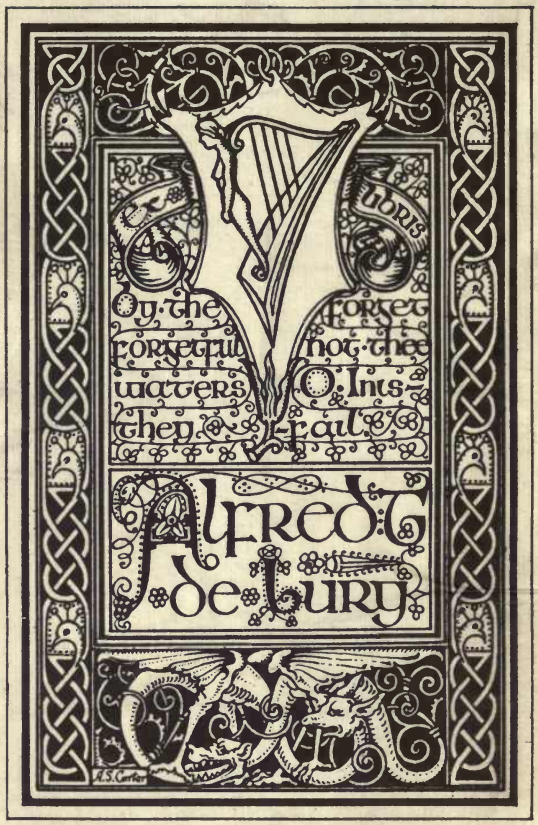
THE INDESTRUCTIBLE NATION

BY P. S. O'HEGARTY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THE INDESTRUCTIBLE NATION

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

JOHN MITCHEL : AN APPRECIATION, WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF YOUNG IRELAND

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE NATION

A SURVEY OF IRISH HISTORY FROM THE ENGLISH INVASION

THE FIRST PHASE : THE OVERTHROW OF THE CLANS

BY P. S. O'HEGARTY

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FOR

SEÁN ÓG

WHEN HE GROWS UP

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INTRODUCTION

It has been conceded in recent years that there is a good deal for Irishmen to be proud of in the history of Ireland before the English invasion, but the same concession has not been made with regard to post-invasion history. The author believes that it should, and this book is intended to tell some of the truth with regard to Irish political history after the invasion. It contains more of the truth about that than any other book on the same period in its political aspect.

It is not impartial. Impartiality in Irish history writing has meant in every case a non-acceptance of the historic Irish Nation, and the result has been a political pamphlet rather than a history. Ireland has been written at rather than about, and the statements of those whose interest it was to belie her have been accepted unchecked. But history, if it is to be true history, must be, like biography, sympathetic towards its subject, it must accept its subject and not deny it. There are writers on Irish history who deny that there is, in any national sense, an Ireland to write about, whose authorities are the State Paper scribes, and whose acquaintance with Irish authorities is nil. The present writer accepts the historic Irish Nation.

The history of Ireland after the invasion is the history of an arrested development, the history of the struggle of two civilizations, one materialistic, commercial, strongly organized for aggression, believing in trade,

and the other spiritual, loosely knit politically, and believing in liberty. The civilizations of Eastern Europe were feudal, all save one. The Irish civilization was federal, and the whole instinct of the people is federal rather than feudal. Their civilization was steeped in the theory of the preservation as fully as possible of the principle of liberty, liberty for the individual, for the clan, for the province. The things which really make a nation, as apart from a State—language, laws, and customs, traditions, outlook, literature—all these they had in common, and judged by these they were more of a nation than England was at the time of the invasion. Their political system, however, had not evolved any strong central authority, and their Ard Ri was so by agreement and not by force, a symbol of their recognition of their common nationality rather than a king over them. Into a people which was feeling its way towards a political system which should adequately unify the country politically, without doing violence to the race's dominant passion for the maximum of liberty within the nation, there came an alien soldiery, feudally trained and feudally led, with the whole strength of a feudal state behind them, with a single purpose, pursued consistently and unscrupulously. The result was the immediate arrestation of Irish development. The new force in the country was wholly alien, not alone in origin, but in everything, physically and mentally, and it had either to assimilate it or to root it out before its task of perfecting its political system could again be taken up. The national genuius of the Irish was for assimilation rather than for expulsion, and they did assimilate the alien elements.

But as fast as they did assimilate these, fresh invaders were sent over, and the wedge which had been driven into the nation was maintained there until it had totally disrupted the Irish political system and imposed on the people a feudal law which they neither understood nor obeyed, save under duress. When that feudal law had been established over all Ireland, after four and a half centuries of fighting, and obedience to it exacted by force, the Irish were deprived of their land in the name of law, and then of their arms, and finally of their legal existence. But still the conquest failed.

In the post-invasion history of Ireland, the landmarks are three. The Treaty of Mellifont in 1603 marked the end of the clan civilization, for with the enforced acceptance by Ulster of English law and suzerainty the English writ ran for the first time over all Ireland, and the native civilization was definitely submerged: the Disarming Act of 1695, when obeyed, marked the end of the Irish power of military resistance to English dominance, and opened the way to the attempted conquest of the Irish mind, *via* its degredation by the operation of the penal laws; and the foundation of the Gaelic League in 1893, marked the reassertion of Irish civilization, the realization of the people that the Irish nation must be built on the foundation it was building on when its development was arrested. The Union is hardly a landmark in Irish history, save in so far as it is a landmark in the history of the development of a colonial nationalism amongst the English planters in Ireland. It was merely the end of the system of holding Ireland through a subservient garrison Parliament, dependant upon England for place and power,

maintained solely in order to register, in the name of Ireland, England's penal legislation against the Irish Nation. This book deals with the first of these periods —the period during which the clan civilization was overthrown.

The "Savage" school of writers on Irish history have labelled Ireland as barbarous, with an uncivilised backward people, without law, without cohesion, with some primal curse upon them which justified an alleged higher civilization in imposing itself on the island at the sword's point. All that is untrue. The Irish civilization was the highest of Western Europe, the most advanced in social and spiritual matters; and the Irish, instead of being a feeble people, with no cohesion, with little resisting power, were a strong people, with a power of resistance, as they have shown, unparalleled. A comparison with England's resisting power may be not inopportune in this connexion. Every foreign foe which has landed in England has conquered it. The Romans came and remained as conquerors: the Saxons came as allies and remained as conquerors: the Northmen came and remained as conquerors, and gave England a Norse dynasty: the Normans came and remained as conquerors after one battle: and the Dutch came and remained as conquerors without even a battle. The Romans never attempted Ireland, but it was deemed by them an event worthy of signal mention that on one occasion they defeated an Irish fleet in the Mediterranean: the Northmen came, but they gave Ireland no Norse dynasty, they were held and assimilated, and it was Ireland which, by the battle of Clontarf in 1014, broke the Northmen's power and

freed Europe from their menace. Finally the English came, not English then really, but Normans, feudal lords of exactly the mettle of those who at Hastings conquered England in one day's fighting. It took four and a half centuries of constant fighting, and a constant stream of men and money, to overcome the Irish resistance, and the struggle has never ceased spiritually, renewing itself physically in every generation. Let no man say that this was a weak nation, without cohesion.

Look again at the coming of Christianity to the nations of Western Europe. It was marked everywhere by bloodshed, and also by the beginnings of organized nations. An organized Christian Church organized also a nation, and we can trace the beginnings of France and Germany with the organization of the Christian framework. But Ireland alone accepted Christianity without making martyrs, because the Irish civilization was more spiritual and more advanced than that of any other civilization of Western Europe. And, so far from Christianity imposing its organization upon Ireland, it was Ireland which imposed its organization upon Christianity. Throughout Europe the Church was feudal in its organization, in Ireland it had to be federal, for it found the Irish federal civilization too strong to accept a Church organized other than federally, and therefore it was a local Church rather than a compact one, with no ecclesiastical framework, united, as the nation itself was united, rather by its common teaching, common ideals, than by authority or organization. In Europe, too, the devotional literature which grew up around Christianity was almost wholly in Latin, but in Ireland it was almost wholly in the vernacular.

So that here is a nation, so vital and so assimilating, that it successfully resisted, and imposed its own forms upon, the two forces, one physical and one spiritual, which moulded the other nations of Western Europe. The nation portrayed by the "Savage" school of writers could not have done that. Had its development gone on unchecked it would have evolved a civilization as different from contemporary civilization as cheese is from chalk. Its standard of organization would be co-operation and equal responsibility, not wage slavery, and its material side would be less thought of than its spiritual side. It would be a democratic federation, rather than a centralized state.

This book is intended for the multitude, rather than for students, and sources and authorities have not, therefore, been indicated. But every available source has been used, and no opinion has been taken secondhand. The State Papers, and the writings generally of Englishmen in Ireland, have been used very cautiously. A fact about Ireland, from these sources, uncorroborated from other sources, is not worth the paper it is written on, except where it tells against the writer's policy or conclusions. Where there is a conflict between English writers and the Irish annals, the Irish annals have been accepted.

The reader will find somewhat more scanty references to religious matters than books on Irish history usually contain. That is because the writer's studies have convinced him that religion hardly influenced Irish political happenings to any material extent until the period of the penal laws.

There has never been in Ireland either a religious

war or a religious insurrection. The religious motive has been put forward in insurrections, but that has been for recruiting purposes—the main motive was always economic and political, *i.e.*, land and liberty.

In the spelling of Irish names the writer has been quite arbitrary. Some of them have been given their proper Irish spelling, and some which have more or less established themselves in their mutilated English versions have not. As a general rule, the spelling of Irish names in English lettering is militated against by the fact that nothing is more ugly than an attempt to write the Irish language in English lettering.

I owe acknowledgment to my friend H. E. Kenny for sources and facts with regard to Shane O'Neill, his own particular subject, and for many other things, the fruits of the arguments of old days, without which this book would be the poorer.

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE NATION

CHAPTER I

THE INVASION (1169-1172)

Take a map of Ireland and look at it carefully. It will be observed that there is no central mountain range, that the greater portion of the interior is a plain, that the land rises towards the sea, the mountain ranges being invariably near the coast, and that there is an abundance of good harbours. It is therefore an easy country to invade, and a difficult country to hold. For an invading force was stopped on most seaboards by the mountains, difficult of passage in many places, and in all places offering security for the Irish to cut up an invading army. Any army penetrating into the interior was cut away from its bases, and in front of it it had forests and bogs, the paths through which were known only to the Irish. Behind it the Irish, if they were wise, closed in and, when it had got far enough, came down on it from the front and the rear, the right and the left, and there was an end of it unless it could succeed in fighting its way back. The Irish, of course, were not all wise, and they were not always wise; but if they were not wise enough to play the proper game always, there were enough of them wise to effectually prevent, for many centuries, any effective occupation of the island by the English. There was no position in the island which could be said to be its military key, and the only way to hold it effectively was to conquer and police every inch of it. But to this which is true as a general fact there is one exception, a very notable exception, which Shane O'Neill Mor was the first to

discern—and that is Dublin. Dublin is situated roughly half-way up the east coast, in the gap which there occurs in the mountains. It opens directly on the great central plain, and from its position an army can be directed with equal facility south or west over comparatively level country. And any foreigner planted there could, as will be seen, by planting a few forts across towards the west, drive a wedge into Ireland, and, with the facility of making an incursion in any direction, fatally react upon any attempted union of north and south. On the one side is open to the sea and, with a foreign garrison, it is an open door into the country. On the other side it opens into the heart of the country; and its possession meant the power to strike in any direction at a moment's notice. This strategic importance of Dublin will crop up again and again, and it was the English grasp of its importance which kept them their grip on the country at all. For more than a century, the English Pale was practically confined to Dublin, and paid tribute to the surrounding Irish chiefs; but while the English held Dublin Ireland was never safe. The colonists in other parts of Ireland—in Cork, and Galway, and Ulster—turned Irish by dint of their environment; but Dublin, the open sore through which all evil came into the country, looking always towards the east, Dublin kept foreign through the centuries. For a great portion of the period during which Ireland is generally supposed to have been conquered, England held just Dublin and perhaps twenty or thirty miles in circumference around it; the rest of the country was to all intents and purposes independent, but with its political organization disrupted by the English wedge.

Again, let it be recollected that there was in Ireland no centralized power which could either be struck at, or could strike, in the name of the nation, and a defeat of the Ard Ri, or of a provincial king, or of all the provincial kings, did not mean a defeat of the nation in the sense in which such a defeat operated elsewhere. For

the clan system and the communal land tenure, which retarded the formation of an effective political union, were the chief inspiration of the piecemeal resistance which was set up to the English invasion. Each clan had to be conquered separately, and the fortunes of the nation were never dependent upon one man or one tribe. In England, when William the Conqueror conquered Harold at Hastings, he conquered also the whole nation, the political strength of which was centralized under Harold. In Ireland, when Henry had outmanœuvred Roderic O'Connor he had still to reckon with O'Brien and McCarthy, O'Neill and O'Donnell, and the chiefs of every clan in the country.

The story which attributes the English invasion to Diarmuid Mac Murchadha and the wife of O'Rourke is largely fiction, so far as the lady is concerned, that invasion having been inevitable in any case. From the beginning of his reign Henry had cast covetous eyes upon Ireland, and in 1155 he obtained from Nicholas Breakspear, who had become Pope under the title of Adrian IV, a Papal Bull authorizing him to conquer and hold Ireland. The authenticity of that Bull has been questioned without success; but the question now is purely an academic one. It was promulgated by Henry and accepted as genuine, it was never repudiated by any of the Popes, and it was confirmed by Pope Alexander II in 1172, and by Pope John in 1315. Although Henry got this Bull in 1155, he was unable, owing to his French wars and his conflicts with his children, to make any move in the direction of Ireland, until appealed to for help by Diarmuid in 1168. Diarmuid in 1152 had carried off Dervorgilla, the wife of O'Rourke of Breffny, with the lady's own consent. As she was then forty-four years old and Diarmuid sixty-two, it is difficult to believe that there was any romantic side to this episode, but anyway Turlough O'Connor interfered at the solicitation of O'Rourke, led an army into Leinster, and restored Dervorgilla to her husband.

She did not, however, again live with him. Fourteen years afterwards Diarmuid, who was proud, cruel and tyrannical to his own people, was expelled by them from his kingdom, O'Rourke being one of the instigators of this expulsion: but the expulsion was wholly because of his tyranny and unpopularity, the Leinstermen exercising their undoubted right of expelling a bad king. Diarmuid sought help of Henry II, but Henry, being in France, could give him no active help. The opportunity was too good to be lost, however; and, moved by Diarmuid's importunities, he gave him letters authorizing any of his English subjects to come to Diarmuid's assistance. Armed with these letters Diarmuid set out for England, where he soon found adventurers to back him.

These first English invaders of Ireland were of the very same stamp as those who come even in our own time. Through the generations the supply has kept steadily on, and the quality has never varied—adventurers, men with fortunes to make or mend, with everything to gain outside their own country, and nothing to lose but life, and to keep that they fought hard and dealt mercilessly. They had the one great quality of their times—they were brave ; and the other qualities of their prototypes in all ages—they were unscrupulous, desperate and liars, shameless on points of honour, and keeping faith only at the sword's point. Diarmuid's new allies had been trained on the Welsh border, where they were encouraged to acts of conquest against the Welsh—things like the historic Jameson Raid against the South African Republic—and any land they won they held by feudal law from the English Crown, thus giving the said Crown an excuse for grabbing Wales under the pretence of protecting its subjects. And in Ireland the process, as we shall see, was similar at bottom.

The chief of the adventurers were Fitzstephen, De Prendergast, Fitzgerald, Montmaurice, De Cogan,

Le Gros, and Strongbow, the latter being the most considerable of them, and to him Diarmuid promised his daughter Eva in marriage, and the kingdom of Leinster after his death. So far as Leinster was concerned it was, of course, a wholly illegal promise. Diarmuid had no more right to give away Leinster than he had to give away the moon; but Strongbow knew nothing of Irish law, and possibly thought Diarmuid had held Leinster by feudal law. In any case, he would not have troubled himself much on a mere question of right. I do not propose to go into detail, into battles and sieges, but to indicate the general march of events, and the evolution of the forces which moulded them in Ireland; and for a proper consideration of Irish history it is necessary to define and bear in mind the following forces or combinations, around which Irish history turns:—

(1) The Irish People.
(2) The Church.
(3) The English in Ireland.
(4) The English Crown.

(1) The people did not view the invasion with equanimity, but the fighting against it was at first confined to those chiefs whose territory was attacked or threatened, and Roderic O'Connor proved unequal, as Ard-Ri, to the occasion. Strongbow and his people were looked upon merely as allies of Diarmuid, and it was not the first time that an expelled prince had sought, by the aid of foreign mercenaries, to recover his kingdom. The English, a foreign force, suddenly intruded into the country, and supported from outside, and kept foreign by a powerful kingdom, set back the political unity which was forming, and the Irish nation found itself compelled either to assimilate or expel a body which was mechanically more highly organized than itself, and which had different conceptions of social and political organization.

(2) The policy of the Church was constant, and consistently against the Irish. All the influence which could be exercised from Rome was exercised in the direction of securing the English in Ireland, and of bringing the Irish Church into line with the Catholic Church generally; and the Church at home accepted the English dominion as a means of increasing its own independence of the mass of the laity.

(3) The English garrison was out for spoil and plunder always. It fell into two divisions—those who, sprung from English stock, became practically Irish by temperament and inclination, three-quarters assimilated, yet held by the political connection with England as a safeguard for their retention of their property and power; and those who came over, each generation, fresh from England, whose business was to make a fortune in as short a time as possible, and who confiscated the property of the Anglo-Irish as cheerfully as that of the old Irish.

(4) The policy of the English Crown was also constant. It was to keep England's grip upon Ireland, and to prevent the organization there either of an Irish or an Anglo-Irish party which would be strong enough to defy it. It set clan against clan, and it set the Anglo-Irish against both. It wanted only weak chiefs, weak nobles, dependent upon the Crown, in the country; and it relentlessly pursued every strong man of every party. For many centuries it could not undertake a conquest of Ireland, but what it could do to keep the dagger of invasion in the country that it did—murdering, robbing, lying, flattering now the Irish, now the Anglo-Irish, now the newer adventurers, only to come in at the end and trample them all under its iron heel.

There is a common impression that the invaders conquered half the country in two or three battles. That is quite an erroneous supposition; they had to fight every mile of their marches in this invasion, but they had to fight a people who fought in saffron shirts

and disdained armour as cowardly. The English, be it recollected, were completely armed, and fought on horseback with sword and lance, supported by archers with the deadly crossbow. The Irish fought in shirts, with sword, and spear, and javelin, and battleaxe, and before they had got used to the new warfare the English had got a footing in the country.

Diarmuid, after his arrangements with Strongbow and the others, returned to Ireland in the winter of 1168, and remained in hiding near Ferns, waiting for the arrival of his allies. The first of them, Fitzstephen, came in May 1169, followed almost immediately by De Prendergast, with about seven hundred men in all. Diarmuid and his followers immediatedly joined them, and they marched on Wexford, which was then Hiberno-Danish. They were beaten twice in their assaults on the town; but then, unluckily, the clergy in the town, beginning the shibboleth about "preventing further bloodshed" in Ireland, induced the townspeople to parley with the invaders, the result of which was that they accepted Diarmuid's overlordship and joined his forces. He then made an incursion into Ossory, against the chief of which he had an especial grudge. It was the first English experience of Irish warfare, and it was typical of many. The Ossory men retreated, throwing up entrenchments here and there, and worrying the English, until they had them far enough, when they turned and, attacking them on all sides, forced them back. Fitzstephen, however, played a similar game, retreated also, and then, suddenly turning, his heavily-armoured knights turned the battle and scattered the Ossory men. The result of a week's hard fighting was that Ossory was laid waste, and Diarmuid returned to Ferns, the Irish closing up again and occupying the wasted territory. These proceedings had attracted Roderic O'Connor's attention, and he gathered the forces of Connacht and Meath, and marched against Diarmuid; but

instead of crushing him while he was able, he parleyed, and finally made a treaty by which Diarmuid was to be recognized as King of Leinster, was to send the English back, and not to bring any more of them over. Thereupon Roderick marched back, and Diarmuid continued organizing. Maurice Fitzgerald and Raymond Le Gros came over with detachments, and finally Strongbow himself landed with close on 2,000 men in August 1170. The combined armies marched on Waterford, which was taken at the third assault, and no quarter given. Amidst the ruin and carnage the marriage of Strongbow and Eva was celebrated, and the spoilers marched on Dublin with an army of 5,000 English and perhaps 10,000 Irish. The Dublin men had no force to resist this, and they met the invaders at a parley outside the walls; but Milo de Cogan and Le Gros were above parleys, broke into the city while the truce was on, and were soon followed by the whole army. Hasculf, the Danish King of Dublin, escaped by sea; Roderic, who had got as far as Clondalkin, in a march to defend Dublin, turned back to Connacht for winter quarters, and the enemy were left in undisputed possession of Wexford, Waterford and Dublin—that is to say, practically in possession of the south-eastern coast.

In the meantime the English Crown came into play. Diarmuid died towards the end of 1170, and Strongbow claimed Leinster by virtue of his compact and his marriage with Eva. Tidings of this reached Henry, and he issued a mandate condemning Strongbow's proceedings, ordered that no English ship should carry anything to Ireland, and ordered all English subjects in that country to return to England by next Easter. It did not suit Henry that Strongbow should grow so strong in Ireland as to be able to maintain himself independent of him, and the object of this move was to compel him to do feudal homage for Leinster. And while Strongbow debated what he should do, Roderic

O'Connor, with an army of 30,000 invested Dublin, while the Manx, as allies of the Irish, blockaded Dublin by sea. His position soon became desperate, and he offered, if Roderic would raise the siege, to become his vassal and hold Leinster from him. This Roderic refused, telling him that if the English had not evacuated Dublin by a certain date he should carry it by assault. The sequel is painful telling. The Irish were little accustomed to sieges, and probably Roderic's operations consisted merely of surrounding Dublin and waiting; but anyway when, in sheer desperation, Strongbow sallied out he found the Irish without a watch, without any suspicion of attack, and routed the whole army, Roderic himself barely escaping with his life.

Strongbow now, feeling himself unable to hold Leinster without English help, went to England to Henry and laid his conquests at his feet, declaring that he acted only in his name, and would deliver over Leinster to him. This was precisely what Henry wanted, so Strongbow was "graciously pardoned," and his English estates were restored to him. Henry himself equipped an army and landed in Waterford in October 1171, with about 5,000 men, and the occurrences during this visit are somewhat uncertain. English writers maintain that he received the submission of all the Irish chiefs, including Roderic O'Connor himself. The *Annals of the Four Masters*, on the other hand, simply record that he came and went, and do not record any submissions; though the *Annals of Ulster aud Loch Ce*, in entries which agree almost word for word, say that he "received the hostages" of Munster and Leinster and Meath. What seems to have happened is that none of the chiefs were able individually to resist Henry's force, plus Strongbow's, that Roderic's defeat just previously put him out of the way of making another appeal for a general hosting, and that the chiefs gave hostages, as they were accustomed to do, to the strongest of themselves. But this was nothing like a submission in

the sense in which the English construe it; it was more of a recognition that he had the strongest army than anything else, and in effect meant nothing in the way of general submission. And we know that after his departure the English held just Wexford, Waterford and Dublin. But whatever doubt may exist as to Munster and Leinster, Connacht and Ulster held aloof and ignored Henry's presence altogether. Henry is said to have contemplated an expedition to the North, but his excommunication for the murder of Thomas á Becket called him suddenly to England. In going he sublimely granted Dublin to the citizens of Bristol, Leinster to Strongbow, Meath to De Lacy, and Ulster to De Courcy, thus laying down the headline of English policy in Ireland, that the Irish had no legal existence.

He made some attempt to justify the Bull which he had received from Pope Adrian, and called a Synod at Cashel in 1172, which was presided over by the Papal Legate, Christian, Bishop of Lismore. The decrees of this Synod are the strongest proof of the absurdity of the reason alleged for giving Henry the Bull, for they deal altogether with minor points, none of them with any points of doctrine. The only points I wish to notice are that the Synod accepted Henry as King, decreed the payment of tithes by "all good Christians," decreed Church lands and possessions freed from all secular exactions—tantamount to freedom from taxation in modern times—and decreed that none of the clergy should be obliged to contribute anything towards the eric for a homicide, even if they were kindred to the perpetrators of the crime. That is to say, they tended to the betterment of the position of the ecclesiastics, and it was this and a greater power that they hoped to find under the government of a feudal monarch like Henry.

Many of those Henry brought with him, together with all those whom he found there, remained in Ireland behind him. Although they held only portion of the

east coast, and that only the length of their lances, they had been granted three-fourths of the country; and Strongbow, De Lacy and De Courcy granted portions of territories they had never seen to their friends and vassals in the recognized feudal fashion; so here was Ireland with a swarm of needy adventurers let loose to prey upon her, and with the whole power of a well-organized kingdom behind them. It was the beginning of a struggle which has not yet ended. The invasion and "conquest" of Ireland by Strongbow and Henry II amounted to this—that after three years fighting the English held Dublin, Waterford and Wexford, and as much of the neighbouring country as was covered by the shadow of their lances. The rest of the country was in Irish hands and unconscious of any national danger. It was gripped, but it did not know it. Dublin was gripped, and Waterford and Wexford; but Ulster did not feel that grip, nor Connacht, nor Munster.

CHAPTER II

THE RESULTS OF THE INVASION (1169-1315)

War! war! war! all over Ireland! That was the most conspicuous result of the English invasion. Some writers on Irish history have taken Henry's grants with bland ingenuousness, and assumed that the simple-minded Irish handed over these territories dutifully to Henry's nominees. But the history of the century which succeeded is plain, and shows that in every settlement of theirs the English had to fight hard and fight constantly—that even when they had won any territory they had to fight hard to keep it. That indeed they did not do for long anywhere, and they were continually being expelled out of various districts, only to return again in due course and renew the conflict.

Immediately after Henry's departure the adventurers set about the attempt to make themselves masters of the territories which Henry had granted to them. Had they gathered their whole forces together, they could have beaten down by main force any one of the Irish kings, but possibly they were shrewd enough to discern that that would inevitably lead to an Irish National Confederation and their consequent utter rout. At any rate, they acted individually and, with an adventurous recklessness and bravery which were their only redeeming features, they set out, each " to conquer his kingdom." From Dublin, and Waterford, and Wexford, they pushed out westwards and southwards, and they fought the Irish in a way which was at first strange to them, but the significance of which they soon understood. Pushing out from Dublin to the conquest of Meath, De Lacy built castles at Trim

and Kells, and garrisoned them, holding the district by means of these garrisons. The Irish, in their mutual warfare, had not occupied opponents' territory to any extent. If O'Neill made a foray into Meath or into Leinster he took hostages, and cattle, and crops, but he took no territory. But the English, wherever they went, built a castle and fortified it and menaced the surrounding district with it, and for quite a long time the Irish could find nothing better to do with these castles than to pull them down. De Lacy, in his attempt upon Meath, slew Tiernan O'Rourke by treachery at a friendly conference, and after that found, to his astonishment, that he was as far from conquering it as before. It was the difference between the feudal chief and the tribal chief, also perhaps the difference between the Irishman and the Englishman. The course of the struggle in Meath varied: sometimes De Lacy was on top and sometimes O'Rourke and O'Melaghlin, until De Lacy gradually came to be a kind of institution in the district, a chief in his way, like so many of the Irish chiefs, to be reckoned with in all warlike operations in the district, either on one side or the other. And much the same thing happened to the others. Like their predecessors the Northmen, they had begun their operations on the coastline—De Bermingham in Louth, De Cogan and Fitzstephen in Cork, Fitzmaurice in Kerry, FitzAdelm de Burgh in Connacht, and De Courcy gripped Ulster at Downpatrick, where he clung like a limpet. Town warfare was never much to the Irish taste, so the seacoast towns were left mostly in English hands, and thence they gradually spread inwards, building castles to overawe conquered territory, until they began to count in Ireland as territorial chiefs in the same sense as the Irish chiefs, and the De Burghs in Connacht, and the Fitzgeralds in Munster began to loom large in Irish eyes; and the annals speak of the "English of Connacht" and the "English of Munster," and so on.

I am not going to chronicle the many and bloody battles which took place, or to record the increase or decrease of English territory in this period. It was really as if one took the adventurers and the Irish and mixed them up together; there were no big clumps which could be "coloured red" outside certain of the towns, and the English everywhere were surrounded by Irish. They held settlements in a great many counties, but these were just settlements, and did not amount to any grip on the country, although as the next century went on their power increased. It cannot be too often repeated that at this time the Irish had no sense of a national danger, no sense of an attempt to make them slaves in their own country; that the various English incursions all over Ireland were looked on as so many settlements in the country, so many new clans introduced; and that there was no consciousness of the external directing force or the external danger which always threatened while the "English of Ireland" kept up the bond with England. And as time went on various of the English leaders—De Lacy, De Cogan, Fitzstephen, De Burgh, for instance—made good their footing and came to be accepted as chiefs of districts inhabited partly by Irish and partly by English, and the surrounding chiefs found it advantageous sometimes to form alliances with them instead of continually fighting them. And so they gradually rooted themselves in the country, now in alliance with a neighbouring chief and fighting with him against somebody else, now fighting him obstinately; now extending their influence, and now, surprised by a sudden uprising of the Irish, driven off into some neighbouring friendly territory, with all the fighting to do over again. The Irish used the English precisely as they had used the Northmen—used them to fight each other, and in return for their assistance tolerated them in certain of their territories, made treaties with them and fought them by turns. But the English

with more of a common purpose than the Northmen, used the Irish with the idea of dominance always in their minds, with the consciousness always that their title to Irish territory was an English title, and that their only security in it was the planting of the English power in the land. And although they became assimilated into the Irish nation, by intercourse and intermarriage, fast enough, yet the English Crown always saw to it that a fresh supply of adventurers came over through the open port of Dublin. And so during the century or so that followed the invasion you are to see the Irish and English turbulently mixing, interpenetrating each other, with boundaries and powers which ever fluctuated.

The tide of battle veered as much to the one side as to the other. But certain of the Irish kings stand out prominently with better fighting capacity, and more consistent opposition to the invaders, than others. Domhnall O'Brien, King of Thomond, fought them constantly, beginning by almost annihilating the English of Leinster under Strongbow himself at the battle of Thurles in 1174; and during the celebrated visit of King John of England (then Prince John) in 1185, he defeated his forces with great slaughter. Finghin MacCarthy of Desmond, was another who fought gallantly against the English, and utterly crushed Maurice Fitzgerald and the whole English forces when that Geraldine was Lord Deputy. And the O'Connors furnished many gallant defenders of the fatherland to set against the indecision of Roderic. Conor Moinmoy, son of Roderic, was the first to attempt a national confederation against the English. But he was slain in 1186, and left to his son Cathal Carrach, and his half-uncle, the better-known Cathal Crobhdearg, the task of keeping Connacht safe, which they did through many a bloody conflict. But the northern kings stand out clearest and noblest. In a long reign of over thirty years Hugh O'Neill steadily

sent back wave after wave of English invasion—the first of his family singled out for that honourable work. In recording his death in 1230, the Annals say "a man who had given neither hostages or tributes to either English or Irish, who had gained many victories over the English, and defeated them with great slaughter, and who had levied tributes on both English and Irish enemies, and contemplated the conquest of all Ireland, died, though it was rather expected that he would have fallen in battle with the English." John De Courcy at first, and other English Deputies after him, found both the O'Neills and O'Donnells impassable in any attempt on the North, and Hugh O'Neill was always ready, as was O'Brien in Leath Mogha, to help any other chief against the English. And in the record of these battles there is constant mention of fleets, the fleet of O'Neill, and of O'Donnell, and of Cathal Crobhdearg, and of MacCarthy, though they seem to have been used mainly for transport.

For more than eighty years after the invasion the struggle was too fierce, and the violent incursion into the nation of the foreign element was too recent to admit of it settling down into any kind of oneness, or to admit of an attempt at unity. The English Crown made no attempt to conquer the country in the sense in which it so many times attempted to conquer Scotland. It was too busy fighting France to do more than keep one eye on Ireland and feed the flame of war there. If any Deputy grew powerful or arrogant he was recalled; if he was too successful against the Irish he was recalled; and if he was not successful enough he was recalled. All that the Deputies were expected to do was to keep the Irish and the English of Ireland fighting one another, and any Deputy who attempted a real pacification or unity of the country was imperilling his neck. So they kept the game going, and each plundered as much as he could in the few years before some new and greedy adventurer told lies about him and had him recalled.

As their feudal lords, too, the English kings often summoned the Anglo-Irish lords to give feudal service in the Scotch, Welsh, and French wars, and as they depended upon English support for their title to Ireland they had perforce to obey, and when they returned from the foreign wars they found most of their territory had become Irish tribeland again. Then they got more help from England, and the strife began anew. This was one of the reasons which caused the English power in this first century to fluctuate so mnch, and which, at the time of the Wars of the Roses, in which some of the Anglo-Irish nobles took so prominent a part, almost destroyed their power altogether. For over eighty years this kind of thing clouded Ireland's perception of herself, sundered her unity, set every chief fighting hard to keep his own territory, and then, after eighty years, light came and Hugh O'Connor, son of Felim, son of Cathal Mor of the Wine-Red Hand, made the first defiinite stroke for the nation again. This Hugh was one of the wisest and bravest of the O'Connors. He had done his best to stop the internal warfare between his own family on the one hand, and the descendants of Cathal Carrach on the other; and now he attempted once again to place a king over all Ireland. He made a truce with O'Brien of Thomond, and they combined their forces and marched north to Newry, where they solemnly invested Brian O'Neill with the crown of Ireland. The new confederacy was unfortunately short-lived, for their combined forces were beaten at Dromdearg near Downpatrick, in 1260, by the English under Stephen Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, Brian O'Neill himself being slain, and the confederacy fell to pieces. But the incident is notable in our history as the first striving of the national mind to get itself expressed in political terms after the lesson of the English invasion began to filter in; and it was followed by the much clearer attempt of Domhnall O'Neill, of which more later. Hugh O'Connor, his national govern-

ment thus nipped in the bud, continued through the rest of his life, until his death in 1274, to hold Connacht against the English, and he defeated them again and again, being especially active in destroying their castles—Athlone, Roscommon, Sligo, for instance, being pulled down by him many times.

The reader will naturally ask how, if the English were beaten so many times, they managed to keep their grip on the country. It is an historical fact that from the fighting point of view we Irish have no reason to hang our heads when we consider any century of the English invasion, winning perhaps six battles for every battle the English won. But it is also an historical fact that the Irish had no idea of "following up" a battle, and that the idea of doing so only penetrated into them very slowly. Time and again they allowed a Deputy, or a big man like De Courcy or Fitzgerald, to escape almost unmolested, with the remnants of his army, to the nearest English castle or town. It was a relict of the old clan warfare, which was devoid of the principle of occupancy of conquered territory, so that the defeated army was seldom pursued after the first flush of the victory. The contrast between the two fighting methods, and the reason for the strange anomaly that those who were oftenest beaten managed to hold the country may be tersely put thus: When the English won a battle they usually built and fortified a castle; when the Irish won a battle they usually pulled one down.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH AFTER THE INVASION

Early Ireland had imposed its organization upon the Church, and the Church supported Henry in the hope of finding, under the rule of a strong feudal monarch, the opportunity to perfect its own organization on the continental model. But the stubborn Irish again upset all calculations, and the Church after the invasion was as helpless and as distracted as were the Irish and English of Ireland in the political aspect. I have already referred to the decrees of the Synod which Henry had caused to be held at Cashel under the presidency of the Papal Legate, Christian of Lismore. They dealt altogether with minor points and not at all with points of doctrine. There is not a particle of evidence anywhere that the statements in Adrian's Bull as to the degradation of the Irish Church had any foundation; and the decrees of this Synod, dealing as they do with minor things, are plain proof that the Church was neither lax nor heretical. If there had been the slightest foundation in actual fact for Adrian's charges Henry would have taken good care to have them dealt with by the Synod. But there was not, and the motive of the Synod in accepting Henry's claims was to consolidate the Irish Church.

The result was a rude shock to them, for the advent of the English, instead of consolidating the Church, split it up. In one sense—in the sense that it imposed tithes and exempted Church property from certain secular exactions, defined eccelesiastical jurisdiction, and made other changes tending to close up its organization—it accomplished some of the desired results; but

all that was nullified by the fact that it practically split the Church into two portions, an English interest and an Irish interest, whose spheres of activity shifted as the political forces manœuvred, and as time went on Church buildings were destroyed, and Church revenues seized, by both parties; and by the fact that it took away its autonomy and put it under the English Crown.

The last Irish Archbishop of Dublin prior to the "Reformation" was Lorcan O'Toole, who was Archbishop at the invasion. That fact alone illustrates the effect which the English invasion had upon the Church. Once Henry's dominion was accepted they could not proceed with the election of a bishop or archbishop until Henry had issued his *congé d'élire*, and Henry always took his time about that, and in the meantime confiscated to his own use the revenues of the See. Then he summoned the Chapter, and used all his influence to get a prelate elected who was either English or favourable to the English. Dublin, for instance, became vacant in 1180, but Henry did not summon the Chapter until 1181, and then he summoned it for Evesham, and induced it to select an English monk named John Comyn. Of the twenty-three Archbishops of Dublin thence to the Reformation all were English, and many—Comyn, for instance—were feudal lords as well as ecclesiastics, and slaughtered and prayed with equal equanimity. The same game was played with Armagh, and Cashel, and Lismore, and other Sees, with varying success, and the introduction of these English bishops, followed of course by English clergy, none of them speaking Irish, amounted in effect to a division of the Church, the two sections hating one another and never pulling together. And amongst the religious Orders the same story was enacted. The English, as a general rule, pulled down Church buildings, monasteries, etc., in their raids, and scattered the ecclesiastics. And then, of course, they condescended to patronize religion again, only they took care that it

should be quite English. So they built monasteries and filled them with imported religious Orders, between whom and the Irish members of the same and other Orders there was deadly war. Irish monks were expelled from monasteries in English territory, and no Irish novices were admitted; and the Irish monasteries retaliated in kind. And so the Church in Ireland found itself portion English and portion Irish, and suffering equally at the hands of both parties when the battle fury was on them, and the Church, as a Church, never seemed to have the disposition to fight against it.

If the Irish Church had been a national Church at the time of the invasion it would not, of course, have endured this kind of interference for one week. But it was not national; it welcomed the English Crown, and it never afterwards cancelled that welcome. The mass of the lower clergy, indeed, remained Irish enough, and the monks and friars always deserved well of their country; but the Church, as a Church, threw in its lot with England. The two-fold effect which the invasion had upon it was to take away its autonomy, and to plant discord in it in precisely the same way as discord was planted in the Irish body politic. About the Irish Church, and the extent of its connection with Rome, volumes have been written and will, I suppose, continue to be written. Irish history is concerned with these things only in their political aspect, and any references to the Church in this book are references to it only in its influences on Irish history. One thing seems to me to be clear—that the Church of Patrick was founded as a national Church, and that in the course of time the ecclesiastical instinct became segregated and developed a consciousness of its own which gradually became, if not antagonistic to the nation, at the least unsympathetic to its political organization. That antagonism was heightened by the fact that in the centuries immediately preceding the invasion many of the leaders of the Irish Church had been smitten with the dignity of the

Imperial Church of Rome, and had striven for a closer union. In the beginning the consciousness of the Irish Church towards Rome was a consciousness of equality; it always respected Rome as the oldest of the Christian Churches, but it paid it no homage of an Imperial nature; its relations with it were sisterly (or brotherly if you will), and it had absolute autonomy inside the four seas of Ireland. As time went on, as the ecclesiastical consciousness grew more ecclesiastical and less national, as it failed to dominate the Irish social and political organization, failed to free itself from the bonds imposed by the clan system, as the two powers—the lay and the ecclesiastical—developed specific antagonisms, it went nearer and nearer to forming an integral portion of the Imperial Church of the Continent. And when Henry came it seized upon that chance of consolidating itself on a feudal organization under a strong feudal king. The price it had to pay was the definite acceptance of Rome as the supreme and Mother Church, and the surrender of its autonomy. Up to then it elected its own bishops and archbishops, thenceforward that election was subject to the English Crown and to the Popes. It grasped at the Crown in order to make itself independent of the nation; and it found itself in the result independent neither of the nation nor of the Crown; it found itself between the two, and so committed that it could not go wholly either with the one or the other. It found itself compelled to receive into itself a body of foreigners, to view with smouldering, but ineffectual anger, the translation to Dublin and Armagh of unknown English monks, the dawn of an English party in the Church as opposed to the Irish majority.

If it had had any national feeling it would have declared a holy war against the English; if it had had any dignity it would have at least fought for its autonomy against the English, as it had fought for its privileges against the Kings of Tara. But, believing

that its own interests lay in the setting up of a strong kingdom in Ireland on a feudal basis, it stood in with the invaders, and extinguished itself as a Church. In the result, it lost its autonomy, endured foreigners, and saw Ireland gradually accustomed to the idea of plundering Church property, as well as lay property, and to the political Church dignitary, who held Church property and drew Church revenues, and was a Churchman one day in the week, and very much a man of the world for the other six days. Like the nation, it was rent, disordered, plundered.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST NATIONAL CONFEDERACY (1315-1318)

The reader will hardly recognize in the above title that episode in Irish history which has been commonly described as the "Invasion of Edward Bruce," which is here presented in its true light as the result of the first notable national confederacy in Ireland, and the first effective evidence of the working of the national instinct towards the resumption of its political evolution. In the century and a half that had elapsed since the invasion, that evolution had been arrested by a force which, numerically, was inferior to that of any one Irish province, but which persisted because the Irish chiefs as a whole did not recognize the menace, and made peace or war with the English just as they did with each other. But Domhnall O'Neill recognized the menace, and concluded that, in order to meet it, all Ireland should combine under one strong king. According to Irish law he himself would be Ard Ri, but he recognized that an outside king of kindred blood would have a better chance of welding Ireland together. The struggle of Scotland for its independence had been followed sympathetically in Ireland, especially in Ulster, and when, after Bannockburn, it was definitely established, the Ulster chiefs, at O'Neill's instance, asked Robert Bruce for help to drive the English out of Ireland, and offered the crown of Ireland to Edward Bruce. The offer was accepted, and its result was the first national confederacy in Ireland, which crowned Edward Bruce Ard Ri.

Concurrently with the invitation to Bruce, they

addressed to Pope John XXII a letter of remonstrance traversing the conduct of the English in Ireland, giving instances of their cruelty and treachery, their non-fulfilment of the conditions under which Adrian's Bull had been issued, and announcing that they had chosen Edward Bruce to be their king. And they asked the Pope "out of a regard for justice and the public peace, mercifully to sanction our proceedings relative to our said lord the king; prohibiting the King of England, and our adversaries aforesaid, from further molestation of us. Or at least be graciously pleased to enforce for us from them the due requirements of justice." The Pope's treatment of this remonstrance is typical of the way in which the policy of the political Papacy has gone steadily against Ireland. He made no answer to the remonstrance, but sent a copy of it with all haste to Edward II, with a covering letter in which he asked him "to take these matters into your calm, deliberate consideration; and confer upon them with your discreet council, and in this way proceed to command and enforce a just and speedy correction and reform of the grievances aforesaid. . . . That so these Irish people, following more wholesome councils, may render you the obedience due to their lord, or if (what heaven forbid) they shall be disposed to persist in foolish rebellion, they may convert their cause into a matter of open injustice, while you stand excused before God and man." And later, after Bruce had landed, he issued a decree excommunicating all who should join him or in any way assist him.

In May 1315, Edward Bruce, with 6,000 Scots, landed on the Antrim coast, and was met by the Ulster chiefs. In the presence of all O'Neill resigned the Crown of Ireland to Bruce, and Bruce swore to be true to Ireland and to serve her. Preparations for a campaign were begun at once on both sides, and there was a wholesale suspension of private quarrels. In Connacht Richard De Burgo, the Red Earl, gathered together all the

English forces of the West, and to his hosting went Felim O'Connor, the young King of Connacht, and his clansmen; the Lord Deputy gathered the Pale forces at Dublin and prepared to march north; and in the south the Geraldines and Butlers gathered all the southern English forces. The Irish moved first, and the English colonists in Antrim—Savages, Mandevilles, and Bissets—were beaten in a battle near Lough Neagh, and their holdings occupied. Leaving a detachment to besiege Carrickfergus, the Irish marched south, and after a short siege took Dundalk and threatened the Pale. Then the Red Earl moved from Athlone, and the Irish chiefs sent envoys to Felim O'Connor, appealing to his honour and his patriotism to withdraw from the English and stand in with the Confederacy in their attempt to drive the English from Ireland. Felim withdrew his forces accordingly, and Bruce turned upon De Burgo and gave him an overwhelming defeat near Ballymena, and thence proceeded to Dundalk, where he wintered.

In the meantime, the Irish had attacked all over Ireland, and as England recognized the vital nature of the struggle, armies were poured into Ireland. In Leinster and in Munster the fighting was local, guerilla warfare rather than pitched battles, and while it held the English armies in both provinces, it did no more; but Felim O'Connor was master of Connacht, and Bruce of all Ulster, from Dundalk northwards. Early in 1316 Bruce marched south, scattered an army of 30,000 under the Deputy at Athy, and a second army of 15,000 under Roger Mortimer, at Kells, and then returned to Dundalk, where he was solemnly crowned as Ard Ri of Ireland. But the English had been left in possession of Dublin, and armies again poured in, and they elected to attack Felim O'Connor rather than Bruce. The armies met at Athenry, where the Connacht Irish, fighting in linen shirts against armour, were most bloodily and fatally defeated, with a loss in

killed of 8,000, including King Felim and most of the chiefs, and Connacht was triumphantly overrun by the English.

Early in 1317 Robert Bruce in person came to Ireland with reinforcements, and the Bruces, at the head of 30,000 men, marched south and laid siege to Dublin, an enterprise which should have been undertaken, and would have been successful, the previous year after the battles of Athy and Kells. They met with no opposition in their march, but Dublin was obstinately defended by Robert Nottingham, its mayor, and upon a failure to carry it by assault, the Bruces abandoned the siege and marched south to Limerick, unmolested. England now sent over another army of 15,000 under Roger Mortimer, the Geraldines and Butlers had gathered 30,000 at Kilkenny, and in Connacht De Burgo had gathered all his forces together after the victory at Athenry, so the Irish, heavily outnumbered, retreated to Dundalk, where they wintered. Early in 1318, Robert Bruce returned to Scotland, promising to return with reinforcements, but Edward Bruce was impatient, and when De Bermingham, with the whole English forces, moved against him, he gave battle at Faughart, though outnumbered five to one. While he himself held the field the battle wavered, but he was mortally wounded by Sir John Maupas, whom he also mortally wounded, and the Irish army retreated north, beaten but not scattered. It was the only battle Bruce had lost in Ireland. The country was now exhausted, and over-run with famine and pestilence, owing to the three years constant fighting and the manœuvring of such huge armies, both sides burning crops and houses in "enemy territory," and with Bruce's death the Confederacy collapsed, the Irish dispersing unmolested to their homes.

The issue in this struggle was a clean-cut one, and it appears to have been clearly understood on both

sides. The English poured men and supplies in on an unprecedented scale, and it is clear from the State Papers that the Irish were practically unanimously on Bruce's side. It is true that the Pope had excommunicated all who should help Bruce, but it is doubtful if that had any influence on the struggle. The Irish chiefs certainly paid no heed to it, and their clansmen probably never knew of it. The Church at that time was in no position to influence either side materially, it was so disorganized. "For the territories of the Church," wrote Domhnall O'Neill to the Pope in 1315, "are so curtailed, narrowed and mutiliated by them that some cathedral churches have been plundered of a moiety, and more than that, of their lands and property, while ecclesiastical privileges of every kind are for the most part entirely abolished by these individuals here spoken of. And our bishops and prelates are indiscriminately summoned, arrested, seized upon, and imprisoned by the Ministers of the King of England in Ireland; and though suffering as they do such constant and serious injuries, they are yet so strongly influenced by a slavish timidity, that they never venture to bring before your Holiness any representations concerning them." It was a fight on a straight issue, which the English won not by superior valour but by virtue of the fatal Irish indifference to Dublin. When Bruce in 1316 had cleared Ulster, taken Dundalk, swept down through Meath and Leinster, and beaten at Athy and Kells the only two English armies then in Ireland, he had only to take Dublin to win. But Dublin was not even attacked, and next year when it was attacked it was attacked only half-heartedly. In the whole war, of the series of battles fought, the Irish lost three—Athenry, a battle in Leix, where the O'Mores were beaten in 1317, and Faughart—yet they were beaten, and so long as Dublin remained in English hands they had no chance of winning. For through Dublin came English army after army.

The three years campaign so impoverished and devastated Ireland as to make the annalists declare that "there never was a better deed done in Ireland than the killing of Edward Bruce," but its general effect was wholly to the good. It uprooted the colonists over almost the whole of Ireland, exhausted the Anglo-Irish nobles, and so weakened English power in Ireland that it lessened until only Dublin was held, and that only by paying black-rent to Mac Murchadha—*but it was held.*

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT ASSIMILATION—FAUGHART TO THE STATUTE OF KILKENNY (1318-1367)

By throwing together every available man, and by hard fighting, the English had preserved their grip on Ireland. They had beaten a purely Irish army at Athlone and a mixed Scoto-Irish army at Faughart, and were left at the close of the war with a victorious army and no regular opponents. Yet, for two centuries thereafter, English power in Ireland was almost negligible. It declined rapidly until it was almost at vanishing point, and it did not flourish again until the Tudors took up the running. That weakening of English power, not alone of their political influence, but also of their civilization, sprang out of circumstances in which the short three years' campaign of Edward Bruce was the determining factor. That campaign went nearest of any attempt to annihilate English power in Ireland.

At the time of the landing of Bruce the English were settling down into a permanency in the country. The period of soldiering and adventuring pure and simple had passed, and under the shadow of their arms they planted colonies. The English and Irish were intermixed everywhere, but the English were in the minority, and were banded together much more effectively by that fact, and the fact that they fully realized that their best chance of keeping their place in the country lay in standing together against the Irish. They had come to be tacitly accepted, in a sense, by the Irish of the various districts and yet, while in a sense of the Nation, were preponderatingly not of it. They held by English

law and customs, paid allegiance to England, had not yet developed any separate Anglo-Irish individuality, any sense of a difference between themselves and the English born, and were gradually forming themselves into a network all over Ireland: overshadowed everywhere by the Irish, but still there. After Bruce all that was changed. Bruce's campaign broke up their organization, and sent them back again to the soldiering days of the earlier invaders. And, because the English monarchs were too busy with Scottish and French wars to send armies to Ireland, they were faced either with assimilation to the Irish nation or the payment of tribute to the chiefs. Some of them chose the one, and some the other. From a policy of aggression they were forced to fall back upon a policy of defence.

Bruce's campaigns had been thorough, much more thorough than the Irish campaigns previously or since. In a hostile district he pulled down and destroyed everything, and left the country bare. His successive victories in his first campaign drove the colonists to abandon their farms for the time being, to turn soldiers, and to concentrate altogether upon the task of fighting him, and when the war was over and Bruce dead, the Irish were once more in actual possession of most of the land. The English occupiers, where they attempted to re-occupy, had to come to a compromise with the Irish, and in a great many cases they wearied of the task and returned to England—so much so that a law was passed forbidding any Englishman of Ireland to return to England—and the influx of fresh colonists ceased almost wholly.

The colonists who remained found themselves outside the towns, isolated in groups, and hedged around on all sides by a vigorous Irish civilization. Their organization broken and their hopes of a complete conquest gone, they gradually adopted Irish manners and customs, and became to all intents and purposes an Irish clan. This assimilation was also helped considerably by two

things. Firstly, the policy of the English kings of exacting feudal dues from the Anglo-Irish nobles for their Scottish and French wars. Many of them went away to these wars and found on their return that their land had reverted to Irish tribe land. The big nobles, Ormond, Desmond, Kildare, etc., did not suffer in this way, but in numerous cases it happened thus to their feudal dependants. Secondly, whenever the feudal succession devolved upon a woman, there was usually a reversion to Irish tribe land. This was, on the surface, the cause of the De Burgos throwing off allegiance to the English in 1333. When William De Burgo, grandson of the Red Earl, died in June 1333, his estates, according to feudal law, went to his infant daughter. The other members of the family refused to acknowledge this, and William and Edmund De Burgo promptly renounced allegiance to England, discarded the feudal law, adopted Irish laws, apparel and language, and called themselves Mac 'Liam Uachtar and Mac 'Liam Iachtar, dividing up the De Burgo estates between them. This example was widely followed, and many of the English colonists turned Irish, adopting Irish names, language, laws, and apparel, so that the nobles became to all intents and purposes Irish chiefs, with this difference, that many of them, including of course Desmond, Ormond, Kildare and others of similar rank, still kept up, through Dublin, the connection with England. The minor men were in fact wholly assimilated, but the big men, Kildare and his equals, while speaking Irish, and living to a large extent as Irish chieftains, yet kept up the English connection; and and the English kept a Governor in Dublin who was nominally Governor of Ireland, and whose mission actually was to keep the big nobles conscious of England's existence, and attached to the English interest, until such time as the English could again undertake a conquest. By playing Desmond, Ormond, and Kildare against one another in the usual English

fashion, they were prevented from throwing in their lot with the Irish. Each in turn would be denounced as a traitor, and thus be driven into explanations and bursts of loyalty which kept him securely attached to the English interest. Yet that attachment was of the slightest, and they were bound to the Irish by what should have been stronger ties, for they intermarried with them, hunted and feasted with them, fostered amongst them, adopted coign and livery in the Irish manner, and lived mostly after the style of Irish chieftains. But the slender thread binding them to England was available, and served, to draw over a stronger thread, and a stronger, until England had Ireland down.

The famous Statute of Kilkenny, passed by an Anglo-Irish Parliament at Kilkenny in 1367, is the best evidence of the state of English power in Ireland two centuries after the invasion. That Statute has been commonly referred to as a malevolent enactment against the Irish. It is actually nothing of the kind, being merely an attempt to prevent, by legislation, the assimilation of the English in Ireland. It was specifically framed to apply only within the English territories, and did not even pretend to be an Act to bind all Ireland. (Two centuries later, when English power had a much wider grip, the Act of course held good.)

The preamble says: "Whereas, at the conquest of the land of Ireland, and for a long time after, the English of the said land used the English language, mode of riding, and apparel, and were governed and ruled, both they and their subjects called Betaghes, according to the English law; but now many English of the said land, forsaking the Englsih language, manners, mode of riding, laws and usages, live and govern themselves according to the manners, fashion, and language of the Irish enemies; and also have made divers marriages and alliances between themselves and the Irish enemies aforesaid; whereby the said land, and the liege people

thereof, the English language, the allegiance due to our lord the king, and the English laws there, are put in subjection and decayed, and the Irish enemies exalted and raised up, contrary to reason," and therefore, it goes on, this Act is passed. Now this preamble directs the act specifically against the English of Ireland and none other, and gives as its justification the fact that English laws and customs and language are "put in subjection and decayed." The various clauses of the Act will show the positions more clearly.

Clause I enacts that the Church shall "be free, and have all her franchises without injury, according to the the franchises granted by our lord the king, or his progenitors," etc.

Clause II enacts that "no alliance by marriage, gossipred, fostering of children, concubinage, or by amour, nor in any other manner, be henceforth made between the English and Irish of one part, or of the other part; and that no Englishman or other person, being at peace, do give or sell to any Irishman, in time of peace or war, horses or armour, nor any manner of vehicles in time of war," etc. From which we may gather that alliance by marriage, fostering, and gossipred was common, and also trading intercourse. As a matter of fact, the English in the towns always traded with the Irish, arms and everything else, despite statutes.

Clause III enacts that "every Englishman do use the English language and be named by an English name, leaving off entirely the manner of naming used by the Irish; and that every Englishman use the English custom, fashion, mode of riding and apparel, according to his state; and if any Englishman, or Irish living amongst the English, use the Irish language amongst themselves, contrary to this ordinance, and thereof be attainted, his lands and tenements, if he have any, shall be seized into the hands of his immediate lord . . . And that no Englishman who shall have the value of one hundred pounds of land by the year

shall ride otherwise than on a saddle in the English fashion, . . . and also that beneficed persons of holy Church, living amongst the English shall use the English language . . . and they shall have respite in order to learn the English language and to provide saddles, between this and the feast of Saint Michael next coming," etc.; showing the prevalence of Irish names, customs, fashions, apparel, and language amongst all classes of the English.

Clause IV enacts "that no Englishman be governed in the termination of their disputes by March law nor Brehon law which reasonably ought not to be called law, being a bad custom, . . . and that no difference of allegiance shall henceforth be made between the English born in Ireland and the English born in England, by calling them English hobbe, or Irish dog." etc. Note the deliciously English description of the Brehon law as "a bad custom," and the plain sign of the rift between the Anglo-Irish and the raw English, a rift which had grown enormously since it was ordained in 1338, that all officers of the Crown in Ireland should be English born.

Clause V regulates the price and sale of imported victuals.

Clause VI enacts that "the commons of the said land of Ireland, who are in the different marches at war, do not henceforth, use the plays which men call hurlings, with great sticks upon the ground, from which great evils and maims have arisen . . . but that they do apply and accustom themselves to use and draw bows, and throw lances, and other gentlemanlike games," etc.

Clause VII orders that diligent inquiry be made into the criminal condition of the English territories, so that malefactors may be punished and wrongs redressed. It leaves the inference that, within the English sphere, crime was rampant.

Clause VIII forbids anyone to confiscate the tithes due to the Church, whether he be "great or little."

Clause IX. "That nobody who has been excommunicated shall be received into the king's favour until he has 'made satisfaction.'"

Clause X. Wars to be undertaken in future by the "Council of our lord the king," and that "the Irish enemies shall not be admitted to peace until they shall be finally destroyed, or shall make restitution fully of the costs and charges expended on that war," etc.

Clause XI. "That if any Irishman becomes debtor to an Englishman, no other Irish person belonging to him shall be seized or ransomed for such debt." From which we gather that it had been the practice to hold an Irishman's relatives responsible for his debts. (Irishman here means Irishman living in English territory.)

Clause XII. "That no Irishman shall pasture or occupy the lands belonging to the English, or Irish being at peace, against the will of the lords of the said lands," etc. Alluding to the habit of the Irish on the borders grazing their cattle on English land without even a "by your leave."

Clause XIII. "That no Irishman of the nations of the Irish be admitted into any cathedral or collegiate church by provision, collection, or presentation of any person, nor to any benefice of Holy Church, amongst the English of the land," etc.

Clause XIV prohibits religious houses "situate amongst the English" from receiving any Irishmen to their professions.

Clause XV enacts that "whereas, the Irish agents who come amongst the English spy out the secrets, plans and policies of the English, whereby great evils have often resulted; it is agreed and forbidden that any Irish agents, that is to say, pipers, story-tellers, bablers, rimers, mowers, nor any other Irish agent shall come amongst the English," etc. This clause is a tribute to the work done by the Irish bards and seanchuidhe. It has often been quoted as an attack on

bards as such, but it is clear that it was an attack on their utility for military purposes.

Clauses XVI to XXVI refer to minor matters, mostly law administration in the English territories.

Clause XXVII prohibits the English from making war upon one another.

The remaining clauses (28 to 35) contain nothing germane to the point I am illustrating, save that they deal, with 16 to 26, mostly with the regulations and enforcement of law, and show that there was no real law in the Pale at the time, that revenues were uncollected, and robbery and violence unpunished, that the strongest took and justice did not prevail.

Justifiable though the Statute of Kilkenny was—from the English point of view—it is doubtful if it was at that time more than a pious expression of a policy so far as those to whom it was addressed were concerned. They did not carry it out, and there was no central English power in the country strong enough to compel them to do so. It was a statute, the observance of which meant to most of the English the giving up of something to which they had been accustomed, trade and intercourse with the Irish, Irish manners and customs, etc., and that they would not do unless compelled to do so; and for centuries the English lacked the power to so compel them.

Sir John Davies, in his discourse, states that for several years after the passing of the Act, it was observed, and did much benefit to English powers in the country. But even that is open to doubt, for we find English power still dwindling after its passing. But apart from its importance in proving how mythical is the old belief that Ireland was conquered in a few years, it was of vast importance in serving as a guide to future generations of English ameliorators on what lines the subjugation of Ireland was finally to be attempted. In the enactments of succeeding Parliaments may be found re-enactments of portions of this statute, proving that

it was not obeyed, and proving also that the English governing impulse persistently followed the lines laid down in it. For it was the first enunciated policy of establishing an English civilization in the country which should root out of English territories all Irish civilization. It was aimed only at the inhabitants of those parts of the country which were under English government, but, as time went on, and that influence grew, it was on the same lines that Irish civilization was attempted to be driven out of all Ireland. It was a case of the English mind in Ireland driven into a corner by the Irish mind, and then coming to a realization of the fact that it was mind, not force, that was telling, and struggling hard for its own separate existence. Then, when it got on top, it aimed at the Irish mind.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT ASSIMILATION—ART MOR MAC MURCHADHA (1377-1417)

The great Art MacMurchadha was but twenty years of age when he succeeded his father as King of Leinster in 1377, and he had been leading his people since he was sixteen. Art the elder left to his son the headship of the Leinster tribes, alliance and friendship with them, and rule up to the walls of Dublin, with a tribute of eighty marks per annum from the King of England's treasury, and while he lived Art the younger maintained all these. The strength of England, and the treachery of England, alike failed against him, and during the forty years of his reign he was undisputed King of Leinster. Specially trained to hold the fruits of the wise government and policy of the line of capable kings that preceded him, he proved himself from the beginning fully equal to his responsibilities, and rolled back the strongest and best appointed English armies that had yet appeared in Ireland, headed with all pomp by a King of England.

Art the elder had beaten the English so severely in so many battles, and had so consolidated his power, that they left Art Mor severely alone for a long time after his accession, paying him his tribute of eighty marks a year regularly. And meantime his power grew, the Pale became more and more narrow, and when he married an Anglo-Irish wife he refused to abide by the Statute of Kilkenny, according to which her lands in Kildare became Crown property. No English Viceroy dared to attack him, and at length Richard II of England, stung to action by the taunts of his rivals for

the Imperial German Crown, resolved to conquer Ireland anew, and in particular Art MacMurchadha. The English Parliament granted him supplies, he issued an edict to the Anglo-Irish to drop their Irish manners and customs and rally to his banner, and landed at Waterford with 34,000 men in 1394. After a week's feasting and display at Waterford, Richard determined to go to Dublin, *via* Ross, which was strongly fortified; but Art, who had already foreseen this, pounced down on Ross first, overwhelmed the defence, and burned the town and castle. This upset Richard's plans, and forced him to make a march inland, where of course he was more exposed, as Art wanted him, to ambuscade and to guerilla tactics generally. He had meant to march along the coast-line to Ross, and thence to Dublin, but now he was forced to make for Kilkenny instead. All along the line of march the Leinstermen harassed him, cutting off stragglers, laying ambuscades, making night attacks, and generally wearing him out. And by the time Richard reached Kilkenny he had given up the idea of smashing up the Leinstermen by main force, and determined to try soft talk. So he sent his Earl Marshal from Kilkenny into Carlow, where Art was, to treat with him. And the terms of peace offered were surely comical. The Leinster chiefs were called upon to surrender all their lands in Leinster to Richard, and in return they were to have any lands they could take from " the King's other Irish enemies " elsewhere. It is difficult to think of this offer as having been seriously made, but it was, and it shows the vanity and incompetency of Richard. Art replied that he could treat only with King Richard himself, and that, so far from giving up any of his land he would have to get the restoration of his wife's land in Kildare. This broke up the conference, and Richard, an angry Richard, made his way northwards through Hi-Kinsellagh, with Art on both flanks and in his rear, messing his

army up amongst bogs, disturbing his sleep, sweeping the country along his line of march clear of all food of any description, and making things generally uncomfortable. When Richard finally reached Dublin he had lost an immense number of men, the discipline and enthusiasm of the army were gone, and yet he had fought no battle. Art played the Fabian game, and with complete success. The Four Masters put it tersely—"MacMurchadha, that is Art, son of Art, waged war against the King of England and his people, and many of them were slain by him; he finally came to the King's residence, at the request of the English and Irish of Leinster, where he was made prisoner on a charge made against him by the Earl of Ormond, the Lord Justice; he was soon after set at liberty."

This visit to Dublin was paid at Richard's request, and it was paid as the visit of one king to another. Art had not then learned to trust an Englishman only with arms in his hands and an army at his back, and so he came to Dublin at Richard's invitation, to be thrown into prison on a charge trumped-up by Ormond. O'Brien of Thomond, O'Connor of Offaly, and O'Neill of Tyrone were in Dublin at the same time—the northern chiefs had met Richard at Drogheda, and come to Dublin with him—but Art was the only one against whom an attempt was made. The charge, whatever it was, was not sustained—indeed it seems likely that it was never formulated—and he was released after a short time and left Dublin. The English historians, as usual, assert that all the Irish chiefs submitted to Richard, a thing which is extremely unlikely, and of which there is no other evidence. But in the midst of his feasting, Richard was recalled to England to look after his own affairs, and he left Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, as his Deputy in Ireland.

Mortimer was young and ambitious, anxious to do what Richard had failed in, and his first attempt to do so opened King Art's eyes to the folly of trusting

himself to the word or decency of an Englishman. In all peace and friendship Art was invited to a banquet, to which he came, attended only by his harper, who, observing that the castle was being surrounded by armed men, played Art's battle song on the harp. The warning was given and taken just in time, and Art got free just before the trap closed. "He made his escape despite of them," say the Four Masters, "by the strength of his hand and bravery, and they were not able to subdue him." This was in 1395, and as Art would never again trust himself in English hands, Mortimer was forced to try conclusions with him in the field, and he did so in 1398, with the whole forces of the Pale. The result was that his army was scattered at Kells, himself slain, and English influence in Ireland practically confined to the cities of Waterford and Dublin.

The news of this victory sent King Richard into a rage, and he made all haste to gather an army together, and landed in Waterford for the second time in 1399, with an army of 20,000 men. In its essentials this expedition was a reproduction of the previous one, except that it was far more disastrous to the English. A French knight, who accompanied Richard, has left us an account of it, which shows how effective Art's tactics were. As before, he hung on the army on its march, and harassed it constantly both day and night; retreating through Carlow into Wicklow, clearing the country of all food. Twice Richard sent messengers to him to submit, and twice Art replied that he would continue to fight and harass him, and to defend his country until the day of his death. So Richard pressed on, with an army whose discipline became less every day, whose numbers were thinned every day and every night, whose nerves were awry owing to the constant harassing of the mobile Leinstermen, and whose food became less and less until they were fasting; and the whole army had like to have died of starvation were it

not for the advent, at or near Arklow, of supplies from Dublin, supplies for which the famished soldiers fought with one another. Next morning MacMurchadha proposed a parley, and Richard joyfully sent the Earl of Gloucester. Art, taught by experience, came to the parley with his men visible not far off, and it came to nothing. He refused to submit, and Richard swore he would not leave Ireland until he had him in his power, living or dead. He pressed on to Dublin with the remnant of his army, the Leinstermen escorting them the whole journey, and set about new preparations to humble Art; but after six weeks in Dublin, he was no nearer to getting another army, and in that time he lost England, for Henry of Lancaster invaded it, won it, and Richard returning in haste, was deposed and killed.

Richard's departure left Art triumphant over Leinster, Dublin paying him black rent, and all his lieutenants, the O'Tooles, O'Byrnes, O'Nolans, etc., flourishing. And he took advantage of it to sweep away, or garrison, the castles still in English hands. Accordingly, he swept Wexford clear, taking Camolin, Ferns, Enniscorthy, and Wexford town, and then going North, he burnt English castles in Carlow and Kildare, and cleared his ancient kingdom. In the succeeding years he was twice attacked, first in 1407 by Sir Stephen Scroope, Lord Deputy, who was beaten and driven in on Kilkenny, a city which was always stubbornly held for the English interest by the Butlers, and again in 1408 by Thomas Duke of Lancaster, son of Henry IV, who came over as Lord Deputy and, following precedent, tried a fall with Art, He gathered together the Pale forces, the Butlers, the Dublinmen, and his own, and Art met him at Kilmainham and utterly routed him, wounding him severely into the bargain. The beaten army was driven in on Dublin, but a siege of that place was not attempted. Thenceforward there was no English attack in force upon him. They paid him his

black rent regularly, and he spent the last years of his lfein peace and quietness, ruling the kingdom with a strong and sure hand. With the exception of an occasional skirmish with the English of Wexford, who refused him tribute once or twice, he was not called upon to do any further fighting, and died in 1417—from suspected poisoning—in the sixtieth year of his age.

There are names as great in Irish history, Shane and Hugh O'Neill, and Red Hugh O'Donnell, for instance, there are many men who were greater in some respects than Art Mor MacMurchadha, but there are none whose life policy and government were so effective and faultless, so absolutely above criticism, as were his. He shares with Shane O'Neill the distinction of having never been beaten by the English in battle (Shane's two defeats were at the hands of the O'Donnells), and he has the higher credit of never having lost a battle at all; and that brings me to what is perhaps the most creditable of his achievements. During the forty years of his kingship he governed Leinster without a rival, without any internal dissension, and, so far as I have been able to gather, he never drew his sword against a fellow-countryman. In a reign of forty years that is a considerable achievement. The O'Byrnes, O'Tooles, and O'Nolans acted with him and under his direction against the common enemy, and their alliance was never broken, and King Richard with his army of over 30,000 men could not withdraw one single Leinster chief from Art's following. With his own Leinstermen only and aid from O'Carroll and O'Connor he smashed up the two biggest armies England had yet sent into Ireland, and under an English King, and he died free and victorious. His victories had an effect, not only on his own Leinster, but on the whole of Ireland, for during his forty years' reign there was no serious English expedition to the South, North, or West. With an enemy so active and enterprising at their gates, the English dared no more than rush an occasional

marauding expedition, and everywhere their influence declined, and their colonists, hemmed in, paid tribute to the neighbouring Irish tribes. With Dublin hemmed in, Art hemmed in English power in Ireland, and it declined everywhere.

It has been said of him that he was merely a provincial chief, and had no idea of an Irish nation. But he lived in, and was of, the Irish nation. It cannot be too clearly stated that the English invasion never appeared to the Irish kings to be a serious attempt to strangle them until after Kinsale. Outside Dublin the English had no power in Ireland in Art's time, and he would be a wise man indeed who would discern danger from Dublin. Shane O'Neill did discern it later—but I am only concerned here to point out that Art did have an idea of the Irish nation and was a part of the living nation; what he did not have the idea of was that English power was to overwhelm the country. He never made an attempt on Dublin, because he never had the forces necessary to carry on the siege of that place. After Kilmainham, indeed, he might have taken Dublin had he pressed hard after the beaten army, but he was a cautious man and was satisfied with the victory.

Bruce, aided chiefly by the clansmen of the North, had kept the English so busy in his short campaign that the Leinster chiefs were enabled to regain their lands within sight of the stronghold of English power; and Art MacMurchadha paid back that debt, for he kept them so busy in Leinster that they never went outside it during his reign, and so the disintegration caused by the campaigns of Bruce still grew. "Since his time until the thirty-ninth year of Queen Elizabeth," writes Sir John Davies, "there was not any army sent over of a competent strength or power to subdue the Irish; but the war was made by the English colonists only to defend their borders."

CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT ASSIMILATION—ART MOR TO SILKEN THOMAS (1417-1534).

Edward Bruce had given the first effective blow to the organization of the English colonists in Ireland, and had initiated the resumption—or rather initiated the conditions which brought about the resumption—by the Irish of most of the land of Ireland outside some of the towns. Art MacMurchadha's forty years' onslaught on the Pale, his hemming in of Dublin, his defeat of every English army which landed in Ireland in his time, had ensured the continuance of the disintegration of the colonists' organization, and split them up into small bands, fighting, each for existence, surrounded on all sides by the Irish, and either becoming annihilated or paying to the Irish the ordinary dues of a minor chief to the head of his clan. For a hundred years after the death of Art Dublin stood practically alone, the nominal seat of English government, but in reality just a fort, held for England with great difficulty, and only by paying black rent to MacMurchadha. It had no power over the English settlements in other parts of Ireland, and these all stood alone also; so that at this period there was practically no effective English power, *qua* English, in Ireland. Some of the most famous of England's soldiers—*e.g.*, Sir John Talbot—were sent over from time to time as Lords Lieutenant, but no large army could be sent, and there was therefore no attempt made to do more than hold Dublin. Occasionally a so-called Parliament was called and held—with profuse apologies from absent Cork and Limerick and other representatives, that they could not get to Dublin through the "Irishe ennemie"—and an attempt

made to bind the English in Ireland again into a united body, but they came to nothing. Irish civilization was in full operation everywhere, and English civilization declined. All the Anglo-Irish Parliaments give evidence of the desperate straits to which they were subjected. One or other portion of the Statute of Kilkenny was re-enacted at each of them, and fresh acts of a similar nature were enacted and re-enacted, but without avail; until at length in dire distress they built a ditch, after the example of the Roman wall of Agricola, around the Northern limits of the Pale, fortified it at intervals with castles, and strove by this means to keep the Irish out, laying down stringent penalties for any injury done to this ditch. The Dublin treasury was empty for most of the period, and time and again MacMurchadha's black rent was levied by force from unwilling colonists. The English of Wexford also paid him black rent; Louth and Oriel paid it to the O'Neills; Cork to MacCarthy; Limerick to O'Brien; Kilkenny and Tipperary to O'Carroll of Ely; Meath and Kildare to O'Connor of Offaly; the English of Connacht to O'Donnell.

It was a time, the clearest thing about which is that English power in Ireland was at vanishing point, and could have been pushed into the sea like a stone down a precipice, and a time which is perhaps the most misunderstood by historians. Considering Irish history from an excessively modern outlook, narrow and unscholarly, with no conception of the historic Irish nation, with no regard to the Irish social quality, the particular character of the Irish civilization, the peculiarities and strengths of the Irish political system, they have asked frantically why the English were not swept out, and instead of trying to answer that question by sifting the evidence, have taken refuge in the safer and easier modern method of asserting that the Irish were then little removed from barbarism, without unity or patriotism or civilization, fools governed by fools.

But that is not the correct answer, but the fool's answer. Ireland was not then barbaric, nor unpatriotic, nor was it just a mass of people fighting with each other all the year round. The mass of Irish trade at this time, the general level of culture, the wealth and prosperity everywhere, prove beyond doubt that Irish civilization was strong, and vigorous, and prosperous at this time; and the events here reviewed, the triumph of Irish civilization over English civilization, the assimilation of the English colonists, alone give the lie to the charges of inefficiency and barbarousness which are so commonly flung at the men of this period. The Irish genius was against centralization and was instinctively federal. If there had been in Ireland a despotic monarchy, a feudal civilization which ground down the people and exalted the nobles, it is probable that the English would have been driven out finally at this period; but the Irish national genius was in harmony with a conception of freedom and humanity which a mammon-riden world has never known elsewhere, and through the centuries it fought obstinately for its own conception of the proper ordering of things. By adopting the feudal organization it could have driven the English out in six months, but all its instincts were anti-feudal, and its innate aversion to feudalism, its innate impulse towards a social and political organization which would generate the maximum amount of freedom and culture, were stronger than the impulse of the English invasion. And so it stuck to its fine ideal and, if it went down temporarily, it went down fighting, and with honour. In an Irish civilization every place where men live and foregather would be a centre of culture, a fountain of light, as were so many spots in Ireland in the fifth and sixth centuries, but in the modern feudalistic civilization whatever culture there is is centralized and rooted in the biggest cities.

With this before our minds the answer to the

oft-repeated question why the English were not driven out is obvious. They were not driven out because they were so powerless that they did not hurt, and because the natural Irish impulse was to assimilate, not to exterminate. The territory of every Irish clan was in its own hands, and the seacoast towns, Dublin, and Cork, and Wexford, and Limerick, did homage to the neighbouring chiefs. The chiefs did not foresee that England would send army after army into Ireland, through Dublin, until she was down, but for this they cannot reasonably be blamed. The Irish genius, having surmounted the invasion of the Northmen, and kept its political and social organization intact, saw no reason why it should not also surmount the English invasion and retain its political and social organization intact. And it almost succeeded. At this time, indeed, the chances were all in its favour: it had assimilated the English settlers everywhere save in some of the towns, and the triumphant tide of its civilization grew daily stronger against the last barriers of English civilization in Ireland—the walls of Dublin.

You are to see Ireland, then, at this period, not a confused mass of warring clans, without order or civilization, but a nation passing through the tribulation and discord of invasion, with its social and political organization still vigorous, untouched by the poison of feudal institutions, assimilating its invaders, imposing on them its language, and laws, and customs, moving on again towards that goal to which before the invasion it was tending, the goal of a free, democratic nation, with a civilization and a culture equally amongst its common people as amongst its nobles, in the remote country places as in the cities.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GERALDINES—SILKEN THOMAS (1534)

"These Geraldines! these Geraldines!—not long our air they breathed:
Not long they fed on venison, in Irish water seethed;
Not often had their children been by Irish mothers nursed,
When from their full and genial hearts an Irish feeling burst!"

Hibernicis ipsis Hiberniores is the verdict which has been most commonly passed upon the Geraldines, and yet it is a verdict which requires much qualification and explanation. Irish they were in manners and customs, and largely in blood after some generations, but never wholly Irish in policy or in outlook. Their history which, in its essentials, is also the history of every other Norman group which settled in Ireland, shows clearly the malevolence of English policy in Ireland and the fatality of any connection, however slender, with England.

Garrett Mor of Kildare, the great Earl of Desmond, Silken Thomas the Gallant, James Fitzmaurice, Lord Edward! Go over all the Geraldines, and how many of them stand for anything to us, how many of them have taken a place with the honoured of the Irish race? Just three, Silken Thomas, James Fitzmaurice, and Lord Edward, the only three of the Geraldines who repudiated the English connection and tried to make Ireland an independent nation. All the others are but names, names of viceroys, of chieftains, gallant and noble, and generous, I grant you, but not of moment. The ups and downs of the struggle between the Geraldines and the Butlers for power and wealth under the English crown are of no permanent interest

to Ireland, but she remembers three who struck for a nation, and not for pelf or power.

During the first four centuries of the English invasion, when England found herself unable to conquer Ireland, and was forced to rely upon the maintenance of a grip on the country through her soldiers and colonists keeping the Irish divided, there were two courses open to the Geraldines, to stay in Ireland as an English garrison, or to turn Irish and go into the nation. They, unfortunately, did both—paradoxical as it sounds. They were both English and Irish, belonging wholly to neither and claiming kinship with both. They became Irishized very quickly and adopted all Irish customs, differing in no respect from the native Irish chiefs, so that they were recognized in the country as new clans. But they were Irish only so long as the Irish in their neighbourhood were the stronger, and let come an English Viceroy with an army and they were the King's subjects, coming to his Parliaments and his courts, paying his taxes and fighting his wars. To all intents and purposes they were independent chiefs during these four centuries, and levied war and made peace as they pleased, but they never had the wisdom or the courage to fight for their own hands against the tottering power of England, or to fight for their country's sake. They gave England a nominal allegiance, while being Irish in speech, habits, outlook, and in all things else; and by that nominal allegiance England held them and us, played them one against the other, Desmond against Ormond and Kildare against both; moving them like chess upon a board, now Kildare to be deputy—until he grew overstrong—then Ormond, until he too grew overstrong, then Desmond, and so on, until the time came when Englaud could contemptuously crush all three, which she did. Where now are the noble houses of Kildare, Desmond, and Ormond, who held Ireland dutifully as England's subjects? Down in the dust. They raised themselves,

by their many noble qualities and their adoption of Irish civilization, into the affections of the native Irish, these followed them, trusted them, and fought for them, and died for them; and they, they bent the knee to a power which was practically impotent then, allowed themselves to be set up and pulled down as King's deputies in a land where they could have been kings had they the courage, went weakly to the block and to the scaffold when ordered, protesting always with mighty asservations that they were "no traitors," led the Irish who trusted them into an English hell, and at the end all broken and despoiled, both Geraldine and Irish! The Irish trusted them, and they led them to destruction; they trusted the English and the English led them to destruction. That is the history of the Geraldines. The slender connection with England, nominal though it was, was their undoing.

Gerald Mor, the Eighth Earl of Kildare, and Gerald, the Ninth Earl, under Henry VII and Henry VIII, had raised the power of the Kildare Geraldines to the highest in Ireland, and had used that power to hold Ireland as a whole under England. It is difficult to say now what precisely these two men may have had at the back of their minds, but they were so able and played their cards so well that the intrigues of Ormond and the English adventurers failed to shake them. In Ireland they used their power as Lords Deputy to strengthen English influence, and at the same time to bring about peace, by intermarriage, by treaty, and by force even, between all Ireland, both of Irish and of English blood. It was a proceeding which, on the surface, was an attempt to unify Ireland under the English crown, and might well have ended as a Nationalist movement if either of the Earls had thought to strike at the right time. But they held on too long, the Tudors got their eyes on them, and in the end the crash came. The Ninth Earl had raised many enemies at home and abroad. He it was who had defied Wolsey

when that Prelate was Chancellor of England. "I would you and I had exchanged kingdoms but for one month. I could trust to gather up more crumbs in that space than twice the revenues of my poor Earldom. I sleep in a cabin when you lie soft in your bed of down. I serve under the cope of heaven, when you are served under a canopy, I drink water out of a skull, when you drink out of golden cups; my courser is trained to the field when your jennet is taught to amble," and emerged from London again Lord Deputy of Ireland. In his old age, in 1534, he was again summoned to London, to answer charges of treason, and again he went, leaving as Deputy behind him, his son Thomas. After the Earl had been gone a short time, a report was spread in Ireland that he had been executed, and Silken Thomas at once threw off allegiance to Henry. With his Irish bodyguard and harper he rode to St. Mary's Abbey where the Council sat, and threw the Sword of State on the table amongst them. "Say not hereafter but in this open hostility, which we profess here and proclaim, we have showed ourselves no villains nor churls, but warriors and gentlemen. This Sword of State is yours and not mine, I received it with an Oath and have used it to your benefit, I should offend mine honour if I turned the same to your annoyance. Now, have I need of mine own sword. . . . I am none of Henry's Deputy. I am his foe. I have more mind to conquer than to govern, to meet him in the field than to serve him in office." And in reply to the Lord Chancellor, who remonstrated with him, he said, "As you would wish me to honour my Prince, so duty willeth me to reverence my father. Wherefore he that will with such tyranny execute my innocent parent, and withal threaten my destruction, I may not nor will not hold him for my King. And yet, in truth, he was never our King, but our Lord, as his Progenitors have been before him. But if it be my hap to miscarry as you seem to prognosticate, catch that catch may. I

will take the market as it riseth, and will choose rather to die with valiantness and liberty, than to live under King Henry in Bondage and Villainy." He took the field immediately, and was joined by O'Connor of Offaly and O'Carroll of Ely—two gallant men who were always ready to fight the English—and they swept the Pale clear of English power from end to end. Silken Thomas was in Dublin, after beating a hastily gathered citizens' force at Kilmainham, before they had well heard of his approach, and held it, save the Castle, into which the officials and garrison had fled. And English power in Ireland now hung on that Castle. Had he taken it he would have held Ireland against Henry, for he had by now sent envoys all over Ireland to the O'Neills and O'Donnells of Ulster, the O'Connors and Burkes of Connacht, the McCarthys, O'Briens and Geraldines of Munster, and there is good reason to believe that they were preparing to join him. They certainly would have joined him had he been able, as he intended, to take Dublin wholly and establish himself there. But the Castle held out, and he left a portion of his forces to besiege it, and himself marched against Ormond, who shut himself up in Kilkenny Castle. The Dublin citizens took advantage of his absence to break their treaty with him, shut their gates, and besieged the little force he had left besieging the Castle, and when he returned he was unable to gain an entry and gave up the siege. Outside Dublin he held Leinster, but through Dublin the English poured reinforcements in. Next year they took Maynooth Castle by treachery, and a sentence of excommunication was fulminated against Fitzgerald, and all who aided him, because some of his men mistook an order of his and killed Allen, Archbishop of Dublin, and his army decreased below the strength at which he could risk a pitched battle with the English forces. He therefore adopted guerilla tactics, but he was at length induced to surrender to Lord Grey, on promise of pardon. And Henry VIII took him and his

five uncles—who had not aided him—and hanged and quartered them at Tyburn. The Earl, his father, had meanwhile died in prison. A recent writer on Irish history has referred to this as the "folly" of Silken Thomas. One might just as well talk of the "folly" of Emmet, or of Washington, or of any man who does a fine thing against odds. Silken Thomas's attempt to "cut the cable," like Emmet's, only just missed success, and he was a much abler man than he gets credit for. His bearing and his action *re* the Sword of State are altogether to his credit, and those, in his own words, of a warrior and a man of honour. It will be urged, and it has been urged, that his action was prompted only by his belief that his father had been executed by Henry. That may be to the extent that that was the immediate cause, but it cannot have been the only cause, it was probably the culminating event of a series which pushed the Geraldines into that position. And the banner under which Silken Thomas fought, and nearly won, was the banner of an Ireland independent, with the English connection severed. It was a fine thing, nobly conceived, and gallantly and fearlessly attempted. Ireland remembers it with gratitude and with pride.

CHAPTER IX

HENRY VIII—REFORMATION HARRY (1534-1541)

As the founder of the Anglican Church in Ireland, and because of the claim made for him by generations of sheepish historians that he was accepted as King of Ireland by the Irish people at the 1541 Parliament, Henry VIII of England arrests the attention of every student of Irish history. He was a greater man than most Irishmen generally imagine, for his Bluebeard temperament and his indifference to other people's lives have obscured the more solid and permanent aspects of his character. A tyrant he certainly was, but he was a tyrant over the nobles, which was a refreshing change from so many generations of tyrants over the people. He was one of the first of the English monarchs to give his close personal attention and direction to Irish affairs, and his policy was deep and consistent—consistent both in Church matters and in political matters. It will be convenient to deal first with the Church business and then to outline generally his whole policy in relation to Ireland.

The Church in Ireland after the English invasion was composed of two elements, the Pale and the Irish, which were at continual warfare with one another. Where the English influence held good the Church was English in outlook and anti-Irish in policy, and where the Irish influence predominated the contrary state of things prevailed. But the two elements formed one Church with common services, common organization, common allegiance to Rome. In the generations since the invasion, the Church had suffered from both

parties. The English set the bad example of burning churches, and the Irish followed it to a lesser extent, so that the Church was weak in prestige, and practically of no account in temporal affairs on either side. Henry II as we have seen, tried to collar the Church and to use it as a means of anglicizing the Irish, but the English failure to do more than hold a precarious footing in the country prevented the building of a well-organized Church, and reduced it practically to a loosely-united assemblage of local churches, dependent for subsistence and support on the neighbouring people, and with nothing approaching to the power and influence of modern times. That is to say that, precisely as in the pre-invasion times, the Church was unable effectively to impress itself as an organization on a different basis from the social organization of the people, and its organization reflected that organization, effective locally and chaotic nationally, the chaos being heightened by the fact that the English monarchs had the appointment of the archbishops in their own hands, and all their archbishops were political archbishops.

In considering the Reformation in Ireland we must clear our heads of all prejudices either in favour of Catholicism or Protestantism, and look at the subject in the light of what we know of Ireland at the time. The history of the Reformation is full of things which will not square with the theories put forward by either side in later generations, and which can only be explained and understood by a frank admission of the fact that the Church then was a very different thing, in organization, in personnel, and in influence from either of its branches to-day. The mistake of historians has been to interpret happenings of centuries ago in the light of modern definitions and modern developments, and to assume that things meant the same then as they do now, that there was then no confusion of ideas, that everything was as clear as it is now. As an organization the Church did not count in the Ireland

of that time; nobody worried about its decrees of excommunication, nobody regarded it in political matters, everybody burned its buildings when in hostile territory. To the majority of the people Rome was but a name, and the chiefs themselves raised no objection to the substitution of Henry for the Pope as head of the Church. But to argue from that that they had accepted, or were willing to accept, Protestantism in the modern sense is applying modern prejudices to happenings of four centuries ago, which is what partisans of both sides are continually doing.

The Christian Church on the Continent of Europe had become subject to abuses of all kinds, and had failed to hold the growing intellectual revival there. There the Reformation was inevitable. In England this was, perhaps, also the case to some extent, but it received its main impetus from Henry's quarrel with the Pope, from his ambition to be supreme master in his own house, and his suspicion and distrust of a strong Church, as of strong men. The causes which later carried it to a degree for which Henry himself burned people as "heretics" were mainly political. In Ireland the Reformation was wholly political and had no religious significance whatever. Whatever causes may be adduced to justify the English Reformation, none such can be adduced to justify the Irish Reformation. It was as political a Reformation as the first English Reformation of the Irish Church at Henry II's Synod of Cashel. Henry II wanted to collar the Church and use it as a political weapon. Henry VIII found that that plan had failed, that even archbishops appointed by himself in Ireland were sometimes quite stubborn, and he tried the alternative of planting a definitely English Church in the country, which should be at eternal war on points of organization and routine with the Irish Church. In his Reformation of the Church in England, he had the bulk of the people with him, and no serious opposition from the nobility. In

Ireland he had no serious opposition from the chiefs and the Anglo-Irish nobles, but he had the bulk of the people against him, not on religious grounds, but because the Reformation was part of the political game, and was felt as such.

It was in 1534 that the English Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, declaring Henry head of the Church in England, and the Earl of Ormond, always more English than the English, hastened to throw off the supremacy of the Pope, so far as he was concerned, and to avow his zeal for the reformed religion. Nobody in Ireland worried about him, and nobody followed his example, save the officers of the crown, whose jobs were at stake. It was in 1536, two years later, that Henry moved an Irish Parliament to pass an Act of Supremacy. There was strenuous opposition from the bishops, but finally it was got through. And in the meantime George Browne, political Archbishop of Dublin, created by Henry in 1535, initiated the Reformation. The reformers in Ireland were in a difficulty, for they had practically no grounds on which to urge a Reformation. The Irish Church was poor, it was disorganized, it was weak, but it was not corrupt, and the religious Orders, which were numerous in the country, were the best friends of the common people. There was, therefore, no point which the reformers could seize, upon which to hang an appeal to the people, and they were finally driven to the argument of force. They had to thrust the Reformed Church on Ireland at the bayonet's point, with the natural result. Browne was a bigoted, aggressive man, with nothing of the ascetic about him, and very little Christian charity or humility. He had no brains and no imagination, and ran the Reformation in the style a modern commercial traveller would adopt in pushing an article. He began on the Church itself, and made a tour around Ireland lecturing and preaching to the priests and bishops. But the Church stood fast to the Papal

supremacy, and, at the first attack, practically unanimously preached against the Reformation. According to Browne's own story, the result of his tour was the conversion of ten bishops to the king's supremacy, but all the others stood aloof. There was practically no attempt made to preach the new religion to the common people, the reformers being too busy endeavouring to build up the framework of an ecclesiastical organization. Following hard upon the Act of Supremacy came the dissolution of the Irish monasteries and Browne's campaign against "idols." The monasteries in the districts which English influence could reach were dissolved, and their lands and revenues vested in the Crown, and relics and such like in the churches and in holy places were all destroyed. This was the beginning of the Reformation, a time when there was practically no doctrinal difference, and the only new departure was the supremacy of Henry instead of the Pope. But the Irish, to a man, rejected the change which was thrust upon them by English soldiers, which heralded itself by an attack upon the monks and friars, who were the best friends of the common people, and which came from the same source which already threatened their lands and property more than enough—England. For convenience sake I have used the word "Reformation" in discussing this business, but in truth there was no Reformation. The Irish Church stood firm, and underwent neither a Reformation nor a schism. What happened was that another Church was, as a political move, planted bodily down side by side with the ancient Church, enriched with land and with Church buildings stolen from the ancient Church, and petted and fostered ever since. The Irish Reformation was not a Reformation, but an invasion. Its effect was to increase the Church power with the people—although that power was not, in truth, great until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—for the Irish saw the English attack extended from their lands to their Church, and naturally

clung the closer to the Church. A common danger and a common enemy drew priests and people more closely together in the centuries which followed, even though the directing power of the Episcopacy remained on the whole favourable to the English connection and opposed to an independent Ireland.

The Anglican Church in Ireland was essentially a political move, a part of Henry's scheme for building up an English civilization in Ireland, an English interest which could be trusted to remain English and resist assimilation successfully. The Reformation in England was largely political prejudice, the so-called Reformation in Ireland was wholly political prejudice. There was no religion in it.

CHAPTER X

HENRY VIII—"KING" HARRY (1541)

This is how English influence stood in Ireland in 1515, as reported by an Englishman then in the country. "There are more than sixty counties, called Regions, in Ireland, inhabited with the king's Irish enemies; some regions as big as a shire, some more, some less, unto a little; where reigneth more than sixty chief captains, that liveth only by the sword, and obeyeth unto no other temporal person, only to himself that is strong; and every of the said captains maketh peace and war for himself, and holdeth by the sword, and hath imperial jurisdiction within his realm, and obeyeth unto no other, English or Irish, except only to such persons as may subdue him by the sword. . . . Also there be thirty great captains of the English folk, that followeth the same Irish order and keepeth the same rule, and every of them maketh war and peace for himself without any license of the king or any other temporal person, save to him that is strongest, and of such that may subdue them with the sword. Here followeth the names of the counties that obey not the King's laws, and have neither justice, neither sheriff under the king: the County of Waterford, the County of Cork, the County of Kilkenny, the County of Limerick, the County of Kerry, the County of Connaught, the County of Ulster, the County of Carlow, half the County of Uryel, half the County of Meath, half the County of Dublin, half the County of Kildare, half the County of Wexford. All English folks of the said counties be of Irish habits, of Irish language, and of Irish conditions, except the cities and the walled towns. . . . Also there is no folk

daily subject to the king's laws, but half the County of Uryel, half the County of Meath, half the County of Dublin, half the County of Kildare." That is to say English influence and English civilization were confined to some of the walled towns, and over the whole country Irish civilization stood triumphant, assimilating the foreign elements. Henry faced the problem and considered it, not without much recommendation and beseeching from various people, Viceroys and ex-Viceroys of Ireland. It is characteristic of the man that he remained obdurate to the advice which was constantly and generally tendered to him to conquer the country by throwing into it a huge army, carrying on a war of extermination, and planting the country with English settlers. This plan was tried later after Henry's alternative plan had failed. His own plan, which he stuck to consistently, is laid down in a letter to his Deputy Surrey in 1520, thus: "We and our Council think, and surely believe, that in case circumspect and polite ways be used, ye shall not only bring them to further obedience for the observance of our laws, and governing themselves according to the same, but also, following justice, to forbear to retain rebelliously such lands and dominions as to us in right appertaineth; which thing must as yet rather be practised by sober ways, polite drifts, and amiable persuasions, founded in law and reason, than by rigorous dealing, comminations, or other enforcement by strength or violence. And, to be plain unto you, to spend so much money for the reduction of that land, to bring the Irishry, in appearance only, to obeisance . . . it were a thing of little policy, less advantage, and least effect. . . . And it may be said unto them in good manner, that like as we, being their sovereign lord and prince, though of our absolute power we be above the laws, yet we will in no wise take anything from them, that righteously appertaineth to them; so, of good congruence, they be bound, both by law, fidelity and liegance, to restore unto us

our own. . . . Howbeit our mind is not more than ye shall impress on them by fearful words that we intend to expel them from their lands and dominions, lawfully possessed, but to conserve them in their own, and to use their advice, aid and assistance, as of faithful subjects, to recover our rightful inheritance. And, therefore, if they shall allege that our laws, there used, be too extreme and rigorous, and that it should be very hard for them to observe the same; then you may further ensearch of them, under what manner and by what laws, they will be ordered and governed; to the intent that, if their laws be good and reasonable, they may be approved, and the rigour of our laws, if they shall think them too hard, be mitigated, and brought to such modification as they may conveniently live under the same. . . . Howbeit, this matter must be politically, patiently, and secretly handled; and so to proceed therein, that the Irish lords conceive no jealousy or suspicion that they shall be constrained precisely to live under our laws, or put from all the lands by them now detained." That is to say, Henry deliberately shelved the policy of conquest and extermination and plantation, and adopted the policy of conciliation :—Get the flies into the king's parlour first, and then when they are all in shut the door, make them live under English laws and give up their lands, but meantime go slowly and craftily, make alliances with them and treat them decently. With no more consideration for the Irish than any other Englishman, Henry had a greater realization of the difficulties of a war of extermination. His policy was carried out by his Viceroys, most successfully by Lord Leonard Grey, one of the ablest Englishmen that came to Ireland—too able for Henry, who beheaded him. Grey offered alliance to the chiefs in the first instance, and, if they refused, gathered all the forces of the Pale and proceeded against them. He had a good army, was able, and went against the smaller chiefs first,

and when it was found that his alliances only meant a nominal suzerainty, such as the chiefs were accustomed to give to any of their own powerful provincial kings, he usually got his alliance. For a time it seemed as if O'Neill and O'Donnell would rally all Ireland against him. After the execution of Silken Thomas and his uncles, they formed a league, known as the "First Geraldine League," for the protection of the youngest and only surviving of the Kildare Geraldines, Gerald, youngest son of the late Earl, and got him safely to France. But the League remained intact after its object was achieved, and O'Neill and O'Donnell gathered their forces and marched south to join O'Brien and O'Connor. They swept the Pale on their way, but when heavy with booty, they were met by Grey with the Pale forces and beaten with heavy losses. Grey afterwards attacked O'Connor and O'Brien singly, and defeated them also. So that within twenty years the aspect of things changed rosily for the English; the chiefs were either in alliance with Grey or afraid of him, and everything seemed going well with Henry's policy. Then came his quarrel with the Pope, and as the result of it came the Parliament of 1541, at which he was proclaimed King of Ireland. He had had this in his mind from the start, but it was rushed because of his feeling that he held Ireland by virtue of a grant from the Pope, and that what the Pope had given the Pope might take away. At any rate this Parliament of 1541 proclaimed him King of Ireland, and it has been, and still is, claimed that this constituted an acceptance by Ireland of English supremacy, of an English King, by virtue of the fact that Irish chiefs sat in that Parliament. Campion, writing in 1571, names MacGillapatrick, and Barry, and "divers others," but I believe the "Irish" chiefs who sat in the Parliament were almost wholly the Anglo-Irish—Ormond, and Desmond, and Barry, and Clanricarde, and so on. The big Irish chiefs, O'Neill and O'Donnell,

and O'Brien and McCarthy, were not in it. The importance and significance of that famous Parliament to the Irish mind were such that none of the Irish annals so much as mention it. Here was a gathering which declared a king, at which all the Irish chiefs were said to be present—we know that O'Neill and O'Donnell were not—and the Irish never heard of it! The thing is absurd. Henry was proclaimed King by the Pale lords, the imported bishops, and perhaps a sprinkling of the minor Irish chiefs. But even assuming that they were there, and assuming also the accuracy of the indentures which are said to have been signed by the Irish chiefs about this time, accepting Henry as their feudal king and promising to do him feudal obedience, even then the whole process is as empty as ever. For the Irish chiefs had no power in such a matter to speak for the Irish nation, the chief's voice was only one voice, he was not the owner of his clan, or of its territory, or of its rights, but the elected chief of the clan and the elected guardian of its territory and rights. And he had no more power or right to commit it to Henry or feudalism than he had to commit France or Spain to it.

Briefly, Henry's acceptance as King of Ireland was an acceptance only by the Pale civilization, by the English strength in the country. That certain Irish chiefs later acquiesced in it, and signed indentures accepting Henry's kingship, his supremacy in the Church, and his Earldoms, may be accepted. That they were present in large numbers at the Parliament is, to say the least of it, doubtful. But the cardinal facts are that the chiefs had neither power nor right to speak for their respective clans, that the Parliament made so little impression on the Irish mind that the annals do not even mention it, and that the clansmen, in cases where the arrangement was known, repudiated it instantly.

Henry's policy, generally, was deep. He believed

more than most people who now talk of it in a Union "under the English Crown," and he meant to reconcile the Irish people gradually to the idea, by persuasion and not by force, and to exact from the chiefs the feudal duties and tributes which made his strength in England. Here, as at all other points, the Irish civilization broke the plan. It meant a subjugation of both chiefs and people, a curtailing of their power and authority, and here he had both chiefs and people against him. He induced some of the chiefs to give him a nominal adhesion by the threat of his army, by distributing titles, and by giving them some of the monastic lands, but he never had a man of the people with him. The clansmen kept their souls and their freedom for some time yet, in spite of "all the resources of civilization." Henry's policy was—in operation—more fair-minded and humane than that of most of the Tudors, but that was simply because he saw the costliness and futility of a policy of conquest and extermination, and his acts in Ireland were less oppressive than those of the saintly Mary later on. "It is certain," say the *Annals of Loch Cé*, "that there came not in later times a better king than that king." Translated, this means nothing more than that Henry was the best of a bad lot. But this honourable mention in the Irish annals is sufficiently noteworthy to be mentioned, and to be set against the lurid Bluebeard we are accustomed to.

CHAPTER XI

SHANE O'NEILL—TO THE CRUSHING OF THE SUSSEX-O'DONNELL CONFEDERACY (1551-1561)

The national character of the English has changed very little during several centuries, but in one respect there is absolutely no change, in that they retain in its full force their habit of slandering their enemies. And the more resistance they meet with in their career of universal spoliation, the bigger and the more venomous the slander they throw out. King Theebaw of Burmah, for instance, got off lightly—he was only set down as a drunkard—and because of Theebaw's little convivial habits, his people were deprived of their country; they offered very little resistance, and hence Theebaw got off comparatively easily. But in dealing with Shane O'Neill they exhausted every epithet in their language: glutton, drunkard, liar, coward, murderer, adulterer, these were the things they loved to write about him, in impotent rage against him, for that he beat them in battle, in wit, in diplomacy, in cunning, in strength and in brains; feared not their poison nor their treachery; broke down all their traps; beat all their Deputies. They feared and they hated him and with cause, for his whole life was one long struggle againt them, a struggle for the upbuilding of a strong kingship in Ulster. "My ancestors," said he to them, "were kings of Ulster, and Ulster is mine and shall be mine."

When Conn Bacach O'Neill agrèed in 1543 to accept the English title of Earl of Tyrone, he did so without any authority from his people, and the arrangement, as all such arrangements at the time, was never operative;

it merely served as an English interest for interference in the North. One of the clauses of the indenture creating Conn Bacach an Earl was that his illegitimate son, Feardorcha—called by the English Mathew—was to be his heir and, during his lifetime, was to be known as the Baron of Dungannon, with certain lands set apart for his maintenance. This, of course, was settled solely to break up the O'Neill power by dividing the house against itself; to give the English a firm footing in the North by ensuring that, whatever way the leadership of the O'Neills went, there would always be a Baron of Dungannon's section to look for support to the English. In actual practice, however, this plan proved to be totally ineffective, and it is an ironical comment on it that it gave to Ireland Hugh O'Neill, in many ways the ablest of the Irish chiefs. In 1551 the English thought that, Conn Bacach being now old, and Feardorcha grown up, and Shane quite young, it was a good time to attempt to consolidate Feardorcha in Tireoghain. Accordingly, we read that "by reason of the war and dissensions between the Earl of Tyrone and his sons, the country was reduced to great misery and desolation, in consequence of which Sir James Crofts, Deputy, and the Council at Ardmaghe, perceiving the Earl not to be minded to amend these enormities procured that he should come to Dublin, where by our Council and assent he was retained, and certain captains and soldiers have been appointed to remain at Ardmaghe, and in the other parts of the North, for the greater tranquillity of the country in the Earl's absence." The English granted the Baron of Dungannon authority in his father's absence and, as for Shane, the Deputy was ordered to catch him if he could "for that we perceive by your brother that the said Shane O'Neill is a man likest to follow his father's conditions, and to be a like enemy to the State, and the weal of our country there." Deputy Crofts accordingly marched North in 1551 to attack the MacDonnells of Antrim, who were at this time in

alliance with Shane, and the ingenious Cox tells the result as follows:—"The English invaded the Island of Raghlin, but were forced to retreat with the loss of one ship and several men: Captain Bagnal also was taken prisoner, but he was afterwards exchanged for Sorleyboy MacDonald, who was their prisoner at Dublin." What actually happened was that, of the force which Crofts sent against Raghlin, one man only escaped to tell the tale, and he was the commanding officer, who was spared so that he might be exchanged for Sorley Buidhe, who was then in English hands. This was not a promising beginning, but in that same year Crofts again marched North to avenge their defeat, and found himself confronted by the MacDonnells, Shane O'Neill and his forces, and the forces of the O'Neills of Clann Aodha Buidhe.

"The Ultonians and Scots," say the Four Masters, "were prepared to meet them, and after they had encountered each other, a fierce and desperate battle ensued, in which the English were defeated, and two hundred of the Saxons, and of their Irish allies, were slain, and such of them that escaped returned in disgrace and discomfiture from that expedition." But Crofts was a persevering man, and he again marched North in 1552 with a new army, expecting to be joined by Feardorcha with his army. But again Shane was too wily. Crofts' advance guard, under one of the Savages, was met by Hugh O'Neill of Clann Adoha Buidhe and beaten, Savage himself being slain. Feardorcha and his forces were attacked at night by Shane himself and almost exterminated: so back went Crofts to Dublin with his tail between his legs. He made one further trial this year, which is not noticed by the English authorities. The Four Masters give it as follows:—"The Lord Justice marched with another army into Ulster in harvest, and only succeeded in destroying the crops; some of his people were slain, and he returned without gaining submission or peace." Sir James Crofts

was then recalled, and Shane was left in undisturbed possession of Tireoghain. Conn Bacach was temporarily released in 1552 with a view to quieting Shane, but as Shane still continued at the head of the Clann, Conn was seized again and taken to Dublin in 1553. Shane immediately made a swoop upon Dungannon Castle, and carried away £800 in gold and silver and all Conn's plate and other valuables. And Lord Deputy Cusack, as he puts it, "hearing of the same on Monday, I went to him with such a band of horsemen and kerne of my friends, and did parle with him, and perceived nothing in him but pride, stubbornness, and all bent to do what he could to destroy the poor country." The ill-bred Shane!

For several years after this he was not further disturbed by the English, and appears, thus early, to have embarked on his settled policy of making himself strong in Ulster. He warred against his former allies, the O'Neills of Clann Aodha Buidhe, and especially turned his attention to the O'Donnells, from whom he got his first defeat in battle. The O'Donnells were at this time also divided. In 1551 Calvagh O'Donnell, with the aid of some Scots, overran Tirchonaill, and captured his father, Manus, whom he kept in prison until the day of his death. The result was that Calvagh's brother Hugh joined Shane O'Neill, and they made a great hosting in 1557 against Calvagh. The son of O'Neill," says the Four Masters, "received intelligence that the people of Tirchonaill had sent their cows and cattle herds into the retired parts and fortresses of the country in their rear. He said that act should avail them nothing, as whether they tarried in Leinster or Munster he would pursue them until he should bring them under his own jurisdiction, so that henceforth there should rule over Ulster only one king." Calvagh O'Donnell had only a small army to oppose to Shane's big army, and he consulted, curiously enough, his father Manus—whom he held as a prisoner

—as to the course he should adopt. Manus was prompt with his advice, which was not to try to fight Shane, but to watch an opportunity, and surprise his camp. This Calvagh did with complete success. He came on Shane's camp at the hour of the evening meal, and after an obstinate battle Shane's army was defeated with heavy slaughter, he himself barely escaping. This checked for a time his project of making himself undisputed ruler of Ulster. In the next year, 1558, Feardorcha, the Baron of Dungannon, was slain in conflict by some of Shane's men. English writers, of course, accuse Shane of murdering Feardorcha, but he was slain in open combat, a combat at which Shane himself does not appear to have been present, and the following year, 1559, Conn Bacach died and Shane was solemnly inaugurated as O'Neill by his people.

With his acknowledgment as O'Neill commences his career proper, a wonderful career of eight years, during which he matched his wits against the sharpest of the Elizabethans and beat them, during which he marched boldly into the lion's den, and got out of it again unharmed. He fought the English with their own weapons, wrote ironical letters in Latin or in Irish to the Deputies, loftily ignored them when it suited him, and beat them in diplomacy and in argument whenever he met them. His policy from the beginning was clear, to put all Ulster under him and make a strong kingdom of it and, while so doing, to disarm English hostility by pretending that all his work was undertaken "in the Queen's service." After Ulster would follow the whole of Ireland.

In 1559 Sydney, who was Lord Deputy, summoned him peremptorily to come to Dundalk and explain why he had himself inaugurated O'Neill in defiance of English law, according to which the young Baron of Dungannon was the rightful heir to Tyrone. Shane replied blandly, inviting Sydney to come to see him and become his gossip, and that then, he would come

and do all that would be requisite for Her Majesty's service. Sydney went, and he and James Wingfield stood sponsors for Shane's child. Shane then put his case to Sydney, and arguing first on Irish law, said that Conn Bacach's surrender of Tyrone to the crown was null and void, as he had no power to make any such surrender, his interest, by the law of Tanistry, being merely a life interest ; and that therefore he, Shane O'Neill, being lawfully elected O'Neill by his people, was the rightful ruler. Coming to English law, he argued that the letters patent were void, because there was no inquisition taken before they were passed, nor had Tyrone been made shire ground, without which no inquisition could be taken. In any case, argued he, even if the letters patent were valid, I am my father's legitimate son, and therefore, his heir according to the English law. This effectually stumped Sydney. He could find no reply to make, but to assure Shane that the matter was one of great moment, and that " he doubted not but that the Queen would do what was right and just " ; and that he, therefore, advised him to a quiet and loyal deportment till her Majesty's pleasure were known. They parted good friends, and one can imagine Shane, who must have had a great sense of humour, watching the departing Sydney, chuckling to himself with a mirthful gleam in his grey eyes, and a heavy curse behind it all. Immediately afterwards he wrote to Elizabeth, telling her, with delicious irony, that " the rude, uncivil and disobedient people will fall to civility, and thereafter be faithful, obedient and true subjects unto God and unto your Highness. And also, having my requests, I shall be able to exile your Grace's enymyes, subdue traytours, overcome rebells, and such as will disobeye."

Sir Henry Sydney was now recalled, and the Earl of Sussex was sent over instead. Elizabeth's instructions to him concerning Shane are, " We are informed that Shane O'Neill, the eldest son legitimate of the

Earl of Tyrone, now lately deceased, makes claim to succeed his father as his heir, and personally occupies and possesses all that country, rule, and lands, which his father enjoyed without let or interruption of any person. Notwithstanding that the son and heir of the Baron of Dungannon, which was the bastard son of the Earl of Tyrone, was entitled to succeed his said father as his heir, we think most meet, especially for the preferment of the person legitimate in blood, and next for that he is thereof in quiet possession, that the Deputy should allow him to succeed his father." But the next year Elizabeth authorized Sussex to "practice with such other subjects as be neighbours unto him, by reward or otherwise, by whom we may most probably reform the said Shane, or otherwise by our force to compel him to stand by your order and goverance." Sussex, however, found Shane too strong to attack and, instead, tried to induce him to go to London and state his case to the Queen. Shane expressed himself as perfectly willing, wrote to the Queen desiring an "English gentlewoman of noble blood to wife," and asked for a safe conduct. He got his safe conduct and then, in April 1561, he wrote that he could not come without the loan of £3,000." This did not at all suit Elizabeth, who wrote to Sussex in May, "We are prepared to spare no charge to scourge and subdue him and his complices to very extremity. . . . For the better exploit hereof you shall do well, before this your enterprise, to solicit and provoke James Mac O'Neill (James MacDonnell), or his brother Sorleboy, to make war upon the said Shane at the same time that you shall determine your attempt; and the like you shall seek to be done by O'Donnell and his followers, and by all others as well the friends and followers of the young Baron of Dungannon as what others soever you shall think meet." Sussex, acting accordingly, soon had a formidable league against Shane. Calvagh O'Donnell, on a promise of

being made Earl of Tirconnell, agreed to attack Shane from the north-west; the Scottish MacDonnells, who were kin to Calvagh's wife, the Countess of Argyle, were to attack from the east; O'Reilly of Breffni, from the west, on promise also of an Earldom—and Sussex himself and the Earl of Kildare, from the south. But Shane proved more than a match for Sussex. He came down upon Breffni suddenly, easily overcame any resistance, and forced O'Reilly to give hostages for his good behaviour; and then as suddenly entered Tirchonaill and captured and carried off Calvagh O'Donnell and his wife, generally known as the Countess of Argyle. The lady, who is described in the state papers as "very sober, wise, and no less subtle, being not unlearned in the Latin tongue, speaketh good French, and as is said some little Italian," remained with Shane, apparently of her own free will, until his death, Calvagh being ransomed by his own people. The morality of this arrangement is a matter which, I think, need not distress us, as it did not distress contemporary opinion. The MacDonnells, who were the lady's kinsmen, immediately detached themselves from the League against Shane, and the Four Masters in referring to it say merely "O'Neill after that gave Calvagh a direful and merciless imprisonment, and cohabited with Mac Gilleain's daughter until she brought forth children to him, and if that had not been a temporary respite for the Tirconallians, it was an unhappy circumstance for the Irish, to have been deprived of their chief after that manner." And a little later there is an entry, "Mary, the daughter of Calvagh O'Donnell—who was Shane O'Neill's wife—died of indignation, disgust, grief, and dire afflictions for the cruel and heartless incarceration inflicted by O'Neill on Calvagh, her father, in her presence." The moral indignation at Shane's conduct with regard to the Countess of Argyle is of purely modern growth, so far as it has been indulged in by

Irish writers; the incident doesn't appear to have made any difference to Shane's contemporaries. The lady, as far as can be judged by the scanty references to her which are available, seems to have been a fit mate for him, accomplished and high-spirited, constantly helping and urging him to keep his principality secure from all invaders. But at any rate, whether Shane's object in this was personal or political, it was a master stroke of political genius, for it broke up the League built by Sussex, and left him to bear the brunt of the fighting. He came into Tyrone with a large army, and Shane retired to his hills, keeping a watchful eye on him. Sussex made a big camp at Armagh, and thence sent out a force of one thousand men to plunder the country. Shane let them alone to their plunder; then when they had as much booty as they thought they could carry, he came down on them heavily. Sussex himself wails the result as follows:—"Never before durst Scot or Irishman look an Englishman in the face in plains or wood since I was here, and now Shane, in a plain three miles away from any wood, and where I would have asked of God to have had him, hath with one hundred and twenty horse and a few Scots and Gallowglass, scarce half its numbers, charged our whole army; and by the cowardice of one wretch, whom I held dear to me as my own brother (James Wingfield), was like in one hour to have left not one man of that army alive, and after to have taken me and the rest at Armagh. The fame of the English army—so hardly gotten—is now vanished, and I wrecked and dishonoured by other men's deeds." Needless to say all the plunder was restored to its rightful owners. And the Four Masters continue: "O'Neill, *i.e.*, John, assured the supreme government of the entire province of Ulster, from Drogheda to the River Erne, so that it was not an inappropriate title to call him Coigheadach—(the ruler of a province)—over Ulster at that time, were it not for the contest carried on against him by the English."

CHAPTER XII

SHANE O'NEILL—THE VISIT TO ELIZABETH AND THE TREATY OF BEINN BORB (1562-3)

All this time, while Shane was fighting and plotting against Sussex and against the English, he continued nominally on friendly terms—even when he knew of the confederacy with the O'Donnells and MacDonnells. He refused to acknowledge Sussex as his equal, and desired that his letters be sent directly to Elizabeth as one sovereign to another, and he worried him continually about his journey to London to see Elizabeth, professing his readiness to go if he were provided with the necessary money. Here is a short summary of the correspondence:—On June 9, 1561, Shane wrote to Sussex enquiring whether the money for his journey to England had yet come, and Sussex replied that he would not withdraw his soldiers from Armagh, and that if Shane "will repair to the Queen's presence he must come quickly to him" (Sussex). Shane replied stating that nothing hindered his repair to the Queen's presence but lack of money; and in July he again wrote requesting Sussex to forward his messenger and his letters to the Queen. Sussex replied that if he did not immediately do according to Her Majesty's directions he would be proclaimed a traitor; to which Shane replied that he "wondered that His Lordship would put the Queen to unnecessary expense in waging war" against him; that he would ask no peace or truce while the soldiers remained at Armagh; and desired that his messenger and letters might be forwarded to the Queen's presence. And a little later he writes again stating that he has learned that His Lordship does not desire to send him

or his messenger to the presence of the Queen; and that he "will not come unto His Lordship's presence until he has seen the Queen." Then in July happened the battle in which he so severely defeated Sussex, and on August 9 he wrote to Sussex "desiring His Lordship's sister to wife," and that His Lordship would be his gossip. The irony of all this is inimitable; Shane first playing with the hapless Deputy about his letters and messengers to the Queen, then he beats Sussex badly in battle, and winds up by a bland note desiring His Lordship's sister to wife, as if nothing had happened. Beaten in battle and in brains, Sussex turned to the unfailing English alternative—assassination, and proposed to Neale Gray, Shane's seneschal, to kill him. "In fine," wrote Sussex to Elizabeth, "I brake with him to kill Shane, and bound myself by my oath to let him have a hundred marks of land. . . . I told him the way he might do it, and how to escape after with safety. . . . If he will not do that he may in your service, there will be done to him what others may." And Elizabeth, of course, approved of it, but it failed, for Neale Grey grew afraid and backed out. Immediately afterwards—all attempts, fair and foul, having failed to put Shane down—Elizabeth instructed Sussex that he was to be drawn to come to London: was to be given pledges for his safe conduct, and money for the journey, and at last, there being no help for it, he made an agreement with Shane. It was agreed that Shane was to have a safe conduct, that he and his should go and come safely, that none of his people should be hurt while he was away, and that he should have the Earl of Kildare's surety—the Earl was his cousin—that the soldiers at Armagh should not hurt him the value of a groat, and should be withdrawn thence as soon as he met the Earls of Kildare and Ormond at Carrickbradagh, and that no Irishman that owed him allegiance should be maintained against him. He got his own terms absolutely, Sussex being only too glad

to get him out of Ireland at any price. Writing to the Queen, Sussex says, "The suspending any conclusion had been most perilous of all others, for that in that time Shane should have had opportunity to seek upon such as served your Highness, and thereby increased his strength. The Earl's protection, which you might wish to be stayed, is most earnestly of him affected, as without the which he will not go—and one other indirect advantage lieth also hidden to be taken upon the strictness of the agreement (which, with such a traitor might very well be allowed) in that the Earl of Kildare was put as surety for the fetching away of the soldiers from Armagh, and no word forbidding others to be at any time brought thither," and in November Cecil writes, "that in Shane's absence from Ireland something might be contrived at against him and his for non-observing the covenants on his side, and so the fact being infringed the matter might be used as should be thought fit."

Shane's visit to London was perhaps the most remarkable of his feats, and shows more than anything else the genius and capacity of the man. He had examples in plenty of Irishmen who had put themselves into English hands and never came out of them, but he chose to play the bold game and to match his wits against those of Elizabeth and Cecil, and out of that trap where Sussex thought he had him fast he marched a free man again, desiring, in his humorous way, "his Lordship's sister to wife." He humbugged Elizabeth as easily and as consistently as he humbugged Sussex and Sydney. He refused to move a step until he had his safe conduct and his £3,000, and then, accompanied by his guard of gallowglasses, went leisurely to Dublin, and thence to London. He came into Elizabeth's presence boldly and proudly and manfully, one sovereign to another. Froude, basing his narrative on Camden, thus described the meeting:—"Elizabeth, her entire court and the foreign ambassadors being present in the Council Chamber, O'Neill stalked in, his saffron mantle

sweeping round and round him, his hair curling on his back and clipped short below the eyes, which gleamed under it with a grey lustre. Behind him followed his gallowglasses, bareheaded and fair-haired, with shirts of mail which reached their knees, a wolfskin flung across their shoulders, and short, broad battle-axes in their hands." Whether he submitted to Elizabeth or not is a moot question. He certainly never submitted in the ordinary meaning of the term, though he may have accepted Elizabeth's suzerainty and grinned in his sleeve all the time, for that was a part of the game he was playing, to give the English no pretext to attack him which he could obviate by any kind of pretence at submission, or by any promises of good behaviour. The Four Masters merely say, "O'Neill went to England about the 1st of November to visit the Queen, and he received great honour and respect from her, and he returned home in the May of the following year." Having got Shane to London, Elizabeth's ministers sought to keep him there and, upon Shane presenting his terms, viz., he to be acknowledged hereditary ruler of Ulster, and to enjoy all the rights and privileges of his forefathers, but accepting Elizabeth's suzerainty, they neither accepted nor refused, thereupon he demanded his safe conduct home, and was answered that *although the agreement gave him a safe conduct it did not specify when it was to be given, and that it would be given at the Queen's pleasure.* Here came out the trick in the whole business, exactly similar to the trick about the garrison at Armagh. No stipulation was made about sending soldiers again to Armagh, so that the English would fulfil the agreement by merely taking out the garrison and sending it back again; and here in the matter of the safe conduct, Shane found that he had been trapped after all, and was a prisoner for as long as Elizabeth liked to keep him. Had he been a lesser man than he was he would have grovelled and humbled himself, and besought Elizabeth's ministers to

intercede for him, and do all the other things which the English love to see their enemies do; but this greatest of the O'Neills was of a different mettle. He went about with the haughtiest and proudest bearing, unconcerned and cheerful, held his own with the whole court, and carried on the game of bluff which he practised in Ireland by refusing to approach Elizabeth otherwise than direct. He was offered by the Privy Council a choice of two courses, either to sign certain articles drawn up by Cecil—which included his giving up of Tireoghain to become shireland, his dressing like an Englishman, and other things of the like nature—or to await the arrival of the Baron of Dungannon who had been sent for. Instead of answering the Council Shane wrote direct to the Queen, asking "Her Majesty's advice as to what was best for him to do," begged her to choose a gentlewoman for his wife; that in the meantine he should be allowed to go with Lord Robert Dudley and learn to ride in the English fashion; declared that he had no refuge or succour save Her Majesty; and finally, "I want," said Shane, "to borrow more money," and, more singular still, he got the money, £300, by warrant from Elizabeth herself to the Receiver General of the Court of Wards, in May 1562. Meanwhile the Council had written the Deputy on the 13th March to have the Baron of Dungannon sent over, and on the 28th March, they wrote to him privately, asking that the Baron should be stayed from coming. This was true English diplomacy, but the Baron was effectually stayed from coming in a manner not pleasing to them, for the Tanist of Tireoghain, Torlogh Luineach O'Neill, slew him on the 12th April, and Shane, one imagines, smiled grimly when the news reached London, and Cecil and Walsingham began to wonder whether it was his doing, and whether they were really a match for this Irishman. There is no positive evidence of it, so far as I know, but it looks as if Torlogh had orders to make himself as nasty as possible just at this time, for

immediately afterwards Sir Nicholas Bagenal writes mournfully to Cecil that Shane's followers have greatly spoiled his lands and tenants; and desiring to exchange them for English lands. This was on April 23, and on May 5 Elizabeth gave way and made an indenture with Shane. He was recognized as O'Neill, as ruler of Ulster, was authorized to expel the Scots, and to subdue all the Queen's enemies; was not to make war without the consent of the Council. He left London immediately, passed through Dublin quickly, and on to Tireoghain, where he was received with acclamation by his clansmen; and then proceeded to play the usual game of bluff, with the enlarged opportunity given him by the necessity for the conclusion of a definite treaty between him and the Queen's Commissioners on the lines laid down in her agreement with him in May. The correspondence respecting this proposed treaty is is as highly amusing as any of Shane's previous correspondence.

Shane's policy, clearly and definitely marked in all his moves, was to make himself king of Ulster, and consolidate under himself all the Irish chiefs. That was why he was eternally at war with the O'Donnells and the Maguires, and why he warred also with the Scots of Antrim. Some chieftains have warred largely for the sake of warfare, and others from the necessity of defending their patrimony. Shane did it with a deliberate statesmanlike object in view, the building up of a strong kingdom in Ulster. He was no mere conqueror or freebooter, but a brave and wise ruler, who ruled justly and fearlessly, and under his jurisdiction Ulster became the wealthiest and happiest part of Ireland. And England's policy is no less clear. In a report which Sussex made shortly after Shane's return in 1562, he says, " It will be necessary to expel Shane O'Neill out of Tyrone, who usurps all rights belonging to the Crown and the Earldom of Ulster, and by spoil and ravine keeps the most part of the

Irishry of Ulster under his subjection and in rebellion against the Queen. He molests all others that acknowledge their duties to her and seeks to join with the Scots, and to procure aid out of Scotland." Sussex goes on to enumerate the various divisions of Ulster, with the clans and their strength, and continues by advising that Her Majesty "should not only tolerate with the Scots of James MacConnell's sept now in Ireland, but should also gratify them in their requests." This, argued Sussex, will divide them from the Northern Irish, and it will then facilitate the Queen in the accomplishment of her principle object—(the putting down of Shane O'Neill)—and this done, said he, they may easily also be expelled out of the kingdom. So that it was the old policy, to incite the MacDonnells and the O'Donnells, Maguires and O'Reillys to fight Shane, with the English looking on while they fought, and Shane, who saw the whole game, was quite content to take it on on those terms. Once let him get a strong united Ulster, and he feared not the English, nor did he fear at any time to match his wits or his strength with theirs. Immediately after his return to Ulster, he gathered his forces and marched against Calvagh O'Donnell, who had definitely allied himself with the English, and against Maguire of Fermanagh, beat them both and expelled Maguire. This was, of course, against the terms of his agreement with the Queen. Instead of waiting for Sussex to complain to her about this, Shane wrote demanding the withdrawal of the garrison from Armagh, and once again informing Sussex that he "desired his Lordship's sister to wife." Some writers take this oft-repeated request of Shane's seriously, but to me it is a huge joke on Sussex. Shane always made it when he had been particularly busy, either defeating the English or some of their allies, and one can imagine him grinning at the thought of Sussex's face when he read it. Sussex, at any rate, laid a trap for Shane, and

invited him to a conference to Dundalk, sending him a safe conduct, which was so worded as to give an opportunity of arresting him. The wily Shane said all right, he'd be there, and when the day dawned Sussex and his party cooled their heels waiting, but no Shane. Thereupon they wrote to him expressing sorrow at his refusal to meet them; and Shane, instead of answering them and excusing himself, as they probably expected, wrote direct to Elizabeth and complained that some of his people had been robbed and spoiled, and some killed during his absence, despite her protection; that Sussex had waged war against him, and that as he understood it was not Her Majesty's will to deal so sharply with him he promised to observe his faithfulness towards her. The next year, 1563, he overran some of the minor chiefs of Ulster who were drawn into the English conspiracy, and then turned southward, carrying his arms up to the wall of Dublin without being fought with save at Dundalk, which he attempted to take but failed in; and in September he put the Council on tenterhooks of suspense by writing in to them and offering peace on his own terms, he to be recognized ruler of Ulster, malefactors not to be sheltered in the English Pale, and he added in the usual joke about the Lady Frances, Sussex's sister. He also wrote to Elizabeth professing his willingness to serve her faithfully, and adding that he could not omit the statutes and ordinances of his predecessors, as neither he nor his subjects were skilled in the Queen's. Sussex this year made another attempt at Ulster, but Shane kept out of the way, and Sussex, with no provisions and no money, was forced to return with a mutinous army and nothing accomplished. After this there was nothing to do but to make peace on Shane's terms; he was master of the situation, and on the 11th September, 1563, the Treaty of Benburb was agreed upon. Shane was recognized as O'Neill, was to be ruler of Ulster, and have all the powers and

privileges enjoyed by his ancestors, and was not bound to come in person to the summons of any Deputy. There were no stipulations about English customs, or about making Tireoghain shireland, or anything of that nature; in short, the Treaty was virtually a recognition of Shane as King of Ulster, with Elizabeth's nominal suzerainty. The garrison was to be removed from Armagh, and any spoil taken from his people while he was in England was to be restored to him. Elizabeth confirmed the Treaty, and immediately afterwards Sussex had another try at assassination. Harmony being apparently restored he sent one John Smith from Dublin with a present of wine to Shane. The wine was poisoned, but it just failed of the intended effect, and Shane and his household, though they were brought to death's door, eventually recovered. Elizabeth's letter expressing horror at this treachery is very amusing reading.

CHAPTER XIII

SHANE O'NEILL—THE ATTEMPTED CONSOLIDATION OF ULSTER (1564-1567)

Shane, having made his treaty with England, and being free from attack from that quarter for the time being, now turned his attention to consolidating Ulster. He had recognized the futility, in the then condition of Ireland, with England always ready to sow dissension, of any confederacy on a voluntary basis, and was determined to force, if necessary, the other Ulster chiefs to accept him as king. His only rivals in the North were, of course, the O'Donnells and the MacDonnells, and he moved against them quickly. Manus O'Donnell had died, and Shane's old enemy, Calvagh, was now O'Donnell, and friendly with the English, supported by his son Conn, who is described in the State Papers as "the likeliest plant that ever sprang in Ulster to graft a good subject on." In 1564 Shane invaded Tir Chonaill, routed Conn's army, captured Conn himself, and took possession of some of the O'Donnell castles. And then he turned his attention to the MacDonnells of Antrim. The MacDonnells, or Redshanks from the Isles, had filtered over to Antrim at first owing to hereditary associations, many of their kings having intermarried with Ulster families, and later as the result of internal warfare, until at this time they practically held Antrim. In general policy and behaviour they were exactly like any Irish clan, except that their numbers were inexhaustible so long as the kingdom of the Isles continued. In proceeding against them Shane was merely adopting the policy which he adopted towards the O'Donnells and the Maguires and the other

Irish clans, but he told Elizabeth he was doing it in her service, tried to get money to assist him—which she would not give, as she thought he was becoming too powerful—and he made insistent efforts to get possession of Cnockfergus—Carrickfergus—which was then garrisoned in the English interest. The MacDonnells were at the time led by four brothers, Angus, James, Sorley Buidhe, and Alexander Og, and Shane came upon them at a time when Angus, James and Alexander were in Cantire with their own people. He crossed the Bann suddenly, and, after a few minor conflicts, beat Sorley Buidhe near Cushendun, Sorley retiring towards Ballycastle—which was their stronghold—and at Ballycastle he was met by his brothers James and Angus, who had hurried with help from Scotland on hearing of Shane's invasion. But Shane, with his army of 2,000, had followed hard on Sorley's heels, and the MacDonnell brethren were forced to fight him with the odds two to one against them. The result was a decisive victory for Shane, seven hundred Scots out of one thousand being slain, including Angus, and the other two brothers, James and Sorley Buidhe being taken prisoners. James was badly wounded and died soon afterwards of mortification of his wounds. The younger brother, Alexander Og, remained in Scotland, biding his time, on hearing of the disastrous battle of Gleanntaisi; and Shane possessed himself undisturbed of Antrim. He wrote an account to the Lord Justice of this expedition, gravely assuring him that it was undertaken on Her Majesty's account. But although he told Elizabeth that, "by God's mercy, Antrim was now reduced to her obedience," the Deputy writes in alarm that Shane had put a ward of his own into the castles of Newry and Dundrum, and that he was likely to get more into his possession than Her Majesty would think meet. Immediately afterwards, Ulster being apparently secure, he marched into Connacht, into Clanricarde's country, and exacted tribute which was formerly payable to the Ulster kings;

and meanwhile he did not forget his game of bluff, writing to Elizabeth in October asking to be invested Earl of Tyrone, to get the town of Belgriffin in the English Pale as a residence, to be allowed his expenses of living in the Pale when he came up to Parliament, and lastly, asking for aid against the Scots. Sussex was now recalled in disgrace, having failed all along the line, and Sir Henry Sydney was sent over in his stead. Sir Henry made overtures to Shane for a conference at Dundalk, which Shane played with in his usual fashion, sending in a long statement which he headed, "The causes and matters moving my people not to suffer me to come to the Lord Deputy's presence with such expedition as his Lordship requireth, with what happened within this twenty years, and in the memory of the same O'Neill, the harm done by the Governors and others here within the realm of Ireland." Then followed an account, written with the greatest irony, of the dealings of the English with Conn Bacach, and with Shane himself, with special reference to the treachery of Sussex and the attempts at assassination. Then he enumerated the chief treacheries performed by the English against other Irish chiefs; and he concluded: "and allbeit I stand assured of your Honour's lawful and most assured friendship, being most assured of your Lordship's good affection, and the most humble of that honourable Council, yet my people are timorous and mistrustful of the former proceeding." Sydney had no answer to make to this and, a few days later, Sir Nicholas Bagenal complains that he never knew the country so out of order, "Shane O'Neill has now all the countries from Sligo to Carrickfergus and from thence to Carlingford, and from Carlingford to Drogheda," and in March Sydney himself says that the English Pale is spoiled daily and in utter poverty, and that Shane O'Neill is the only strong and rich man in Ireland, and is able to burn and spoil to Dublin's gates and go away unfought. In March Cecil writes to Sydney that they

are all bent on the extirpation of that proud rebel, Shane O'Neill, and Elizabeth instructed him "to employ his whole care and consideration how O'Neill, who has now manifested himself so contemptuous a traitor, may be utterly extirpated." And Sydney can only reply that O'Neill will be tyrant of all Ireland; has won the rest of O'Donnell's castles, confederated with the Scots, is in Maguire's country, will spend the summer in Connacht and next winter in the English Pale. Shane, on his side, wrote in April to Charles IX of France, and to the Cardinal of Lorraine for help to drive the English out of Ireland, and this year was exceedingly active. He burned the cathedral of Armagh so that the English could not take refuge there again, and overran the Pale without opposition, save again at Dundalk, which he made an unsuccessful attempt to capture. And in September he wrote to John of Desmond, pointing out that the English "had no other view but to subdue both the English and the Irish Pale," and urging that they should combine and drive them out; that "now was the time, now or never." Shane was the first man in Irish history to see that England oppressed her own colonists equally with the Irish people; but John of Desmond did not respond. Sydney at this time puts Shane's fighting strength at 4,000 foot and 700 horse. He was now at the height of his power, absolute ruler of Ulster, with every prospect and apparently a definite intention, of extending himself into Leinster and Connacht. "I care not to be made an Earl," said he to Commissioners Stuckeley and Dowdall, "unless I may be better and higher than an Earl; for I am in blood and power better than the best of them; and I will give place to none but my cousin of Kildare, for that he is of my house. You have made a wise Earl of McCarthy Mor; I keep as good a man as he. For the Queen, I confess she is my sovereign; but I never made peace with her but at her own seeking. Whom am I to trust? When I came unto the Earl of

Sussex upon safe conduct, he offered the courtesy of a handlock. When I was with the Queen, she said to me herself that I had, it was true, safe conduct to come and go; but it was not said when I might go; and they kept me there until I had agreed to things so far against my honour and profit, that I would never perform them while I live. That made me make war; and if it were to do again I would do it. My ancestors were kings of Ulster; and Ulster is mine and shall be mine. O'Donnell shall never come unto his country, nor Bagenall into Newry, nor Kildare into Dundrum or Lecale. They are now mine. With the sword I won them; with the sword I shall keep them."

And just now, when Shane was apparently quite secure and more formidable than ever, the end came with appalling suddenness. Sydney was reinforced in 1566 by one thousand men from England, and garrisoned Derry with seven hundred men, under Colonel Randolph. Shane immediately besieged it, and Randolph sallying forth, a battle was fought under its walls. The English accounts are to the effect that four hundred Irish were slain and only one on the English side, viz., Colonel Randolph himself, but that the magazine and fort of Derry blew up shortly afterwards, and that the garrison was forced to evacuate the town. But in the Spanish State Papers on English affairs, preserved at Simaneas, in which there is an occasional reference to Irish affairs, there is a reference to the killing of Randolph and to the report as to the slaying of four hundred Irish. The Spanish ambassador in his letter to King Philip, says:—"This is not true, according to people who have come from there, but that several died on both sides, O'Neill not losing more than forty men," and in a further letter, on the 8th March, he states, "Preparations are being made for Ireland, as John O'Neill's people have treated badly the troops who were sent from here."

The attempt to hold Derry having failed him, Sydney

had recourse to the old plan of inciting the other Northern chiefs to attack Shane. Calvagh O'Donnell died at this time, and was succeed by his brother Hugh, the same Hugh who had been Shane's ally against Calvagh some years before, but who now, incited by Sydney, turned against him and fought for full authority over Tir Chonaill. Sydney at the same time caused some other chiefs to break away from Shane, by promising them full power over their own territories; and he also sought to stir up the Scots by reminding them of their defeat at Gleanntaisi by Shane, and of the death of James MacDonnell, their best loved leader. In the winter of 1566 O'Donnell crossed into Tireoghain and took a prey there, and Shane, in retaliation, crossed the Swilly in the spring of 1567 with a large army. Hugh O'Donnell could only muster four hundred men, but he attacked Shane's big army in sheer desperation and utterly routed it after an astonishing battle ; 1,300 of Shane's army were either slain or drowned in attempting to cross into Tireoghain, he himself barely escaping with his life. "As to O'Neill," say the Four Masters, "he escaped from that battle, and he would have preferred that he had not, for his mind and faculties were affected ever after it." Unless something of the kind happened it is difficult to account for the crushing result of this battle. Ten years previously, when Shane was defeated by Hugh's brother, Calvagh, the victory was quite as decisive, but it did not materially affect Shane's position, whereas this battle seems to have made him a fugutive, and his whole power fell to pieces in a few hours. He came to the desperate resolution of trusting himself to the Scots, having first released Sorley Buidhe, who had been a prisoner for two years, and he accordingly came to their camp to a banquet in Cushendun on the 22nd June, 1567. An altercation, deliberately provoked, was started by the Scots, and under cover of it they killed Shane. "The reception he got from them," say the Four Masters, "was

suddenly to attack him and instantly cleave him with their swords, so that they left him dead on the spot. The race of Eoghan, son of Niall, much lamented the death of him who was there slain, for that O'Neill, namely John, was their Conchubhar, as a provincial king, their Lughaidh of the Long Hand in valour, their champion in chivalry and bravery." It is now known that Shane's assassination was deliberately and treacherously planned by the MacDonnells, partly in revenge for Shane's crushing defeats of them in 1565, and partly by arrangement with Sydney and Captain Piers, the governor of Cnocfergus. Sydney, writing to the Queen, says: "I am informed he (Shane) offered to them of Kintire all Clandeboy, all the gold kine of his country, also to deliver up Sorlebye and give them pledge and assurance for his fidelity towards them. *But I, fearing this beforehand, have so temporized with the Captain of Kintire, Sarley's brother, that they have utterly refused his requests.*" And Piers dug up Shane's body, after it had been four days buried, cut off the head, which he sent to Dublin Castle, and got the reward of one thousand marks which had been offered.

English writers of Irish history, and Irish writers deriving their facts from them, have exhausted their vocabularies to find epithets for Shane O'Neill, and it is only within comparatively recent times that he is receiving anything like justice. When he was killed in 1567 the English uttered one universal sigh of relief, and the State Papers despatches are full of exultations and congratulations, and immediately the slanders began, for Shane had run them too close, had put too much fear on them, and expressed too much contempt for them, for them to do him any justice. Yet, apart altogether from the testimony of the Irish annals as to his character and ability, there is ample testimony in English records. Campion, writing in 1571, writes of Shane that "he ordered the North so properly, that if

any subject could approve the loss of money or goods within his precinct, he would assuredly either force the robber to restitution, or of his owne cost redeeme the harme to the loosers contentation. Sitting at meate, before he put one morsell into his mouth, he used to slice a portion above the dayly almes, and send it namely to some beggars at his gate, saying, it was meete to serve Christ first." And the following interesting extracts are from the Carew manuscript, known as the *Book of Howth*, a book which was written by some unknown Englishman, who regarded the Irish as wonderful barbarians. "This O'Neile was of such policy and strength as his like was not a long time afore in his room. . . . This O'Neile made very good cheer upon the Queen's charges all the while that he was in England. This O'Neile was a prudent, wise captain, and a good giver of onset or charge upon his enemies during the time of his reign, and was given from fourteen years of age till the day of his death, always in the wars. . . . Proud he was, and arrogant, for he thought that no man ought of right to be his superior or seem his eqall. He had great policy in the wars, that he was practised with, no man more in his time. He was a great surfeiter, a great spender, and cruel and extreme in all his affairs, no man his like, and liberal in nothing but in housekeeping ; a courteous, loving, and good companion to those whom he loved, being strangers to his country. . . . This John O'Neile, which I spoke of before, did enter many times in the English Pale in several places, and had under his rule from the gates of Carlingford and Dundalke all the North beside to Sligaghe, saving Carrickfergus, that was well kept. As obedient was all that to O'Neile this time as the English Pale to the Deputy." The sum and substance of Shane's crime was that he fought the English by any means to his hands his whole life through, and because he beat them in war and in diplomacy they feared and hated him, and

blackened his character. They called him murderer, but he slew no man in cold blood save proved traitors, his alleged brother, Feardorcha, was slain in open fight; they called him liar because he played their own game against them, and paid as little regard to his promises as they did to theirs; they called him drunkard and surfeiter, but it was not a drunkard who beat one after another of Elizabeth's generals, who sent them reeling back from Ulster time and again; it was not a drunkard who matched his wits against Cecil and Walsingham and won, who held his own at Elizabeth's court; they called him ignorant because he disdained the use of English, would not twist his mouth with such a barbarous tongue, and wrote his letters in Latin or in Irish; they called him a coward for no reason but that no possible charge against him might be omitted, but it was no coward who led the O'Neills for sixteen years and overran all Ulster and threatened the Pale; they called him adulterer for a reason which has been already discussed. But the mists of ignorance are clearing away from Shane, as from many another prominent figure in our history, and we can see him at last as he really was, the foremost Irishman of his time, and one of the greatest of the Irish chiefs. From the beginning of his career he had no illusions about the English, he saw through their game, and all his life he hated them. He hanged one of his soldiers once for having English biscuit upon him, and he built a castle on Lough Neagh, which he called Fuadh na nGaill or Hate of the English. He ridiculed their language, and their dress, and their customs, and as for brains, he was more than a match for the best of them. He was only beaten in battle twice, and on each occasion by the O'Donnells, and he routed every English army that came into Ulster in his time. In diplomacy he was never beaten, either by England's Deputies or by Cecil or Walsingham or by Elizabeth herself. He saw the fatal weakness of the clan system, and he

warred against that constantly; he saw that England kept her grip of Ireland through the clan system, and he fought to end it by conquering all the other Ulster chiefs and erecting in Ulster a strong kingdom. His continual battles against the O'Donnells, and Maguires, and O'Reillys were justified by the end he had in view, and all contemporary historians testify to the excellence of his rule. Under his strong arm in Ulster, husbandry and industry flourished, and the inhabitants, not groaning under exactions like the English Pale or Connacht under Clanricarde, or Munster under the Desmonds, became the happiest and wealthiest in Ireland. As Shane sarcastically reminded Elizabeth in one of his letters, inhabitants of the Pale fled out of it to settle in Ulster under his protecting arm, and he ruled strictly and with even-handed justice. No robbery, or theft, or crime was allowed to go unpunished where the Red Hand held sway, and Sydney, when he went through Ulster after Shane's death, testified his astonishment at its wealth, and orderliness and populousness. His policy towards his contemporary fellow-chiefs was dictated by his own statesmanlike mind, which worked for a strong authority which should sweep away civil dissensions. And his policy towards the English was simply to keep them from interfering in Ulster until he had it in his own hands. That was why he made his journey to London, for he thought that if he could make a direct treaty with Elizabeth he could hold Ulster nominally from her, and independently of any Lord Deputy, and thus prevent any Deputy from interfering with him. And when he thought himself able, he extended himself into Connacht and Leinster, and would gradually have tried to put all Ireland under him. The Earl of Sussex, beaten by him in battle and in diplomacy, tried to assassinate him twice, but failed. The third attempt by Sir Henry Sydney was more successful, and by the aid of Captain Piers of Cnocfergus and of the MacDonnels,

the dreaded and hated Shane was assassinated at a friendly banquet, and his head sent to Dublin Castle. It was a fitting end to the whole English policy towards Shane. An Diomair he was called, Shane the Proud, and his pride hurt the English more than anything, for he despised them and never fawned on them, or parleyed with them as other chiefs did. His attitude was always as his signature Mire O'Neill—I am O'Neill, and there was no prouder title, and none that he would exchange it for. His death in his prime, at the early age of thirty-five, was an irreparable loss to Ireland.

CHAPTER XIV

JAMES FITZMAURICE AND THE SECOND GERALDINE LEAGUE (1567-1579)

Sir Henry Sydney bears an honoured name in English history, but in Ireland his proceedings were as unscrupulous and as bloody as those of the most ignoble adventurer of them all. He was one of the "thorough" men, believing in extermination and confiscation, believing in pacification by massacre, and acting up to his belief; not as thoroughly as Carew afterwards, perhaps, but sufficiently so, hanging, for the sole purpose of pacification by terror, old men and sick men, and in one case a blind man. His journeys through Ireland as Deputy could be traced by corpses, and his the hand which directed, if it did not originate, the campaign which ended with the confiscation and plantation of the broad Desmond acres in Munster, and the elimination of the Munster Geraldines as an effective force.

The death of Shane O'Neill was an immense relief to the Government, but it did not advantage them to any extent in Ulster. Shane's Tanist, Torlogh Luineach, was inaugurated O'Neill without opposition, gathered his clansmen and marched against the MacDonnells, and avenged Shane by inflicting on them a bloody defeat and slaying their leader Alexander Og. Hugh O'Donnell even, who had defeated Shane and led to his death, stoutly refused to accept an English Sheriff or to give up the least of his rights as an Irish O'Donnell. So that Ulster still presented an unbroken front, and as the struggle with Shane O'Neill had decimated the English forces, depleted their treasury, and prevented

them from devoting as much attention to the other provinces as they would have wished, Sydney had to turn away from Ulster, and attempt to consolidate English power in the South. A great confiscation of Munster was planned *via* the goading of the Earl of Desmond to insurrection, and the encouragement of bogus English claimants to Irish estates. Sir Peter Carew was the first of these, and though he finally held nothing, he and his successors (who included Boyle, the adventurer progenitor of the Earls of Cork) pointed the moral for the land-holding Geraldines of the South, and facilitated James Fitzmaurice in the foundation of the Second Geraldine League.

Sydney gathered a considerable force and marched through Munster in 1567, after the death of Shane O'Neill. In his dispatches he waxes eloquent on the miserable condition of the country, as a result of the feud between the Earls of Ormond and Desmond, but that did not prevent him adding to it, and as he went he, as he doubtless would put it, made examples to strike terror into the hearts of the unrighteous. The Munster nobles made their peace with him on his progress, and at Kilmallock he arrested the Earl of Desmond, and shortly afterwards his brother, John of Desmond, and sent them to England, where they were lodged in the Tower, this being nominally to answer charges in connection with the Desmond-Ormond feud, but no charges appear to have been formulated.

It was to John of Desmond that Shane O'Neill had written in 1565 urging a combination of all Ireland, both the Irish and what the annals call the "English of Ireland," against the English Government, and though this exhortation produced no apparent effect yet the seed must have struck root in the one Geraldine of that generation who had a head on him—James Fitzmaurice. Fitzmaurice was Desmond's cousin, a poor cousin without land or riches, who adhered loyally to the head of his house, although Desmond's countess,

who was a Butler and disliked Fitzmaurice, interfered effectively to prevent Desmond making any proper provision for him. Thomas Russell in his account of the Fitzgeralds (derived from his father who had personal knowledge) thus describes him:—"This James Fitzmaurice was a brave and gallant gentleman, witty, learned, impassionate, circumspect, active, generous, devoute, subtill, and quick of apprehension, eloquent, of a high and adventurous polliticke and dissembling mind; too forward and apt to travaile, to take great paines, and to endure thirst, cold and hunger; not much given to the pleasures of Bacchus or Venus," and on being appointed by Desmond (from the Tower) in 1568 to rule in his absence he took advantage of the apprehension, which was caused by Desmond's arrest, by the coming of the adventurers with their bogus claims, and by the stiffening of the Government towards the Catholic religion, to attempt what Shane O'Neill had desiderated—a union of all born in Ireland against the English Government—Fitzmaurice acted quickly on his authority from Desmond, mobilised the Desmond forces and garrisoned his castles, and then proceeded to form a League of all the Munster chiefs and nobles, both of Irish blood and English blood, against the Government. It is fairly certain that Desmond himself knew nothing of this project of Fitzmaurice's, though John of Desmond probably did know, and it is uncertain how long the project had been on foot. Fitzmaurice probably had it in his mind for some time. But, at any rate, in a year's time, *i.e.*, in 1569, the League was launched and, as the annals put it, "James, the son of Maurice, son of the Earl, having become a warlike and turbulent person this year, all the English and Irish of Munster, from the Barrow to Cape Clear, joined and united with him in a League against the Council of the Sovereign." In a brief period they overran Munster and South Leinster, but they had no great military capacity, and the war resolved itself into a series of raids rather than

battles. Fitzmaurice had been in negotiation with O'Brien of Thomond and with Torlogh Luineach, both of whom had promised to join him, and O'Brien did take the field in his own district, but Torlogh was prevented by an accident (real or assumed) to his leg. The Leaguers appear to have acted in small bodies all over Munster, there being no co-operation with O'Brien, for instance, and when Sydney and Carew marched South to repress the League they found little difficulty in dispersing it. Carew moved against the South Leinster Leaguers, who were besieging Kilkenny, and defeated them, and this ended the insurrection in Leinster, which was not participated in by the Irish clans. Sydney for his part marched with little opposition to Cork, and received the submission of the majority of the Munster Leaguers, thence to Limerick, where Sir Edmond Butler submitted, and thence into Connacht, where O'Brien of Thomond submitted. Fitzmaurice himself held out for another three years, submitting in 1573 when his forces had wasted away, but he was still formidable enough to escape harsh terms, and was left at large upon promise of good behaviour. Elizabeth, of course, was not particularly out for Fitzmaurice's head, and she may have hoped to use him in some way to further her designs against Desmond.

The second Geraldine League is remarkable in Irish history not so much for what it accomplished as for what it portended. It portended the unity of all Irish-born folk, and it postulated England as the enemy of Ireland, and common agreement amongst Irishmen as the only way of keeping England out of Ireland. Shane O'Neill had been the first to recognize that, and in the day of his greatest strength, in 1565, he had made tentative efforts towards a national league, and now the recognition came from one of the "English in Ireland," and the idea did get itself actually embodied in the proclamation which Fitmaurice issued, and actually translated into action in the League, which

included, as the annals tell us, "all the English and Irish of Munster"! But Munster had been too many times devastated, too rent and disordered, too long under English grip, to produce a leader strong enough to direct a National League, though it did produce one to conceive it and establish it, and it was left for the North, still untouched by English hands, to establish a national confederacy and to produce a leader to guide it almost to victory, in the person of Hugh O'Neill. Still, Fitzmaurice's proclamation, addressed to the "prelates, princes, lords, estates, citizens, and the people of Ireland," is worth giving at some length. It runs as follows:—

"Our Holy Father, Pope Gregory XIII, Christ's Vicar on earth, perceiving what dishonour to God and his saints—what destruction to Christian souls in Ireland and England—what sedition, tumult, spoil, and murder hath fallen to Scotland, France, and Flanders, by the procurement of Elizabeth, the pretended Queen of England; perceiving also that neither the warning of other Catholic princes and good Christians, nor the sentence of Pope Pius V, his predecessor, nor the long sufferance of God, could cause her to forsake her schisms, heresy, and wicked attempts, as he now purposes, not without the consent of other potentates, to deprive her actually of the unjust possession of these kingdoms, which she uses for her chief instruments of her impiety; so he first of all attempts the said actual deprivation by means of our dear country, wherein he does us more honour and favour than can easily be expressed in words." Then it dilates on the glory that will accrue to Ireland if he should stamp out heresy, and states that His Holiness "considers the proper power of our country sufficient for this exploit, and no wonder, for if we ourselves list not to hinder one another, but do agree and join together (as he trusts we will, and indeed we ought

to do), it is certain that there is no power in this realm able to withstand our forces." It goes on to argue against the possibility of many men being sent from England against them, "the pretended Queen can make no great army out of any part of England, but the greatest number of them must be husbandmen, which commonly are all Catholics, and they will not fight against the cross of Christ, erected and set up by His Vicar, under whose banner we fight." Then follows a noble appeal to the chief men of Ireland to sink all quarrels and differences, and "to come with all speed possible, or to send your lawful attorneys, to the place where I am, to the end that we may there make a perpetual peace, league, and friendship, first to the utter destroying of schism and heresy, and next to the establishing of true love and amity amongst ourselves, whereof the perpetual wealth of our dear country is like to ensue.

"And here, considering the wariness, or rather wiliness of some men who, for their own worldly security, will see what others do before they themselves move out of their place, and others pretending the better to prepare themselves for their self-coming, will also use delay only to see what event the time is likely to have. And knowing that in the meantime the common enemy of God and of us all will not cease to his best against me, and thereby great damage may come to me and my company before that my friends resort to me; for this cause I must needs most earnestly request those that indeed have zeal in God's honour, and to their countries, not to use such delays, but with all speed to show good examples unto others, being assured that, besides the favour of God Almighty, His Holiness, and such other potentates as in this behalf join with His Holiness, will reward any man with honours, goods, and inheritance, according to the readiness which he shall show in furthering this holy cause.

"This one thing I will say, which I wish to be imprinted on all our hearts, if all we that are of good mind would openly and speedily profess our faith by resorting to His Holiness's banner, and by commanding all your people and country to keep no other but the Catholic faith, and forthwith to expel all heresies and schismatical services, you should not only deliver your country from heresy and tyranny, but also do that most godly and noble act without any danger at all, because there is no foreign power that would or durst go about to assault so universal a consent of this country, being also backed and maintained by other foreign powers, as you see we are and, God willing, shall be.

"*In omnia tribulatione spes mea Jesus et Maria.*

"JAMES GERALDYNE."

Fitzmaurice, it is evident from this, thought that his best chance of forming his League was by an appeal on religious grounds. The Pope had just then excommunicated Elizabeth, and probably he thought to increase his strength at home as well as to increase the chance of help from the continent, by making the war a religious war. But this was a mistake. There had up to then been little religious persecution in Ireland, and the Irish people, contrary to their reputation, are not inclined to religious quarrels even when they have justification. They will fight for land, or for glory, or for an idea, but they do not normally include religion amongst the things for which they will fight. Not that they are indifferent to it, but that they are naturally tolerant in regard to it, and require it to be much diluted as a *casus belli*. It would probably not have mattered, however, what the professed motive of the insurrection was if it could have produced a leader capable enough, in a military way to have combined all the forces of the League into one army,

and to have manipulated them in one army. But it produced only guerilla leaders, raiders, and they were unable to hold their ground before Sydney's formidable army, which disposed of them singly.

The Earl of Desmond and John of Desmond were realeased shortly after Fitzmaurice's submission, and after being on his keeping for a year because the English would not restore some of his castles, Desmond was persuaded to an abject submission in 1574, upon which Fitzmaurice left Ireland to seek help on the continent. For five years he went from court to court, and eventually the Pope sent eight hundred men, under one Thomas Stukeley, and Spain sent one hundred, with which latter body went Fitzmaurice and the Pope's Legate, Dr. Sanders, with the Papal banner and the Papal blessing. Stukeley diverted his eight hundred to a Portuguese expedition against the Moors, which was annihilated, and, therefore, when Fitzmaurice and his hundred landed at Smerwick Harbour in 1579 he waited in vain for Stukeley and his eight hundred. John and James of Desmond joined him, but the Earl, who had now determined to be loyal, notified the Deputy of his arrival, and himself, with his forces, blockaded Fitzmaurice at Smerwick, awaiting the arrival of Ormond and the Deputy, with the English forces. Fitzmaurice had sent messengers to Clanrickarde, to Turlogh Luineach, and to the Leinster clans, urging a general hosting, and he now broke through Desmond's blockade, and made for Connacht, but in a skirmish at Barrington's Bridge, in Limerick, he was mortally wounded, and with him vanished the hope of a renewal of the League.

James Fitzmaurice has hardly had justice done to him. He was not a military leader, but he was a thinker, and he must be recognized as one of the predecessors of Tone in formulating an all Ireland nationalism. From his first insurrection in 1569 until his death he was consistently rebel, working for insurrection when

he was not actually engaged in it. He was the only man of the Geraldines of that time who fought definitely on principle; he fought for Ireland as a whole rather than for his own little corner of it; and he was persistent in his attempts to accomplish that which he knew would put it out of England's power to interfere in Ireland—a unity of the whole people of Ireland.

It was Wolfe Tone who said, in his day, that if it were only a corporal's guard that were being sent to the assistance of his country he would go with it. And a similar saying is recorded of Fitzmaurice. In 1580 Drury captured a friar named "O'Haie," and he was duly "examined" at the Tower. His examination contains the following:—"Coming to Rabdio in Galicia, James Fitzmaurice asked Dr. Sanders 'How doth your ship and soldiers?' And then Sanders said 'that the King (of Spain) would not suffer him to bring away neither ship nor soldiers." And James answered, 'I care for no soldiers at all; you and I are enough; therefore let us go, for I know the minds of the noblemen in Ireland." There speaks a mind which is akin to that of Tone. Like Tone, he was a "rebel" from conviction, and that conviction remained unaffected by adversity, exile, and the wearisome round of pleading at foreign courts. But even a Fitzmaurice could not save an aristocracy which stood neither English nor Irish wholly, but something of each, and the Munster Geraldines were doomed. Neither to England nor to Ireland were they essential—and the Undertakers were hungry for land.

CHAPTER XV

THE LAST EARL OF DESMOND (1579-1583)

When Garrett, Earl of Desmond, was arrested by Sydney in 1567, he was a man of mature age, but still vigorous and turbulent. He had never been a man of any capacity, but he had at least had a will of his own and the indomitable courage of his class. All his life had been spent at war—with Ormond, with McCarthy Mor, and with other of his neighbouring chiefs—and it is told of him once, after having been heavily defeated and captured by the Butlers, that being jeered at by his captors and asked "Where now is the great Earl of Desmond?" he replied defiantly, "Where he ought to be, on the necks of the Butlers," for they were at the time carrying him in triumph on their shoulders. He had done nothing big in his life, but he had held his own. Such was the Desmond whom Sydney arrested in 1567, and sent to the Tower: but it was a different Desmond who was released in 1573. His captivity seems to have taken away his courage and resolution, and left him with only one mastering desire, the desire to keep his head and his lands secure. The captivity had broken his spirit, and hence his abject submission and his taking the field against Fitzmaurice, when the latter landed at Smerwick.

His protestations and deeds of loyalty were, however, of no avail. The Undertakers were determined to get his lands for confiscation, and the remainder of his life was a struggle, which he eventually lost, to prevent himself being forced into insurrection. Successive Deputies treated him as a rebel, although no act of rebellion could be urged against him, and increasingly

severe demands upon his loyalty were made by each new Deputy, until at last they were forced to proclaim him with little or no cause, their goading patience exhausted.

After Fitzmaurice's death, Desmond hastened to Sir William Drury to assure him that he had had nothing to do with Fitzmaurice's coming, and as the contrary could not well be sustained in view of the unchallengeable fact that Desmond had not alone refused to join Fitzmaurice but had blockaded him, his protestations had perforce to be accepted. His young son was taken from him as hostage, and he was promised that his territory would not be molested. Shortly afterwards, however, Drury died, after having been badly beaten by John of Desmond, who had gathered up the threads of the Geraldine League and had managed to get an army together, and Sir Nicholas Malbie, who succeeded Drury as President of Munster, tore up the agreement made by his predecessor and marched through Desmond's territory, burning and slaughtering. Still Desmond contained himself, and though he gathered his men made no move. Then Sir William Pelham was made Lord Deputy, and he proceeded to treat Desmond as if he were a rebel, and sent his bitterest foe, Ormond, to treat with him. The old man offered to do almost anything if he were only let alone. "I shall to the utmost of my power serve against my unnatural brethren, the traitor Dr. Sanders, and their adherents"; but the terms asked of him included the delivering to the Deputy of his manors of Askeaton and Carrigafoyle, at which he demurred, and also the delivery to the Deputy of Dr. Sanders and the Spaniards who had come over with Fitzmaurice, which it was manifestly not in his power to do. The deadlock which ensued in the negotiations gave the adventurers the chance they had been waiting for, and on November 2, 1579, Desmond and all his adherents were proclaimed traitors.

He had now no option but to fight, and he was joined by many of the McCarthy and O'Sullivan chiefs of South Munster. Even then no junction was formed with the forces led by John of Desmond. They operated in North Munster, and Desmond in South Munster, and the war became merely a series of raids, and the utter defeat of the Geraldines merely a matter of time. At first they overran most of Munster, avenged Fitzmaurice's death upon the Burkes of Castleconnell, who had slain him, pressed Cork so hard that St. Leger wrote in January 1580 that "no messenger can depart half a quarter of a mile out of the town without danger of his life," and for six months practically had it all their own way in Ireland south of Kilkenny. But they had apparently no plans which went beyond raiding expeditions, little sense of nationality, and fought mainly because they had been driven to it, and with the intention only of obtaining good terms for themselves. They were rather feudal lords in revolt than men with a sense of national grievance, and they looked for recruits, like Fitmaurice in his proclamation, more on the ground that it was a war for religion than on any other ground.

Desmond had, however, two chances which might have been made formidable use of by any good leader. In 1580 James Eustace, Viscount Baltinglass, promoted and headed a rising in the Pale. It also was mainly on religious grounds, and in his letter to Ormond, when the insurrection began, he says:—"If the Queen's pleasure be, as you allege, to administer justice, it were time to begin; for in this twenty years past of her reign we have seen more damnable doctrine maintained, more oppressing of poor subjects under pretence of justice within this Kingdom than ever we read or heard (since England first received the Faith) done by Christian princes. You counsel me to remain quiet, and you will be occupied in persecuting the poor members of Christ. I would you should learn and consider by what means

your predecessors came up to be Earl of Ormond. Truly, you should find that if Thomas Beckett, Bishop of Canterbury, had never suffered death in defence of the Church, Thomas Butler, *alias* Beckett, had never been Earl of Ormond." Baltinglass had not been a good subject since a dispute the Pale nobles had had with the Pale Government some years previously on a question of taxation, and the growing tyranny of the Government, as they became stronger in Ireland, alarmed him, the final impulse being the increased severity against Catholicism. He carried very few of the Pale lords with him, but Fiach MacHugh joined him, and together they annihilated the force with which Lord Grey of Wilton, the Deputy, moved against him. Fiach lured the main body of the English army into the valley of Glenmalure, and then came down on it on every side, half a dozen men fighting their way out, out of eight hundred who entered. Unfortunately, Grey himself and Kildare, who was also with the army, had not entered the valley, and got safely away. This victory, followed up, might have swung over all Leinster to the Irish side and penned the English within Dublin; but it was not followed up, and Grey was given time to gather another army, which he used, not against Fiach MacHugh and Baltinglass, but against a force of eight hundred Spaniards, the news of whose landing in Kerry, and fortification of Dun an Oir, reached him on his return to Dublin from Glenmalure.

The Spaniards had arms for 5,000 men, but before the slow-moving Geraldines had joined them Ormond had moved from Kilkenny with all his strength and held them, and on the arrival of Grey with his new army, the Spaniards were blockaded in their fort. They held out bravely for some days, expecting succour, but none arrived. Desmond and his brethren were foraging somewhere, and the people of Munster had been too devilishly treated to make a fresh hosting just then. The Spanish commander, at any rate, surrendered

on promise that the lives of his troops should be spared (Grey says he surrendered unconditionally, but the Irish authorities say they were promised their lives and there is no doubt that Grey lied). However, this is what Grey wrote to Elizabeth:—"I sent straight certain gentlemen to see their weapons and armours laid down, and to guard the munitions and victual then left from spoil; then put I in certain bands who straight fell to execution. There were six hundred slain." The Spaniards were despatched by the sword, and their bodies thrown into the sea, but the Irish of both sexes who were found in the fort were hanged.

Through 1581 and 1582 Desmond continued the struggle, with increasing ill-luck, and 1583 saw him the last survivor of his brethren with only a few followers, hunted all over the country, hiding by day and travelling by night. The minor leaders had all submitted, and even his countess had to submit, but for him there was no submission. Many times he offered to surrender if he were guaranteed his life and his lands, but the Undertakers wanted his lands, and nothing but unconditional surrender would be accepted. He was eventually betrayed to a party of soldiers in November 1583, by an O'Moriarty, a kinsman of his own, and slain by one of the soldiers named Kelly. Kelly was afterwards hanged in England for highway robbery, and, fifteen years later, when all Ireland was stirring at the call of the Northern Eagles, Thomas Fitzmaurice, baron of Lexnaw, hanged O'Moriarty at his own door.

Munster was once more quiet—pacification by terror and by massacre. One or two extracts with regard to the way this war was carried on by the English may be not inopportune here. Here is an extract from a contemporary letter of Pelham's (March 1580):—"We entered Connelough in two companies, Ormond towards the Shannon side and I upwards towards Newcastle, and marched all day without offence of any

enemy, wasting and spoiling the country. . . . We left our camp guarded the next day, and searched some part of the mountain. There were slain that day, by the fury of the soldiers, above four hundred people, found in the woods, and wheresoever any house or corn was found it was consumed by fire." This was an ordinary day's work (a score such might be cited), four hundred human beings slain and a whole countryside ruined. And here is the Four Masters' account of, I think, the same expedition: " . . . they give no mercy to rich or poor that came in their way. It was not surprising to kill those that were able to make resistance, but they also slew the blind and infirm, women, sons and daughters, the sick, the feeble, and the old."

In July 1580, Pelham writes to the Privy Council: "The Earl's followers would gladly forsake him if they might be received. I do not receive any but such as come in with bloody hands or execution of some better than themselves." These extracts are typical, and it was no wonder, seeing that for fourteen years the tide of war—this kind of war—had rolled unceasingly over Munster, that it was in no condition to aid the hapless Spaniards who landed at Dun an Oir, only to be massacred by Lord Grey of Wilton.

If we except the insurrection of Silken Thomas, which there is some ground for holding to have been in a manner personal rather than national, this insurrection of the Munster Geraldines was the only evidence of a national spirit exhibited by the Anglo-Irish nobles prior to their coalescing in the great National Confederation which followed the 1641 insurrection. It is probably true that James Fitzmaurice alone of them had a definite national idea in his mind, and that where he envisaged a united Irish nation free of English influence altogether the others never went much beyond the secure possession of their estates and the undisturbed practice of their religion. Yet some

national idea, vague though it was, must have been in them; Fitzmaurice, as the ablest mind, voicing what was then a general tendency. And had they had ability, it could have been developed into a very formidable movement. But they had only one man of character, Fitzmaurice, and no leader with more than mediocre military ability, or capacity for leadership. And therefore the insurrection, however widely spread at some periods, was always strictly local, and in place of one compact army they had many raiding parties, and they were therefore an easy prey for the compact forces of the English Deputies. It took them fourteen years to put the Geraldines down at a time when in none of the other provinces was there any serious fighting, and it may, I think, safely be concluded that a good leader in Munster would have turned the tables and would have utilized, for instance, Baltinglass's Pale insurrection, as the stimulus to an all Ireland Confederation which would assuredly have had a more rosy chance of success than had either Hugh O'Neill's or Roger O'More's afterwards, though both these had it in their grasp.

CHAPTER XVI

THE POLICY OF ELIZABETH

The policy of Elizabeth has made for itself in Irish history a well-marked track which, after three centuries, is as bloody as it was when Spenser beheld it after the "pacification" of Munster. So much so that "impartial" historians have been compelled to explain and justify it, which they have done on the ground that the continental situation gave England no option but to dragoon Ireland. The Elizabethan ruthlessness is explained by the menace of Spain.

But if these historians would take the trouble to read carefully all State Papers, Reports and Dispatches concerning English policy at this time, they would hardly—that is, the more honest of them—keep up this myth any longer. So far as the English invasion in the earlier centuries is concerned it was simply a plundering invasion, an attempt to grab land and amass wealth, and nobody denies that. And the instructions and reports of the Tudors, and of Elizabeth herself, are equally eloquent as to the mainspring of the exterminating policy. There is no word in them of continental complications. Elizabeth kept her grip on Ireland because she wanted to, because she wanted Irish land and revenues, as her forefathers did, and as her descendants do to the present day. Here are some of the instructions to Sussex in the first three years of her reign:—"That land cannot otherwise be brought to obedience, but with extending of force upon some stubborn sort, and with peopling some parts thereof, and especially the North, now possessed with the Scots. . . . It shall *hereafter* be very meet to plant in the same parts not only some faithful captains and rulers, but

also some numbers of English people; but as this cannot presently be done the Deputy shall have in mind and consideration as much as may be decided beforehand, and to embrace and to show favour to all such persons as he shall think meet and serviceable to that end, and yet to order the doing therein as the same may not appear to the prejudice of the case until a more convenient time." "But you shall do as much as the season of the year and other accidents there will permit to take the thoughts and strengths of the same counties, and appoint such portions of land as shall seem most convenient, and likewise to distribute such part of the rest of the country as ye shall perceive that ye may have convenient persons to take and inhabit the same, and to use the same ground in manner of husbandry for increase of tillage for corn." And so on. Elizabeth's sole concern with regard to Ireland was how best to flood Ireland with Englishmen, to confiscate the estates of the great semi-independent Earls and Barons, to plant all over the country little plots garrisoned for the Crown, so as to ensure that the revenues of the country should go to the Crown and not to any wealthy nobleman. That is to say, it was the same object and the same policy which the English had always pursued in Ireland, or wished to pursue. They had not always had the power. Observe the phrase above quoted: "It shall *hereafter* be very meet to plant in the same parts, but as this cannot presently be done," etc. That was English policy always, to refrain from extermination and confiscation when they had not the power, but it was always the mainspring of their policy, and it always came into operation when they had the power. The Elizabethans were simply more thorough than their predecessors, and hence the explanatory historians' flank movements towards continental complications.

The truth of the matter is simply this, that it was not until Elizabeth's time that the English got the

chance and the strength to attempt an extermination of the Irish people. Those who have followed this book so far will have seen how very ridiculous is the prevalent theory upon which all, or nearly all, our history writers have built, that Ireland was conquered by a handful of Englismen in ten or eleven years. They have been misled, of course, by their own want of the energy to look into the matter as into a new subject, leaving out of account altogether the theories of English writers and their sweeping generalizations. *For four centuries the English footing in Ireland was extremely precarious, and it was not assured until the end of the seventeenth century, when England passed the first Disarming Act, and the Irish obeyed it.* We have not been seven centuries under the heel of England, as some of our orators are wont to declare, but only two centuries. The first five centuries were centuries of actual physical conflict, during which Ireland mostly had the better of it, and that phase of the struggle is bound to be renewed some day.

When England first invaded Ireland, England was not the strong nation she had become when Elizabeth devastated Munster and Ulster. England was in the making then, just as Ireland was, but England was more advanced towards a centralized political unity—she was feudal, whereas Ireland was federal. Her first adventurers succeeded in getting into the country and remaining there, and in the years that followed the English monarchs sent over enough men and money to keep that garrison in the country, without giving it the chance to develop into a strong power apart from England. That garrison was constantly renewed; for more than a hundred years it subsisted by the favour of the Irish chiefs, by paying them tribute, just as any minor Irish clan might, for they came in time to accept most of the isolated settlements as necessary evils; the "Crown" played off the Anglo-Irish against the new English, and the Irish against both; they governed

their garrison at first by the strongest of the Anglo-Irish nobles, and gradually, as England itself began to become more settled, and the power of its kings to increase, they smashed up the most powerful of these nobles and governed through a Deputy, who was nearly always an Englishman and an adventurer, with a limited tenure of office, a fortune to make, and no scruples. Previous English monarchs had leant, for the holding of Ireland, on the Anglo-Irish nobles and on the Deputy; Elizabeth swept away both. With the Geraldines of Kildare and the Geraldines of Munster decimated and their lands confiscated to the Crown, and the Butlers bound fast to England, there was an end of the great Anglo-Irish nobles; with the carefully fostered claimants to Irish chieftainship, backed by English soldiery and English money, the great Irish chiefs were usually busy; and with the initiation of the system of governing each province by a President, the danger of a Deputy who would be almost a king was removed, and the way was open for an attempt to smash all resistance in the country, and establish the absolute supremacy of England. Elizabeth tried it. English armies had been sent into Ireland before, when that was necessary to preserve English influence there, but not consistently as Elizabeth did. She poured men and money into Ireland like water all through her reign, and she tried to the full the exterminating policy. That was not, as I have tried to show, a new policy. From the very beginning the English only kept their footing by extermination and confiscation. But it was tried on a new and more systematic scale. And in the Elizabethan generation appeared the most fitting generation to try it. It was that generation in which England first found herself as the piratical, blood-thirsty, power-loving nation she is. It had all the pirate virtues—courage, daring, endurance, and the pirate vices—cruelty, heartlessness, mercilessness. The whole country was aflame with a lust for gold, and trade, and blood.

That is the explanation of the policy of Elizabeth and the Tudors, about which so much balderdash anent continental complications has been, and continues to be, written. It was merely a putting into logical operation of the principle which has operated behind the whole of England's dealings with Ireland—that Ireland is an uncivilized country, and that its people may be lawfully removed by a higher civilization. It was imperialism, and not funk, which stimulated extermination.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PLANTATIONS OF CATHOLIC MARY AND REFORMATION ELIZABETH (1556-1583)

The Plantation project was the constant idea behind all the English operations in Ireland, the assumption of English law, upon which the English title to Ireland rested, being that the country was an uninhabited country, no Irishman, not being tame, having any legal existence. The three "Plantations" which are especially noted in history books, the Plantation of Leix and Offaly by Mary, of Munster by Elizabeth, and of Ulster by James, merely denoted an extension of that principle from the garrison stage to the extermination stage, not the stage of extermination by battle, but the stage of extermination by slaughter and burning women and children, cattle and crops. They were attempts to carry that principal to its logical conclusion, and attempts strictly in consonance with the spirit of the English. The State Papers of all ages are full of petitions from, as it is printed often, "divers gentleman," offering to plant this or that district of Ireland with "good English stock." And the greatest Plantation of all, that of Cromwell, was the final in the way of direct extermination. Since then, the Plantations have been indirect.

Henry VIII had steadily refused to agree to any scheme of Plantation in Ireland, though this was constantly urged upon him. Not so Mary. Three years after she came to the throne of England, she issued orders for the Plantation of Leix and Offaly. Neither of these counties was then in English hands, but they were the most troublesome of the Irish counties contiguous to the Pale. The said Plantation was not a

Plantation at all, but a desperate, merciless war. The Irish were in possession, and a horde of English adventurers was poured in *via* Dublin, assigned to lands which the English writ never reached, and told to conquer them. That fight went on for half a century under Rory O'More, and Rory Og, and finally Owny MacRory. It was a war, a guerilla war, and not a Plantation in any sense in which that word can be used. But it marked the beginning of the unabashed attempt of the English to exterminate the Irish, a beginning by Mary, cheerfully followed up by Elizabeth and James, and concluded by Cromwell. And it was a failure as a Plantation for a different reason from the later ones. It failed, because neither side got the upper hand permanently, and fighting went on until both sides exhausted each other, and eventually settled down together—give and take. One of Mary's enactments, as I am dealing with her, is eloquent of the way she regarded the Irish. She passed a law which gave the Lord Chancellor power to plant the rest of Ireland at any time he liked, by directing the appointment of Commissioners, " to view, survey, and make inquiry of all the towns, villages and waste grounds of the realm, now being no shire grounds . . . . to limit and divide by limits and bounds, all such towns, villages, and waste grounds, into such and as many several counties, shires and hundreds, as to the Commissioners shall be thought meetest and convenient, and that the said shires, counties, and hundreds, after certificate so made, shall be used and taken as other counties, shires, and hundreds in every other shire within this realm of Ireland." And all this, forsooth, because " divers and sundry robberies, murders, and felonies be daily committed, and done within sundry towns, villages, and other waste grounds of this realm, to the great boldness and encouraging of all other like offenders, by reason that the same towns, villages, and waste grounds be not made shire grounds." Observe

the definition of waste grounds, "towns, villages, and other waste grounds now being no shire grounds," so that waste ground was not untilled or uninhabited ground, but ground which was not shire ground, *i.e.*, where England's writ did not run. And it never strikes the "impartial" historians that this was done by Mary, the Catholic, to a Catholic Ireland, out of pure greed and covetousness, and without any "continental complications"!

The Plantation of Munster was attempted under conditions different altogether from the Leix and Offaly Plantation, for it was attempted at a time when no effective resistance was likely, after Munster had been devastated and exterminated and the Geraldine brethren slain. Spenser, taking that devastation as his model for the subduing of Hugh O'Neill, has left a picture of how Munster stood then. "The end will be very short, and much sooner than can be in so great a trouble, as it seemeth, hoped for, although there should none of them fall by the sword, nor bee slaine by the souldiour, yet thus being kept from manurance, and their cattle from running abroad, by this hard restraint they would quickly consume themselves, and devoure one another. The proofe whereof I saw sufficiently exampled in these late warres in Mounster; for, notwithstanding that the same was a most rich and plentiful country, full of corne and cattle, that you would have thought they should have been able to stand long, yet ere one yeare and a half they were brought to such wretchednesse, as they any strong heart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glynnes they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legges could not beare them; ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eate the dead carrions, happy where they could finde them, yea, and one another soone after, insomuch as the very carcases they spared not to scrape out of their graves, and if they found a plot of watercresses or shamrocks, these they flocked as to a feast for the time, yet not

able long to continue there withall; that in short space there were none almost left, and a most populous and plentifull country suddainly left voyde of man and beast, yet sure in all that warre, there perished not many by the sword, but all by the extremitie of famine, which they themselves had wrought." The confiscated land was divided into plots of 12,000, 8,000, 6,000, and 4,000 acres each, and the grantees were bound by their grants to plant what was practically a colony in each plot. Everything was carefully laid down, the amount they were to keep for their own family, and the amount to be let to approved English settlers. For instance, every holder of a 12,000 plot was bound to plant eighty-six families; to retain for his own family 1,500 acres; one farmer, four hundred acres; two farmers, three hundred acres each; two farmers, two hundred acres each; fourteen freeholders, three hundred acres each; forty copy holders, one hundred acres each; twenty labourers, forty acres each. It was a beautiful scheme on paper, but it failed utterly in practice. In the majority of cases the Undertakers found it impossible to carry it out in its entirety. Either they could not get sufficient English settlers, or, after getting them, they were frightened out of the country by the Irish, so that in the end most of the land was actually occupied and worked by its rightful owners, the Undertakers forming simply a landlord class—the beginnings of that landlord class which has always cursed the country. Where any attempt was made to carry out the scheme fully, the Irish bided their time, and slew the intruders. A letter in the State Papers—January 1597—for instance, tells us that "divers Englishmen have been lately murdered and spoiled, by reason they have so singled their dwellings, that they lie open to the malefactor, without ability of defence or mutual succour, all English inhabitants should be drawn into a near neighbourhood of twenty households at the least, and none not inhabiting in a castle to be suffered

to dwell out of such neighbourhood, and that the same neighbourhood so inhabiting together, shall, within a certain time, to them prefixed, enclose all their dwellings with a great deep trench and quickset, if may be, only leaving two places of ingress and egress, where shall be strong gates, to be shut every night." And where the settlers were neither frightened back to England nor slain they were assimilated; this, indeed, being the greatest factor of all in nullifying the Plantations. They intermarried with the Irish, spoke Irish, and adopted Irish customs, and their children grew up Irish. Spenser, writing in 1597, is well worth listening to on this point. "And first I have to finde fault with the abuse of language, that is, for the speaking of Irish among the English, which as it is unnaturall that any people should love another language more than their owne, so it is very inconvenient, and the cause of many other evills.

"It seemeth strange to me that the English should take more delight to speak that language than their owne, whereas they should (meethinkes) rather take scorne to acquaint their tongues thereto. For it hath ever beene the use of the conquerour to despise the language of the conquered, and to force him by all meanes to learne his. It were good, therfore (me seemes), to search out the original cause of this evill; for, the same been discovered, a redresse thereof will the more easily be provided; for I think it very strange that the English being so many and the Irish so few, as they then were left, the fewer should draw the more unto their use.

"I suppose that the chiefe cause of bringing in the Irish language amongst them, was specially their fostering and marrying with the Irish, the which are two most dangerous infections, for first the childe that sucketh the milke of the nurse, must, of necessity, learne his first speech off her, the which being the first inured to his tongue, is ever after most pleasing unto

him, insomuch as though hee afterwards be taught English, yet the smacke of the first will always abide with him; and not only of the speech, but also of the manners and conditions. For besides that young children be like apes, which will affect and imitate what they see done before them, especially by their nurses, whom they love so well, they, moreover, drawe unto themselves, together with their sucke, even the nature and disposition of their nurses; for the minde followeth much the temperature of the body; and also the words are the image of the minds so as they proceeding from the minde, the minde must needes be affected with the words. So that the speech being Irish, the heart must needes bee Irish, for out of the abundance of the heart, the tongue speaketh. The next is the marrying with the Irish, which how dangerous a thing it is in all Commonwealthes appeareth to every simplest sense, and though some great ones have perhaps used such matches with their vassals, and have of them, nevertheless, raised worthy issue, as Telamon did with Teemessa, Alexander the Great with Roxana, and Julius Cæsar with Cleopatra, yet the example is so perillous, as it is not to be adventured; for instead of these few good, I could count unto them infinite many evill. And, indeed, how can such matching succeede well, seeing that commonly the child taketh most of his nature of the mother, besides speach, manners, and inclynation, which are (for the most part) agreeable to the conditions of their mothers; for by them they are first framed and fashioned, so as what they receive once from them they will hardly ever after foregoe. Therefore are these evill customes of fostering and marrying with the Irish most carefully to be restrayned; for of them two, the third evil, that is the custome of language (which I speak of) proceedeth."

Thus Master Spenser. This *View of the State of Ireland* of his, written in 1597 at Kilcoleman, where

he was undertaking, is a very illuminating document in parts, as illustrating the English mind in Ireland, and throwing valuable light upon the situation as it appeared to one who was actually up against it. Spenser would have settled the Irish question by an extension of the policy of Pelham and Bingham, and Grey, by a huge army which should burn and slay until the peace—and fever—of desolation should cover all the land. But the next year, 1598, Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell smashed Bagenal at the Yellow Ford, and the Irish of Munster, the "anatomies of death" of ten years before, swept the Undertakers, including Spenser, into a few walled towns—Cork, Mallow, and the castles of Castlemaine and Askeaton—and repossessed their ancient territories until after the fatal fight at Kinsale.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GREAT FIGHT OF THE NORTHERN EAGLES—THE MAKING OF HUGH O'NEILL (1574-1593)

One of the English—I think it was Sydney—once, at a conference with Shane O'Neill, referred to Mathew, Baron of Dungannon, as his kinsman. "There is no such person," said Shane grimly. "I think you refer to Mathew Kelly, the son of a Dundalk blacksmith." "My father was a gentleman, and never gave any woman the lie." We do not know now whether Mathew was an O'Neill or an O'Kelly, and we know very little as to the quality of man he was. So far as we do know he appears to have been just a willing puppet in English hands; but Shane slew him before he got much chance, and Torlogh Luineach slew his eldest son. And there remained only his younger son, a boy of slender years, Hugh. We do not know what manner of man Mathew Kelly was, but we do know that he begot a man.

When one approaches that period in Irish history which corresponds to the Elizabethan age in England, one is amazed at the galaxy of virility with which one is confronted. The best statesmen and the best captains of the full tide of England's virility were poured into Ireland in a flood, and Ireland answered the challenge, and out of all quarters of the island, even out of districts drenched by blood and exhausted by famine within the memory of a generation—out they came, gallant gentlemen and noble ladies, gallant and heroic livers and fighters. They grappled with Perrott, and Bingham, and Fitzwilliam, and Sydney, and Drury, and Malbie, and Waterhouse—you will find the names

big in England's history, and many more of them—and they held their own in a welter of policies, and purposes, and cross-purposes, and intrigues, never before or since existing in Ireland. Lords Deputy and Lords President came to Ireland regularly and left it regularly, with Ireland still unsubdued, still turbulent and disaffected, still with whole districts where the "Queen's writ was not regarded." And Essex came with his whole army and Hugh O'Neill sent him back. And finally, chance, destiny, the devil, I know not what to call it, but it was not superiority either of valour or intellect, and it was not merit, intervened, and in the space of a few hours a sorely beset Mountjoy, and his army found defeat turned into victory at Kinsale, the most extraordinary and most fatal battle the Irish ever fought. In the whole war the Confederate Chieftains lost but this one fight—Armagh, Clontibret, Beal-an-Atha-Buidhe, the Curlews, Tyrrellspass, these and scores of others were victories—again, and yet again, England's armies were broken, but Kinsale was fatal. The story of that war, and of that final battle, is long and involved. To deal with it in all its ramifications does not come within the scope of this book, but it must be dealt with rather more fully than previous periods. There are too many fine personages in it to be passed with casual mention.

And first, Hugh O'Neill, the organizer and the brain of a resurgent Ireland, building up himself and his power from nothing, slowly but patiently and with set purpose, binding all the north to him, winning his way, out of an English education and English training, into the heart of Ireland. Other names and deeds come up to the memory, names and deeds one loves to dwell upon: Hugh Ruadh O'Donnell, sword of destruction to the Gall, man's purpose in a boy's frame; his heroic mother, Inghin Dubh, daughter of that James McDonnell of Antrim slain by Shane O'Neill, who kept Tirchonaill safe while Hugh lay in chains in Dublin Castle: Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne, the Eagle of Ballinacor, "the main-

stay of all the disaffected of Ireland," swooping now and again upon Dublin of the Foreigners, helping the Irish all over Ireland: Walter Reagh Fitzgerald, his son-in-law and lieutenant—Walter with the handsome brown head, quick soldierly step and swift action, a great guerilla captain, whose head shall one day greet that of Shane O'Neill without fear and without regret: Brian O'Rourke, who disobeyed the English proclamation against the Spaniards of the Armada, told Perrott to go to hell, and gave them shelter and food, and died for it cheerfully two years afterwards at Tyburn: Brian of the Battleaxes, who threw Oxford and its University to the winds, and came home to smash up Clifford at the battle of Corrsliabh Pass: Grace O'Malley, who held the whole western seaboard with her fleets and paid toll to nobody: Rory Og O'More, chief captain of Leinster, thorn in the side of the Pale, swordman, terror by night, and Chief of Leix by birth, by the grace of his clansmen, and by the sword; Maguire, and O'Cahan, and MacMahon, and O'Connor; MacGeoghegan at Dunboy, and O'Sullivan Beare at Leitrim: good men and good women all—we remember and we shall not forget. But it is no disparagement to any to place Hugh O'Neill first, first in genuis, first in achievement, first also, perhaps, in tragedy. Red Hugh O'Donnell died of poison, with the blood still running fast in his veins, with his manhood before him, with the game not yet lost: and others died violently and greatly, but in their own country; but Hugh O'Neill, that had been uncrowned king of Ireland, that had brought Ireland nearer to Freedom than any man before him, Hugh O'Neill lived on to become a pensioner at foreign courts, to hear ever and always the cry of his people, to dream ever and always of that sword-bright return which never took place.

The making of Hugh O'Neill was a strange and wonderful making. The first Baron of Dungannon, Hugh's father, was set up by the English as a con-

venient thorn with which to prick Shane O'Neill, and after Shane had dealt with him Hugh was removed to England for safety and for proper training, reserved against the time when another O'Neill, Torlogh Luineach or some other, migh also require to be pricked. He was carefully trained and educated in the household of Sydney himself, learned warfare and statecraft, and became to all appearance as polished an Englishman as any. And, then, in due course, he was produced in Ulster. It says a great deal for the man he was, that he was not slain immediately by Torlogh or by some of the O'Neill clansmen.

Some day it will be worth somebody's while to go thoroughly into old Torlogh and demonstrate to us what manner of man he was. The reports of him in the State Papers are rather conflicting. He disappointed the English very much, while he was Shane's Tanist, by not attempting to hold Tireoghain for himself, while Elizabeth kept Shane in London. Indeed, he was so indiscreet as to slay the young Baron of Dungannon—Hugh O'Neill's elder brother—and thus remove an English trump card and precipitate the release of Shane. He was faithful to Shane while he lived, and after his death his first act on being inaugurated O'Neill was to avenge him by an expedition against, and defeat of, the MacDonnells. Torlogh appears to have troubled the Deputies in some ways quite as much as Shane. One week he is spoken of as a "pestilent rebel," and the next he will be a "well-disposed person." He and Hugh O'Donnell between them, however, held Ulster still against the English. Knowing the pæan of triumph, and anticipation of spoil, which went up when Shane was killed, this alone, the retention of Tireoghain as it was, was an achievement for which he must get the full credit. It rendered Hugh O'Neill possible. It is significant that, so far from the O'Neill power being broken by the defeat of Shane, Torlogh, immediately after his

accession, could take the field and harry the Scots, and that Elizabeth could swallow her pride and recognize him as O'Neill. Despite Sydney's assurance that, after the removal of Shane, all Ireland would be as tame as a mouse in Elizabeth's hand, lo! the Red Hand still waved triumphant over Tireoghain. If Hugh O'Donnell had been the loyal, respectable citizen he ought to have been, they might have tried to bully Torlogh and to make shire ground of Tireoghain and Tirchonaill. But Hugh, much praised at one time in the State Papers, who had been backed up and incited against Shane, who had accepted the Earldom of Tyrconnell without a "thank you," who had beaten Shane in that last great battle, Hugh O'Donnell intimated that he intended to rule Tirchonaill himself, that it would not be made shire ground, and that he would not receive an English Sheriff. And, therefore, Torlogh continued to hold his own, with varying success, sometimes at war with O'Donnell and the MacDonnells, sometimes worrying the Deputy, but alway well to the fore. In his dealings with the Deputy he sometimes followed the example set him by Shane. There is a proposal of his extant, for instance, quite in the Shane manner, that he should be appointed Lord President of Ulster, should have absolute rule there, and would undertake to reduce all the other chiefs to obedience and pay Elizabeth £3,000 per annum. She did not accept, and Torlogh having made this proposal apropos of something else, went his way blissfully.

In the meantime Hugh was being moved about on the stage, here and there in the tail of the various journeys and expeditions. In the process of his education he did many things which would be inexplicable were it not for the circumstances: he was with Essex on his expedition against Brian McFelim O'Neill; he fought against Desmond in the Geraldine struggle and was wounded, and generally was found to be very useful

in small affairs. In 1574, for instance, he is commended as "the young Baron of Dungannon, a valiant fellow," he was then thirty-four years old, and he was generally encouraged to worry Torlogh as much as he could. In the years while he was making himself secure in Ireland, we can but guess at the life he led, always watchful and wary, always polite and calm, always planning how to gain the confidence of the Irish without at the same time arousing Elizabeth's suspicions. And he did it, that's the marvellous thing; he gained the confidence and the respect of the Irish chiefs, even of Torlogh, and without losing Elizabeth's. He married—*inter alia*, for our Hugh was a much married man, much more so than Shane—a daughter of Hugh O'Donnell's, and he married one daughter of his own here, and one there, until he had alliances with most of the chiefs of Ulster. Occasional outbursts of suspicion there were against him at all times, but they were never seriously corroborated, and Burghley and Cecil, on the whole, thought it was safer to support him than to sit upon him, and he seemed to be as well able to manage Elizabeth as was Shane.

Here is a wail from Drury on Hugh's matrimonial subtleties: "I find that Turlogh Lynagh, since my coming thence, hath so tampered with the Baron of Dungannon, as, notwithstanding his assured promise unto me that he would not deal any further in that match, yet he hath taken his daughter to wife, and sent home O'Donnell's daughter; and in like sort tied Sorley Boy by giving another of his daughters to the said Sorley's son, by which means the Scots are now wholly at his commandment and devotion." This was in 1579. In 1583 there was a report of the death of Torlogh, and Hugh O'Neill was in such good standing that it was decided to back him up for the vacant leadership of Tireoghain. But the next year, 1584, the Lords Justices reported that he had come to an understanding with Torlogh. "They are suddenly growne

into a very firme league of amitie and friendshipp, insomuch as in confirmation thereof Tyrlough, as we heare, hath in secreate sorte, made the Baron tanist, or secondary of his countrie, and the Baron embracing that offer, keepeth the matter as secret as he may, for that he knoweth it to be against Her Majesty's laws." But notwithstanding this, when he applied next year, 1585, for the Earldom of Tyrone, and the lands appertaining thereto, they were granted him after some discussion, and apparently with the consent of Torlogh, he to pay Torlogh £1,000 per annum, and to provide for the sons of Shane O'Neill. His position was now secure; he was friendly with Torlogh on and off, was allied with all the Northern chiefs and many of the Southern chiefs; he is thus spoken of in the State Papers in 1587: "He is greatly followed, valiant, and by reason of his bringing up and training, of far better disposition, more tractable and polite than any of his ancestors." He was also reported to be "the best man of war of his nation," and he was fortifying Dungannon, but he was careful to declare to the Lords Justices that it was as a protection against the turbulent Torlogh and his sons. In 1593 he succeeded Torlogh as "O'Neill" without opposition, and became at once the strongest man in Ireland.

Thus was Hugh O'Neill made: in hard, strenuous, and unremitting labour to keep his head on his shoulders between Elizabeth and Torlogh. There are those who see in his attempt to free Ireland nothing but personal ambition. Ambition! When he started out on his great effort he was already an old man, he was fifty-five years of age, he was wealthy, respected, comfortable, and had only to exercise a little of that tact, of which he had abundance, to end his days in the security and the power which he had won to himself. But Ireland had gripped him. From the very beginning she must have gripped him, for his whole career is a settled policy of conciliation and unity at home without

alarming the enemy, and through the years he laboured and prepared, and struck when he could no longer deceive the enemy. There is an Irish tradition to the effect that, sleeping one night at Dungannon, he was visited by the ghost of an ancient piper of the O'Neills, who piped him into the Hugh O'Neill that we know; and that is a symbol of what happened. For the call of Ireland, her clear call, was too strong for that early training of his, and he came over to her wholly. And Shane's ghost, wandering about, went to rest quietly, now that the head of his house was once again a *man*. And Ireland found Hugh, and Hugh found Ireland, and it was good.

CHAPTER XIX

THE GREAT FIGHT OF THE NORTHERN EAGLES—THE MAKING OF RED HUGH O'DONNELL (1587-1591)

"And far away, far, far away,
In Valladolid's cloisters grey,
Sleeps Hugh O'Donnell now;
Hugh, the undaunted, gallant Hugh,
To faith and country ever true."

Hugh O'Donnell, able warrior and statesman, had fought with Shane O'Neill against the English in the great campaign in which Shane smashed up the league formed by Sussex. Later, when he became O'Donnell, he fought against Shane, egged on by the English, who were then trying to form another league; and in the last battle Shane fought, Hugh was the victor, although numerically the inferior. But the MacSweeneys, the Giant MacSweeneys of the Battle Axes, who straddle over Donegal in contemporary English maps, the MacSweeneys were formidable warriors, fosterkinsmen of the O'Donnells, and always fought with them. Afterwards, Hugh was made Earl of Tyrconnell, but there he stopped short. His castles of Ballyshannon and Donegal flew the O'Donnell flag, and he stoutly refused to receive an English Sheriff, or do any homage to the English Viceroy, and the English were not strong enough to attack both O'Donnell and O'Neill, with Sorley Buidhe and Hugh Maguire in the offing. So they swallowed their chagrin, and put the best face possible on the matter, holding Hugh O'Neill in reserve against Torlogh Luineach, and waiting the turn of events in the O'Donnell principality.

As Hugh O'Donnell grew old, and his firm grasp of things relaxed, hope began to spring up in the English mind: for there was promise of a quarrel over the succession after Hugh's death. His heir, according to the English view, was Hugh Dubh, and the other candidates were Domhnall, illegitimate, but a brave and capable leader; and Red Hugh, eldest son by his then wife—the famous Inghin Dubh. The English had not made up their minds whether to run Hugh Dubh or Domhnall, but one thing they had made up their minds to, and that was to oppose Red Hugh.

"The men whom the Viceroys and their Counsellors abused best, were the best men," writes Standish O'Grady, and truly. Judged by this test, the best man in Tirchonaill, between 1580 and 1591, was Inghin Dubh. She was a MacDonnell from the Isles, a race that had been for many generations in alliance and intermarriage with the Irish, and she had Irish blood in her, both on her father's side, and on her mother's side. She makes even a more significant figure in contemporary Ireland, than does Shane O'Neill's countess, the Countess of Argyle, reputed also to be wise and subtle and learned. Of Inghin Dubh, the State Papers can say no good: they cannot even refer to her without disparagement and spleen; they refer to her usually as "the Scottish woman," and speculate on the advantages that would accrue to the State were she and "her progeny" banished out of the land. "The Scottish woman," and the "Dark Daughter" was a painful thorn in Perrott's side, and in Fitzwilliam's after him, for she held Tirchonaill firm when it was like to go to pieces under the shaky grasp of old Hugh, and she brought her son, Red Hugh, up to be a warrior and a leader. A warrior and a leader she was herself—afterwards, when Fitzwilliam, after Hugh's capture, had come up to Donegal and installed Domhnall, the illegitimate, brave O'Donnell as Sheriff of Tyrconnell, the Dark Daughter came out of the MacSweeney country, whither

she had fled with her other children on the approach of Fitzwilliam, on what he called a "friendly" visit, and led her forces against Domhnall and defeated him, he being slain in the battle—and wise and careful into the bargain, trusting no Englishman, trusting nothing but the strength of the O'Donnell swords, and the MacSweeney battle-axes, calling upon the MacDonnell kinsmen for help when she required it—"a great bringer in of Scots," we are told she was—but always holding Tirchonaill safe, safe for Hugh. In the last years of old Hugh's life, and the four years of Red Hugh's captivity, she ruled Tirchonaill as no man in similar circumstances could have ruled it, and when Hugh escaped, and became O'Donnell, she lapses into the shadows, her work, the giving of Hugh to Ireland, done. All her children, Hugh, Nuala, who married Niall Garbh and left him when he turned traitor; Ruaidhri, who succeeded Hugh, and fled with Hugh O'Neill; and Cathbarr, the ancestor of the Spanish O'Donnells; were capable and faithful, and dependable, glorious witnesses to the heroic and patriotic woman who bore them and reared them. Lughaidh O'Clery, a contemporary chronicler, who wrote a life of Red Hugh, writes thus of her: "It was an advantage that she came to the gathering, for she was the head of advice and counsel to the Cinel Conaill, and though she was slow and very deliberate, and much praised for her womanly qualities, she had the heart of a hero, and the soul of a soldier."

Perrott looked upon Inghin Dubh with a gloomy eye. When he demanded her sons as hostages for her good behaviour, she defied him and refused, and he bethought him whether he should fight or be treacherous. And after due consideration of the O'Donnell swords, and the MacSweeney battle-axes, and the Scots who were behind the Dark Daughter, he decided to be treacherous. Just then, 1587, things were beginning to look ominous. Hugh O'Neill had been winning his way into the position

of one of the strongest men in Ireland quietly but surely, and so subtly that not even Perrott could succeed in inducing Elizabeth to molest him. He was now married to a daughter of old Hugh O'Donnell's, and Red Hugh himself was matched with a daughter of O'Neill's. Perrott saw trouble ahead, and determined to meet it by kidnapping Hugh. In May 1587, he broached his project to Elizabeth, and in September of the same year he effected it, and kidnapped Hugh. The fame and promise of Red Hugh had spread through all Ireland. He was a comely and a well-built, and a gallant lad always, tall and strong and free, like a young eagle, "of a countenance so alluring that he fascinated all who might behold him," say the Four Masters: long auburn hair, ruddy complexion, keen grey eyes, a long-limbed, energetic whirlwind. "As for the eldest of these, Hugh Roe," says our chronicler, "immediately after his birth he was given to be fostered and brought up to the high-born nobles of the tribe of Conall Gulban, son of Niall, and it was not these alone that got him to rear and foster, but some of the tribe of Eoghan, son of Niall, took him, for they were sure that something could ensure through him, if he reached puberty. Then he continued to grow and increase in comeliness and urbanity, tact and eloquence, wisdom and knowledge, goodly size and noble deeds, so that his name and fame spread through the five provinces of Erin among the English and the Irish, even before he passed the age of boyhood and completed his fifteenth year. Moreover, the fame and renown of his youth were reported to the foreigners of Dublin too, and they reflected in their minds that there would not be one like him of the Irish to avenge his wrongs and punish the plundering of his race, if he was allowed to reach manhood. It was told them too that prophets and people, with foreknowledge and predictions of futurity, had announced that there would come some one like him who would cause disturbance among them, and in the

island of Eire also, as Columkille, son of Feidhlimidh, the famous holy prophet of the Cinel Conaill, a man full of grace and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, promised, when he said:—

> There will come a man, glorious, pure, exalted,
> Who will cause mournful weeping in every territory;
> He will be the God-like prince,
> And he will be King for nine years."

And so, one fine morning, the 29th September, 1587, a pirate ship, with irons and soldiers aboard, disguised as a merchant ship, with Perrott's commission and Elizabeth's blessing, sailed into Rathmullen Harbour, in Lough Swilly, and was very friendly with the people, selling cheap wine. Red Hugh, who was in the neighbourhood, with his foster-people, the MacSweeneys, was enticed aboard, and down into the cabin. Once there, the hatches were clapped on, all sails set, and Hugh was safe in Perrott's hands, confined in Dublin Castle. Had Perrott remained in Ireland, he might have used his possession of Hugh as a lever for the destruction of Tirchonaill—he was clever enough, and ruthless enough—but just then he was recalled in disgrace, and Fitzwilliam, who succeeded him, was not able enough to grasp the importance of Hugh, nor clever enough to outwit the Dark Daughter.

The capture of Red Hugh, under such treacherous circumstances, sent all Ireland into a ferment, and Inghin Dubh at once set all possible influences at work to get Hugh back, but to no purpose. The young MacSweeney chieftains offered themselves as hostages in his place, even Ruaidhri O'Donnell was offered, but Elizabeth held fast and issued special instructions to Fitzwilliam that Hugh was to be kept. Perrott had been offered by Inghin Dubh £2,000 to let Hugh go, but refused: Fitzwilliam, however, was less squeamish, and appears to have taken a bribe either from Inghin Dubh or from Hugh O'Neill—who protested strongly

against the capture, and used all his personal influence, then great, with Walsingham and Elizabeth to procure his release. Twice Fitzwilliam recommended to Elizabeth that Hugh should be released, and twice she peremptorily refused. And so escape was tried. Within the walls of Dublin Castle, the lad of fifteen, who was Hugh Ruadh O'Donnell was turning into a man, a man with a flame of wrath in his soul. He held his head high, and his body straight, and his soul free, in that captivity, and bore himself as one should who was of the highest blood in the land. And through it all smouldered and strengthened that quick, high impulse of his, which made him after his escape, one of the greatest and most constant of Irish chiefs, which swept the enemy out of Tirchonaill in a couple of weeks, and shook Bingham's hold on Connacht in as many months, which finally decided Hugh O'Neill on his great attempt to free Ireland. Red Hugh learned from his captivity a contempt for all which the English power in Ireland represented, for their language and their civilization, and their institutions, and came out from it with a determination to pay them back for the four years liberty they had robbed him of.

The first attempt at escape, three years after the capture, was unsuccessful. Hugh got out of Dublin, and into the mountains of Wicklow, but instead of making for Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne, who would have held him against all England, he went to Felim O'Toole, who gave him up. Felim sent two messengers announcing Hugh's arrival, a slow one to Dublin Castle, and a fast one to Fiach MacHugh: but the rivers between Ballinacor and Castlekevin were swollen with floods, and the fords were impassible. When Turlough O'Byrne and Walter Reach, after a wide detour, approached Castlekevin, it was only to see Hugh, under a big escort of mailed warriors, marched out for the Castle again. Thenceforth he was kept in irons. But Fiach MacHugh, the "friend of the rebels," tried

again. He managed to get a clansman of his in some menial capacity into Dublin Castle, and through him a file to Red Hugh, and on Christmas Eve, 1591, Hugh filed through his irons, and through those of Henry and Art O'Neill—sons of Shane—and the three escaped. Outside the clansman of Fiach's was waiting, but the horses that had been in readiness for a week had been taken away that day through misadventure, and they had to run. They swam the moat and journeyed on in merely doublet and hose, in the depths of winter; going through Dublin they lost Henry O'Neill, who, however, made his own way safely to Ulster, but Hugh and Art, and the clansman reached the mountains, where cold and famine struck down Art, and Hugh's feet began to swell and blister. The clansman left them and hurried forward to Fiach for help, but when his men arrived Hugh and Art had been two nights on the mountain (Sliabh Ruadh) without food or shelter and in the snow. "Their bodies," say the Four Masters, "were covered over with white bordered shrouds of hailstones freezing around them on every side, and their light clothes and fine-threaded shirts, too, adhered to their skin; and their large shoes and leather thongs to their shins and feet; so that, covered as they were with snow, it did not appear to the men who had arrived that they were human beings at all, for they found no life in their members, but just as if they were dead. They were raised by them from their bed, and they requested of them to take some of the meat and drink, but this they were not able to avail themselves of, for every drink they took, they rejected again on the instant; so that Art at length died, and was buried in that place. As to Hugh, after some time he retained the beer; and, after drinking it, his energies were restored, except the use of his two feet, for they were dead members, without feeling, swollen and blistered by the frost and snow."

He was taken to Fiach's Castle, and thence to

Tirchonaill as soon as he was able to sit on a horse, but he had to be lifted on and off, for his toes were frost-bitten, and his legs still suffering the effects of that two nights exposure. With him went the chivalry of Fiach, ready to fight their way from Ballinacor to Ballyshannon if need be: Turlough O'Byrne, eldest son of Fiach, Walter Reagh Fitzgerald, his son-in-law, his other two sons, Owny Mac Rory O'More, every noted "rebel" in Leinster in fact. With them also went Torlogh Buidhe O'Hagan, Hugh O'Neill's foster-brother, who planned the escape with old Fiach. Fitzwilliam had set guards on every ford of the Liffey and Boyne, knowing that Hugh was at Glenmalure, save the ford which passed by the west port of Dublin Castle, never dreaming of an attempt to go north that way. But over that ford, within hailing distance of the Castle, went the chivalry of Leinster, Red Hugh, and Torlogh Buidhe in front, and Walter Reagh in the rear. Standish O'Grady tells that tale, as none but he can tell it: "There was a sudden silence in the hall, and in the silence was heard the distant hollow trampling of the hoofs of horses drawing momentarily nearer and louder. And this was but a vanguard, for a louder and denser trampling succeeded, a storm of hoofs, and those hoofs plainly of the great horse or warcharger, such was their full thunder, and such the shaking of the solid earth. Nearer and nearer it sounded till the storm of hoofs, the noise of that thunderous four-footed trampling seemed to pass under the very Castle walls on the west. A voice was heard, too, it rang clear like a distant trumpet. The words were in an unknown tongue, and after the voice rose a peal of mocking laughter. Then the noise died away northward, while men looked at each other silent and astonished. What did it all mean? Fitzwilliam's prophetic heart told him. It was the 'overthrow of Ulster,' passing northwards around Hugh Roe, and by that one ford of the Liffey, over which he had not set a guard. Ere he and

his officers could interchange surmises and conjectures, the captain of the west port watch burst into the apartment, hastily stepped to the Lord Deputy's table, and delivered his tidings:—

"Huge Roe passing into the north in the midst of a great troup of horsemen. One of my people saw him, for the moon was full, and also the light of the lanthorn above the west port fell on his face. He rideth a bobtail grey, a hackney, very fleet and strong, and, your Honour, he lowers his voice, 'the Brown Geraldine is with him, the three sons of Feagh, and Rory Ogue's son; and Raymond Donn O'Moore, the counterfeit Baltinglass, and many others of the gentlemen of Leinster, whom my men noted not, seeing that they spurred too fast. But as he rode by the west port, Walter Reagh turned him in his shank-pillion, and with a strong voice cried to us words which I may not repeat in this presence, words too full of rebellion, insult, and contumely.'"

And so Hugh went home to Garret Moore's house at Mellifont that night, thence boldly through the garrison at Dundalk, and so to Ulster, to Hugh Maguire, thence to Ballyshannon Castle, to his great-hearted mother, and to his clansmen.

Thus was Red Hugh O'Donnell made, in the first place by Inghin Dubh, slow of speech and quick of action, tenacious and heroic, one of the great women of the Gael, heroic mother of heroic children; carefully trained from his youth to govern and hold Tirchonaill, giving promise beyond his years, already before his fifteenth year a beacon of hope to the Irish; then thrown into a dungeon for four years, three years in close confinement, and one year in irons, finding his manhood and his purpose in those four years. The promising lad of fifteen who went into Dublin Castle came out at nineteen, a man of a set and inflexible purpose with a boy's frame yet, but a man's heart and will and a man's strength, and all the qualities of a leader. He came out of that captivity lame, and he

was lame for life; for twelve months he was under medical attendance in Tirchonaill, operated upon several times; but even from the bed whence he finally arose lame, even from his bed he sent out his fiery spirit through Tirchonaill, weakened of late; expelled on the one hand Captain Willis and his English followers; and on the other Torlogh Luineach, who had encroached somewhat on Tirchonaill; and bound all his patrimony together as one man behind himself. Soon he was to sweep through the English of Connacht, slaying every man who knew no Irish, soon to inaugurate with Hugh O'Neill the great struggle which ended at Kinsale. He came out of his four years captivity a man, "a lion in strength and might of determination and command," say the Four Masters, "of a countenance so alluring that he fascinated all who might behold him." At nineteen he was head of his clan, in alliance with Hugh O'Neill, with Hugh Maguire, with Fiach McHugh O'Byrne—and with the memory of Dublin Castle strong in him.

CHAPTER XX

THE GREAT FIGHT OF THE NORTHERN EAGLES—THE EVE

There are writers on Irish history who have speculated, as regards this and other crises in our history, as to what would have happened had the Irish been abject and loyal, and "not gone into rebellion," and they all assume that the result would have been a happy and a prosperous Ireland. It is difficult, when one has calmly considered the facts and gone through the available materials, to credit them with arriving at that conclusion otherwise than by jumping. They merely carry modern political prejudice into the writing of ancient happenings, and fail in the historic imagination which must be the basis of any useful interpretation of history. There are not wanting writers, even of our own day, to bemoan and beat the breast when they come to deal with any attempt of the Irish nation to free itself from strangulation, but there was no alternative to those attempts, save death and degradation, the alternative which was forced down Ireland's throat after 1690. If Ireland, at any time previous to 1690, had taken that course, had laid down her arms and sent her fighting men out of the country, she would merely have had the penal laws and the penal degradation so much the earlier.

No English monarch, no English governor or soldier, no English writer, from the beginning of the connection of the two countries down to our own time, has ever thought of Ireland save as a foreign country, inhabited by a rude and uncivilized race, to be governed and exploited for the good of England. That ruling idea

in the minds of all Englishmen, and its results in actual practice, made it impossible for Ireland to do anything but fight, whilst she had the strength and the opportunity, against an attack whose guiding impulse was plunder, whose method was murder and treachery, whose final goal was extermination, or, at least, depopulation. One has not to go to the soldiers of fortune, to the casual adventurers, and to the "Undertakers" alone for evidence of this unanimity of opinion amongst the English; one finds it in poets like Spenser and in otherwise decent folk like Sir William Petty. Here is how Petty, in a memorandum to James the Second, in 1687, recommended the governing of Ireland—this, mark you, in a "settled" period:—"This is to be done. 1. By bringing one million of the present 1,300 thousand of the people out of Ireland into England, tho' at the expense of a million of money. 2. That the remaining 300 thousand left behind be all Herdsmen and Dairywomen, servants to the owners of the lands and stock transplanted into England; all aged between 16 and 60 years, and to quit all other Trades but that of Cattle, and to import nothing but Salt and Tobacco. Neglecting all Housing but what is fittest for these 300 thousand people, and this Trade, tho' to the loss of 2 millions worth of Houses." And so on, to the tune of nine chapters, in which the idea is expounded and labelled "Settlement and Union of People by this New-inexpensive Government and Simplicity of Trade." This scheme of Petty's was put forward in his character of political economist, gravely and seriously, and its many advantages set forth. There would be no more disputes as to priority of Parliaments, for there would need to be no more Parliaments in Ireland, and it would be easy and inexpensive to keep 300,000 cowherds in proper subjection. And, at a time when religious feeling in England ran high, there was not a word about religion in it; the scheme was the outcome of the national attitude of the English mind

towards the inhabitants of Ireland, irrespective of blood or religion.

One might fill miles of columns of print with schemes of a similar tendency, coming from responsible persons, and coming at all times, even when there was least disturbance in the country. In them, in the dealings of the Deputies and the Presidents with the Irish chiefs, and in the general tenour of the voluminous instructions issued from England, either by the various English sovereigns or by the Privy Council, even without reference to the weighty testimony of the various Irish records, are to be found abundant evidence of the absolute impossibility of any Irish generation, or any Irish chief, settling down in amity with either the English nation or the English garrison, which burrowed into the vitals of political unity in Ireland. Treachery, and murder, and deceit are writ large through the State Papers as the constituent atoms of English policy in Ireland, as the three great weapons upon which her grip on the country rested. And historians, writing even with these records only before them, as the "Savage" school of historians have written, and bringing in a verdict of Incapacity and Febrility against the Irish, are sometimes deliberate liars, sometimes incapable, sometimes both, and always political pamphleteers.

Where there has been an incursion into a nation of a new element, an element in a minority, as the Norman invasion of England and the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, either of two things must happen. Either the minority is assimilated by the majority, accepts its language and culture, and forms one people with them, or the minority imposes its language and culture upon the majority. In either case, you get, after the fusion of the two elements, one people. In Ireland we got neither, because the supply of foreign elements, which in the case of the Norman settlement in England ceased almost with the first invaders, in the case of Ireland

has never ceased, because as fast as Ireland assimilated to her own culture one generation of invaders, another generation came over and rode over both the older Irish and the newly-assimilated Irish, because Dublin was an open door through which England kept on poisoning the Irish body, gradually overcoming its powers of resistence until finally the poison broke out everywhere —in Penal Laws. As soon as ever an Irishman of English blood began to regard Ireland as his country, he was suspect by England, and found himself as mercilessly and as treacherously treated as if he had been Irish for seven generations. There was always in Ireland a garrison whose power and place depended upon the armed strength of England, who looked upon the Irish as beasts, and treated them as beasts, and who looked upon the final conquest of the country, and the extermination or abject subjugation and spoliation of the Irish, as a thing only postponed. That garrison was kept rigidly in that frame of mind, by deliberate English policy, and the ramifications of that policy, even when English power in Ireland was weak, prevented any lasting union of the people or any settled peace. At any time, almost, from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, Ireland might have been peaceably settled by agreement between the Irish chiefs and such of the Anglo-Norman chiefs —Ormond, Kildare, etc.—as were definitely portion of the Irish nation into a nation, even with the nominal suzerainty of England; but the first condition of any such settlement, that the Irish should have peaceful possession of their territories, and that the constant legal confiscations and invasions should cease, was a condition England never contemplated, and such a settlement remained an unfulfilled dream in the minds of half-a-dozen men. Gerald of Kildare, Fitzmaurice, Shane O'Neill, Hugh O'Neill, all thought of it—but it never reached fulfilment. England wanted a weak and divided Ireland, from which she could draw men and

plunder, and wanted not a united, prosperous Ireland, which would be as strong as she was herself; and so the fight had to go on, a fight of one nation against another, without cessation and without quarter. And the Irish nation is there yet.

On the eve of the great fight, waged by O'Neill and O'Donnell, the country was comparatively calm, and English power was firm in many districts, firmer than ever before. In Leinster, the O'Mores of Leix and the O'Connors of Offaly, always troublesome, were quiet, although Owny Mac Rory O'More, Chief of Leix in his own right, was at large, and had been trained to his Chieftainship by Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne. Fiach himself, gallant chieftain of the Wicklow hills, who had towered over Dublin and the Pale for two score years, had defied Deputies innumerable and beaten armies innumerable; to whose name the English of Dublin hushed their children; Fiach, who had befriended and helped every rebel in Ireland in his day, and had twice carried his mountain men up to the walls of Dublin Castle; Fiach had been slain in a skirmish in 1594. And Walter Fitzgerald, Walter Reagh, the merry and chivalrous, with more hero deeds to his credit than years to his age, the grim humorous gentleman who had shouted his defiance to the Castle as he brought up the rear of Red Hugh's escort over the Liffey ford—Walter had been taken in 1593 and hanged in chains, and the O'Tooles and O'Byrnes were now quiet. In all Leinster there was now no big figure standing out against England. In Munster the tale was similar. The "anatomies of death," as Spenser called them, had grown again into men and women, and the McCarthy and O'Sullivan chiefs still ruled the greater portion of their territories, and O'Brien was still in Thomond, but the broad lands of Desmond had no chief to link them up, and in the Province there was no big resistance to England. Connacht remained the most disturbed of the Provinces. Perrott and Bingham had gone through

it with fire and sword many times, and had attempted a "settlement" of it by what is known as the "Composition of Connaught," under which the chiefs were declared to hold their lands under feudal law, and not under Irish law. To enforce this composition, all the forces of the English were employed, but to no purpose. The Province was "settled" only in such portions as the English Arms actually ran, and while they were actually there, and outside these Irish law and custom held. The O'Connors and the Burkes and the O'Flahertys still kept themselves free, and Grace O'Malley held the western seaboard. The President of Connacht never knew when he was safe, and had to be constantly on the alert. Ulster alone held itself clear, to all practical intents and purposes, of the English. O'Neill, O'Donnell, Maguire, O'Hanlon, MacMahon, O'Cahan, O'Doherty, and Somhairle Buidhe held Ulster still, and were now all more or less in league with one another.

Outside Ulster there was an English Sheriff in most of the counties, and effective English interference everywhere. It was no longer an isolated English settlement, struggling against an overwhelmingly stonger Irish environment; it was an aggressive force in every county, ready to back up with England's armies any who claimed lands on English tenure, making friends to-day, and confiscating to-morrow, always slaughtering, always scheming to bring in fresh confiscations. The methods of the Elizabethans were so thorough and so unashamed that no Irish chief felt himself safe with them, and so, though their position was strong, they were on the brink of a volcano, for everywhere they sowed hatred and distrust, and everywhere the materials for Hugh O'Neill's National Confederacy were mixing. English law and Irish law were at death-grips everywhere, and both sides felt that a struggle was inevitable.

All over the country still the lands were tilled and populated by the Irish clansmen. Outside the towns

there were no large rootings of foreigners into Irish soil. They held garrisons everywhere, and in English law and by English swords they held a lot of the land, but they were only on the surface yet. All the plantations, and all the plans for settling Englishmen on the soil of Ireland, had failed. They were either driven out or assimiliated. And so, when the war did come, the English were cleared into the fortified towns in a few weeks.

CHAPTER XXI

THE GREAT FIGHT OF THE NORTHERN EAGLES—CLONTIBRET AND DROM FLIUCH AND THE YELLOW FORD (1595-1598)

Hugh O'Neill remained on good terms with Elizabeth as long as that was possible, and did everything in his power to avoid overt anti-English acts in Ireland. He had served with alacrity under various of Elizabeth's Deputies against various Irish chiefs, against Desmond and against Maguire, for instance, and he had kept his "English" aspect held up to Elizabeth all the time. Yet he won his way at the same time into the hearts of the Irish, and when Torlogh, after a long and honourable O'Neillship, died, Hugh was tumultously and without hesitation inaugurated O'Neill. Even that he managed to defend to Elizabeth on the ground that if he had not been inaugurated O'Neill somebody else would. His personal influence with her was very great, for the repeated reports by various Deputies in the years prior to 1594-5, to the effect that Tyrone, as they called him, was plotting against her, was making alliances with the Irish chiefs of Ulster, and encouraging Fiach MacHugh and every other rebel in Leinster, failed to move her. She persistently refused to sanction any acts of hostility by her Deputies against O'Neill, and as late as May 1594, superseded Fitzwilliam, mainly upon a complaint against him by O'Neill of acts of aggression, and ordered the new Deputy that he should "nowise attempt anything against the Earl and his people." Hugh himself had long been preparing for war; his friendship with O'Donnell, with O'Hanlon, with Maguire (despite his service against

him, which Maguire, doubtless, understood), with Fiach, all stamp him with a preparation for a big fight. By an old agreement, made when Elizabeth feared Torlogh Luineach more than anybody else, and relied upon Hugh to be a docile thorn in Torlogh's side, he was entitled to keep six trained companies at Elizabeth's expense. He kept them, with a vengeance, for by constantly changing the personnel of the companies, he trained all his clansmen to arms; he bought a lot of lead "for the roofing of a new house," and turned it quietly into bullets; and he built a fort at Dungannon for his own protection and the protection of "Her Majesty" against Torlogh, who, let us hope, rejoiced in the joke. Even yet, in 1594, Hugh was not ready to begin the fight. He had Ulster with him now, and portion of Connacht, and portion of Leinster, but I believe he would have held his hand and waited until, as Roger O'More had in 1641, he had a National Confederacy in his hand, organized and determined, before moving. But events, and the suddenly aroused suspicion of Elizabeth, and the glorious uncompromising fighting spirit of Red Hugh, opened the campaign.

In the skirmishes which went on in Fermanagh, in North Connacht, and elsewhere, O'Neill had hitherto been altogether behind the scenes. He knew that a suspicion by Elizabeth that he was in an Irish league would throw the whole force of England against Ulster, and he did not want that. So long as she thought O'Neill loyally inclined, so long she let things be, even though O'Donnell smote her lieutenants for fifty and a hundred miles outside the borders of Tirchonaill. When help was to be given to Maguire or O'Hanlon, or O'Rourke, it was O'Donnell who sent it. Red Hugh, by this, not alone had consolidated his own territory, but had won all North Connacht save for occasional raids by the President of Connacht from one of his fortified towns. Early in 1593 Fitzwilliam had invaded Fermanagh in force, and Maguire was driven out to

Tirchonaill, but the next year he came back with Red Hugh and his clansmen thundering behind him, and Fermanagh was Maguire land again, save Enniskillen, which they besieged. While O'Donnell was again in Tirchonaill for reinforcements, Bingham marched to the relief of Enniskillen, and Maguire was threatened with overwhelming. To the relief came Cormac O'Neill, Hugh's brother, and Bingham was completely defeated. Whether Cormac was sent by Hugh is uncertain, but the probability is that he was not, and that Hugh would have preferred a temporary defeat of Maguire to his own embroilment with Elizabeth. But Cormac's action was the last straw, and Elizabeth's previous trust in Hugh was changed at once into malevolence, and she sent orders that he was to be "stayed" if he came to Dublin. In a final effort to avert war, and not knowing of Elizabeth's change of front, he astonished the Deputy by coming to Dublin, bearding the Council, and challenging them to prove anything against him. They could do nothing but accuse him valiantly, for proofs there were none, and he as valiantly denied, and finally the Council, after much hesitation, decided not to charge him. Ormond, however, told him in private of Elizabeth's secret orders, whereupon Hugh departed, and the long sparring was over. Elizabeth was furious when she heard that the Deputy had let him slip. "This was as foul an oversight," wrote she, "as ever was committed in that kingdom. The natures of treason are secret, and not to be proved, for the most part, but by presumptions. (Lovely, that!) He coming in of purpose to offer personal purgation, with great reason you might have stayed him *till proofs had been made*, or kept him in suspense upon his trial until you had received our pleasure. You alleged that you thought it perilous; but he or his could not have any way prejudiced you or your estate; and none of his durst have stirred while he was in restraint. It was great oversight in

you of the Council there, when the Earl was first so properly charged, to dismiss him so slenderly upon his denials. Our commandments to you in private for his stay ought otherwise have guided you." And again she wrote: "We hold it strange that in all this space you have not used some underhand way to bring in the Earl; and we think that by setting division in his country, and by other sound means, he may be disabled and reduced to obedient conformity." And at the same time a memorandum written for the guidance of the new Deputy—probably by the Council—states that "he has evermore had a thirsty desire to be called O'Neale—a name more in price to him than to be intituled Cæsar."

Elizabeth was hot for the humiliation of Hugh and ordered his instant "punishment," and for that purpose all the forces were gathered together, and on June 28, 1595, O'Neill and O'Donnell and all their allies were proclaimed traitors. O'Neill moved first. He came down suddenly on Portmore, took it, besieged Monaghan with another force, beat Bagenal in a skirmish near Newry, and shut him up there. Then Sir John Norris marched up with all his forces to relieve Monaghan, but at Clontibret O'Neill met and beat him, and Monaghan fell. There was no roundabout way of getting at Hugh, as they had tried to get at Shane, for James MacSomhairle Buidhe MacDonnell fought with him, and Red Hugh held the Connacht border. So Elizabeth thought she would try what negotiation would do. There ensued a long and fruitless series of parleys and cessations, cessations due wholly to the fact that Elizabeth had not the power at the time to crush O'Neill, or had not the heart to pay an army large enough. "Endeavour," she wrote at one stage, "to procure a prolongation of the cessation, considering we are not provided for them." And the Commissioners on their part wrote: "We will keep them together by means of delays until we discover how far they will be

drawn, and their further intentions. We desire to know whether we shall cease to treat with them after acquainting them with the easiest of Her Majesty's demands. O'Donnell carrieth great rule amongst them, and Philip O'Reilly is a great Councillor." And they tried the ancient game of division, tried to parley separately with O'Donnell and found Red Hugh, as they mournfully wrote it, "most resolute." The two Hughs refused to treat separately, and refused to treat only on their own account. They represented every chief with whom they were allied, McMahon, and O'Hanlon, and O'Reilly, and Maguire, and Owny MacRory, and the sons of Fiach, and refused to split up. "We are now to let you understand," wrote Hugh to one of the Confederates, "that the conditions whereupon the best of the Irish have given their promise and oath one to another is not to make peace until every one in particular that entered into the war may have the like peace and their right and other things meet."

Both parties were only gaining time, and there was no complete cessation of hostilities. In Connacht, O'Donnell's lieutenants kept Bingham and his allies penned up, and O'Neill and O'Donnell had sent letters to Spain asking for aid. They had also urged the Leinster chiefs to be up and doing, and Hugh had sent his son Conn to Munster to try and rouse Munster into life, and had ravaged the Pale. Elizabeth, on her side, abated her first haughty attitude, ordered Norris to make the best terms he could, and finding finally that the Confederates would not treat singly, and would not abate any one of their material demands, superseded Norris, got another army together, and sent over Lord Borough as Deputy, and she also superseded Bingham in Connacht by Sir Conyers Clifford. The new Deputy tried a triple attack next year, in 1597—Clifford to come in from Connacht, over the Curlews; a second army from Meath, under Barnewell, "The Baron Bold of Trimleston," and the main army, under himself and the

Earl of Kildare, *via* Newry and Armagh, to rebuild Portmore. But Hugh O'Donnell and Hugh Maguire and Brian O'Rorke met Clifford at Ballyshannon and drove him back, step by step, with heavy loss, behind the walls of Boyle. Walter Tyrrell and O'Connor of Offaly, with a smaller force, ambushed and annihilated Barnewell's force near Mullingar, at the place now known as Tyrrell's Pass. Borough and Kildare, with the main army, marched without interruption to Portmore, which they rebuilt, and then made for Dungannon, but at Drom Fliuch, O'Neill defeated them, both Kildare and Borough being mortally wounded, and there was an end of that plan.

There ensued another cessation, precisely the same as the previous one, Elizabeth preparing a fresh army, and O'Neill trying to raise a blaze in Munster and Leinster, and expecting Spanish aid which had been promised. Ormond, who was an old friend of O'Neill's, was appointed Deputy, and there were many conferences, until finally Elizabeth definitely refused the allies' terms, and O'Neill broke off the negotiations and attacked the newly-erected Portmore, which Ormond resolved to relieve. Of the new army he had gathered, he picked 4,500 foot and 600 horse, and sent them North under Bagenal. Bagenal hated O'Neill because O'Neill had married his sister, and he was confiident that with this force he would easily subdue him; but two miles from Armagh, O'Neill and O'Donnell awaited him at Beal an Atha Buidhe, and on August 14, 1598, he was utterly beaten and slain, the remnants of his army escaping, disorganized and spiritless, to Newry. whence they went back to the Pale.

The victory was complete, and its effect was electrical. Portmore and Armagh surrendered at once, and Ballymote, which had been in English hands for thirteen years, was taken. Ireland stirred herself again, looked up at the sun, stood upon her two feet, and reached out for the sword; the long and gallant fight waged by

Ulster, under Shane and Torlogh, and now under the two Hughs, made itself felt, and sent the blood bounding in her veins. Connacht was up again, not merely North Connacht, but the whole of it; Leinster was up, and Tyrrell, O'Conor, Owny MacRory, and the O'Byrnes swept it clean; even Munster, Munster with the stench of rotting and famine-stricken corpses still in its nostrils, with the remembrance of the inhuman scourging of the Geraldine wars, Munster woke up; all over Ireland the Irish, chiefs and people, rose up like a surging wave, and overwhelmed the Undertakers. Dublin, Kilkenny, Cork, Limerick, Galway—behind their walls the remnants of the English crouched, amazed and dispirited; the Red Hand of Ulster overshadowed Ireland.

CHAPTER XXII

THE GREAT FIGHT OF THE NORTHERN EAGLES—THE RISING TIDE (1598)

All contemporary and reliable records bear witness to the completeness and deadly effect of the great victory of the Yellow Ford. The Four Masters and the State Papers are equally emphatic, and Fynes Morrison, Ware, Cox and company, all admit the completeness of the overthrow. It gave Hugh O'Neill an undying reputation, not only in Ireland, but on the continent, where he was thenceforth regarded as King of Ireland, and it sent all Ireland stirring into a great confederation.

Nowadays, when we realize the completeness of the victory, how it paralysed the Lords Justices and Council, unnerved the remnants of the English army, and sent the Undertakers everywhere trembling; how it was months before any reinforcements arrived, and that in the meantime Ireland might have been cleared of the English; it is easy to accuse O'Neill of a want of generalship in not following up his victory. But he did follow it up as much as he could, and he got to Armagh practically at the same time as the remnants of Bagenal's army, and never left it until he had its surrender. But more he could not do. It was harvest time, O'Donnell and Maguire, who formed nearly half his gallant army, were short of provisions, and his own commissariat was none too plentifully stocked. If he had succeeded in delaying the fighting, as he had wished, until he had all Ireland confederated under him, he would have struck, and struck hard, but now he was sure only of Ulster and portion of Connacht; Leinster and Munster were largely unknown quantities;

and he bided his time. With the facts as they stared him in the face, it was the best he could do. He did not minimise the importance of Dublin, however, for in October of that year a plot was discovered in Dublin to surprise the town and Castle. Thirty Irish within the walls were concerned in it, and the attacking force was to be 1,000 mountainy men and 1,000 of O'Neill's own men. But O'Neill had neither the materials for a siege nor the necessary men. The whole forces of the allies did not exceed 5,000 men; and, be it remembered, that each man was a free man, and could not be ordered about as a modern soldier can. If a clan got anxious about the harvest, they had to be let go, for there was neither the means nor the desire to keep them. That instinct, the development of individuality in the Irish civilization, their passion for absolute freedom, was at one and the same time one of the things which most powerfully aided England in driving and maintaining a wedge into the Irish body politic, and at the same time one of the things which most powerfully prevented that wedge from being effective. A feudal civilization might not have succumbed to that first English attack, but only a free and virile nation could have repelled it so long and so gallantly after it had taken root.

In April 1597, the Lord Deputy and Council wrote a memorandum on the state of Ireland, showing that Ulster was "universally revolted; no part of it is free from hostility against Her Majesty and adherence to the Capital Traitors of Tyrone. The only places left her beyond Dundalk are Newry, Knockfergus, Carlingford, Green Castle, Armagh, Dundrum, and Oldrifleete"; that in Connacht "not one of the six shires is free from revolt"; in Leinster the O'Mores, O'Tooles, O'Byrnes, and some of the Butlers were troublesome; and as for Munster, "there standeth up none that we know, any man of name, against Her Majesty in that province, except two chief persons of the McShees and two base sons of the Viscount Roche, which, being

followed by a rabble of loose people, stand out still." That was substantially the situation before the Yellow Ford, save that then North Connacht was with O'Donnell, Owny More, and Walter Tyrrell were threatening the Pale, and Norris, President of Munster, felt a storm gathering there, although he could not produce enough evidence to induce Elizabeth to send him the heavy reinforcements he wanted. After the Yellow Ford all this changed. The Lords Justices and Council fell into a state of panic, and on the day after the battle wrote to O'Neill: "We have taken knowledge of the late accident (!) happened to part of Her Majesty's forces employed in Ulster, only for victualling of the Blackwater, and that many of them are retired into Armagh, where they now remain. We thought good upon this occasion to send to you on their behalf, though we think that, in your own consideration, you will let them depart without doing them any further hurt. We are to put you in mind how far you may incense Her Majesty's indignation towards you, if you shall do any further distress to these companies, being, as you know, in cold blood; and, on the other side, how far you may move Her Majesty to renew a favourable conceit of you by using favour to these men. And, besides, your ancient adversary, the Marshal, being now taken away, we hope you will cease all further revenge towards the rest, against whom you can ground no cause of sting against yourself, being employed by her Majesty in these Her Highness's services. This much we thought good to signify unto you, and by way of caution to admonish you to avoid to provoke so mighty a Princess upon such a matter as to distress her servitors in cold blood. To this end we have sent this bearer the poursuivant, by whom we expect your answer." This extraordinary letter, which maddened Elizabeth, shows the state of panic the Government were in; and Ormond alone, then Lord Lieutenant, made an effort to save the

situation. He knew that this victory would be a beacon to all Ireland unless it could be nullified, and he gathered all his forces and went for the Leinster men; but Owny MacRuaidhri and Walter Tyrrell met him and beat him, and he barely escaped with his life to Kilkenny. Then all Leinster rose up, Owny MacRuaidhri and Walter Tyrrell directing operations; Leix and Offaly were cleared of the planters; in Kildare James Fitzspiers, a Geraldine and Sheriff of the county, went "into rebellion"; the Earl of Mountgarrett, a Butler, and an important man, made a treaty with O'Neill, and all Leinster was in Irish hands save the narrow margin around Dublin—with the O'Mores and O'Byrnes within musket shot—and Kilkenny and Wexford towns. In Connacht the news of the victory had a similar effect; Clifford shut himself up behind fortifications and bemoaned the situation, and only Clanricarde remained with the English. But Munster —Munster which had undergone such a terrible devastation, with her ancient families decimated—Munster, where, in April 1597, there stood up "none that we know, any man of name, against Her Majesty in that province"—Munster also went "into rebellion." Norris, as I have said, had been suspicious of Munster, without knowing why. He felt the gathering storm, but could not stop it, and in a vain attempt to do so he summoned the Munster chiefs and nobles to Kilmallock, and exhorted them to be of good behaviour, and they answered him that they could no longer answer for their people. When the storm broke, it broke suddenly, and the flame went through Munster "like a lightning," as Fynes Morrison puts it. O'Neill, after the defeat of Ormond, and the rising out of Leinster, had turned his attention to Munster, leaving Connacht to O'Donnell and Maguire. And so, one morning early in October, two gentlemen stepped gaily over the border; and one was young and comely, and swift as a hawk and fierce, for he remembered the

"planting" of his country, and he had been trained by Fiach MacHugh; and the other was older and graver, courtly, with dancing eyes; and a better pair never stepped out upon a better journey, for they were Owny MacRuaidhri O'More of Leix and Walter Tyrrell of Meath, the pair who had beaten Ormond's desperate venture, had annihilated Barnewell at Tyrrell's Pass, and were to defeat Essex at the Pass of Plumes; and behind them went 2,000 of their clansmen. As they went they took castles and garrisoned or demolished them. Piers Lacy, the Sheriff of Limerick, joined them; an Earl of Desmond, an O'Brien, a McCarthy, started up from the earth, and all Munster was in a blaze. Norris was at Mallow, and he forthwith fled to Cork without awaiting the onset, whence he wrote explanatory and apologetic and beseeching despatches to Elizabeth. All over the Province the Undertakers, "either for lack of comfort from you, or out of mere cowardice, fled away from the rebels upon the first alarm," as Elizabeth wrote to Norris. Within a few weeks Munster was almost cleared of the English; James FitzThomas, Earl of Desmond, in command for O'Neill, and Norris and his men cooped up in Cork, Youghal, Kinsale, and the castles of Castlemaine, Askeaton and Mallow.

Mr. Standish O'Grady has asserted that in these wars the English army was miserably small, and that the greater portion of it was composed of Irishmen, and that statement has formed the basis for a sheepish follow-on by many others with less knowledge and more prejudices; and, of course, it conforms to the usual English myth on the subject. Now let me examine it briefly in this present war. It is quite true that for many centuries the English and Irish fought in an intermixed fashion. As already pointed out, in course of time many English settlements came to be regarded as on the same footing as an Irish clan—were, in fact, admitted into the Nation as a portion of the Nation; and the old clans and new clans made alliances indis-

criminately, sometimes using, more often being used by, the English. But the English army in Ireland was at all times composed mainly of English—or at least of non-Irish—men. After the Yellow Ford, the Lords Justices and Council were at their wits' end to explain the defeat, and to explain their inability to meet the Irish in the open field either in Leinster, Ulster, Connacht, or Munster; and the expedient they hit upon was to declare that a large portion of the English forces were Irish born, that they had all "deserted," carrying with them their arms and ammunition, and that, therefore, reinforcements were urgently needed. This is a palpable blind. An Irish clan might, and did, follow its chief in an English host often, but they would not, and did not, crowd into the English army. In a torrent of rage Elizabeth, after the Yellow Ford, ordered Ormond, on September 12, to "clear our army of the Irish, and so order it that for this winter it may be reduced to 8,000"—*reduced*, mark you, to 8,000, with the alleged Irish eliminated. And she added, "With an army of eight or nine thousand men it is strange that the provincial rebels of Leinster and Wexford should not be mastered. Writing on December 1 again she complains that although Ormond had "the great number of 9,000 men, we do not only see the Northern traitor untouched at home, and range where else he pleased, but the provincial rebels in every province, by such as he can spare, enabled to give law to our provincial governors; besides that, the Pale is not only wasted, but the walls of Dublin (where our State is seated) esteemed unsafe, and (as we hear) the suburbs thought a dangerous lodging for some of our principal Counsellors." Under date September of the same year, 1598, there is a memorandum on the English army in Ireland, and it is given as 10,082 foot; while O'Neill's forces are given as 3,540 foot and 1,043 horse. Mr. Standish O'Grady's pet statement will not bear critical examination.

Nothing is clearer than that now the war developed into a national struggle, to the perception of all on either side. In October James FitzThomas, created by O'Neill Earl of Desmond, wrote to Ormond: "Englishmen were not contented to have our lands and livings, but unmercifully to seek our lives by false and sinister means under cover of law"; and Ormond himself writes to Elizabeth: "The Irishry in general have combined and joined together"; and the Justices write, "and we see daily the distresses of the realm so to multiply in every part by a general revolt of the Irish, pretending a general Irish quarrel for old titles and recovery of lands." And the fight they made was a gallant and worthy fight. Supercilious modern critics, whose knowledge of Irish history is limited to Froude and Lecky and perhaps Ransome, will pass it all by in scorn: but nobody who goes to the original records, and goes through them patiently, but will rise up with a sense of the greatness of his race, of the greatness of Hugh O'Neill, of the gallantry of that fight. To the English themselves it was a marvellous resurrection; they actually felt the avalanche, and shuddered and hurried behind the walls of the fortified towns. Immediately poured in the usual horde of plans for the "settlement of that realm"; "Plant Ulster with Dutch"; "Divide the country into lots of 2,000 acres each"; "Starvation and extermination," and so on. Ulster, even as it is to-day, was a red rag to a bull to them. And one anonymous scribe, sorrowfully and in chastened mood, wrote a memorandum on "The Causes of the Miseries of the Englishry." To those of my readers who may be inclined to regard the English Planters in Ireland as the salt of the earth, I make a present of this unprejudiced contemporary evidence on the subject: "First of all, I note their great wickedness formerly rooted, not purged, by change of air, but found still procuring the wrath of God, according to that of the past, '*Coelum non anima mutantur, qui trans mare currunt,*'

they change the air and not the mind who cross the seas. Notwithstanding many wise, godly and virtuous, yet there were out of England, and other countries, traitors, murderers, thieves, coseners, conycatchers, shifting mates, runners away with other men's wives, some having two or three wives, persons divorced living loosely, bankrupts, carnal gospellers, Papists, Puritans, and Brownists. If the enemy, by the permission of God, had not come with a scourge against them (as Josephus said some time of the Jews in Jerusalem) it is like with other plagues, the earth would have gaped and swallowed them up."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GREAT FIGHT OF THE NORTHERN EAGLES—OWNY MAC RORY AND HUGH ROE STRIKE HOME (1599)

Elizabeth set herself at once to plan a new army, and a new general for Ireland, with a view to the immediate subjection of O'Neill. The reports of the Council and of the various Provincial Presidents threw her into a state of fury, and she meditated making peace with Spain, in order that she might be enabled to throw her whole strength into Ireland. What maddened her was the thought that it should be Hugh O'Neill, carefully fostered in England, trained up to be a traitor to his country, like the Earl of Clanrickarde, who should thus threaten her grip upon Ireland, and animate the momentous Irish National Confederacy which faced her. After abusing Ormond and his fellow-councillors to her heart's content, she resolved upon a new army of 16,000 foot and 1,300 horse, to be led by Robert, Earl of Essex, who had in the Spanish War taken Cadiz, and had great military reputation, and to be reinforced every three months by 2,000 men. When Essex actually did muster up his forces he found 19,000 men, and the total of the English forces in Ireland at this time was, of course, actually much greater.

The state of Ireland at the time, from the English point of view, is given in a memorandum which was prepared by the Council for Essex's information, and was handed to him on his arrival. It enumerates the "rebels" in the various counties. In Dublin, the mountain rebels, O'Byrnes and O'Tooles; in Kildare, the O'Dempseys, Eustaces, and Fitzspiers; Carlow and

Kilkenny, most part in rebellion; in Leix, Owny Mac Rory; in Offaly, the O'Connors, O'Molloys, and O'Donoghues; in Kilkenny, the O'Carrolls and Viscount Mountgarret; in Westmeath, the O'Melaghlins, O'Foxes, and McCoughlans; Walter Tyrrell of Meath gets a special mention of his own, and we are told that Louth and Longford are "much wasted of Ulster."

Ulster. All in revolt. Dundalk, Knockfergus, Newry, Carlingford, Greencastle, Narrowwater, and the Castle of Ballindarroge in English hands, "all the rest is in rebellion."

Munster. Generally in rebellion, but "the cities and port towns, with the best castles, still hold for the Queen."

Connacht. Enumerates all the clans as in revolt, the only notable traitor in the Province being Clanrickarde, who stuck to the English all through this war.

The total Irish forces are given as:—Leinster, 3,230; Ulster, 8,922; Munster, 4,555; and Connacht, 3,290; that is an English estimate of 19,997 as the total fighting force of Ireland, a force scattered over every parish in the island, and unprovided with artillery. The odds seemed to be all in favour of Essex, and yet when he departed he left the Irish stronger than before. His instructions from Elizabeth were elaborate and comprehensive. She advised him first that "we shall spare no earthly thing of ours" to bring this proud rebel to subjection, reminded him that he was commanding a "royal army, paid, furnished, and provided in other sort than any King of this land hath done before," and ordered him to reinforce the Presidents of Munster, Connacht, and Leinster, so far as necessary, and himself "chastise" Ulster. When she mentions O'Neill, one can feel the venom yet; he was to be received only upon unconditional surrender—this was on the supposition that Essex could beat him absolutely; then he was empowered—assuming, I suppose, that he were well,

but not hopelessly, beaten—to offer him his life, and finally—it occurring to her that perhaps Essex might not absolutely subdue him—he was empowered "to take him in upon such conditions as you shall find good and necessary for our honour and safety of that kingdom," and, finally, the people were to be "instructed and contained" in the reformed religion, and provided with reformed clergymen, for Elizabeth, now that she began to suspect Popery, as one of the things which fanned the Irish war, began to be solicitous for the souls of the Irish.

Essex's army was a formidable one. In a later despatch, Elizabeth refers to it as "the flower of our army," and it was led by England's best captains; but the net result of Essex's six months in Ireland—April to September 1599—was a series of heavy defeats for the English, which so exasperated Elizabeth that eventually he went to the block. The various blood-thirsty gentlemen who wrote to the Council at this juncture, recommending their special methods of ending the war, were all agreed upon one thing, to begin with Munster and move upwards; and Ormond and his fellows were, or pretended to be, of the same opinion. Essex himself wanted to attack Ulster at once, but they persuaded him to try the other plan, and accordingly he did so. After reinforcing various garrisons, and issuing various proclamatinos—in regard to which the Four Masters say "not many of the Irish, however, responded to these proclamations"—he sallied South with 7,000 men, well-armed and lightly-baggaged. Owny Mac Rory, and Tyrrell, and Domhnall Spaineach, and other Leinster chiefs kept him company, and kept him in a constant state of nerves. Writing to Elizabeth afterwards he complained that he was constantly harassed, and never free from interruptions, and that his health was breaking. His army certainly was. The Irish, scattered as they were into numerous small bands, attempted no general action, but they worried Essex

incessantly, day and night, ambushing him, attacking his rearguard, and generally adopting the tactics which Art Mor MacMurchadha adopted against Richard II. At the same time, Owny and Tyrrell watched every opportunity of vitally attacking him, and took the one chance they got. Moving through the Pass of Plumes, near Maryborough, his vanguard got a bit in front; and Owny Mac Rory promptly fell on the rearguard and decimated it; the pass being called the "Pass of Plumes" since owing to the number of plumes lost by the English. But Essex pursued his way to Munster, where the Geraldines and MacCarthys took up the running from O'More and Tyrrell, and as effectively. He joined his forces with those of Sir Thomas Norris, and at Croom the allies attacked and defeated him, Sir Thomas Norris being mortally wounded. He took Cahir Castle, after battering its walls to pieces with heavy ordnance, and Askeaton; but the Geraldines about the same time took Desmond's old stronghold at Castlemaine; and, weary and dispirited, Essex turned and made for Dublin, arriving there with a diminished and broken army, and with the news before him that a sally by 600 English, under Sir Henry Harrington into the Wicklow Hills had been met and smashed by the O'Byrnes. Of this expedition Elizabeth wrote later to the Lord Justices and Council, "and therefore can we not but still challenge you all, and you especially, our cousin of Ormond, that contrary to that Council you did so strangely urge our Lieutenant against his own mind (as he protesteth) still to range so far from place to place in Munster, and to spend so long time as not to arrive in Dublin before July were a third part spent, whereby you know that all the forces he carried (which were the flower of our army) were tired and harassed, and it accounted honour enough to bring them back again; whereof you saw this effect to follow, that in some corners whole regiments were defeated, in many places divers disasters happened, and in all places,

wheresoever the army itself marched, some losses fell of our best commanders."

Stung by Elizabeth's letters to himself, taunting and reproachful letters, Essex resolved on another attempt. She had ordered him to go for O'Neill, and for O'Neill he went, adopting the plan of Lord Borough—Clifford with the forces of Connacht to attack O'Donnell from the Connacht side, while he should attack O'Neill himself *via* Armagh. Sir Conyers Clifford was a capable soldier, and he made his preparations well. He sent O'Conor Sligo—an English O'Conor—into Sligo to make a diversion, but O'Donnell beat him into Collooney Castle, which he besieged; and Clifford gathered all his forces, 2,000 men, and went for O'Donnell. From Athlone he marched to Boyle, and thence forward to Sligo—held by O'Donnell save for Collooney—*via* the Curlew Mountains. He had already been beaten by O'Donnell at Ballyshannon at the beginning of the war, and had no mind to be beaten again, and laid himself out with care. But in the Curlews his army of 2,000 was hopelessly beaten by less than 1,000 of the Irish under MacDermott and Brian Og O'Rorke, under the generalship of Red Hugh. Clifford had his infantry massed in three divisions, with the cavalry at the foot of the Pass ready for emergencies; and MacDermott held the first wood with six hundred men, and behind him O'Rorke with one hundred and sixty gallowglasses, clad in mail and armed with battleaxes. Through the wood went MacDermott, giving ground, but not flying, and through the bog beyond to the edge of a farther wood; and here he took his stand again. Clifford's vanguard came out of the first wood and began to advance, and behind him came the second portion of his army, with the rearguard still in the wood. And MacDermott and his men began a hot attack on the English. They crumpled up the vanguard, threw it in disorder on the second portion, and then when it was

quite disorganized, opened their ranks to O'Rorke. Brian of the Battleaxes had been an Oxford student when his father, Brian of the Ramparts, was hanged at Tyburn, but Oxford saw him no more. Now he came with his one hundred and sixty chosen, down on the English like a thunderbolt. It was as effective as a cavalry charge: methodically the mail-clad gallowglasses moved; methodically the battleaxes did their work, and Clifford's men broke in disorder and ran, tumbling into the rearguard. Behind them hot foot came MacDermott and his six hundred, and the disorder became a rout. "Howbeit," say the Four Masters, "the English at last turned their backs to the mighty men of the north, and the few routed the many." Soon the English cavalry at the base of the wood saw the remnants of their army emerge in hasty flight, and an English cavalry charge checked MacDermott. But he opened his ranks again, and Brian Og and his gallowglasses charged and routed the cavalry. The battle was over. Clifford and 1,400 English lay dead, Collooney surrendered, and O'Conor Sligo made a friendship with O'Donnell.

With this news ringing in his ears, Essex made only a half-hearted attempt to fight O'Neill. He marched north towards the end of August, and the two armies met near Louth. O'Neill had the superior force, but he did not wish to fight Essex, who was an old friend of his, and he proposed a parley, at which they agreed to a cessation, and at which O'Neill gave Essex a verbal message for Elizabeth, with the terms upon which he would make peace. Essex agreed to the truce, and undertook to convey the terms personally to Elizabeth; terms which he, evidently, in view of the strength of the Irish position, deemed reasonable. These terms included the recognition of the Catholic religion, that all Irish offices should be confined to Irishmen, that the Irish chiefs should be restored to and recognized in possession of of their hereditary

territories, and that every Irish chief who desired it be permitted to keep a fleet. Cecil's comment on them was the one word "Ewtopia," and Elizabeth herself got angrier than ever. "What," said she sarcastically to Essex, "would become of all Munster, Leix and Offaly, if 'all the ancient exiled rebels be restored to all that our laws and hereditary successions have bestowed upon us.'" O'Neill refused to modify the terms, or to treat with Ormond or any of the Council, whom he did not trust: and in due course he gave the prescribed fourteen days notice for the cessation of the truce, and the war went on.

Essex's record in Ireland has been put very succinctly by Standish O'Grady. "Historians," he writes, "have not at all sufficiently recognized his very bad record as chief Governor of Ireland. They say he did nothing, but, in fact, he did a great deal less, for he was beaten by the insurgent lords at many points. As he marched through the Queen's County, young O'More, lord of that region, routed his rearguard and plundered his baggage in the Pass of Plumes. At Askeaton, County Limerick, he was beaten by the Geraldines, and driven back out of West Munster. The sons of Feagh MacHugh, defeated his cavalry in one battle, and his infantry in another. Finally, his lieutenant, Sir Conyers Clifford, President of Connacht, was first beaten by Red Hugh at Ballyshannon, and afterwards beaten disastrously in the Curlew Mountains." That is precisely all that Essex was able to accomplish with his 20,000 men. He left O'Neill in a stronger position than before, stronger, inasmuch as, without O'Neill or his own army firing one shot, Essex and his lieutenants were defeated individually and collectively and, as Elizabeth put it, "brought in never a capital rebel." Writing about this period about Hugh O'Neill's many misdeeds, a State Paper scribe says, "He stirred Feagh MacHugh and his sons, Donnel Spainagh and Brian McDonough, Onie O'More, and the O'Connors,

with some bastard Geraldines, and many Irish septs, to raise rebellion in Leinster and Meath, and made Connachtmen, *who of themselves are most apt thereunto*, to rise upon the sudden." That unsolicited tribute to Connacht, which I have italicized, ought not to go down to oblivion.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE GREAT FIGHT OF THE NORTHERN EAGLES.—O'NEILL'S MARCH THROUGH LEINSTER AND MUNSTER (1600)

In the State Papers Calendar for November 1599, there are several lists purporting to be the terms upon which Hugh O'Neill was willing, at this time, to make peace. There is no guarantee of their authenticity, and the probabilities are that they are, none of them, quite authentic; and, furthermore, we have no easy way now of determining what in them is authentic and what imagination. In his negotiations after the Yellow Ford and with Essex, O'Neill committed nothing to paper, and these lists can, therefore, only be taken as so many memorada drawn up by the English, and based upon the reports of their agents, as to the terms upon which it was believed that peace could be made. It is interesting to chronicle what they were at this period, when the Irish had not alone been uniformly successful, but were getting into a stronger position every day. One of these lists is marked by Cecil "Eutopia," and contains twenty-two articles. It may, I think, be fairly taken as the official English view of Hugh's irreducible minimum. Here are the articles.

They are headed, "Articles intended to be stood upon by Tyrone."

"1. That the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion be openly preached and taught throughout all Ireland, as well in cities as borough towns, by Bishops, Seminary Priests, Jesuits, and all other religious men.

"2. That the Church of Ireland be wholly governed by the Pope.

"3. That all cathedrals and parish churches, abbeys, and all other religious houses, with all tithes and church lands, now in the hands of the English, be presently restored to the Catholic Churchmen.

"4. That all Irish priests and religious men, now prisoners in England, be presently set at liberty, with all temporal Irishmen, that are troubled for their conscience, and to go where they will without further trouble.

"5. That all Irish priests and religious men may freely pass and repass, by sea and land, to and from foreign countries.

"6. That no Englishman may be a churchman in Ireland.

"7. That there be erected an University upon the Crown rents of Ireland wherein all sciences shall be taught according to the manner of the Catholic Roman Church.

"8. That the Governor of Ireland be at least an Earl, and of the Privy Council of England, bearing the name of Viceroy.

"9. That the Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer, Lord Admiral and Council of State, the Justices of the Laws, Queen's Attorney, Queen's Serjeant, and all other officers appertaining to the Council and Law of Ireland, be Irishmen.

"10. That all principal governments of Ireland, as Connacht, Munster, etc., be governed by Irish noblemen.

"11. That the Master of Ordnance and half the soldiers, with their officers, resident in Ireland, be Irishmen.

"12. That no Irishman's heirs shall lose their lands for the fault of their ancestors.

"13. That no Irishman's heir, under age, shall fall in the Queen's or her successors' hands, as a ward, but that the living be put to the heir's profit, and the advancement of his younger brethren, and marriage of his sisters, if he have any.

"14. That no children, nor any other friends, be taken as pledges for the good abearing of their parents, and, if there be any such pledges now in the hands of the English, they must presently be released.

"15. That all Statutes made against the Preferment of Irishmen, as well in their own country as abroad, be presently recalled.

"16. That the Queen nor her successors may in no sort press an Irishman to serve them against his will.

"17. That O'Neill, O'Donnell, the Earl of Desmond, with all their partakers, may peaceably enjoy all lands and privileges that did appertain to their predecessors two hundred years past.

"18. That all Irishmen, of what quality they be, may freely travel in foreign countries for their better experience, without making any of the Queen's officers acquainted withal.

"19. That all Irishmen may as freely travel and traffic all merchandises in England as Englishmen, paying the same rights and tributes as the English do.

"20. That all Irishmen may freely traffic with all merchandises that shall be thought fit by the Council of State of Ireland for the profit of their Republic, with foreigners or in foreign countries, and that no Irishman shall be troubled for the passage of priests or other religious men.

"21. That all Irishmen that will may learn and use all occupations and arts whatsoever.

"22. That all Irishmen may freely build ships of what burden they will, furnishing the same with artillery and all munitions at their pleasure."

These twenty-two articles represent what Cecil and his colleagues made out of the parleys with O'Neill, and they show clearly the strong position he was in, and the bid he made for a final settlement of the Irish wars. These conditions would have conceded to Elizabeth the sovereignty, while depriving her of any power of keeping England dominant in the country, and they would have

pulled all the Irish aristocracy of all bloods at once to Ireland's side. See especially articles 6, 9 to 14, 16, 17, and 22. Article 11, by the way, is another nail in the coffin of the oft-repeated myth that the English army in Ireland was nearly all composed of Irishmen. At this time Hugh O'Neill could easily have concluded a peace upon terms which would have left himself and his chief allies undisturbed, but would have left it in England's power to interfere fatally in the country again when they choose, but it is clear that he was not prepared to agree to any peace which did not give a guarantee of permanence, which was not based upon a settlement which would put it out of England's power to exploit Ireland, and he wasted very little time upon negotiations. When he found that there was no possibility of his terms being accepted he broke off the truce and prepared for the next invasion. That, he knew, would be no light thing. Elizabeth's fine army had been, not alone beaten, but humiliated, and Elizabeth knew that her enemies in Europe had begun to talk of Hugh O'Neill and his generalship, and in her imagination she saw Spain and Ireland in hearty conjunction. So she set about another army with all speed. And Hugh, on his side, sent messages to Spain and Austria for help, representing the war as a war against heresy, and giving the same advice which Tone afterwards gave France, to send a small force to Ulster, or a large force to Munster. And, that done, he tried to pull all Ireland together to meet the threatened shock. and made a circuit of Munster and Leinster in the early part of 1600.

Ulster and Connacht, under his own eye and that of O'Donnell, were safe. Ulster was with him to a man, and in Connacht only the Earl of Clanrickarde held out for the English. Leinster was fairly safe, with Owny Mac Rory and Walter Tyrrell keeping their eagle eyes upon Dublin and Kilkenny, but Munster was the weak spot in the Confederacy, and he determined to go through it and endeavour to put some unity of purpose

into it. In the previous years his ambassador to Leinster and Munster had been his son Conn—(this Conn, an illegitimate son, was one of his most trusted and most efficient lieutenants, and played a prominent part in the war. He is one of many, akin to Walter Tyrrell and the Brown Geraldine, to be met with everywhere in these years, everywhere where there was work to be done, and it was always effectively done, and cheerfully done. The State Paper scribes delight to call him a bastard. And some day, after all this spade-work and laying bare of fundamentals has been driven into the thick heads of our Universities, Conn O'Neill, and Walter Tyrrell, and Walter Reagh, and their comrades, will come into their own)—but now, in the interval between Essex and Mountjoy, he went himself with his forces. This circuit, like unto the circuit of a newly-elected Ard-Righ in the old days, was a remarkable testimony to the way in which Hugh was regarded through all Ireland as High King, practically. From North to South of Ireland he went, slowly and at leisure, and back again, and everywhere his march and his reception were as those of a king. The English dared not stir out of their fortified towns, and the Council in Dublin, and Ormond in Kilkenny, and St. Leger in Cork, saw his army within musket shot of them, and let it pass unfought. The only martial operations he carried on were against the O'Carrolls of Ely, who had the previous year exterminated some of the MacMahons of Oriel, O'Neill's allies; and against David Barry, of Barry More, the only notable Munster leader who held out for Elizabeth. Barry remained defiant, and answered O'Neill's letters to the effect that his title to his lands was an English title, and that he would stand for Elizabeth, and O'Neill contented himself with wasting his territory and weakening his power to do mischief. All the other notable chiefs confirmed their alliance with the Northern Chiefs: the McCarthys submitted to him a dispute concerning the leadership

of Desmond, which he decided in favour of Finghin (or Florence, as he is usually called) McCarthy; James Fitzthomas, the Sugan Earl of Desmond, renewed his alliance with O'Neill, who had, as will be remembered, made him an Earl. He had his camp at Inniscarra, near Cork, and, as the Four Masters put it, "Thither repaired the greater number of the English and Irish of the two Provinces of Munster (except those in the great towns) to submit and pay their homage to O'Neill; and such of them as were not able to come to him sent him tokens of submission and presents, except Barry, before mentioned, and the Lord of Muskerry, and O'Sullivan Beare. O'Neill obtained eighteen hostages of the Chieftains of Munster at that camp; and he remained twenty days examining the disputes and covenants of the men of Munster, and reconciling them to each other in their contentions." And having done all that was possible to stiffen up the Munster chiefs for the expected invasion, he marched back to Ulster unfought, eluding Mountjoy, who had landed with his army in February at Dublin, and leaving behind him 1,800 men under Walter Tyrrell.

This period, the spring of 1600, marked the highest point of the Irish wave in the war. Fynes Moryson writes of it thus: "The mere Irish, puffed up with success and blooded with happy encounters, did boldly keep the field and proudly disdain the English forces. Great part of the English-Irish were in open action of rebellion, and most part of the rest temporized with the State, openly professing obedience that they might live under the protection thereof, but secretly relieving the rebels and practising with them for their present and future safeties. Among the English, the worthy generals of this age, partly by this fatal war, partly by factions at home, were so wasted as the best judgments could hardly find out any man fit to command this army in chief. The English common soldiers, by looseness of body, the natural sickness of the country, by the

poverty of the war *in which nothing was to be gained but blows*, and by the late defeats wherein great numbers of them had perished, were altogether out of heart. The colonels and commanders, considering the army's weakeness, were somewhat dejected in mind; yea, the very Councillors of State were so diffident, as some of them in late conference with Tyrone had descended (I know not upon what warrant) to an abject entreaty for a short cessation." But Hugh O'Neill himself, the wisest and ablest head in Ireland, knew well how precarious the position was while Dublin, Kilkenny, Cork, Galway, and the seaport towns generally remained in English hands, and he knew that, without artillery, they could not be taken. That it was which governed his action with regard to the terms of peace he was willing to accept. Taking the articles printed above as approximately representing those he was willing to agree to, it will be seen that he was willing to accept a peace which would guarantee Ireland freedom, even under an English Viceroy, so long as it ended the exploitation, which a peace on those articles would have done. And the alternative, the course to which he turned when peace was hopeless —the alternative was foreign aid. It is idle, and it is shallow, to blame, as pseudo-historians have done, Shane O'Neill and Hugh O'Neill for seeking foreign aid, and for posing as champions of Catholicity at a time when there was no practical religious oppression in the country, and when there was no possibility of binding Ireland together on a religious issue. It was artillery they wanted, and siege guns especially, enough to batter down the walls of Dublin and Kilkenny and the other fortresses, and thus make Ireland safe; and the Catholic appeal was for the Pope, and Spain, and Austria, and the Powers fighting a Catholic battle on the continent. Matthew de Oviedo, who was at Dungannon as envoy from the Pope and Spain, sent to find out the truth about Ireland, wrote to King Philip in

June, confirming all O'Neill's previous letters, and saying that "if a help of 6,000 men and some large guns were sent them, they could take any city in Ireland"; and O'Neill himself, writing to Philip, says: "At present matters stand in so favourable a way in this Kingdom that with some help and some large guns to make breaches in the walls, this war would end successfully, for we have an army in all the provinces of Ireland, and when the succour reaches us, and its arrival becomes known, our strength would be doubled; whereas if the aid fails to come, or is delayed, our forces must grow less and melt away, not having means to subsist." That was exactly the position at any time between the 15th August, 1598, and the first moves of Mountjoy in May or June 1600. Siege guns! For eighteen months only a normal equipment of artillery stood between Ireland and freedom.

CHAPTER XXV

THE GREAT FIGHT OF THE NORTHERN EAGLES.—MOUNTJOY, AND CAREW, AND DOWCRA (1600-1)

In the beginning of 1600, Elizabeth sent over Mountjoy as Viceroy, Carew as President of Munster, and Dowcra as Commander of Derry and the Ulster garrisons, with a new army of 12,000 foot and 1,200 horse, and with a new policy, new, that is, as compared with that of Essex, but more in keeping with the general English policy. Essex and his 20,000 men had passed as chaff before the wind in an ordinary trial of strength by battle with the Irish, and, therefore, the weapons of the trio included battle only as a final resort. Their policy was a policy of (1) extermination, (2) burning of crops, houses, and destruction of cattle, (3) detaching from the Confederacy such of the Irish chiefs as were amenable to soft talk, (4) promoting quarrels and bogus claimants to various clanships, (5) assassination. That is to say, the comparative honesty of Essex was thrown overboard, and the standing basis of English policy in Ireland was reverted to. Elizabeth's instructions to Mountjoy were full, and exact, and characteristic. She began by being pious, "And forasmuch as the two pillars of kingly state are piety and justice, we do recommend unto your special care to preserve the true exercise of religion amongst our loving subjects; and though the time do not permit that you should now intermeddle by any severity or violence in matters of religion, until we have better established our power there to countenance your actions in that kind, yet we require you that, both in your own house and in our

armies, you forsee that no neglect be used in that behalf." And Mountjoy and Carew played up bravely to that key, and interlarded their correspondence plentifully with pious references to the Deity, while all the time they were murdering women and children, and harmless beasts, Mountjoy trying to hire assassins to murder Hugh O'Neill, and Carew trying to hire them to murder the Munster leaders, "generally holding a market for assassins," as Standish O'Grady puts it. Elizabeth, however, having relieved her mind of her anxiety about souls, went on to more practical subjects and, in one pregnant sentence, laid the lines upon which Mountjoy mainly acted in his holding of the country—"It is plainly confessed that there is no course to be taken but by plantation of garrisons in the heart of the countries of the capital rebels"—a course which was generally adopted both by Carew and Mountjoy.

To all the "rebels," save Hugh O'Neill, Mountjoy was instructed what terms to offer, but Hugh was to be taken alive or dead without conditions. "Use all means possible to cut him off as a reprobate to God, and leave him to the force of our sword. . . . We would have you make a great difference between the northern rebels and the others of Munster and Leinster. Of those of the north, we have not had much profit, and therefore can be content you do therein for a beginning order things, so in their compositions, as rather to seek provision for continuing them in obedience and abatement of their greatness, than to strain them to any matter of profit . . . but for the rebels in Munster and in other places, where our English subjects are seated and planted, we require you there not to yield to any conditions that may displant them, or bind us to give away to traitors any matters of value, which of right appertain to us; for that were to reward traitors, and not to forgive them." And she ended up with a special command that "as we have lost the best part of our

possessions by the rebellion in Munster" an immediate effort should be made to reduce that province. It was Munster, therefore, the weakest of the provinces, which had to bear the fiercest and most ruthless attack—the attack of Carew.

Mountjoy got his campaign going at once, and sent Dowcra by sea to Derry with over 4,000 men, Carew to Munster with 3,000, while he himself with the remainder feinted at O'Neill in order to distract attention from Dowcra. When Carew got to Munster he saw quite enough to deter him from making any attempt to risk a pitched battle with the combined chiefs, or with MacCarthy Mor or the Earl of Desmond singly; he found the whole province in a state of complete revolt, and even some of the walled towns, garrisoned though they were, trembling in the balance. And so he struck hard and mercilessly at the smaller men, leaving for the present the Earl of Desmond, MacCarthy Mor, Pierce Lacy, and Dermot O'Connor alone, none of whom had the insight to see his game and attack him. Some of the chiefs, by means of letters and promises, he detached from the Confederacy, and broke at his leisure, others he came down on suddenly, and broke at once; MacCarthy Mor he succeeded in inducing to proclaim himself neutral, to sit on the fence; and gradually he recovered all the castles in Waterford, Limerick, and Kerry. In these castles he planted garrisons who wasted the surrounding country, destroying crops, and cattle, and houses, killing women and children, and in December 1600, he felt himself strong enough to move against Desmond and Lacy. He proclaimed a free pardon for Munster—on conditions of promise of good behaviour, etc.—save for James FitzThomas Desmond, John FitzThomas Desmond, Thomas Fitzmaurice, eldest son to the late traitorous Baron Lixnaw, Edmund FitzThomas Fitzgerald, commonly called the Knight of the Valley, and Pierce Lacy of the Bruff in Limerick"; and when,

the next year, John FitzThomas and Pierce Lacy were slain in battle, and James FitzThomas taken by treachery, Carew could point once more to a Munster which was apparently pacified and quite in the English grip again. But it was a forced, sullen, pacification, which he proceeded to make more secure by a multiplication of garrisons.

In Leinster, Mountjoy had adopted a similar policy. He struck hard at the O'Byrnes with all his strength, and fought a number of battles with Owny Mac Rory and Tyrrell; but when, in August 1600, Owny was mortally wounded in a skirmish, the formidable aspect of the Leinster Confederacy disappeared, and the English were freed from urgent apprehension of all save O'Neill and O'Donnell, and the indomitable Tyrrell who was still in Leinster. Not that "rebellion," in a disconnected and disorganized fashion, was not still rife both in Leinster and in Munster, but that only in Ulster and in Connacht, under O'Neill and O'Donnell, was it formidable. The material was still there, but Munster had not produced a leader, and the leader who had been the life and soul of Leinster—Owny Mac Rory—was slain. The Northern Eagles still held their ground.

And well and bravely they rose to the occasion. Dowcra's 4,000 sailed up Lough Foyle, landed at Derry, and built three forts in the neighbourhood, while Mountjoy drew O'Neill's attention South. O'Neill burned Portmore and Armagh, and tried to draw Mountjoy further North, but he would not be drawn, and he turned back when he thought that Dowcra had had time to make good his footing. Here is what the Spanish Envoy wrote to King Philip at this time of the situation:—"Yet such is the bravery of these two Earls, and of their followers, that if they fought with equal arms they would have no fear; but as they have neither muskets nor artillery, they cannot drive them from the forts which they are erecting each day within the

province, and as the war has lasted so long, they are so exhausted and impoverished that they have not the means of supporting the soldiers or of paying them, and so every day we are afraid they will leave us. The English are making great efforts to bring about a peace, offering excellent terms. . . . To all this they reply most honourably that they will hold out so long as they have one soldier, or there remains a cow to eat. At present they have got together a very good army, so that O'Neill made the Viceroy retreat when he was coming by land, and O'Donnell keeps those who came by sea shut up in their fortresses." That was Oviedo's impressions, and Hugh O'Neill, writing at the same time, asks just for siege guns, guns to enable him to batter down the walls of the forts.

Yet even without artillery, and without money, and without a plethora of muskets, O'Neill and O'Donnell held their own. Mountjoy made several expeditions to the North, and succeeded in planting several forts on the south side of O'Neill's lines, and O'Neill on his part avoided a pitched battle, and contented himself with keeping Mountjoy out. They had constant and sometimes very heavy skirmishing along the line of the fortifications, but nothing decisive. O'Neill, evidently, waiting for the promised Spanish help. O'Donnell, on his side, had to guard Connacht, and watch Dowcra. He sat down before the newly-erected forts, smothered all Dowcra's attempts at sallying forth to gain a grip on the neighbourhood, and proceeded to draw a cordon; so that soon Dowcra's provisions ran short, and his men began to die from disease. "Now the winter began to be fierce upon us," wrote Dowcra, "our men wasted with continual labours, the island scattered with cabins full of sick men, our biscuit all spent, our other provisions of nothing but meal, butter, and a little wine, and that by computation to hold out but six days longer . . . our two forts, notwithstanding all the diligence we had been able to use, far from the state of being defensible

. . . our horses were so weak and few that we were not able to hold watch any farther out." In these straits he attempted to suborn Niall Garbh O'Donnell, in command for Red Hugh, and succeeded. Niall Garbh was a brave and capable leader, a cousin of Red Hugh's, and married to his sister Nuala, and probably the rightful chief by Feudal law. Dowcra worked upon this and promised, in Elizabeth's name, to give him Tyrconnell. The bait took, and Niall Garbh went over to the enemy, took Lifford for the English, and thence to Donegal, where he took and garrisoned the Abbey. Red Hugh was then in Connacht, fighting—and beating—Clanrickarde, who had to be constantly watched, and he came back like a whirlwind. He blockaded Lifford, and gradually swept the English and Niall back towards the sea, getting Niall finally, in desperate straits, besieged in Donegal Abbey, which he blew up, Niall escaping to the castle of Donegal. This also Red Hugh blockaded, notwithstanding the fire of an English ship in the harbour; and this was the situation, that he was in a fair way to drive both Dowcra and Niall into the sea when the news came in September 1601, of the Spanish landing at Kinsale—the most fatal event in Irish history. All operations were immediately suspended, and the theatre of war shipped from the uttermost North to the uttermost South—from Donegal to Kinsale.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE GREAT FIGHT OF THE NORTHERN EAGLES—KINSALE (1601)

For more than two years Hugh O'Neill had wanted but heavy artillery to drive the English out of Ireland, and for more than two years Spanish aid had been promised: "If you send a large army," said he, "send it to Munster; but if a small one, send it to Ulster"; and Philip sent a small army, and sent it to Munster, after Munster had been dragooned by Carew, most of her castles and strong places garrisoned again by the English, and her most trusted chiefs dead or prisoners. In anticipation of a Spanish landing he had captured, by treachery, the chiefs of greatest note, *e.g.*, Florence McCarthy Mor, and in Munster there was none to call a rally when Don Juan put in at Kinsale. And yet Carew had his doubts. He was just a bloody-minded coward and butcher, and never felt safe: in his letters to Elizabeth, in the months preceding the Spanish landing, we find a continual wail for reinforcements and money, and a continual reiteration that all Munster will rise as one man if the Spaniards come. Even the towns, Carew felt, were not safe, and this feeling of his was justified when Kinsale, which was an English town, received the Spaniards with open arms.

The Spanish force which landed at Kinsale on the 23rd September, 1601, is variously numbered—O'Sullivan Beare gives it as 2,500; Carew says 3,400; and modern writers take it generally at 4,000. It certainly was not more than 4,000, and we may take it at that. The command of the expedition had been offered to several of Philip's generals, who had refused it unless an army

of betwen 8,000 and 10,000 men was sent, but Don Juan, who was then in prison under charges of misconduct in previous commands, took it on with 4,000, and the 4,000 did not even bring any material, spare arms, or artillery: an expedition, obviously, to twist England's tail without any hope, in Philip's mind, of doing her any real injury; the only injury it did was to us. Just then the war was at a critical point, and both parties understood that: it was touch and go, and the least thing might set the balance finally to one side. Mountjoy's 13,000 were already almost spent, between garrisons and skirmishings, for every trip he had taken north he had had to fight O'Neill a guerilla fight once he got to the Ulster borders. Dowcra and the remnants of his 4,000 were hard pressed by O'Donnell, and on the point of being overwhelmed; all North Connacht was behind O'Donnell, and only Clanrickarde and Thomond held out for England; Leinster was more or less in arms, not strongly and vigorously and aggressively, as under Owny Mac Rory, but sullenly and smoulderingly, demanding constant wariness, with Walter Tyrrell still holding himself over the heads of the English like a bogey man; and even dragooned Munster, garrisoned and slashed, even it had an atmosphere that made Carew troubled in his mind. Elizabeth was even getting impatient at the lack of big results, impatient at the constant call for reinforcements; and so far every mile of territory had to be fought for.

Into this Ireland came the news of the Spanish landing, and at once both parties concentrated upon Kinsale. Mountjoy and Carew were afraid that unless they went for the Spaniards at once the whole of the Munster Irish would join them, and messengers were sent all over the country gathering the English in, Carew and Mountjoy, at the same time, marching post haste to Kinsale with what men they had, so as to prevent Don Juan moving into the interior. In this whole crisis may be observed, more clearly and more damnably

than in any other, the operations of what John Mitchel ironically termed the "British Providence"; for the Spanish force landed in two divisions, the first under Don Juan, at Kinsale, was only 3,400 men, and the second, which did not land until some weeks later at Castlehaven, was 700. Don Juan's force was too few to take the offensive, and so he just held Kinsale, and sent messengers to O'Neill and O'Donnell to come and join him: and he made no effort to gather up the Irish of that coast. According to Philip O'Sullivan Beare, he refused the aid of Domhnall O'Sullivan Beare, with 1,000 men, and waited for O'Neill and O'Donnell; and, so, Mountjoy and Carew had uninterrupted liberty to bring up their troops until O'Donnell came down like a whirlwind, and Munster rose behind him.

News travelled slowly then, and it is not clear when Don Juan's messengers reached O'Neill and O'Donnell. They had told King Philp that if he sent an army to Munster they would be unable to help, and it would have to be strong enough to fight its own way; yet, after a hasty council, they chivalrously staked all on this, summoned all their confederates, and prepared to march south and fight it out with Mountjoy. It was the middle of October before Mountjoy and Carew began any kind of siege business at Kinsale, and it was the middle of November before their artillery was in place, and their lines made, and the siege proper begun. We do not know for certain what his forces were, but they were at least 12,000, for he was able to send 4,000 under Carew to meet O'Donnell. O'Neill and O'Donnell could not, straightaway, upon receiving Don Juan's letters, begin a march south; they had to summon up their reserves, to leave sufficient behind to ensure that their own territories would be held whatever happened, and generally to secure a line of retreat. Red Hugh moved first with 1,500 men, all that he could spare, leaving Ruairi O'Donnell to look after Tirchonaill; eluded

Carew and his 4,000 by a lightning mountain march —thirty-two Irish miles with carriage in one day— which Carew confessed to be the best march he had ever heard of, and reached Kinsale on 23rd November. Behind him Munster was up, and many castles and strong places again in Irish hands; and he promptly sat down and besieged Mountjoy closely on the west, awaiting O'Neill. A fortnight later O'Neill arrived with 4,000, camped at Belgooly, and besieged Mountjoy on the north and east. And there he was shut in, in a trap, to which there seemed to be no outlet. Munster had risen, as Carew feared, all save McCarthy Reagh and Cormac McCarthy of Muskerry, and all Mountjoy's lines of communication were cut. The English fleet held Kinsale harbour, but between that and Mountjoy stood Kinsale town and the Spaniards, and if Don Juan was between the fire of the fleet and of Mountjoy, Mountjoy was between Don Juan and O'Neill. And so, shut in in wet weather, short of provisions, huddled together, his men began to die like sheep. He began with an army, including 5,000 reinforcements, which came from Barnstaple, and Ilfracombe, and Bristol, of perhaps 15,000. On the 23rd November the State Papers give his numbers as 10,000, and a few weeks later it was down to 6,000, of whom, according to Carew, not more than one quarter were wholly fit to fight.

Thus far Hugh O'Neill had been managing the campaign, and managing it well. He never fought a battle when it could be avoided, and in this case he saw clearly that Mountjoy must surrender in a very short time. He kept enough of the Ulstermen before Kinsale to ensure that the lines were tightly drawn, and used the others in expeditions behind—commissariat, or attacks upon castles, and so on. And he would have been able to carry his plan to the end were it not for Don Juan. Don Juan grew tired of the siege —a siege in which the Spaniards fought well—and sent

urgent letters to O'Neill and O'Donnell, demanding that they should attack Monntjoy. These letters became so urgent that a special Council of War was called, and O'Neill was overborne. "O'Donnell, however," say the *Annals*, "was oppressed at heart, and ashamed to hear the complaint and distress of the Spaniards without relieving them," and another annalist, Lughaidh O'Clery, who wrote O'Donnell's life, says that the two Hughs quarrelled about it. But anyway, Hugh O'Neill was overborne, and it was decided to attack Mountjoy on the night of the 24th December, 1601.

The whole circumstances of the attack, and of the resultant battle, are still mysterious. Carew asserts that one of the Ulster chiefs—MacMahon—warned him of the attack, but his testimony is uncorroborated, and as his book, *The Pacata*, is full of lies about this siege, it is not evidence enough. On the other hand, as Don Juan was, according to the Irish plan, to sally forth at the same time as the Irish attacked, as he never fired a shot until long after the battle was over, and, as Carew himself admits that letters of O'Neill's to Don Juan were intercepted, it seems to me at least equally probable that O'Neill's messenger to Don Juan was captured, and thus the English were ready, and Don Juan ignorant of the attack. And the circumstances of the battle are as obscure as the circumstances under which it was planned. The Irish army set out in three divisions, first O'Neill, then O'Donnell, and finally Tyrrell, with the men of Munster and Leinster; they had only a few miles to march to get to Mountjoy's camp; yet O'Neill only reached it to find it daylight, Mountjoy ready, his own division spent and weary after a night march, and O'Donnell and Tyrrell somewhere behind. On coming in sight of the enemy he halted and formed up his men to await O'Donnell's arrival, and, finding him not coming, decided to postpone the attack, and gave the signal for retreat.

Whereupon Mountjoy attacked with his cavalry, and his first charge was beaten back, but the second, with the whole weight of the English cavalry behind it, succeeded, and the Tireoghain men were broken, and scattering confusion amongst the Tirchonaill men, who had just come up, they, too, were broken, and the skirmish became a rout, Tyrrell, with his division and with the Castlehaven Spaniards, covering the retreat to Innishannon. Carew and all the English writers claim about 2,000 Irish slain, but the Four Masters say "very few" were slain, and Philip O'Sullivan Beare says two hundred. Here is his account of the battle, the most detailed we have, and somewhat different from the general account. After describing O'Neill's arrival opposite Mountjoy's camp in the early morning, and his surprise at Don Juan's inaction, he says that on the camp being reconnoitred it was found that "it was very strongly fortified with a rampart, a trench, turrets, and engines. The soldiers were under arms, the horses ready bridled. Even in point of numbers they were superior to the Irish. . . . For this reason O'Neill, putting off the engagement for another day by advice of the leaders, ordered the troops to retreat. When they had retreated about half a mile they met O'Donnell, and at the very same moment the Viceroy's cavalry was at hand. These crossed the river, which was near, at a ford, O'Donnell, coming up with his horse, beat them back through the same ford, and put them to flight. The Viceroy's cavalry made another attempt to recross the ford. O'Donnell, thinking they could be easily overpowered between himself and the ford, gradually retreated. While he was thus engaged, a portion of his cavalry, either by accident or through perfidy and treachery, turning back their horses and thrusting themselves into his lines, forced the ranks of his infantry asunder. The infantry, thrown thus into disorder, betook themselves to flight. The columns of O'Neill and O'Sullivan fled likewise, though the enemy

was not pressing on them, and their leaders were in vain calling them back. . . . O'Neill and O'Donnell were unable to bring them back again to the fight." Out of all this, and out of Carew's account, the only thing we can be certain of is this: that Hugh O'Neill was outvoted in Council, and probably went to the attack with a heavy heart; possibly it was an attack for the details of which he was not responsible; that it was a stormy night, and that in the two short miles they had to go the "British Providence" sent the three divisions astray; that they came opposite Mountjoy's camp at daylight, separated and in disorder (Carew says that the charge was ordered because they were perceived to be in some disorder); that they were charged by the English cavalry before they could form up properly; and, finally, that the army was seized with panic, and collapsed.

It was the turning point in the war, the one thing that was to send the balance on the wrong side, and it was the only battle the Irish lost in the whole nine years! All the Irish authorities agree that the number slain was small, but the moral effect was disastrous. Shame took possession of the army and of its leaders; O'Donnell neither slept nor ate for three days and three nights; and finally, after another council, they decided to return to Ulster, leaving Tyrrell behind to make what headway he could against Mountjoy, and sending Hugh O'Donnell to Spain to plead the Irish cause personally with Philip. O'Donnell pleaded for a return, and a reblockade of Mountjoy, but this time it was he who was outvoted.

The impatience of De Aguila, and the impulsive chivalrousness of O'Donnell, who could not resist his appeal for relief, had taken out of Hugh O'Neill's hands the fruition of his long years' planning and fighting, but he never complained. Back he went to Tireoghain, to make a new army, and fight it out to a finish.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GREAT FIGHT OF THE NORTHERN EAGLES—THE LAST CAMPAIGN (1601-3)

"Immense and countless was the loss in that place," say the *Annals, re* Kinsale, "although the number slain was trifling; for the prowess and valour, prosperity and affluence, nobleness and chivalry, dignity and renown, hospitality and generosity, bravery and protection, devotion and pure religion, of the Island, were lost in this engagement." Let it be remembered again that in the whole course of the war it was the only battle the Irish lost; and that in the final campaign between that and the 30th March, 1603, they were rather worn down by famine and decimated by the constant warfare and the exhaustion of their reserves, than actually beaten in battle. It is difficult to understand the paralysis of national effort which followed Kinsale, save that the fatally blundering result of the operations there spread panic and shame everywhere. After the battle the chiefs held a council at Innishannon, and even then the position might have been retrieved. Mountjoy had some 6,000 men, of whom not more than 4,000 at a liberal estimate, were fit; Don Juan had 2,000; the allies had perhaps 4,000 or 5,000; and the enemy was in the grip of fever. There was no pursuit, and there was nothing to prevent the blockade of the English being continued. That, the *Annals* tell us, wa :Red Hugh's counsel, to gather up their men, turn back, and blockade Mountjoy again; but this time he was outvoted, and the decision come to was for the chiefs to return to their own territories and hold them, to leave Tyrrell behind in Munster with

O'Sullivan Beare in command, the pair to do the best they could against Mountjoy, and to send O'Donnell to Spain to King Philip to urge reinforcements; Ruaidhri O'Donnell to command in Tirchonaill. And so it was done. O'Donnell sailed for Spain, Tyrrell remained behind, and the rest went back to Ulster and Leinster. In ten days Hugh O'Neill was at Dungannon looking after the defences of Tireoghan and Ruaidhri O'Donnell reconnoitring Niall Garbh and Dowcra in Tirchonaill.

Red Hugh reached Spain and saw King Philip, who promised to send reinforcements, and sent urgent letters to Don Juan, bidding him hold out until their arrival. But Don Juan had already made terms with Mountjoy, marched out of Kinsale with colours, etc., and was sent back to Spain, delivering up to Mountjoy the castles of the MacCarthys, and O'Driscolls, and O'Sullivans, which they had given him to garrison—save Dunbuidhe, which O'Sullivan managed to seize in time. And when Philip learned of the surrender of Don Juan, he countermanded the immediate preparations and waited. Red Hugh stayed on, still pressing him for aid, but "the weapon of the Saxon" found him, and he died on the 10th September, poisoned by a spy of the coward Carew's, one James Blake, dying, one may imagine, with the horror of Kinsale—lost by his impetuosity—over his soul. One of Ireland's greatest and most faithful; some day a free Ireland will bring his ashes back to the country he loved and died for.

Turn we now to affairs at home. And first let us see what forces the English had. I have given details from time to time taken altogether from English sources, of their armies in Ireland, armies three and four times as numerous as those with which superficial writers of Irish history have credited them. Those who believe, or assert, that England maintained no armies, or small armies in Ireland, are liars or incompetents; either they falsify facts, or they have never sought them.

Under date April 1602, in the State Papers, there is a list of the English forces in Ireland which comes out at 16,100 foot and 1,350 horse—this after Kinsale, and not including the forces of many Irish chiefs, who by that time had made peace, and under the conditions of peace were bound to act against those who still held out. And Mountjoy, in sending this list and asking for a reinforcement of 2,000, writes:—"And such Irish companies which are now standing are those which have been erected not by me, but by your Lordship's orders, and I have discharged 3,092 men who were in list when I entered upon the Government." The 16,100 foot were distributed as follows:—In Leinster, 5,900; in Munster, 4,400; with Dowcra, 3,000; at Carrickfergus, 1,000; and in Connacht, 1,800; and Mountjoy set about the subjection of the provinces at once. In Leinster there was little difficulty. The death of Owny MacRuaidhri O'More had staggered Leinster, and now, with Walter Tyrrell also out of the province, the other chiefs rapidly made peace. They were all "pardoned," and re-granted their lands under English tenure, with certain reservations for forts, etc., as Mountjoy held authority to deal leniently with anybody except Hugh O'Neill. Elizabeth wanted him dead, or absolutely at her mercy.

Munster and Connacht, and Ulster, however, still made something of a fight, and in the three provinces the same policy was adopted—the policy which Mountjoy and Carew had begun when Mountjoy was made Deputy. Famine, intrigue, and extermination formed the policy. Everywhere the crops and houses were burned; chiefs who were wavering were offered peace and invited to conferences; and those who held out were attacked on all sides, and no quarter shown to men, women, or children. The defeat at Kinsale and the dispersal of the Ulstermen broke up the Munster Confederacy, despite Tyrrell's efforts, and individual chiefs made their peace. Carew took

Dunboy Castle, after "the most obstinate siege recorded in history," as he termed it, and butchered the garrison of one hundred and forty-three men—or the survivors of it—who had held it against his 3,000; Sir Charles Wilmot, another of them, coming across the Irish hospital in the Kerry mountains, butchered the wounded; and so on. Domhnall O'Sullivan Beare, Tyrrell, and MacCarthy Cairbre saw their forces dwindle away as the weeks passed, with no hope of reinforcement, until finally they dispersed altogether: Tyrrell to Leinster, MacCarthy "on his keeping," and O'Sullivan, with the remnants of his men, with four hundred men and six hundred women and children, to make his famous march to Leitrim. Every mile of the way, from Berehaven to Leitrim, had to be fought—for Elizabeth wanted him badly owing to some disparaging remarks he had passed about her—but they fought their way, with diminishing numbers, and out of the 1,000 that started thirty-five entered the hospitable doors of Brian O'Rorke of the battleaxes. Then there was peace, Carew's vulture peace, once more in Munster.

South Connacht, under Thomond and Clanrickarde, was safe for the English, and they moved north, and gradually, when they found Ruardhi O'Donnell unable to help them as Red Hugh had, the chiefs of north Connacht made their peace also. There remained only Ulster, and on Ulster all the English forces were now bent. They made elaborate preparations, and, under the shadow of them, the great confederacy of O'Neill's at length broke up. Randall MacDonnell of the Glens made his peace; so did O'Cahan; so did MacSweeney and O'Doherty, and many minor chieftains. And there remained only O'Neill, O'Donnell, Cuchonnacht Maguire, Brian O'Rorke, and Walter Tyrrell. Niall Garbh and Dowcra had maintained their footing in Tirchonaill, and against O'Donnell the English moved first, attacking him from the

Connacht side. But he beat two of their armies in succession, one at the Curlews and one at Ballysodare, and Mountjoy approached him for peace. With no prospect of help, and learning of Hugh's death in Spain, O'Donnell made his peace also, and agreed to hold Tirchonaill on an English tenure. There remained only O'Neill, and O'Rorke, and the irrepressible Tyrrell, the latter wandering about Ireland, skirmishing here and there, and trying to rekindle the flame.

And on Tireoghain all the forces were now bent. North, south, east and west, Hugh O'Neill was assailed, and strong castles were erected on all sides of Tireoghain. These were well garrisoned, and the garrisons preyed the country around regularly, burning and destroying, and prevented either help or food entering Tireoghain. With the break-up of his confederacy, and the losses of the long war, Hugh O'Neill had no troops to make a regular fight against the English, but with what he had he fought a guerilla war, burned Dungannon, and withdrew into the fastnesses, and defied all efforts of Mountjoy to bring him to his knees. In the twelve months that followed Kinsale, Mountjoy tried all he knew, bribery, force, cajolery, but in vain. The clansmen of Tireoghain stood by Hugh O'Neill staunchly to the last man, and spent themselves for him so long as he held out. In one of his letters to Elizabeth, Mountjoy bemoans thus: "And it is most sure that never traitor knew better how to keep his own head than this, nor any subjects have a more dreadful awe to lay violent hands on their sacred prince, than these people have to touch the person of their O'Neals; and he, that hath as pestilent a judgment as ever any had, to nourish and to spread his own infection, hath the ancient swelling and desire of liberty in a conquered nation to work upon." And in another letter he writes to Cecil: "I pray you, sir, believe me that I have omitted nothing, both by power and policy, to ruin him, and utterly to cut him off;

and if by either I may procure his head before I have engaged her royall word for his safety, I protest I will do it; and much more be ready to possess myself of his person if, by only promise of life, or by any other means whereby I shall not directly scandal the majesty of public faith, I can procure him to put himself in my power." But they could neither overwhelm him nor cajole him, although that year there were 1,000 unburied corpses in Tireoghain and 3,000 dead of famine, and so in the end Mountjoy reluctantly prayed Elizabeth for authority to offer terms of peace, and Elizabeth as reluctantly agreed; and on the 30th March, 1603, peace was made. The terms were, O'Neill to be "Earl of Tyrone," to be re-granted all Tireoghain, save the land around Mountjoy and Charlemont Forts, and the lands then held by Henry Og O'Neill and Torlogh MacHenry: all the inhabitants to have the free exercise of their religion; and O'Neill to agree to receive an English sheriff and hold the land on feudal tenure, and so on, in return for which he had "a full pardon." Ruaidhri O'Donnell was made Earl of Tyrconnell, to the dismay of Niall Garbh, who paid for his treachery later by being committed to the Tower of London, where he died. Brian of the Battleaxes, O'Rorke, and Walter Tyrrell, the last gallant pair, followed O'Neill's example, and made peace also. And, for the first time, English law entered Tireoghain and Tirchonaill.

So ended the great National Confederacy formed by Hugh O'Neill, a great and a worthy, and an all but successful attempt to free Ireland. How nearly it succeeded only those who have studied the period will appreciate, but for a long time it was on the verge of it. Had O'Neill any heavy artillery after the Yellow Ford, every town in Ireland would have opened its gates to him, and with acclamation. Those who talk of the "loyalty" of the Irish towns know not of what they talk. In Ireland, as elsewhere in the Middle

Ages, the towns developed marked individualities, and had the usual contempt for the countrymen, which the countrymen returned. Each town was a little Republic, and Galway, Limerick, Cork, and Waterford, for instance, kept fleets and used them. But all their trading relations, or the majority of them, were with the Irish, and their blood connections were mostly Irish also, and a clean throw of the dice against England would have thrown them all into O'Neill's hands. They were "loyal," forsooth, because they had to be, being held by heavy garrisons. Even the State Papers, giving the English side of the story, afford ample evidence of the state of the towns.

In Galway and Limerick, when O'Neill was in the ascendant, the townsmen rejoiced, and mocked at and insulted the garrison; Kinsale received the Spaniards with acclamation; and the despatches are full of references to the "pestilent and proud townsmen." Carew found no loyalty in the Munster towns, nothing but sullenness and rebellion; and time and again he warned Cecil that they were all "disaffected," and that the only hope of holding them was to put strong garrisons into them. Ireland was then finding herself, strengthening her national consciousness, townsmen and countrymen finding out their oneness; but the odds, the lack of artillery and the British Providence, prevailed. And down she went, to gather strength for a fresh effort, to gird up her loins to fight a new plantation, a new importation of garrisons.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE EARL OF TYRONE (1603-1607)

We may dismiss at once as more or less fabulous the detailed accounts we get from English sources of the abjectness of the submission of Hugh O'Neill and Ruaidhri O'Donnell. O'Donnell and O'Neill made treaties of peace rather than submissions; and it is set out in Mountjoy's own despatches that he had found it impossible to compass O'Neill's destruction by force or cunning, or to induce him to come to any conference or to trust himself to the English, without a definite treaty. O'Donnell, as we know, beat the two English armies that were sent against him in the last campaign, and the *Annals* definitely state that Mountjoy then sought peace. We know from his own despatches that he gave up as impossible the idea of removing O'Neill by force of arms, and that he braved Elizabeth's wrath by frankly telling her there was no chance of getting him, and by recommending, as the only thing to be done, a treaty with him. Elizabeth agreed reluctantly, and the result was the Treaty of Mellifont. O'Neill and O'Donnell went with Mountjoy to London, where they were well received by James, and the articles were confirmed. They both agreed to hold their territories by English tenure, and to renounce Irish tenure, to renounce Irish titles, and to admit English sheriffs, judges, and the rest; but they were granted, by English law, the territories they and their ancestors had held, and the only apparent difference in Tireoghain and Tirchonaill was to be the admission of English law, and the final banishment of Irish law. O'Neill was given power to exercise martial law in Tireoghain, all garrisons, save

Charlemont and Mellifont, were to be withdrawn. And O'Neill went back to see what he could make of it as an English Earl.

It was a situation which made the citizens and law-abiding folk gnash their teeth. Here they had been fighting for ten years against "a pestilent traitor," only to find him, not alone still in possession of the lands they coveted, but apparently in high favour. "I have lived," wrathfully wrote Sir John Harington, "to see that damnable rebel, Tyrone, brought to England honoured and well liked. Oh, what is there that does not prove the inconstancy of wordly matters! How I did labour after that knave's destruction! I adventured perils by sea and land, was near starving, eat horse-flesh in Munster, and all to quell that man, who now smileth in peace at those who did hazard their lives to destroy him; and how doth Tyrone dare us, old commanders, with his presence and protection." And he very quickly gave evidence that as Earl of Tyrone, even as The O'Neill, he would rule in his own territories. He hanged, without trial, two of Dowcra's men whom he found plundering in Tireoghain; he exacted cess from O'Cahan; he stoutly denied the exactions made upon him in the name of the Church by Montgomery, Bishop of Derry. And complaints made to Mountjoy fell on deaf ears. Mountjoy had had a taste of O'Neill's quality, and was unwilling to stir him up again. He refused to interfere, and the intriguers bided their time for the coming of a Lord Deputy who should be more zealous and less scrupulous in the cause of good government. They got him later in Chichester, an enemy of O'Neill's.

O'Donnell also had been vigorous, too vigorous for a man who is alleged to have been beaten to his knees before the treaty. Niall Garbh had had himself proclaimed O'Donnell, and Ruaidhri, coming down on him with the decision of Red Hugh, beat him and ended his O'Donnellship. Niall also appealed to England, and England decided against him. And so it looked as if

there were going to be a miracle, in the shape of a pair of loyal Earls in the North, and another miracle in an English Government which would let them keep their lands. There has been much nonsense written about this particular point in Irish history, and historians with flimsy knowledge of the period have written rounded periods on the fair prospect which was opening up for Ireland in the justice which she was about to receive from England on the one hand, and the determination of the erstwhile rebels to be loyal, on the other. But the English were only resting on their oars pending the next move in the game, as were the Irish. Both parties had put out all their strength in a big fight, which left them exhausted, and the treaty was, like all similar treaties, a compromise. The mainspring of English policy in Ireland—the subjection of the Irish race, and the imposition upon it of a ruling and holding garrison—was still there, and the impulses that moved O'Neill and O'Donnell, the call of their nation, of their civilization, the remembrance and the smell of burnt crops and houses and bodies: these were still there. There could have been no permanent truce. Hugh O'Neill, Prince of Ulster, and Ruaidhri O'Donnell, Prince of Tirchonaill, could never have lived their lives out as Earls of an English civilization. The slow march of Anglicization on the Irish nation had made a perceptible advance, but the Irish people had still arms in their hands, and the man with the gun never gives in. He may make a treaty but he will not permanently surrender. Those who in modern times have discredited the Northern Eagles with the intention of giving up the Nation and occupying the Province, are people who come of several generations of disarmed folk: not alone disarmed, but having no wish to be armed. And such-like should not write of war and the things of war, and the results of war and the justifications of war. Mountjoy was resting, and England was resting; and O'Neill was resting, in the meantime rebuilding

Tireoghain as well as he could in the altered circumstances.

In the four years during which he remained Earl of Tyrone, O'Neill pursued the same policy which he had pursued in his early manhood, when he was laying the foundation of the Great Confederation; he kept scrupulously on the safe side, so far as open action was concerned, performed all his treaty obligations carefully and faithfully, and gave the enemy no chance to come down on him for a breach. Sir John Davys, even, has grudgingly left testimony to the fact that Tireoghain was the quietest and best governed part of Ireland. But this has been too rashly taken as indicating that O'Neill had accepted defeat and was henceforth determined to be loyal, of which there is no evidence, and strong inferential evidence to the contrary. During the years in which he planned the great insurrection he was also quiet and peaceable, a loyal man and a trusted man, fighting, even, against James Fitzmaurice and against Hugh Maguire. And it was precisely then, when he was most carefully giving no overt sign, that he was most dangerous. It is inconceivable that, after his long life of plan and effort, he could or would settle down to anything less than the best he had hoped for, and the years after Mellifont found him, I have no doubt, planning another attempt: establishing friendly relations with other chiefs, strengthening himself—that was his way, an advance by inches. James had been faced, at his accession, by that which shrewd Carew had feared and foretold, a revolt of the Munster towns. Cork, Limerick, Waterford, and Kilkenny shut their gates against the English on hearing of Elizabeth's death, and for a time things looked very shaky. But Mountjoy marched straight on Cork, which stood a siege and then surrendered, and made terms with the others, and an incipient revolt of the towns was checked. Had it come three years previously, it had delivered all

Ireland to Hugh O'Neill. But it rather knocks on the head the prevalent theories of the "Savage" school, that the Irish towns were loyal to England at this period. Coupled with that was another pregnant fact, that one of the first proclamations of James was one declaring that he had no intention of being tolerant in matters of religion, and ordering all Jesuits and seminary priests to quit the country forthwith. And these indicated two things; first, that Ireland was being hammered by tribulation into oneness; and second, that conformity to English land-law having at last been secured, nominally at least, the next thing attempted would be conformity to English religion. And so, although there is no direct evidence, I have no doubt whatever that Hugh O'Neill, at this juncture, was acting, not up to the character which some modern historians will foist upon him, of a man playing for his own hand, but rather acting up to the character given him by the Four Masters—"A warlike, valorous, predatory, enterprising Lord, in defending his religion and his patrimony against his enemies." In a word, that he was still, in heart and in deed, Prince of Ulster and rebel unrepentant and unashamed, and, naturally, "plotting."

Be that as it may, the experiment of an Earl of Tyrone was rudely cut short. O'Neill was deluged with law-suits, and plots and rumours of plots reached the Privy Council. O'Neill, O'Donnell, O'Cahan, O'Hagan, Randall McDonnell, and pracically all the northern chiefs, were said to be planning insurrection. The irrepressible Walter Tyrrell, "the best man of them after O'Neill," as Mountjoy termed him, was also said to be of the company, and O'Neill and O'Donnell, apprehensive of early arrest, came to the desperate resolution of leaving Ireland. The attempt to live as English Earls, whether made really or as the cover for a gathering of strength for a new trial, proved too much for them, and on the 14th September, 1607,

O'Neill, O'Donnell, Maguire, and their families and friends, left Lough Swilly and never saw Ireland again. The Four Masters wrote of it: "Woe to the heart that meditated; woe to the mind that conceived; woe to the council that decided on the project of their setting out on this voyage."

This was the only blunder O'Neill made in his whole career. It removed out of Ireland the one man whom the English feared, and the one man who could have, at that juncture, pulled her together for another effort. It deprived the mass of the people of the chief in whom they put their greatest faith, and it left Ulster open to the planters. Had the chiefs stuck on there would have been no plantation of Ulster on the extensive scale which followed their flight and the confiscation of their lands, and the whole of subsequent Irish history would have been altered. There would now be no "Ulster" question apart from an Irish question. But even Hugh O'Neill had not learned from his experience in the war that no help was to be expected from the continent. He expected to come back with an army and artillery behind him, and deliver his people. But on the continent he got nothing but promises; and the remainder of his life was passed going from Court to Court, thinking all the time of the day when his sword would flash in his hand on Irish soil again. He died in 1616, in his seventy-eighth year, one of the greatest of Irishmen, as soldier or statesman.

The way was now clearing for the Plantation of Ulster, and the Undertakers rejoiced.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE PLANTATION OF ULSTER (1610)

Sir John Davies, who was Solicitor-General, Serjeant-at-Law, Word-Compounder-in-Chief, and what not at this period, has left us, in his *Discoverie of the true causes why Ireland has not been subdued*, and in his various reports and letters, not alone a typical example of the omniscient Englishman, but a searching insight into English policy and English methods, even from the point of view of law. Writing about the flight of the Earls, Sir John says: "We are glad to see the day wherein the countenance and majesty of the law and civil government hath banished Tyrone out of Ireland, which the best army in Europe, and the expense of two millions of sterling pounds, had not been able to bring to pass." (Incidentally the reader should note the phrase, "the best army in Europe." Allowing even for exaggeration that phrase indicates clearly enough that in this matter of armies the best that the English could do was done: and it is another of the many nails from English sources, with which to nail the lie so commonly accepted that the English forces in Ireland were only nominal.) John O'Donovan, commenting on this naive and typical paragraph, interprets it as proof, amounting almost to certainty, that it was a deliberate English policy which flooded O'Neill, O'Donnell, and Maguire with bogus lawsuits and bogus claims after the Treaty of Mellifont, making their lives hideous with constant attendance at law courts, and thus inducing the flight. However that may be, after the flight, law began to feed its full upon the land, Commissions and Courts; Courts and Commissions! One might easily write volumes upon them,

upon their stupendous building up, in bewildering phraseology, of mythical claims and mythical forfeitures. The King's title to the country of so and so, and the falsity of O'Cahan's title to his country, or O'Reilly's title to his. English law in Ireland has always meant proving black white.

In the plantations which followed the Treaty of Mellifont, the submission of an exhausted and dragooned Ireland to English law everywhere, and the final catastrophe of the flight of the Earls, the Plantation of Ulster holds the field. But this does not mean that there were not other plantations. There were, and all over Ireland: in Leinster, Munster, and Connacht, as well as in Ulster. Under Davies and his fellows' legal arguments and direction there were Commissions everywhere to inquire into defective titles, a Commission to inquire into defective titles being, in law, just the same as a packed jury. But the Ulster Plantation was easily the most extensive, and the lands planted had hitherto been virgin of English grip. James had, at his accession, as we saw, promised that the Irish should remain undisturbed in possession of their lands, but, as Noster Johannes very fatuously points out, all this was conditioned, as everything else, by law: and who is the King, or what is the King's promise, that they should override the law? And so, after the first year of comparative tranquillity had been used to undermine the clan leadership by promising the undertenants direct grants of land from the Crown, after forts had been erected, surveys of all lands made, and all strongholds, etc., surveyed and noted, the Commissions were started, and the Irish, bewildered and struck down by their native respect for law, even a rotten law, could do nothing. Law to them had always been a matter of right and justice, of public weal and private probity, and a law which was only a mask for oppression and mercilessness was so strange to them that they did not at first realize its devilishness.

Sir John Davies, in his simplicity, will give us a more convincing sidelight on law and Commissions than anything that any modern commentator can write. Before the Plantation of Ulster was finally promulgated in detail there were several Commissions and surveys. Here is an abstract from Davies' account of their method of work: " . . . but the rest of the spiritual lands, which the Irish call termons, they were granted to sundry servitors . . . but as well as these patentees as the former did all fail in their performance of the conditions whereupon their several estates depended, so as there wanted nothing but an office to be found thereof for the making void of all their patents. And therefore as soon as the state of the possessions of this country did appear unto my Lord Deputy to stand in such sort as is before expressed, his Lordship forthwith commanded me to draw a Special Commission, directed among others to the Chief Justice and myself, to inquire as well of the breach of the conditions contained in the grants before mentioned, as also of all escheated and concealed lands in that country. Accordingly the Commission was drawn and sealed in the haniper, in the execution whereof we impannelled as many of the patentees themselves as appeared at that sessions to inquire of the articles contained in the Commission; so as they themselves found their own Letters Patent void, some from non-payment of the King's Rent, and others for not building of castles within the time prescribed. Besides, they found divers of the original freeholders to have been slain in the late rebellion, whereby eight or nine ballibetaghs were escheated to the Crown, every ballibetagh, as I said before, containing nine hundred and fifty acres, or thereabouts; which office being found, there rested in the possession of the Crown the greatest part of that country. This being done, my Lord Deputy entered into Council in what manner he might best dispose and resettle the same again, according to his instructions received out of England in that

behalf." And so on. The stamp of these Commissions is Davies solemnly, as he sets it out above, drawing up a Special Commission, directed to himself. Church lands, or termon lands as they were called by the Irish, were also confiscated, and used in the attempt to build up in Ulster a Protestant Church.

Another instrument of "law and civil government" was the "court of justice," humorously so called. Here is Davies' unconsciously humorous account of the administration of justice by the civilizers: "Our Grand Jury was so well chosen as they found with good expedition all the bills of indictment true; but on the other side the juries that were impannelled for trial of the prisoners did acquit them as fast, and found them not guilty, which whether it was done for favour or fear it is hard to judge. For the whole county consisting of three or four names only, viz., M'Mahon, M'Rena, M'Cabe, and O'Connaly, the chief was ever one of these names, and of these names the jury did consist; so that it was impossible to try him by his kinsmen, and therefore it was probable that the malefactors were acquitted for favour. But, on the other part, we were induced to think that fear might be the cause, forasmuch as the poor people seemed very unwilling to be sworn of the juries, alleging that, if they condemned any man, his friends, in revenge, would rob or burn or kill them for it, and that the like mischief had happened to divers jurors since the last session holden there; such is the barbarous malice and impiety of this people. Notwithstanding, when we had punished one jury with good round fines and imprisonment for acquitting some prisoners contrary to direct and pregnant evidence, another jury being impannelled for the trial of others found two notorious malefactors guilty, whereof one was a notable thief, and the other a receiver of thieves, both which were presently executed, and their execution struck some terror in the best men of the country." Not unnaturally, oh Johannes: for your juries, methinks,

were not wanted to try people, but to convict them; and so for the first time in their history, the people of Ulster saw tyranny and injustice in the mask of law and order; and thuswise came the blessing of English civilization—as the "Savage" School are wont to term them—to Ulster—honest jurymen fined and imprisoned.

One final extract and we may dismiss Davies. The Irish in some of the counties had tried to meet law with law, and briefed Pale lawyers to put their case before the Commissions, which was done, special stress being laid upon the earlier proclamation that they would not be disturbed. "To this the King's Attorney . . . for his Majesty's right, it shall appear," said he, "that his Majesty may and ought to dispose of these lands in such manner as he hath done, and is about to do, in law, in conscience, and in honour.

"In law, whether the case is to be ruled by our law of England which is in force, or by their own Brehon Law, which is abolished and adjudged no law but a lewd custom. It is our rule in our land that the King is Lord Paramount of all the land in the Kingdom, and that all his subjects hold their possessions of him, mediate or immediate. It is another rule of our law that where the tenant's estate doth fail and determine, the lord of whom the land is holden may enter and dispose thereof at his pleasure. Then those lands in the County of Cavan which was O'Reilly's country, are all holden of the King; and because the captainship or chiefry of O'Reilly is abolished by Act of Parliament of Statute Second of Elizabeth, and also because two of the chief lords elected by the country have been lately slain in rebellion, which is an attainder in law, these lands are holden immediately of his Majesty.

"If then the King's Majesty be immediate chief lord of these lands, let us see what estates the tenants as possessors have by the rules of the Common Law of England. Either they have an Estate of Inheritance or a lesser estate. A lesser estate they do not claim;

or if they did, they ought to show the creation thereof, which they cannot do. If they have an estate of inheritance their lands ought to descend to a certain heir; therefore they have no estate of inheritance." And so on. This was the kind of jugglery, a mixture of impudence and fatuity and words, by which Davies proved to himself and to the conscience of law that no Irishman had any right to a foot, even, of Irish soil. And with many many thanks to him for his ingenious exposure of his ways and his littleness, and those of his nation, we may leave him. He once wrote a poem called "Nosce teipsum"—Know thyself! Oh, Johannes, I am very glad you did not know yourself. You might have gone without leaving behind you that finished and unconscious betrayal of a consummately servile and consummately scoundrelly mind. If Cromwell had been forty years earlier, he might have committed one good deed and lopped off your head for the sake of your abject king-worship.

So it was, with lies and bribes and oppression, that the Plantation was prepared for, and the details were finally worked out under the personal supervision of James himself. It was provided, in order to prevent any Undertaker becoming too powerful, that no lot was to be more than 2,000 acres, the other lots being 1,500 acres and 1,000 acres. The regulations were so framed as to ensure the planting in Ulster of communities everywhere, instead of merely military garrisons. The planters were to build stone houses, to plant a certain number of English or Scottish freeholders on their lands, to plant all English customs, to employ no Irish on their lands in any capacity, to erect and support Protestant churches, to prohibit all Irish habits and customs, and especially not to intermarry with the Irish. The six counties which were planted contained about 2,000,000 acres, and the portion "escheated" was 511,000 acres—the good land, the rest being bog, and mountain, and forest. Two-thirds

of this was planted in equal numbers by English and Scottish Undertakers, and the remaining third by Servitors and Irish, Servitors being Englishmen and Scotchmen who were already serving in Ireland, and the Irish being approved, and not dangerous, Irishmen. How this worked out may be seen from Sir Arthur Chichester's complaint. Chichester was deep in the Plantation Scheme, but he opposed it in two particulars, in the limitation of the lots to 2,000 acres—this was eliminated in his case, and he was granted the whole of Innishowen—and in the lands granted to the Irish. Chichester thought that a good proportion of the forfeited lands should be regranted to the Irish, and, after the Plantation details had been promulgated, he complained that not more than one barony in each county, and in some counties not even that much, had been left them.

Such was the Plantation of Ulster. In some particulars it failed: for the Scotch intermarried with the Irish almost from the beginning, and it was found impossible rigidly to apply the rule that no Irish should be employed on the lands: but it succeeded to the extent that it planted its communities generally, and for the first time in Irish history the framework of a Protestant population began to appear there. Contemporary English opinion regarded this Plantation as practically settling the Irish question, all save Carew. Carew's Munster experiences seem to have given him a lively sense of the Irish capacity: for he had no delusions as to it being a final settlement, and prophesied gloomily that the next war would be the bloodiest of them all.

In the meantime the country was settling down to a regrouping and revaluation of forces. Without leaders for the first time in history the Ulster Irish, meshed in law and only half conscious of it, left the lands they had been born and bred in, where their memories and homes were, and saw them in the

possession of strangers: they themselves pent in bogs and mountains, watching the alien smoke coming from the places they knew. The rest of Ireland, leaderless also, went again about the business of daily life, patient under the burthen. And the soul of Ireland began to glimmer again through the chaos and the upset: but before it blazed out to the radiance of the great National resurrection of 1641, the greatest of all Irish struggles, it had a few preliminary obstacles to clear. It was invited into the spider's parlour, to wit—it was given a form of Parliament, and it was given a religious question. Hitherto there had been no Parliament worthy of the name. Now the Parliament farce was about to commence, and words to do duty for swords. And for the first time the "Catholic Lord" appears with his fictional loyalty and his subservious differentiation of his own interests from those of the common people. The weakening of the clan bond weakened also the human bond and the national bond. Ireland was to play for a while with phrases and arguments, her mind still a bit clouded with the law of Sir John Davies, and the justice of his Commissions and Assize Courts, only to find again there was no law and no justice outside the naked sword.

CHAPTER XXX

THE FIRST WEDGE DRIVEN HOME

The history of anglicization in Ireland is in its essence the history of the driving of wedges into the essential parts of the distinctive Irish civilization, and Irish history since the coming of the English revolves itself chiefly into the history of that struggle between the two civilizations, one democratic, federal, with a loosely-knit political system, and the other aristocratic, feudal, highly organized and mechanical. The clan system, which was responsible for the English obtaining a footing in the first instance, was also responsible for the astonishing power of resistance which Ireland displayed. Feudal England accepted defeat, and her people settled down to vassalship after one battle—Hastings—but there was no conquering Ireland without defeating in detail, and again and again, every clan in Ireland. There was no central authority to be paralysed by one defeat, or to be made terms with; the whole country had to be conquered in detail. This, amongst other things, was what England had learned in the centuries of warfare. Her early policy and proceedings were so much groping in the dark: one can see the fangs of her civilization reaching out this way and that, seeking vulnerable spots, gradually coming to definite conclusions as to what ought or could be done. One can see her at first striking at the more obvious things—political system and social system, land and government—and then, grown more subtle, strike at the more essential things—language and general national atmosphere—until the present century, when it reached its most devilish level. In

that history there are events which stand out luminous, marking changes, now a good change and now a bad change—the short campaign of Bruce, for instance, or the fatal treaty of Limerick. The flight of the Earls, too, has its peculiar significance: it marked the subversion of Ulster, and the subversion of the Irish political system.

That Ulster remained unsubmerged so long after the rest of Ireland was submerged in bits was due chiefly to the fact that it was harder to get at. All Ireland fought well against the English; the O'Briens, and MacCarthys, and O'Tooles, and O'Byrnes, as well as the O'Neills, Maguires, and O'Donnells: and the clan units of the Irish civilization gave a gallant account of themselves, attacked in detail as they were and always outnumbered. It was easy to get from Dublin, or from Waterford, or Wexford, to the south or west, and easy to keep up the line of communications of an invading army. But up north it was not so easy. And so, Ulster was virgin of the English clutch long after the rest of Ireland had grown familiar with it. That was of incalculable advantage to Ireland in the struggle she was waging, for it prevented any wholesale attempt to depopulate or enslave her, such as was made afterwards by Cromwell and William of Orange. So long as one material portion of Ireland remained integrally Irish, out of the reach of English law, and English arms, and English bribes altogether, so long England had a very insecure grip upon the country; and it was Ulster, ominous and formidable, which, in the years after the Tudor policy began to get itself properly going, gave the rest of Ireland time in which to recuperate. The virile and independent north was a source of immense moral, as well as material, support to the rest of Ireland; and so long as it remained uncontaminated by the English hand, so long England never felt free to carry out the thorough policy which she always yearned towards. The Irish political system had been the first

artery of Irish life to be attacked, and through Leinster the English grip had crept out to Munster and to Connacht. It had been reaching out to Ulster also, and nearly got itself chipped off for its pains; but now it got its grip upon Ulster also, and for the first time one distinctive and native Irish institution—the Irish political system—was down under England's feet. For the first time her governmental claw could seize upon the externals of government in all Ireland. Ulster, the unknown quantity, the land of the O'Neills, and O'Donnells, and Maguires, who politely requested to know the "eric" price of her sheriffs, who came even up to the walls of Dublin in fierce foray, was in a fair way to become merely a geographical expression. And the eyes of the Irish, turned so long towards the north, now knew not which way to turn.

Only a close and an understanding study of the four centuries since the coming of the English will reveal the intensity and the consistency of the struggle: how it was not alone the Irish Provinces that had to be beaten, but every county in them, and every parish in every county. How the separate soul of Ireland nerved and sustained her people, and wrought itself into the most surprising places: and how Irish folk remained Irish in heart and in civilization, even while being politically English, Niall Garbh O'Donnell, for instance, one year fighting under the English banner against Red Hugh, and the next year proclaiming himself "O'Donnell." The tonguge was Irish, and the rest was only accidental. No political trappings could hide the Irishman, and the English element in the Nation was steadily assimilated, and steadily renewed by fresh garrisons. That assimilation, through language and social civilization, was one of the things to which England had been waking up, and now, with a grip on the governmental machine, she would have a free hand to deal with it, and to attack the Irish Nation at its root—language and education.

The significance of this point is not in the passing of the clan system, as it is often stated. The clan system did not pass, can hardly be said to have passed yet. It was more than a system, it was a national instinct, the fruit of a civilization the germ of which is in all distinctive Irish institutions. But after this the positions were reversed, and the Irish political system found itself at a disadvantage everywhere. In the early stages the English settlements in the country were like islands in an ocean. They were all surrounded by the Irish system, which could have swallowed them all up had it been conscious of their purport and their danger. For a century, while Irish civilization was at the height of its strength after the Bruce epoch, it only existed on sufferance. Now the positions were to be reversed and the English system, highly organized, merciless, and mechanical, found itself as the ocean, swirling about the fragments of the Irish system, which may now well be likened to islands in an ocean. The first wedge had been driven home into one of the Irish essentials, and a political system, alien to the temper and character of the people, bade fair to be imposed on them at the sword's point. For four centuries England had been buzzing about, had impeded the machine but been unable to divert it; now she was for the first time in a position to divert it.

And that left her free for the attack on other and more insidious lines. And herein let those who in our times are disposed to be too scornful of politics and politicians take heed. It was the weakening of the Irish political machine which opened the way to anglicization, and it was the despised political arm of the Nation which made the biggest fight. The submersion of the Irish political system was the first definite step into anglicization, as it must be the last step out of it. The political system went first, then the land system, then the language, and the attack on the two last was rendered possible only by the success of the attack on

the first. Every increase of English grip in Ireland decreased, comparatively, the Irish power of resistance, and while it took four centuries to break down the political system, the land system lasted less than a century thereafter, and the language not much more. So long as the Irish political system stood upright, even though in difficulties, so long anglicization halted at that, but the break up of the political defence involved also the eventual break up of all other defences. The language alone proved unable to withstand the combined attack of the influences which the command of the political field gave to the anglicization policy. First went the political system, then arms, then the land system, and finally the language, and in the inverse order they must come back.

We are passing now out of the period which so many of the "Savage" school of Irish history have characterized as uninteresting, nay, horrible, because of the constant battles and forays and warlike expeditions of all kinds. The hypercritics pretend to expect that miracles should happen in Ireland, and that, in an age when the ballot-box and the member of Parliament were, thank God, undreamt of, a fierce struggle between two civilizations should be carried on without war. War there was, and plenty of it, just and necessary war; but not nearly so much as one is led to believe. And with it the arts of peace grew also, and there were trade and commerce, wealth and learning, bards and poets, in the Ireland of the Middle Ages. Had Ireland been a weak and spiritless Nation, had her people had no manhood, did they "lack gall to make oppression bitter," may be they would have knelt down and kissed their chains; but they rose up in "wrath and warlike gear," as the *Annals* would put it, and they did battle often and valiantly against the stranger. For centuries there was no day whereon someone somewhere did not lay a lance in rest for Ireland, and Irish blood has reddened every inch of our soil. The constant record

of battles and expeditions is an honourable record, and they who cannot, or will not, see in it the manifestation of the Nation as it actually was—in eruption, gallant and virile eruption—should not attempt to write history. History is an interpretation and a justification, rather than a splenetic criticism.

NOTE TO CHAPTER III

The political institution which calls itself the "Church of Ireland" has, at times, claimed to be the National Church of Ireland on the allegation that the Irish Church was independent of Rome until Henry II held the Synod of Cashel. It may be as well, therefore, to state that the unity of the Irish Church with that of Rome, for which many Irish ecclesiastics had worked in the preceding centuries, took place at the Synod of Kells in 1152. It is, of course, perfectly true to say that the autonomy of the Irish Church disappeared after it accepted Henry II, but that is a different matter.

NOTE TO CHAPTER XI

The relations between Shane O'Neill and the Countess of Argyle which, though arousing no contemporary indignation, have aroused some modern indignation, are possibly not so abnormal as has generally been surmised. In his notes to the "MacDonnells of Antrim," the Reverend G. Hill refers to the custom, which then prevailed in Scotland, of handfasting, by which a marriage could be dissolved by the parties after seven years, and states that this lady had probably been married to the third Earl of Argyle, and the marriage dissolved after seven years. It would appear from a letter in the State Papers that a marriage ceremony between Shane and the Countess was celebrated after the death of Shane's wife, and that the lady's father was present at it. Calvagh O'Donnell was then alive, but the lady may possibly have claimed power to dissolve her marriage under the Scottish custom. It is, at any rate, extremely unlikely that any priest would have celebrated a blasphemous marriage, and the whole question still awaits investigation.

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