr. James M'Donnell, 16, William Street."

should never have any grounds for saying I was a mercenary one. Father Mathew reluctantly yielded to my wishes, and the project was dropped.

Public indignation took a form we little expected. A number of young men from the Dublin clubs were arrested for what was called the Crampton Court conspiracy—a plot to break open Newgate and set the political prisoners free.

As the New Year approached I read the amazing announcement that a new journal to be called the *National*, printed with the type and issued from the office of the *Nation*, and ostensibly owned by my late book-keeper, was about to appear. The design was that it should be regarded as my property, and should leap into the circulation won by the *Nation*. The projector and proprietor of this specious journal was Mr. Durham Dunlop, formerly editor of the *Monitor*, a Whig who probably had no deeper design than to make a little illegitimate profit. The book-keeper, Bernard Fulham, who since my imprisonment had been profuse in professions of devotion to his "dearly beloved friend and master,"¹ wanted employment, and fell cheerfully into the plot. The Government objected to the proposed title, but after some negotiations, in which Lord Clarendon granted an interview to Mr. Fulham, and doubtless ascertained the true state of the case, he permitted the journal to appear under the name of the *Irishman*. From the first issue it was sent to the agents and friends of the *Nation*, whose addresses Mr. Fulham copied from my books, and for a time was universally believed to be mine. On subsequent trial of the action, "Birch against Sir William Somerville," we discovered that one of the writers was Mr. Taylor, sub-editor of the *World*, a subsidised organ of Lord Clarendon, and that the editor was Mr. William Dunlop, who finally left the *Irishman* to write in a Conservative journal, the *Daily Express*. I sent from Newgate to the *Irishman* a denial of any connection or sympathy with the new paper,

¹ "August 9th, 1848.

"MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND AND MASTER,—Nothing but the interest of your family would induce me at this time to intrude on you the following, or any other question: What was the amount of money lent by you to Mr. —? May Almighty God guard and defend you is the prayer of your ever devoted Friend,

"B. FULHAM."

but it was not published; a paragraph was substituted declaring that I was not "the proprietor," which only confirmed the public belief that it was, at any rate, my organ. I caused a paragraph to be inserted in the *Freeman's Journal*, declaring that Mr. Gavan Duffy had "no connection whatever of any character with the *Irishman*, and had not any knowledge of its purpose, politics, managers, or any person or circumstance connected with it." But many of the readers of the new journal never saw this denial. Part of the disreputable game was to affect a deep interest in my fate, and articles and poems on this subject were common till I exposed the cheat, when the engine was promptly reversed. Finally Joseph Brenan and some of his associates, who had been club men, succeeded the original staff, and continued to manage it till Brenan had to fly to America for his connection with what is known as the Cappoquin Outbreak. After the revival of the *Nation* I explained the true state of the case, and the *Irishman* ended in the Insolvent Court.¹

After the Clonmel trial visitors were excluded from Newgate, except my wife for an hour daily. No letters or papers were delivered. The only sound from the outer world that broke the solitude was the tramp of a sentinel outside my door. Books, however, were not taken away, or writing materials. This solitude struck the public imagination as appallingly desolate. But a friend who had been associated with me in the *Nation* understood the case better. "I envy you (he wrote) the profound tranquillity of a prison, to be alone after the stormy days of the Confederation, to have leisure for self-communion, certain that whatever may befall, it will find you prepared; that is surely peace and happiness." "Lost to virtue, lost to manly thought, lost to the nobler sallies of the soul, who thinks it solitude to be alone."

I have never, perhaps, passed periods of greater tranquillity than while I was a State prisoner. On the first occasion I was young (28 years of age) engaged in a generous struggle

¹ It was on this journal that a man who came to a tragic end of an infamous career in recent times, Mr. Richard Pigott, the forger of the Parnell letters, had his first employment.

and suffering for it, and my leisure was devoted to study. On the second occasion, though a cause on which I had staked life and fortune was defeated, time had brought tranquillity. I had the sense of having done my duty, and the long, peaceful evenings spent in thought and lighted up with the hope of reviving the cause if I escaped conviction, have left a memory gentle and pensive, but by no means unpleasant.

Towards the close of my imprisonment it became evident that the country was beginning to regain heart. In after times John Dillon gave me a letter he received at this period from John O'Hagan, which assured him that whatever befell, the contest for Ireland would be soon renewed. It contains also some light on the question how our appeal to our friends in America for assistance in our enterprise fared :—

“*Christmas, 1848.*

“**MY DEAR DILLON**,—In the course of last July, just after the Ballingarry business, a gentleman came from New York, bringing with him M. O'F.'s watch as a token and money, £800 in notes and £200 in gold, for a certain purpose. As you and others were not to the fore he came to me and unfolded his purpose, without disclosing his name. I said the money was then utterly useless for that object, but that it would be most valuable as a fund for the defence of the political prisoners. He fully agreed that it *ought* to be dedicated to that end, but not conceiving that his commission authorised him to leave it for any purpose but one, he resolved to take it back with him, promising me, however, that when he arrived in America he would do his best to have the money remitted back here as a defence fund. Now, money is sadly wanted here to enable us to prosecute writs of error. Duffy is completely beggared, and the other men have little enough, and if then that £1,000 be still undisposed of, and you could get it remitted to R. O. G., or any one else here, it would be a Godsend for our poor friends.

“As to yourself, I saw the resolution of the American Bar admitting you, and was extremely gratified, and so was

every one else. Of all the men implicated in the late affairs there was *no one* who excited more interest among friends and foes than you ; no one for whose escape more joy was expressed. That you have a great career before you, and will not only be a happy man, but an eminent man in your new sphere I feel assured. Still you must keep your eye on Ireland. To serve her is your true mission.

"For us, I have still great hopes of this country, provided we succeed in saving Duffy. I cannot express how much I feel to depend on that. Let him be free to direct his labours to the reconstruction and proper direction of the Young I. party, and let Lucas come here to give a right bent to the priests, and we will be better before the wind than ever. We were very sanguine last week of succeeding in a plea in abatement in Duffy's case, but, contrary to all expectations, the judges (Perrin and Richards) decided against us. A demurrer is now being argued by Butt and O'Loghlen. A jury will not be sworn, I think, till Monday next. They have packed the panel infamously.—Ever my dear D., hoping to hear from you, your affectionate friend,

"JOHN O'HAGAN."

Isaac Butt thought the time was come when he might advantageously go into Parliament, and asked me to recommend him to a constituency, and to get O'Brien and Meagher to do the same. I was quite willing to do so if he made it possible by declaring himself a Nationalist. Meagher took the same ground. He wrote to me :—

"At the time Butt undertook my defence in the Sedition Case he assured me he would not have the slightest hesitation in avowing himself in favour of self-legislation ; and I can't see why he should have changed his mind since then. Let him declare for the Constitution of '82, and no man was ever returned more triumphantly than he will be ; the whole of Munster will be up for him, and he will be loved and worshipped by the people. In fact the tribuneship is vacant, and whoever had the genius and the boldness to step up to it, will win it amid the acclamations of the country. Butt has the genius—Heaven grant he may have the boldness !"

It was years before Butt acted on this counsel, but in the end he did what Meagher advised with all the results Meagher predicted.

Another evidence of growing confidence that all was not lost came from Samuel Ferguson. I take a single extract from a desultory and discursive diary written by fits and starts in prison :—

“I do not love to see visitors. Since Ballingarry there have not been half a dozen whom I would not willingly have avoided. Father Mathew was a signal exception ; his sweet sympathetic disposition soothed my spirit. I was glad also to talk to Ferguson who came with Wilde the other day. He is persuaded that there will be a middle-class Protestant movement for some sort of legislature in Ireland, and that it will probably be successful.”

Among the *détenus* transferred to Newgate was James Fintan Lalor, and as no restriction was placed on the intercourse of the political prisoners I took an early occasion of visiting him. This is the account of the visit in my diary :—

“I have seen Lalor for the first time in bed, poor fellow, with complicated maladies. Nature has been very unkind ; he is almost a dwarf, near sighted, and with a face far from being winning or sympathetic. But he has a precious jewel in his head, which makes one speedily forget these drawbacks. His talk is original and vigorous, weighty with thought, and made bright and pleasant by a happy style. He is quite confident that this country, which was so recently appealed to in vain, is eager for an opportunity to fight, and may make a revolution before the end of 1850. His feeble frame is the vesture of an unconquerable soul, but he seems totally incapable of seeing facts which contradict his theory. He is without money, and though I have little enough it is the duty of one poor patriot to help another. Imprisonment is endangering his life, and I will move any one who can help to obtain his release, which ought not to be difficult, as he is only a *Habeas Corpus* prisoner. He has not forgiven John Mitchel for stealing his opinions and parading them as his own. He refused to write in the *United Irishman*, though Mitchel made various appeals to him, and when he came to

write in the *Felon* he proceeded to condemn and reverse Mitchel's incredible policy of inciting a revolution without making any preparation for it. 'I was to blame,' he said, 'for not sending earlier to France and America, though Mitchel was proclaiming that it was a work of supererogation.' He spoke with appreciation of M'Gee, and said whenever the report of a Confederate meeting came down to Tinakill he read my speech first and M'Gee's second. I said I did not wonder at his reading M'Gee's eagerly, for it was generally the best—but why mine? 'Because,' he answered, 'I wanted to know what was going to be done, and I was sure to find it there.' He begged me to come back to him, which I shall certainly do."¹

After Lalor's release from prison he wrote me this characteristic letter:—

"DEAR DUFFY,—I know and feel how heavily your own affairs must be pressing on your mind just now, yet I cannot help asking your advice and opinion as to how I ought to act under present circumstances, so far as you can give them, which I know can be but very imperfectly.

"I am urged by several parties, of different shades of *green*, to join them in a new movement. I can no longer delay giving an answer, one way or the other, and acting accordingly I must step out or stand by.

"There is a very general fermentation going on below the surface. The movement everywhere is running spontaneously into secret organisation, and I think *natural tendency* ought to be aided not interfered with.

"A new journal, conducting itself with *prudence* and *pro-*

¹ "Lalor was detained for several months in Newgate, Dublin, where he conversed much with Mr. Duffy, for whom he seems to have conceived warm feelings of personal friendship. I have heard him speak in the strongest terms of Mr. Duffy's 'personal honor.' Mr. Duffy was anxious that Lalor should co-operate with him in a newspaper, in case they should be able to extricate themselves from the clutches of the Philistines. Lalor was not unwilling to accede to this suggestion, if only they could agree sufficiently in their views. He (Lalor) felt embittered against John Mitchel. He seldom praised him cordially; would even sometimes speak slightly of him as 'a bold, clever fellow,' and accusing him of appropriating his ideas."—"Recollections of Fintan Lalor." By T. C. Luby.

Mr. Luby was one of the founders of the Fenian Society and one of its Executive Government.

privately, would be indispensable to any new movement. Now, on this matter, I wish not to adopt any course that could interfere with your intended arrangements in the event of acquittal. Will you let me know your own personal views, wishes, and feelings, on the subject, as I wish to be guided by them?

“We ought to have but *one* journal, that is clear, and clear, too, that you should be at the head of it. *Two journals* would inevitably create *two parties*. Nothing could hinder that. But the immediate establishment of a *weekly* journal at least, if not of a morning one, is required.

“Now, why should I conceal it from you—my own firm impression is that you need have little fear of being taken from Ireland, but I am greatly afraid they mean and will contrive to keep you in *Richmond*, with O’Brien and the others, for the next eight or ten or twelve months. For such a case you ought at least to be prepared and making provision. Is there anything to hinder you from being proprietor of a paper while there, or from writing its articles? I can see nothing—nothing, at least, that could not be got over. You could not superintend details, but you could write the more, *there* would be all the difference.

“Your funds may probably have failed, but I have reasons for hoping that funds may be furnished.”

I had no confidence in conspiracy. I was resolutely determined to fall back upon the plan I had proposed to the Council of the Confederation—*independent opposition* and the gradual creation of confidence in a patriot party whom the country would trust and follow in any extremity. I had learned the story of the late abortive insurrection from its leaders; and I knew they had found no town or district ready to begin an insurrection, each of them having an insensate confidence that the struggle would break out somewhere else, and that we could bring an army into the open field who would hold their ground before artillery and cavalry was a dream. I did not make it a reproach to the country that they did not fight; they were broken by famine and disaster, and they saw nowhere what they had a right to see when such an appeal was made to them, men qualified from experience and

discipline to handle an army. What had happened in Munster was no more than had happened in other countries. Nations have fits of paralysis, and even of baseness. When Charles Edward was at Derby his English partisans, who constituted the bulk of the gentry and clergy in half the counties of England, did not move a hand in his behalf, and it was just now confidently asserted that over thirty millions of Frenchmen would permit the Republic they had created to be strangled before their eyes. Lalor was a thoroughly honest and remarkably able man, but our paths distinctly separated. I told him he must fail and probably fail ignominiously, and that Ireland had failures enough. He took his own course, and many have since followed him in it, but unhappily without falsifying my predictions.

Before my last trial I was removed from Newgate to Richmond Penitentiary, where O'Brien, Meagher, and their associates were still confined, but I was not allowed to see or communicate with them. A happy accident gave me, however, an opportunity of spending a day with them. William Fagan, member for Cork city, wrote to one of my friends that an amnesty extending to all the political prisoners would be granted if I "offered securities for the future." I would offer no securities, and I was well assured that my friends would not purchase their safety at such a price, but it was proper that they should speak for themselves, and I showed Mr. Fagan's letter to the Governor of the prison, and asked that I might be allowed to visit O'Brien and the others. He consented, and we spent a pleasant day together disposing of the business in a contemptuous sentence. This was Mr. Fagan's letter:—

"Private and Confidential.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have just returned from an interview of over an hour's duration with Lord Clarendon.

"My firm conviction is that if Mr. Duffy made any concession so as to give the Government a fair excuse to escape from the whole affair that an amnesty extending to all would be the result. Lord Clarendon did not say this in so many words; but he over and over repeated to me that the Government was not in a position to make any distinction between

Mr. Duffy and the others in England and Ireland, Mr. Duffy having exhibited no desire on his own part for clemency, and not having made any concession. I am satisfied if Mr. Duffy offered securities for the future the thing would be done—that is my conviction—I may be mistaken. As for any feeling of a vindictive character, he over and over repudiated anything of the kind.—I am, my dear sir, yours very truly,

“WILLIAM FAGAN.

“Charlton S. Ralph, Esq.

“6th April, 1849.”

The convicted prisoners in Richmond were, however, allowed a generous liberty of action, the prison being under municipal control. The following note from Meagher to one of his friends, M. R. O’Farrell, must be unique in the literature of *détenus* :—

“We are to have a little *soirée* here on Monday evening, and we warmly unite in requesting the pleasure of your company. We shall have something of a supper and a dance of course. The Governor has most kindly given us the use of his apartments, and desires me to intimate to all our friends his wish that they should ask at the *hatch* for the Governor.

“Richmond Prison, May 5, ’49.”

My determination to put the Government slanders to shame by reproducing my life and character such as they actually were was very successful. The venerable Bishop of Dromore, who had been my friend since the *soirée* at Newry so often referred to ; Dr. Moriarty, the head of All Hallows Missionary College ; George Petrie, and William Carleton, who stood at the head of Irishmen of letters ; and, above all, the reformer of his age and country, Father Mathew, eagerly answered the call to speak of me as they knew me. The effect was decisive on the jury and the audience. I shall not recall their evidence which was generous beyond my merits, but I cannot refrain from publishing the letter in which Fathew Mathew acknowledged the call to be a witness :—

“CORK, 17th November, 1848.

“MY DEAR MR. DUFFY,—Though your letter is dated ‘Newgate Prison,’ I was delighted at receiving it. It was

unnecessary to enter into any arrangements to induce me to be present at your trial. Neither time nor distance of place are of any importance to me when I have even a remote prospect of being of the slightest service to you.

"I shall, please God, be in Dublin before the end of this month, and shall be happy to receive any communication from you at the Imperial Hotel.

"It would be well if you could procure for me a copy of the *Belfast Vindicator* and *Newry Examiner* containing the report of that memorable party, the *Newry Soirée*.—Believe me, with highest respect, your ever grateful and affectionate friend,

"THEOBALD MATHEW."

The curious and instructive story still remains to be told how the foul strokes of the Irish Executive, like the fiends' bullets in the German opera, struck not the victim but his assailants. While all the facts were fresh in the public memory, in the memory of my enemies as well as of my friends. I narrated them in a letter to Lord Clarendon in the *Nation*, I can never tell the tale more briefly or more feelingly, and I reprint the letter in the next chapter, that no one who cares to know shall be ignorant how justice was administered in Ireland fifty years ago, and how malignant animosity "may o'erleap its selle and fall on t'other side."

CHAPTER X

HOW DID GAVAN DUFFY ESCAPE CONVICTION ?

My letter to the Earl of Clarendon disclosing how I escaped at the First Commission, at the Second, at the Third, and at the Fourth.

THERE are twelve judges in Ireland, my Lord, and I have stood before ten of them in succession to answer your indictments. There are but six Commissions of Oyer and Terminer in a year, and I was carried before five of them at your instance. One bill of indictment on one charge is the ordinary practice of criminal law ; I answered five bills of indictment exhibiting the same charge, each in a new and aggravated form. It is hard, I think, that I must hold up my right hand at the public bar again to defend myself for the new offence of having defeated you. It is not magnanimous, my Lord, when I escaped your public prosecutors, to set your hired slanderers upon me. A noble heart would have scorned so poor a revenge. Nay, a noble heart, I think, would have been touched with sympathy for the last of a routed party, who, when the odds looked so terribly decisive, refused to despair of himself or his country. But you have acted after your nature, and I am the last man in the world to complain that your hired claque have dragged the history of '48 again before the world.

How did Gavan Duffy escape conviction ? In your dispatch to Lord Shrewsbury you charged it on "the perjury of one of my jurors." Enthusiastic young barristers attributed it (and with good reason indeed) to the matchless skill and eloquence of my counsel. Good, easy men, content with the surface of things, assured each other in railway

carriages and over dinner tables that the Whigs, tired with pursuing me, had given me a fair jury at last. But you and I, my Lord, know that it is to *you*, above all men, I owe my deliverance. I was honoured with your personal hatred ; it became a passion with you to convict me ; but your blind fury defeated its own purpose. At each new Commission I escaped in *direct consequence* of some new stroke of violence aimed at me. You called the devil to your aid, and your shots, like the fiend's bullets in "*Der Freischütz*," missed their victim, and struck your own purpose in the head. The goodness of God and the malice of the Irish Executive—these were the agents of my liberation. Mark how each new aggression defeats itself, as if this true history were some fanciful legend, written to exhibit the triumph of God's providence over the designs of the powerful of the earth.

At the beginning of August, '48, a month after my arrest, I wrote with my own fingers the usual instructions for counsel. They barely filled a sheet of notepaper ; and said, in scarcely more words—"Deny nothing, and retract nothing, of what I have actually written or done. But explain my motives, and defend my character from the slanders of the Government Press. They are not content to transport me ; they are conspiring to bury my name under a cairn of obloquy. Let them not succeed in this at least." Birch and a kennel of Birches, some of them nicknamed Mitchelite Republicans, were let loose on me. I was specially charged with advocating the doctrines of Blanqui, and of advising private assassination. I was held responsible for all the inane and vulgar atrocities of the *United Irishman*.

Had you brought me to trial in August, without suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, this defence was all you had to apprehend. I neither meditated a rescue by force nor a rescue by the stratagems of criminal law. I did not summon one witness. I and my three companions in Newgate regarded ourselves as indispensable victims to the necessities of the cause. It was too soon by some months to answer your indictment in the field, and no other answer was counted of much practical avail at that day.

But you suspended the Constitution, and the explosion came at once. Two terrible weeks of uncertainty, which

counted by leaden minutes, and all was over. On Sunday morning, August 6th, the Governor of Newgate came to my room, and announced that Smith O'Brien was a prisoner in Kilmainham. It was like the setting of the last sun. I thought I would never care to look on the daylight again.

Every day of the fortnight that followed brought some new disaster. Meagher, Lalor, and Leyne fell into the hands of the Government. Dillon, MacManus, M'Gee, O'Gorman, and their comrades, were under hot pursuit. There was no longer a hope that Ireland could right herself ; and I looked forward to my trial with the indifference of a man who has nothing more to lose in the world.

THE FIRST COMMISSION.

The Commission met on the 8th of August, and I was brought to the bar of Green Street. Not a solitary witness had I summoned—not a scrap of instruction had I written in addition to the memorandum already mentioned. I accepted my fate in silence and without an effort.

True bills were returned by the grand jury, and my arraignment commenced. Some progress had been already made in it, when the junior counsel for the Crown, Mr. John Perrin, rushed breathless into the court, and, in an audible whisper, warned the Crown Solicitor that the arraignment must not be completed. All was blank wonder for a moment, when Sir Colman O'Loghlen, with that singular instinctive perception of motives which is among the most notable of his gifts, whispered to one of his colleagues :—

“They are going to send Duffy to Clonmel with O'Brien.”

It was precisely so. When my counsel declared I was ready for trial, and demanded to have the arraignment completed, the whole truth came out. The Crown produced an affidavit that a letter, in my handwriting, of a highly treasonable character, had been discovered in O'Brien's portmanteau ; and the Attorney-General announced that he could not permit my trial to proceed at this Commission, as he might find it necessary to abandon the proceedings for felony, and institute a prosecution for high treason. I was sent back to prison to prepare for death. For five weeks my

fellow-prisoners, when we met in the ghastly prison chapel on a Sunday morning, fancied the public gallows, which forms its principal window, was destined to open for my last exit from that edifice. For public opinion was still dumb, and defeat was interpreted to mean death.

This was the First Commission. How I escaped on that occasion needs no more words.

There were many foul strokes in your duel with me, my Lord, but one of the foulest followed close on this transaction. For five entire weeks, and up to the day O'Brien was removed to Clonmel, my friends could obtain no definite information whether or not I should accompany him. The perpetual answer of the Attorney-General to my solicitor was that he had not determined. Long after his measures must have been taken, and up to the day O'Brien was removed to the south, I remained in total ignorance that I was not to be tried at the same Commission.

During all this time the fire of your literary police never ceased. After my arrest it increased in intensity. The language of a distinguished ecclesiastic, who in that hour of panic united the vigour and independence of Swift, painted it in words that will not die.

My friends made some effort to counteract this torrent of slander, but you out-manceuvred them.

Some weeks before my arrest I had published the "Creed of the *Nation*," so that if I fell before the law or the sword my opinions might live. O'Brien, in a public letter, volunteered to adopt every sentiment of it, and the document had come to be, in some sort, the profession of faith of our party. My friends caused this pamphlet to be republished with the Dublin *University Magazine* as a true statement of my opinions. But my true opinions were precisely what must *not* be published. Your police agent, Col. Brown, sent for certain of the Dublin booksellers, and caused them to cut it out of the magazine. My friends next ordered it to be reprinted in the *Nation*, where they fondly believed it beyond your control. But they were mistaken. They did injustice to the resources of your generous imagination. That number of the *Nation* you caused to be seized at the printing-office and confiscated. A single copy of it never reached the

public till I was a free man again. And so your Birches and Balfes had the field to themselves.

THE SECOND COMMISSION.

On the 23rd of October O'Brien, Meagher, and their comrades were sentenced to death at Clonmel. On the 26th the Commission opened in Green Street, and I was brought up the second time for trial. How did I escape? By the sharp practice of the illustrious Earl of Clarendon. Once again, had you been content with the ordinary course of English law, you had me safe enough. But you charged your blunderbuss to the muzzle and it burst. Up to the night before the sitting of the Commission my solicitor could not ascertain for what offence, or on what indictment, I was to be tried. When the Court opened we found you had transferred me from the city to the county. I had lived ten years in Dublin—it was feared perhaps that the citizens knew me too well to be misled by your hired Press; for a sure stroke you carried me among men to whom I was unknown, except through the blood-red portraits of the *Evening Post*. Mitchel and Martin, who were tried before me, were tried in the city—O'Doherty and Williams, who remained to be tried after me, were tried in the city; but "my equals and neighbours, indifferently chosen," were to be found only in an Orange squirearchy, the *débris* of the Old Corporation, and superannuated Castle officials, gone into country quarters from Finglas to Glasthule.

But I had skilful and generous counsel, impatient to thwart you. They demonstrated that your practice had been too sharp, and was contrary to the express provisions of the law. When the venue is changed from one district to another, the removal of the prisoner by *habeas corpus* to the prison of the new district must take place ten days before the trial, in order to give him due notice and adequate time for preparation. You had not given me the legal notice nor half of it. Justice Crampton and Justice Torrens were compelled to pronounce, with lugubrious faces, that the trial could not take place in the new venue at that Commission. Thus a second Commission was lost by your sharp practice.

THE THIRD COMMISSION.

The Third Commission opened on the 15th of December, more than five months after my arrest. A new bill of indictment—the third—was sent up to the grand jury, with a new count, charging me with inciting Smith O'Brien to make war on the Queen. In the forty volumes of the State Trials there is not a single case in which three indictments were launched against the same man on the same charge. But you and I, my Lord, had the honour to make a set of precedents for the gentlemen of the Bar, which will long keep our memory green in their souls. Mr. Justice Perrin signalled this Commission by one of those brilliant *coupés* which would have immortalised your Proconsulship if each of them had not unhappily rebounded like a boomerang on the hand which projected it. The grim Justice, glancing from his son and his son's father-in-law (who were there engaged in prosecuting me) to the dock, growled out an order forbidding publication in the newspapers till the trial was over. How he persisted in this besotted blunder for more than a week, and was frightened out of it at last by a leonine roar from the *Times*, is of no consequence now except to illustrate the providential course of these proceedings. When Mr. Justice Perrin shut up his court in darkness, trust me he opened the eyes of more jurors than I could have couched in a twelvemonth.

And now, my Lord, at this new Commission, with a third indictment, a new change of the *venue*, eager prosecutors, and complaisant judges, and the *Dragon* in Kingstown Harbour with its steam up to carry me into exile, why did you not convict me at last? Again “the mercy of God and the malice of the Government” were my safety. In this new bill of indictment the penetrating eyes of my counsel discovered serious loopholes. Your unscrupulous manœuvres had determined them to fight every inch of the ground, and here was fruit of their vigilance. They demurred to the indictment; and, after a fortnight spent in debates and adjournments, the Court were forced to declare *four out of the six counts* substantially bad in law. Two-thirds of the bill swept away at a brush!

The moment judgment was delivered we declared ourselves ready for trial. But your Lordship's officials would not consent. They had got another "short cut." The ordinary course of the law would not do for a man honoured by your Lordship's enmity. They insisted that I should BE SENTENCED WITHOUT TRIAL. This demand had a bare shadow of precedent. In misdemeanour cases, where punishment is trifling, it is the practice, if a man demur to the indictment, that he does so at the penalty of conviction in case his demurrer is overruled—that is to say, he is compelled practically to declare "your charge is well founded, but you have not made it according to law." If he shows that they have not made it according to law the indictment fails ; if he does not succeed in showing this, he is sentenced as if he had been convicted in due course by a jury. But in trials for high treason a man may demur and plead afterwards, as the case involves results too serious to be risked on the whim of a judge. Treason-felony naturally followed the same rule. But the Attorney-General insisted that it should not ; insisted that I must be transported, and transported on an indictment three-fourths of which were declared to be bad in law.

After long delays and portentous ponderings, running over three weeks, the Court at last had to pronounce that the thing could not be done—that I must, in fact, be tried, and even convicted, before I was sentenced !

And now, at last, on the 18th of January, I pleaded "not guilty," and declared myself ready for trial. In fact my counsel were eager to have me tried on the broken indictment, which shut out certain damaging evidence. But the learned judges would not consent. A month had already been spent, and they were tired of the business. Perhaps, too, a broken indictment was not considered quite the instrument fit to give me the *coup de grace*. They peremptorily refused to sit longer at that Commission. I insisted that the delay had been their own fault, made up of short sittings and long adjournments—that I had been six months in prison, and I required to be tried at once. But gruff Perrin grunted a savage negative and the Court adjourned to its Christmas holidays a little past date. And so once again, by the mercy

of God and the malice of the Government, I had escaped conviction.

THE FOURTH COMMISSION.

The 15th of February came at last, and the Attorney-General sent up a new bill of indictment against me! It was the fourth found, and the fifth printed—of all sizes, from the length of a Catechism to the length of a Bible. It was no longer a double-barrelled gun but a Colt's revolver—a battery of barrels—which was provided for me. The indictment with which you insisted upon transporting me in January was not found fit to trust to a jury in February, but a brand-new one was fabricated, “mended,” as some one observed at the time, “at the cost of the prisoner and by the skill of his counsel.”

And now, at last, we stood face to face, and a jury was to judge between us. But what jury? You refused me a copy of the panel, though it had been given to Mitchel; though it is a right in treason, and usage in felony cases; though in Scotland, in identical prosecutions, it was furnished a fortnight before trial to the prisoners. And I entered the dock, and pleaded “not guilty,” ignorant what jurors were arrayed to try me.

But you had driven us to the wall, and we planted our backs against it. When the panel was at last read my counsel challenged the array, and while they were exhibiting its partisan character the panel was printed and in ten minutes distributed over the city. Out of the remnant of the clubs I had formed a more effective police than your detectives. It was a picture to look on the angry front of Hatchell as bundles of the printed panel were carried back to me in the dock from every district in the city with the character of the jurors marked on them by trustworthy men of their own neighbourhood. Just heavens! how ineradicable is the hatred of English dominion in the heart of Ireland. Men who before and after played the flunkey at the Castle, men who kissed the Queen's feet and yours, sent me private information how to embarrass and defeat you.

At length the jury was sworn and the case commenced. I have already described the elements of my defence. Twice

in the course of the trial a majority of the jurors were prepared to acquit me. Up to the end several jurors were determined to acquit on all the counts but the second. One juror persisted to the end in demanding a full acquittal. You have ventured, my Lord, in your private protocol to Lord Shrewsbury, to apply a hard and insolent word to his honest verdict. Let us see on what grounds it may have stood.

Jurors have claimed it as their inalienable right to pierce through the outward filaments of law and determine on the intrinsic justice of great cases. James II. could not coerce a jury to convict the seven Protestant bishops, though the letter of the law was plainly against them. Neither Stuart nor Cromwell could persuade juries to strike down John Lilburne, the Puritan. The statutes against duelling were as plain as the multiplication table, but juries are judges of the law as well as the fact, and of the equity as well as the law. And an Irish juror who consulted his conscience at that day might well pause to consider whether, on the whole, the true offender upon whom public justice ought to be executed stood at the bar or sat in the high places of the land.

Or, on a lower ground, the juror might well deem that already an ample penalty had been exacted. A year's close imprisonment counts, in the graduated scale of judicial sentences, as equal to seven years' transportation. I had already been seven months shut up in a prison described, in official reports, as "the worst in Europe." It was built on the burying-ground of an ancient monastery, and reeked with foul airs. My only outlet was a damp, narrow, funeral court, crossed in four paces, into which the sun never shone and where a nameless nuisance poisoned the air of heaven. I had paid an enormous fine in the loss of my whole property, between fraudulent debtors and the costs of a protracted defence. I had in fact paid a heavier fine, and endured a worse, if not a longer, imprisonment, than actual conviction would have incurred before the Treason Felony Act of April, '48.

You had put a case before the jury which they could not believe. You proved my handwriting by a witness who admitted he had sworn to it once before in error. You proved the barricades at Killenaule and the siege at Ballin-

garry, and asked the jury to convict me for them—me! a prisoner in Newgate! On the highest grounds of public principle, on plainest practical equity, on the narrowest technical theory of his duty, a juror with a clear conscience might refuse you a verdict.

These four Commissions, resulting in four providential escapes, are directly traceable to the malignity and incapacity of your administration. At the rising of the Court, in February, I was sent back to prison, to await for eight weeks more the period of a new trial, and the chances of new judges and a new jury.

Happily there is a measure to public forbearance. Much had been borne in dumb submission, but indignation was gathering slowly in the public mind ; and when I was recommitted for the fifth time, it burst out fierce and strong. Hatchell's foul tongue had swelled it, Perrin's secret tribunal had swelled it, the literary assassins—the Ryan-Pucks, the Birch-Pucks, and Barrett-Pucks of the Government Press had swelled it ; and now the protracted and merciless imprisonment exploded it at last. Men began to declare openly that it was not a trial but an immolation. They saw

“Beneath the sable garment of the law
Revenge concealed,”

and they rushed forward to forbid the desecration.

Never, perhaps, was such a singular movement seen in any country on the earth as it elicited from a people broken with famine and disheartened by a recent and ignominious defeat. At the eve of the fourth Commission, the chief Catholic Corporations in Ireland, a host of Protestant and Catholic gentlemen, and seventy thousand of the people, memorialled against your practice of packing partisan juries. Memorialled against foul play in a court of justice! Memorialled that you would be generously pleased not to swindle me out of liberty, property, and life. It was, as the venerable Cloncurry wrote at the time, like a memorial against highway robbery organised by a Government. No civilised country had ever witnessed such a spectacle.

After my recommittal to prison ten thousand of the citizens

of Dublin of all parties, with many of the foremost names in commerce, literature, and the professions at their head, demanded that the prosecution should be utterly dropped. The jurors who had been willing to convict me united with them. Several of the principal towns in the north and south followed their example. The Irish electors in certain English and Scotch boroughs called on their representatives to interpose. It was plainly the opinion of large masses of men that the ordinary course of justice had been departed from, and that public opinion might, and ought to, penetrate into the court of law itself and stand between the prosecutor and the prisoner.

THE LAST TRIAL.

The last Commission opened on the 10th of April, 1849, nine months and two days after my arrest. The public impatience to know the constitution of the jury panel was immense ; and Judge Jackson, who was no lip Liberal, but a Tory and a bigot, acted with commendable fairness. He ordered it to be read aloud the day before my trial. Lo ! the prolific Government had conceived a new device. Felony cases are invariably tried by a common jury. So they have been tried for centuries. So Mitchel, Martin, Williams, and O'Doherty had been tried. But you summoned for this Commission, not only special jurors, but special jurors alone. Every name was taken from a list composed, according to statute, of "the sons of peers, baronets, and knights, magistrates, ex-sheriffs, grand jurors, squires, bankers, merchants, and traders worth £5,000 !" You estimated me highly, my Lord, when you insisted upon these personages, and none others, as my "neighbours and equals." Titus Oates swore that the "Papists plotted to shoot the King with a silver bullet" ; and this was plotting to hang me with a silken halter. There were Catholics on this list, of course—Castle Catholics, employés in public offices, the brothers and brothers-in-law of official people, the "sons of baronets" made by Whigs ; magistrates raised to the Bench by the same faction, and proud of their dignities—in short, your sworn servants. And I have before me at this moment the letter of a trustworthy witness, assuring me that to his own positive

knowledge the same post which carried the Sheriff's summons to certain of those persons brought them also an invitation to some Viceregal hospitalities! This was making assurance doubly sure; it was worthy of your lordship's skill and precaution as a veteran diplomatist.

But you failed again. How did you fail with such admirable precautions, and rehearsals so numerous? Alas! "the extinguishers themselves took fire." The jurors who were to execute your will were part of that public which had risen in remonstrance against you. There is a point beyond which even Dublin jurors will not go.

The trial commenced; the panel was called over, and only seventy out of one hundred and seventy jurors answered to their names. It was called again on a heavy penalty—only ninety answered. Eighty special jurors refused by their absence to take any further part in your proceedings. Fines of £50 could not whip them to the box. The public feeling which had pronounced in the Press and in memorials, now pronounced in the very court, by this wholesale desertion of the middle classes.

Only ninety answered. The prisoner has a right to set aside twenty peremptorily. Here were twenty of the worst struck out at a blow. The list consisted, as I have said, of magistrates, grand jurors, &c. But no grand juror who had found an indictment against me could legally serve on my petty jury. It was beautiful to see the poetic justice executed on you for your repeated indictments, when man after man was set aside because he had acted on one or other of the grand juries which found true bills against me. Here was another huge gap in the list.

Three jurors were excused by the Court on the plea of ill-health—that accommodating sickness which seizes gentlemen who find it inconvenient to keep their appointments. They were sick, I presume, of "the Queen against Duffy."

Actual residence in Dublin is an essential qualification of a juror in treason-felony cases, but many of your special jurors lived in country houses in the suburbs—at Kingstown, Blackrock, Roebuck, and Rathfarnham. Here went a dozen more from the panel.

A new objection, never raised before, remained. Jurors were in the habit of excusing themselves on the plea of being over sixty years of age. Pondering over the matter in the long, lonely days in prison, it struck me that the law not only excused, but prohibited, these venerable gentlemen from sitting upon juries. I submitted the point to my counsel, and was sustained by their authority. Hence, a batch of grey-headed old corporators and special jurors, who had listened to Norbury's jokes and Saurin's sneers, were swept away.

And now came the dilemma? You could not make up a jury without admitting some Catholics and Liberal Protestants upon it. The Crown can object peremptorily to a juror but once. If the panel be exhausted, the jurors set aside peremptorily in the first instance are recalled, and unless some special and legal objection be established against each of them they must be sworn on the jury. Your Law Officers set aside three Protestants and fifteen Catholics; and these omissions, with the prisoner's successful objections and challenges, left the list in such a condition that, unless some of the jurors remaining on the panel were placed on the jury, the Court would have to fall back on the identical men already outraged by being set aside for their religion or their opinions. Of the ninety jurors in court, twelve good and true Castle hacks were not left. Hence you were compelled to give me a fairer jury than before. You were *compelled*; it was the specific and net result of our labour to defeat you.

I have good reason to know now that some of these jurors entered the box with strong prejudices against me, begotten of the *Evening Post*. Gradually, under the influence of the evidence for the defence, and of one of the most practical and persuasive speeches ever addressed to a jury, they gave way. The same motives that influenced Mr. Burke, increased by longer imprisonment and new aggressions, appealed to them, and half of them pronounced for an acquittal.

I shall never forget that scene when I was called into court near midnight to hear my fate. The court was thronged to the roof with an audience of both sexes and of all ranks in the city. But there was a stillness like the chamber of death. The Sheriff was despatched to ascertain

the decision of the jury. He remained away five—eight—ten minutes. "They are writing their verdict," was the whispered opinion. The Sheriff returned, crossed the court to his own box in solemn silence, and there, after a theatrical pause, announced that the jury could not agree! A shout from the audience, which made the roof ring with triumph, was the answer. The jury were called into court. They were divided half and half. Bankers, magistrates, manufacturers, pronounced the prisoner not guilty. It was worth a long imprisonment to look on the beaming faces and clasp the generous hands that thronged round the dock that night. It is one of the pictures that will not depart from my memory but with life. The jury were locked up for the night, and twelve hours' reflection added one more to the number for acquittal.

Next morning I consulted, in Newgate, with my three gifted and generous counsel. Mr. Butt, with the eye of a tactician, saw your routed position. He insisted on demanding a new trial forthwith, or my immediate liberation. With the panel scuttled by objections, he felt sure no Government jury could be secured. "If they try you again," he said, "it must be now, and you will be acquitted; or let them open the door."

On this agreement we returned to court to see the jury discharged. But your officials had been consulting also—the state of the case was as plain to them as to us, and when Mr. Butt rose to open his demand the Attorney-General precipitately consented to admit me to bail. It was an easier fall than my acquittal, which another jury might have made short work of. And so I saw the daylight again. Among stalwart men whose manly faces were wet with tears, among dear friends who had made light in the darkness for me, I was led out of Newgate broken in health and fortune, but not broken in spirit, to take up anew the hereditary task of our race and country.

And now, my lord, no soul will have any difficulty in understanding "how I escaped conviction." I escaped from first to last, through every step of this eventful history, by the malice of George William Villiers.

I have called this trial a providential one, and was it not

so? It seemed as if a benign power took out of your hands every weapon and snare fabricated for my destruction, and made them the agents of your discomfiture. Whatsoever you attempted failed, and not only failed, but recoiled on you.

You prohibited my trial with Martin and O'Doherty that I might be reserved for Clonmel and the gallows; but the delay was my salvation.

You carried me from the city to the county and from the county to the city, and by your precipitous rage missed me in both.

You insisted upon *transporting me* without trial, and the attempt issued in carrying me from a morose and besotted judge to a calm and upright one.

Your Solicitor-General denounced me in my absence as the author of the insurrection, and an outraged jury refused to convict me on the minor charge of felonious writings.

You selected me from my colleagues for special vengeance, and I alone have escaped you.

You employed a troop of literary Lazzaroni against me, and where are they now? Three of the base journals that assailed me in prison or on my release have died in disgrace and insolvency. The police spy who sought to betray me had to fly the American cities from dread of Irish vengeance, and died on the banks of the Mississippi with the arrow of an Indian in his breast.

A Christian slave led into the amphitheatre to be delivered to the wild beasts, who saw tier after tier of contemptuous faces frowning down upon him, who saw the purple of authority, the toga and the sword, staked against him, hardly fronted a more unequal and ferocious array than I the first day I was carried into Green Street. What had I to set against it except the inexhaustible sympathy and help of a few dear friends? And yet the cloud of enemies have vanished away like a theatrical show, and I am still here—and free.

A wise man has elicited a moral from this struggle; may it prove the true one! "Consider yourself," Thomas Carlyle wrote me, "as a brand snatched from the burning; a *providential* man, saved by Heaven, for doing a man's work yet."

And let this thought give you rather fear and pious anxiety than exultation or rash self-confidence."

This was the case I submitted for the consideration of the Viceroy, and I trust his Excellency relished it; at any rate, he could not contradict or controvert it.

When I walked forth a free man I was able to visit habitually my comrades in Richmond Prison, and witness their manly joy that at least one of the group of friends had escaped the enemy.¹

¹ O'Brien, who was the soul of courtesy, followed our leave-taking by a farewell letter:—

"DUBLIN, RICHMOND PRISON.

"June 6, 1849.

"MY DEAR DUFFY,—As it is uncertain whether I shall have an opportunity of seeing you again, I cannot refrain from writing a few lines to convey to you my farewell benediction.

"My mind is so overwhelmed with the multitude of topics connected with our intercourse, which arise to afford matter for reflection at a moment such as this, that I dare not allow my pen to record my thoughts lest I should find myself unable to check its career.

"It is enough for me to say that however painful to both of us may have been the final results of that intercourse, my esteem for your character and my admiration of your abilities remain unchanged.

"Nor do I regard with any other feelings than those of unmixed satisfaction the circumstance that you have been more successful than I have in resisting the power of British law. Both for your own sake and for that of the country I rejoice that it is your lot to remain in Ireland to work for Ireland.

"I send herewith a little volume as a parting gift. Though of trifling pecuniary value, it may perhaps be prized by you as having belonged to your sincere friend,

"WILLIAM S. O'BRIEN."

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