

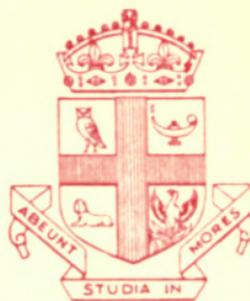
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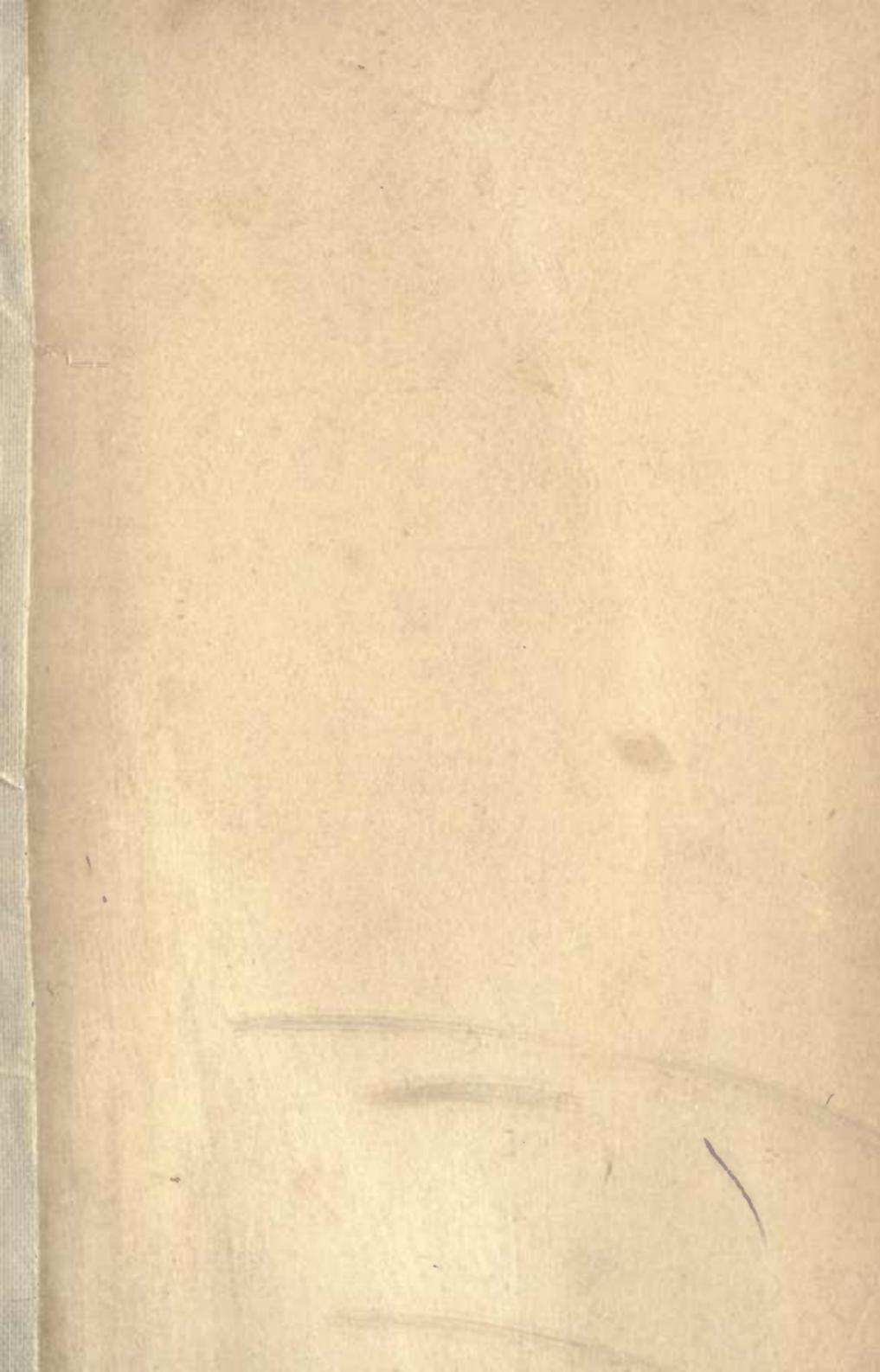
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**THE STORY OF
THE IRISH NATION**

THE STORY OF THE IRISH NATION

BY
FRANCIS HACKETT

DRAWINGS BY
HARALD TOKSVIG



NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.

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To
HERBERT BAYARD SWOPE

When I came to see you just before Christmas you asked me if I could write a history of Ireland in three days. I said, "not in three days but in three weeks," and on this pure mechanical retort you told me to go ahead for the *World*. You raised only one point: Do men make the epochs, or do epochs make the men? And you flattered and impressed me by inquiring if I agreed with Hegel. Here, then, is the result, though I had to give it more than the heroic three weeks. I owe you much because without your superb confidence I should never have had the courage to attempt even this popular story. So let me thank you—and especially for plunging me into the history of Ireland, its "perilous seas," its "faery lands forlorn."

F. H.

New York City,
March 17, 1922.

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**THE STORY OF
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CHAPTER I

THE GAELIC PERIOD: PAGAN

1

ON a fine day in the Wicklow Mountains you can survey half Ireland. You can look as far north as the lovely Mourne range in Ulster, and on the other hand as far south as the tip of Wexford, framed in a bright sea.

To take in the full scope of the Irish story you must climb to some similar height in imagination, some height from which narrow boundaries are released, and the prospect becomes emotionally open. To find this eminence, it is perhaps best to go back a few thousand years. Here it is no longer history, as we know it nationally and politically, that takes us by the hand. It is the much calmer genius of science.

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From this remote period one can construct no certain narrative. There is only the wavering accent of tradition, the hint of geology and anthropology, the literal "footprints on the sands of time." But by great luck we happen to have preserved in Gaelic the oldest existing body of Northern literature. From this literature we are able to judge or guess at the types of men who stand on the sky-line of Irish history.

This Gaelic past is of intense interest, not only because so many records and memorials of it exist, but because the Irish people to-day are in such vivid relation to their past. Like all invaded and suppressed peoples, they have been repeatedly informed that their past is wild, obscure, and barbaric; they have been encouraged to forget it. But the past swings the future into being. The present key to Ireland is in the Gaelic period which flourished so nobly in pagan times, and so generously in the Christian period that followed Patrick. This civilization, however, is not monstrously peculiar or archaic. The Irish are not racially separate from Europe. Their history is a vital part of European history. By an accident of political and economic suppression the Irish people have been forced for centuries to turn all their energies into making a fight for survival. But, for centuries, like a river that

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has been dammed and forced out of its channel, the Irish nation has at last pushed through its unnatural obstacle, established its continuity, and begun to flow in freedom. Hence the head-waters of Gaelic civilization are more important to examine than ever.

2

To begin with the earlier human inhabitants of Ireland, it is by no means established that they were all of one racial stock. It was dark Mediterranean people, we are told, who worshiped around the glacial boulders which still remain. It was broad-headed "Beaker" people who erected the great burial mounds and laboriously decorated the memorial stones. These prehistoric inhabitants of Ireland are hardly discernible. They are vaguely known as Iberians and as Picts.

Descendants of early tribes—wiry, black-haired Sicilian-like—are still to be met in stony Connacht. Perhaps these are "Iberians." Once it was supposed that the famous chronologies of the pagan kings had historical value and gave a clue to the pre-Celtic Irish, but it now appears that their lists of dates and monarchs were compiled on the model of the Old Testament after Christianity had come to Ireland. But

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much is to be inferred from the unwritten records—from the burial mounds and the big memorial stones and the Druidical circles which are still, to our wonderment, sprinkled over Ireland. On a stone at New Grange there is to be seen the spiral that came from the *Æ*gean, traced by some pre-Celtic hand about 1500 B. C. Near-by in royal Meath are the many hillocks which the fear and awe of a later age raised to the Old Men. Under a seventy-foot mound at New Grange, with a circle of stones outside, one may now climb down to the mysterious set of chambers in which the pre-Celtic chiefs were first buried. Here, up to the time of Christianity, the pagan kings were laid, sometimes in urns and sometimes lengthwise and sometimes standing up, in full armor and face toward the enemy.

The early race of men came to be called Firbolg, or “men of the bags.” In these bags, it is recorded, the Greeks, so-called, compelled the Firbolg to haul loam for their hillside gardens. Revolting against their slavery, the Firbolg escaped from their Mediterranean masters, making boats out of their bags.

However dim this legend, the first man of the present surviving type certainly came to Ireland oversea, so one may fairly picture the Firbolg sailing to their new country as Lucan pictured the Briton:

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The moistened osier of the hoary willow
Is woven first into a little boat;
Then, clothed in bullock's hide, upon the billow
Of a proud river lightly doth it float
Under the waterman:
So on the lakes of overswelling Po
Sails the Venetian; and the Briton so
On the outspread ocean.

Here, as so often, the poet is the antique historian. On the west coast of Ireland the little boat "clothed in bullock's hide" is still in use.

But there are other memorials of the bagmen. There is a legend that they fought a great battle for survival against powerful new-comers in County Mayo, near Cory. On this ground to-day there are five groups of stone circles, besides a number of burial cairns, which may indicate a battle-field or simply a cemetery. One of these cairns, however, has always been known as the "Cairn of the One Man." Eochy, the king of the Firbolg, was bathing in the opening of an underground river that still connects Lough Mask and Lough Corrib. Three of the enemy came upon him and demanded his surrender, but before they had taken him his own body-servant arrived and, at the cost of his life, fought and slew all three. The legend declares that in this "Cairn of the One Man," the king, with great honor, buried his servant. And when this grave was opened, in the middle of last century, by Sir Wil-

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liam Wilde, father of Oscar Wilde, a single urn was found inside which once had held a man's bones.

The Firbolg, then, were the primitive stock, and when the Celts or Gaels came oversea to Ireland about 350 b. c. (in the so-called Iron Age), they were met, as Pilgrim Fathers always seem to be met, by a group of "natives." These natives of 350 b. c. have left no trace whatever of their language in Ireland, and no certain picture of their appearance and social habit, but enough is known about them to make it clear that they were definitely less far advanced than the fighting Celts to whom they succumbed.

Almost immediately after the arrival of the Celts, these older inhabitants seem to have become bottom-dog. The Celts were bigger men, they had bigger and better boats, they were better clad—above all, they had better implements both for fighting and working. The result, in the dim age of which we speak, was the subjection of the early tribes.

3

Who were the Celts? They were a Nordic people, sprung from southeast of the Baltic. Some recent commentators, not without political bias, have denied that the Irish have ever had Celtic antecedents. They

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assert that the invaders of 350 b. c. were Alpine folk, round-headed and tall and fair; more primitive than the Nordic type, though “plastic and imaginative and sympathetic.” But the evidence of race, of the Gaelic language, and of the Latin classics points to the inclusion of Ireland within the range of that Celtic expansion which took place in the fourth century b. c.

The Firbolg, however, were not exterminated by the Celts or Gaels who came in the fourth century before Christ. Although it is certain from all the memorials of the North that these Gaelic contemporaries of the civilized Greeks were some hundreds of years behind the Greeks in culture, it is also certain that their state of culture was not primitive. They were far enough along, at any rate, to tax their subject peoples. But they did not kill off the Firbolg. What happened to the brave but less advanced type may, in a plain image, be suggested by the survival of frame dwellings in a modern city like New York. Even latterly a single frame dwelling may stand next to a sky-scraper, while in outlying districts the frame dwellings may persist in groups. The erection of the brownstone type of house suggests a later incursion—say the Norse—and the survival of this type in a variety of modifications and disguises indicates what may happen even with

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tenements of stone. As to the succession of human types, one thing seems clear; nothing, not even the skull, is unchangeable in size or shape, and too much may be inferred on the hypothesis that bone is fixed, like cast-iron. But history and tradition in Ireland do indicate that the Firbolg was subordinated, even though he was valued as a fighting conscript and gave the Heroic Cycles some of their noblest figures. The Firbolg generally was pushed into the hills, into the woods, into the less desirable lands and the less desirable work. Still, because his property descended through the female line, the Gael not only fought his way but married his way into supremacy: he took the Firbolg chieftainess to wife, and then her property went to the Gaelic sept in the natural course of descent. For the Gael came to Ireland with social ideas considerably in advance of those matriarchal tribes who at that time supplied the human groundwork of the British Isles. The Gael, we may assume as certain, was of the common Northern stock which is the racial basis of modern France, Belgium and Germany. And probably the clearest way to conceive the Irish nation is as part of this vast Northern adventure which became possible once the later inhabitants learned to use iron.

The conquest of the Firbolg by the Gael is now

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viewed with equanimity by all Irish historians. Yet historically speaking, the Gael was a ruthless oppressor. He belittled and misrepresented the people whom he conquered. It is a pity we do not possess a Firbolg history of the Gael.

The fact that he was so capable of conquest and oppression links him with northen Europe. And historically it is desirable to remember the European—Southeast Baltic—cradle of the Gael, because for many centuries the Gael continued to be an element in the life of the Continent. It is easy to see, in our own time, how the whole fortune of a modern people may change in a few years, how their social margin may be wiped out and their main fight become the primitive fight to survive. That was the case of the Irish Gael after 1600 A. D., and to a great extent after 1200. But at the time when the Continent of Europe had the least cultural margin of its own, in the chaos of the fifth and sixth centuries, it was the Irish Gael's turn to contribute. During that period, as a consequence of the conversion by St. Patrick, the Gael was a supreme factor in the life of the Continent. It is impossible, on this account, to comprehend the true story of the Irish nation unless one keeps realizing the fluidity of boundaries that now seem to be fixed and

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the flexibility of channels that now seem to be rigid. The Gael is a European not only in stock but in cultural history. To think of him as separate and isolated is to make him unintelligible.

4

To return to 350 B.C. The physical Ireland to which the Gaels pushed forward under Continental pressure was a fair, fertile land, with probably the same moist climate it has to-day. Like the rest of the Northern world, it swarmed with forest. When the Picts came Meath alone seems to have been cleared. In the shade of its great woods of oak and ash and hazel and holly, the fox, the red wolf, the boar, the bear, the deer, and perhaps the elk were still at large. But one may suppose that the Gaels were rejoiced to find grassy plateaus from which they edged the Firbolg away; and clear rivers leaping with salmon, and "fishy pools," and sandy shores where boats could easily be beached. The wild swan, we may imagine, swam in the silences of inland lakes. The wild geese flew over Ireland on their journey south. On high hills there were places for Druid worship and sacrifice, and on a plain in Cavan a place for the idol Cromm Cruach, god of the sun, whom the pagan multitudes adored.

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A very old Gaelic poem, ascribed to Finn mac Cool (Finn mac Cumhail), may be quoted to suggest the country that surrounded and delighted the Gael. "May-Day, delightful time! How beautiful the color; the blackbirds sing their full lay; would that Leahy (Laighaig) were here! The cuckoos sing in constant strains. How welcome is the ever-noble brilliance of the seasons! On the margin of the branching woods the summer swallows skim the stream. The swift horses seek the pool. The heath spreads out its long hair, the weak, fair bog-down grows. Sudden consternation attacks the signs; the planets, in their courses running, exert an influence; the sea is lulled to rest, flowers cover the earth."

From the Irish literature that now remains, thousands of pages of which are still unpublished and many not yet translated into English, it is not impossible to suppose the kind of life which these pre-Christian groups enjoyed. Each of these groups which occupied the fair lands of Ireland circled socially round the dominant local chief and his family. And the group in itself formed a community with a social structure which was fairly proof against internal change. The Fir-bolg, in the first place, seem to have been in most cases "unfree." They were not slaves; that lot was reserved

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for the males and females who were captured in raids or for the general captives of war. But the Firbolg, excellent fighters though they were, formed subject communities to do the mechanical work which the pastoral Gaels apparently scorned, and to pay tribute, after the fashion of subject communities. The bronze rivet-folk, the shield-folk, the chariot-folk, the wheel-folk, the plow-folk, were castes of Firbolg, and it is suggested that the tameless tinkers of Ireland to-day may be a survival of this type of community life. Everywhere, except in Ossory and in Down and Antrim, the Firbolg succumbed. But besides the "un-free" Firbolg, with their fairs and possible exchange of wives, there were serfs who were too poor to own cattle. They merely had the use of cattle in return for servitude.

Wealth was then, as now, in the hands of a ruling class. As the "pillow-talk" of king and queen in the epic tale of the Raid of Cooley (County Louth) informs us, wealth consisted of sheep and herds, of horses and steeds and studs, of droves of swine "driven from woods and shelving glens and wolds," of pails and caldrons and iron-wrought vessels, of jugs and eared pitchers, of apparel of kingly colors—purple and blue and black and green and yellow and vari-colored—and

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rings and thumb-rings and bracelets and golden treasures, probably from the rich alluvial gold of Arklow. Slave-women, who were worth three cows or five bullocks, were also part of the wealth of that harsh Queen Maeve of Connacht who went to war for a bull.



FROM OLD FRESCOES AND
STONE SCULPTURE

Ancient Irish Archer, Kings and Harper

In this pastoral life, as might be expected, the great men were the men of personal strength and beauty and pride and skill. When even the petty king traveled in state he was accompanied always by his judges and poets, by harpers and pipe and horn players, by jugglers and fools, besides his soldiers and stewards and servants. Sport and hospitality were as much a part of his life as war. His lawful occupations, as the old rule laid them down in later times, were legislation on

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Monday, chess on Tuesday, seeing the coursing of grayhounds on Wednesday, the pleasures of love on Thursday, horse-racing on Friday, delivering judgment on Saturday, and on Sunday feasting and ale-drinking and distributing ale. These activities have a flavor of the time and place about them, and yet, with the inclusion of the laying of corner-stones, they might bring to mind the limited sovereignty of Edward VII.

5

In the habitation of Ireland by free Gaels, their unfree dependents, and their slaves there was no immediate need for a strong central government. Government centralized for military reasons was attempted in pagan times but not secured. It was hard to secure because it was still possible for compact political agencies like the sept, or group of kinsmen, to be self-sufficient, like small shops before the trusts came. Now, looking backward, we can see how "primitive" the Gaelic septs were, just as by hindsight it will some day very likely be agreed all around that it was wasteful for each railway in 1922 to try to keep its independence. But to the Gaels who occupied Ireland in pre-Christian days the main reason they rode to Tara in their chariots with their poets and judges and retainers was to enjoy

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the enormous triennial assembly in a festival spirit, with tradition and ceremonial in their mind rather than the modern idea of representative government. The hard political problems were not central in an age in which wealth was agricultural, an age content with wooden bridges or fords and a few good roads and houses built from the timber or wattles with which Ireland was so well supplied. The really pressing conflicts concerned tangible wealth and provincial military power. By what new local combinations could a proud and mettlesome chief hope to aggrandize himself at the expense of his natural or acquired enemies? That was the sort of problem that had point. Until the Strangers came with such strategy that they could grip all pastoral Ireland willy-nilly, the need to combine was not clear. When the necessity was felt to be actual, the Gaels did attempt to centralize. Perhaps because they had never lived in towns and had therefore missed the quick though dangerous adaptability that comes with many contacts and easy associations, they persisted in the old ways long after the European world had learned new modes. This conservatism, joined with their pride in the fighting character of their leaders, was probably one element in determining their subsequent fortunes.

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Another fact of serious social consequence, as Professor MacNeill defines, was the way in which the sept or true family or derbfine was organized in relation to the kingship.

A derbfine or true family was not grouped according to the modern idea of the married couple and their offspring. The Gaelic family took in all the immediate kinsmen of four generations, the head of the sept being reckoned the great-grandfather, whether living or not. Birth and death were consequently of essential importance to the derbfine. When the first son was born to the fourth generation a new great-grandfather was thus created, and consequently a new unit or derbfine. When any male member of the four generations died his holdings went into the family pool and were redivided among every one according to prescription. In case of the kingship, any male member of the derbfine was in line of succession, the monarch being elected by all who were eligible. The bad consequence of this law of succession, as Professor MacNeill points out, was the drive it gave to those men whose fathers and grandfathers had not held the kingship to seize the kingship for themselves and thus "keep it in the family."

There was much conflict in early Irish history, and

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most of it sprang from this system. Powerful men gambled with life rather than resign themselves to an inferior rôle in their family's district. And where so much depended on the chances of mortality, men's minds naturally tended to elevate the value of power rather than the value of life. To kill a man, as with all Aryans, asked for vengeance, not justice. There was, besides, the provocation that came to fighting men from living near other fighting men whose wealth consisted in cattle and sheep. There were innumerable disputes, a few entirely lawless and wanton, but most of them due to the lack of a code supported by force and to the fierce personal partisanships of the septs. The conflicts of territorial chiefs were possible at any time down to the sixteenth century. But there were long periods of tranquillity and order during the whole Gaelic period, and at least one great effort to consolidate the position of the high-king. A professional soldiery, with its promise of order and threat of dominance, was missing in Ireland. It existed so long as the plundering of Britain and Gaul was profitable. But later this fighting militia disappeared, and with it royal Tara, "home of the warrior-bands."

There are many popular notions about Ireland which are best explained by reference to this prehistoric period in which the life of Ireland is simply the life of a congeries of small, comfortable, prosperous, belligerent chieftaincies. One is the famous myth that a handful of Spaniards wrecked on the shores of Ireland after the dispersal of the Armada became thereafter the fathers of innumerable and consistently black-haired descendants. These black-haired people are now reckoned to come from the Picts or Pretani (Britanni), of whom Professor MacNeill speaks. Another notion is that which Lord Salisbury indulged when he spoke of the "Celtic fringe." His image was meant to convey the fact that the Celtic traces in the British Isles were around the rim of a territory which some superior group had wiped clean. This theory, supported by Rhys, now seems to be upset. The Hottentots, the "miserable shell-eaters" of that remote age, appear to have been the unfortunate Pretani. The Gaelic "fringe" in western Britain, in Argyllshire, in Wales, and in Cornwall, was an embroidery, not a remnant. It came from fresh Irish settlements after the collapse of Roman power in Britain. The classic name

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for the Irish Gaels was Scotti, or raiders. Ireland, known as Eiru, Eire, Iverne, Ierne, Hibernia, Ire-land, was also known as Scotia Major. (Scotland, of course, was Scotia Minor, named after the Irish who colonized and Christianized it.) The fame or ill-fame of the Irish Gaels as raiders and plunderers traveled into Gaul as well as to Britain. It was one of the reasons later advanced by Milton toward justifying the counter-incursion of the Normans.

7

From these authentic raids of the Gaels we may approach the actual history that precedes the coming of Patrick. But first we must admit the dimness that surrounds Ireland and Britain even as late as the beginning of the Christian era.

It has been brilliantly said, "If communications had been more easy, Queen Maeve might have entertained Cæsar Augustus in her palace at Rathcrogan, while the fame of Finn MacCool might have added to the apprehensions of Aurelian." (Grenville A. J. Cole.) This cross-section in chronology suggests how the illumination of history, so vivid in Mesopotamia and Egypt and Greece and later Rome, palpitates and pales as one follows the horizontal line to the North. The

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dimness is utterly impenetrable at a time when the world is already radiant in the South. Where were our ancestors when the Sumerians were writing their tablets? How advanced were they when Socrates played the fine light of reason on gods and men in the glowing Athenian shade? It is only by the aid of happily surviving heroic legends and justly compensated tradition that scholars venture to build up the Gaelic past before the time of Patrick. And yet the secrets of the race have been in good keeping in the hands of Irish poets. Each year, as scholarship improves, the magnificent epics of Ireland yield up one clue after another to prehistoric Gaelic civilization, and the age of historical disclosure is not over. It was only in 1868 that the superb "Ardagh" chalice was brought to light by a man digging potatoes at a rath in County Limerick; it dates probably from the ninth century. It was only in 1850 that a wayfarer picked up on the strand at Bettystown, near Drogheda, the admirable "Tara" brooch. Somewhere, perhaps, in a buried shrine, there may still lie hidden in Kildare that glorious manuscript which the emotional Gerald de Barri declared to have been decorated by angels! Time, at any rate, favors our enlightenment on this flowering Gaelic period.

The failure of the Romans to conquer Ireland is, in a sense, a landmark of Irish history. By their conquest of half-naked and primitive Britain the Romans came in sight of Ireland, but they never attempted to extend their empire across the Irish Sea. They lacked the extra legion which would have enabled them to tackle the Gaels. The Gaels, on their side, were undoubtedly aware of the nearness of that formidable imperial power. And the outside contact of the Gaels with the Roman empire has left a few records in writing and in material form. Once they had established a footing in Alba (Alp-a, now Scotland), the Gaels advanced toward the Roman wall in the north; Ulster built a defensive rampart after that model in the third century. The Gaels harried the Roman colony before the downfall of the empire, but later, when the "barbarians" came sweeping from the east in the fourth century, a division called the First Scots (apparently including Gaels and pre-Gaels) fought with the Romans "to defend the line of the Rhine." New colonies of Celts about the same time settled in that accessible region of Leinster around Dublin which Belgæ and Norsemen and Normans and Saxons have always made their own.

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Such colonists were not, in the nature of things, objectionable. If the new-comers entered into the right alliances and lent military aid and paid tribute, they were as welcome in Irish politics as the "Polish vote" or the "Italian vote" or the "Irish vote" in twentieth-century American politics. Immigration and emigration were more frequent than usually recognized in the early centuries of this era, and the Norse-Irish, especially, formed what might be termed dissolving combinations.

9

In the Gaelic land at home early history actively revolves around one central political theme—the strife of Ireland in changing from a state of five main divisions to a state of seven divisions and sub-kingships. Professor MacNeill says that the oldest certain fact in the political history of Ireland is the "pentarchy." Till 1833 the rock stood near Mullingar from which the five divisions of the country were traced, and the sept names that were identified with each of these divisions, either as kings or under-kings, are on record in the genealogies. Dr. Douglas Hyde, in his fascinating "Literary History of Ireland," gives us the names of these septs that were best known. In Leinster there were the O'Tooles, the O'Byrnes, MacMurroughs or

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Murphys, O'Conor Falys, O'Gormans, and others, tracing back to A. D. 123. In Munster were the MacCarthys, O'Sullivans, O'Keefes, O'Callaghans, the MacNamaras and Clancys, the O'Carrolls, O'Meaghers, O'Haras, O'Garas, Caseys, and southern O'Conors. Ulster had the O'Neills and the O'Donnells. From Brian came the O'Conors, kings of Connacht, MacDermots, O'Rorkes, O'Reillys, O'Flaherties, MacDonaghs, O'Shaughnesys. And these are by no means the last of the leading genealogies.

The boundaries of Ireland even now are under discussion; in the past, change was the rule rather than rigidity. From the time of Toole (Tuathal), who exacted the huge Borumha or Boru tribute from Leinster, to the time of Cormac mac Art there was probably a constant shifting of power. A new era came with Cormac mac Art (227-266). (Mac means son of, O' means grandson of.) Working his way forward from his own home in Connacht across the central plain, Cormac established his kingly power over Meath. By seating his dynasty at Tara and making the king of Connacht the automatic successor to Tara, Cormac gave a trend to history which, in the century succeeding, was developed by the uniting of Connacht and Meath against Ulster and the break-up of that historic

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division. The domination of Munster, at the same time, was achieved by the powerful kings enthroned on the Rock of Cashel. Internal security seems now to have obtained for a considerable period. The high-kings who came later, Niall of the Nine Hostages and Nath-i (also called Dathi), attest their dominance at home by their militant activity abroad. Niall was slain on board ship in the English Channel (404) by a Leinster prince, Nath-i killed in Gaul (429). Niall's many sons inherited or conquered small principalities throughout half Ireland. Vassal communities and communities that paid tribute were multiplied under this division of Niall's territory, which has given place-names still in use to countless districts in Ireland. Northeast Ulster, however, remained discordant and split into four sections. The men of South Leinster, at the same time, stood apart. Their mission was to recover by force the power which had belonged to them when a Leinster king reigned at Tara.

These dynastic struggles, apparently so meaningless, were the main political activity of the warring Gaels. But the conflicts of power that they indicate did not cease for many centuries. War rather than peace was the chief fact of existence. Love was the

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incentive and the reward of heroes, not of the tamer breed of men.

10

The barbarous Gaelic king is not a misty figure in the Gaelic past. An official word-portrait of Cormac at royal Tara fortunately remains for our edification. It is to be found in the "Book of Ballymote": "Beautiful was the appearance of Cormac in that assembly; flowing and slightly curling was his golden hair. A red buckler with stars and animals of gold and fastenings of silver upon him. A crimson cloak in wide descending folds around him, fastened at his neck with precious stones. A torque of gold around his neck. A white shirt with a full collar, and intertwined with red gold thread upon him. A girdle of gold, inlaid with precious stones, was around him. Two wonderful shoes of gold, with golden loops, upon his feet. Two spears with golden sockets in his hands, with many rivets of red bronze. And he was himself, besides, symmetrical and beautiful of form, without blemish or reproach."

It is not hard to credit the account of a Firbolg revolution when one reads of Cormac's magnificence.

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He was attended by a prince of the blood, a Druid, a leech, a judge, a bard, a musician, a story-teller, and three stewards. The great Feis, which lasted a week, consisted of a royal reception, a parliament, a national registry of annals and genealogies, a great festival, and a market. Merchants came to barter from as far as the Eastern Empire. There was also a great banquet in a hall which accommodated a thousand warriors seated beneath their shields. The Fiana, or militia, were no doubt strongly represented, as well as the territorial kings and lords. The hall, entered by fourteen doors, was three hundred feet long, ninety feet broad, and forty-five high. It was, of course, built of wood and has long since disappeared.

The magnificence of Cormac mac Art's gold ornaments is, however, far from incredible. Antique gold ornaments weighing five hundred and seventy ounces are now in the Irish Academy in Dublin, as against thirty-six ounces of British findings in the British Museum. As for "Tara's halls," the written record must also be taken as credible. The government ordnance survey has confirmed the actual ground measurements recorded in the "Book of Ballymote."

Cormac built the first water-mill in Ireland, which released many women from working the primitive quern.

The Gaelic Period: Pagan

Had this pagan king the use of letters? Could he write? Tradition declares he could, and we find in the "Book of Ballymote" his "Instructions to a Prince," which counsel "self-government without anger, affability without haughtiness, diligent attention to history, strict observance of covenants and agreements, strictness mitigated by mercy in the execution of laws," and so on. A king should be elected, he said, "from the goodness of his shape and family, from his experience and wisdom, from his prudence and magnanimity, from his eloquence and bravery in battle, and from the number of his friends."

This, then, is the Ireland of the epic; of gods and fighting men. And here, in A. D. 432, comes Patrick with his strange message of the Savior, of sin and repentance, of hell and of eternal salvation.

CHAPTER II

THE GAELIC PERIOD: CHRISTIAN

1

ST. PATRICK shines out of the pages of Irish history. Looking at his figure as at a bright flame, a rim of obscurity surrounds him. But this obscurity is unfortunate; not to see him surrounded by the pagan Gaels is to miss the full value of his dramatic success.

Patrick is a tremendous figure in the history of the North. He made a bridge between two cultures—the Celtic culture of Cuchulain and Finn and Ossian, of Deirdre and Naisi, and the Christian culture of Nazareth and its humble faith in the eternal. Patrick found Ireland naïvely pagan. Without arousing passion or confusing the will of those to whom he came, he and the great mission that came with him gave the Gael a new vision of life, a new habit, a new orientation.

We are familiar with the efforts of Christian missionaries among so-called infidels and heathens in modern times. We know how the uncomfortable Poly-

The Gaelic Period: Christian

nesians have yielded to being photographed in the stiff calico night-dresses of Christianity. The efforts of heroic missionaries in China, in Japan, among the Indians, among the Africans, have been witnessed by a world that estimates the cost of conversion at so much per head. But in none of these cases, either among the lowly cultured or the highly cultured, has the whole stream of a people's life been swiftly and smoothly converted into a new channel. The victory of the Cross in Ireland, against a paganism that has often been described as barbaric, has elements in it which demand that the preceding epoch be taken into account.

2

The Druid is a dim figure in the ancient Celtic world. Wherever the Celt lived—in France, Belgium, parts of Britain, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and Spain—the legend of the Druid may be picked up in a trail of incantations, ceremonials, and sooth-saying which makes him seem like a particularly forbidding and superstitious medicine-man. But out of the vague institution of the Druid in Gaelic Ireland one gathers that something more than a medicine-man was developed. The archaic Druid in Ireland does not seem to be steeped in the bloody ritual of human sacrifice.

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He appears to be akin to the Magi from the East. He looked toward the East in his worship. In groves and by streams he invoked the spirit of the earth and the air: there are still mounds and secret places in Ireland where one feels a presence, as if out of the regiment of the past there came a breath of the impalpable. Mystery still clings in the hollows and folds of the Irish hills, and in many a quiet wood one feels the tenseness of the unseen, the wind of an enchantment.

It was in these moods of the earth, still so close to us in Ireland, that the Druid arose in the half-light of the past, feeling his way in a universe where he bowed before the sun and yet unconsciously lifted himself in the majesty of the trees. We discover that as society became more secure and spacious the Druid did not remain a mere spokesman of the hidden. In Gaul, Cæsar found that the Druids had become the custodians of law and the referees of custom. Out of these offices, one surmises, branch the various social functions of the brehon or judge, the filé or bard, the ollamh or sage.

The brehon law did not develop as did Roman law, adapting itself with an empire and changing (as well as law can change) with the social organism. Rewritten and revised though it was, the brehon law clearly remained a body of precepts not different in kind from

The Gaelic Period: Christian

other Aryan precepts, but stabilized with respect to a conservative form of existence.

We know from Cormac mac Art's instructions what the ideals of the prince were in the Gaelic period: from the regulations in the brehon law we know the system of fines for acts of violence, the laws permitting cattle-seizure, the ancient custom of fasting or hunger-striking on a debtor. With the allied functions of law-giving, arbitration, deciding and chronicling genealogies, and recording traditions, the bards became intimately associated; and the Druid, the judge, the poet, the chronicler, are generally mentioned in one breath. So important did these offices become that the bards, moving about the country like a swarm of honey-bees and settling on whatever ruling family they elected to patronize, had almost as great privileges as their hosts. They were subdivided in rank among themselves, but the chief poet ranked next to the king, was attended by a considerable staff of retainers, and lived handsomely at the public expense. To rise to this eminence he had to serve a long apprenticeship. His feats of memory were remarkable, but, having reached a height of privilege, he worked to maintain that scheme of privilege for the sake of himself and his order.

The bards, as is often said, may have pressed their

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advantage too hard in pre-Christian times. The fact remains that the bardic institution preserved and enhanced a genuine culture. This, because of its inherent refinement and civility and rich imaginativeness, is the basis on which alone Patrick and his company could have built.

“Irish epic story,” as de Jubainville says, “barbarous though it is, is, like Irish law, a monument of a civilization far superior to that of the most ancient Germans; if the Roman idea of the state was wanting to that civilization, and if that defect in it was a radical flaw, still there is an intellectual culture to be found there, far more developed than among the primitive Germans.” This culture is not a matter of speculation. The epics in fine meter and in prose are at last finding their way into the English-speaking world where for generations it has been almost a point of etiquette to be ignorant of them.

3

Patrick was not the first Christian to come to Ireland. He did not banish the snakes. The snakes were excluded geologically. The fact that there were no snakes was known in Firbolg times when Irish soil was exported to kill off snakes in other lands. The absence of snakes was noted definitely by Solinus in

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the third century. As for the Christianizing of Ireland, it was a mission that beckoned many British Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries: several are recorded to have established themselves in Ireland. But if popular tradition has embroidered the story of Patrick, it has done less than justice to his positive and massive personality. Luckily for us, the man himself is to be found in a poignant document copied from his own text in a manuscript itself over 1100 years old. This is the "Confession," which is as authentic as the "Confession" of St. Augustine.

What Patrick gives us is nothing like that search in the labyrinth of man's soul which the exiled Augustine penned in Hippo. Patrick was not a psychologist but a man of action. His story, however, has profound feeling and dignity. It spreads before us a true and telling account of a great enterprise.

Patrick was a Briton. He was born on one of the rivers in the north of Britain, probably at Dumbarton on the Clyde. The name he gives in his "Confession" seems simply to mean Riverhead Tavern. He was known as Succat till he took the name Patricius. His father was a considerable official of the waning Roman colony. In the time that Patrick was born, at the beginning of the fifth century, the Gaels were out in

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strong fleets to raid the coast of Britain. At the time he was sixteen years old his father's estate was visited by the troops of the high-king Niall, and he and his sister and "thousands of others" were taken as slaves. "When a mere youth, nay a beardless boy," he says pathetically, "I was taken captive, before I knew what to seek and what to avoid; and therefore I am even to-day ashamed and greatly dread to show my ignorance, because not being learned I cannot express myself in a few words."

This boy was separated from his sister. For six years, in Antrim or Down, homesick and naked and lonely, he worked in the harsh strangers' land. "Now after I came to Hiberione, I herded flocks daily, and I prayed often during the day. Love of God and fear of Him and faith grew in me and moved my soul so that I must have prayed a hundred times a day, and as many times in the night, though I stayed in the woods and on the mountains. I was moved to pray before dawn, and in snow or frost or rain; yet I took no harm."

When he was twenty-two he had a vision: "the ship is ready for you." He believes that at last he is to go home to his people, among the Britons. When he reaches the ship and offers to work his passage the ship-

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captain refuses him, but as he turns back to his lodging, praying in his despair, one of the crew hails him, "Come back, they want you!" The ship, the cargo, the crew, the voyage, remain in his memory all his life. Dogs were part of the cargo—great Irish wolf-hounds. When they reach port they start overland, and for twenty-eight days they travel through a land famished after the wars against the Huns. At last they come to Italy, but in the end Patrick starts north and reaches his folk in Britain.

And there, though he was "welcomed like a son," he hears the "voices of the Irish." "Come and dwell with us!" Would he heed these voices? He was a patrician. He had friends and family who begged him not to heed. But he who had not believed in the living God in his prosperity had been brought to Him in daily hunger and nakedness. With sublime spirit, Patrick says, "These things brought good, for through them I was corrected by the Lord, so that I work and toil now for the well-being of others, I who formerly took no care, even for myself." And so, "for His sake" he "willingly left home and people though they offered me many gifts with tears and sorrow."

In this fifth century of world war and desolation and upheaval, the pure and exalted faith that Patrick

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had conceived comes as a new light on life. He is very human. He says: "Not my grace it was, but God who conquered in me and resisted them all, so that I came to the Irish people to preach the Gospel—and to bear insults from unbelievers, to hear reproaches for having gone abroad, and to suffer many persecutions even unto chains. My rank of freeman too I had to give up for the sake of others."

Like John Bunyan, Patrick burns with faith, but his faith is the faith of a great and influential missionary. "Willingly would I see my own people and my native land again, or even go so far as Gaul to visit my brothers, and see the faces of my Master's holy men. But I am bound in the spirit and would be unfaithful if I went. I fear to lose the labor which I began. Yet not I would lose it," he adds quickly, "but Christ, the Lord, who bid me come hither, to spend my whole life in serving, if the Lord should so will."

Before he came, he says, they all opposed his mission to Ireland. They talked behind his back, saying: "'He wishes to risk his life among enemies who know nothing of the Lord,' not speaking maliciously, but opposing me because I was so ignorant. Nor did I myself at once perceive the grace that was in me. . . ."

There speaks the leader. But Patrick was as hum-

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ble as he was strong. He lived his life "for the hope of the life eternal," and he governed himself strictly in the ways of poverty and plain living. He took no jewels and lavished his own gifts on those who conveyed him from one domain to another. "You know, and God knows," he declares, "how from my youth I have lived among you with belief in the truth and sincerity of heart. Even with the tribesmen among whom I dwell I have kept faith and will keep it. God knows I have deceived no man in anything, nor ever shall, for God's sake and the sake of His church, lest persecution should be stirred up against them and us all, and the name of the Lord be blasphemed through me."

And then he says, as though to himself: "I look forward daily to a violent death, or to be taken prisoner and sold into slavery or some like end. But I fear none of these . . . but let me not lose His people whom He has purchased here at the very end of the earth."

It is usually intimated that Patrick came to Ireland alone in 432, probably carrying a crozier. This is fantastic. We learn from the "Book of Armagh," as Dr. Douglas Hyde points out, that he arrived with members of his own family, with bishops, priests, deacons, and others. He traveled with a coadjutor, a psalm-singer, an assistant priest, a local brehon, a

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“personal champion” or strong-arm man, an attendant, a bell-ringer, a cook, a brewer, a chaplain, two waiters, and a commissariat. Three women, one of them his sister, came to make vestments and altar linen. Besides, there were three smiths and three artisans. Like the evangelists of the twentieth century, Patrick built his own tabernacle wherever he went, and as he made converts of the right sort he hastily prepared them and ordained them priests and equipped them.

The Irish were ripe for him; from A. D. 432 onward he met with one of those responses which remind us how capricious and at the same time how dramatic is the course of history. Patrick came to Ireland when no vested interest really opposed him. He was able to level the idol Cromm Cruach, to “burn the books of the Druids at Tara,” and at Armagh, less identified with paganism, to settle down after twenty years to prepare young men for his mission. This was the school to which, two hundred years later, the Anglo-Saxons came in such numbers that one-third of the city was called “the Anglo-Saxon third.”

4

The waves from Patrick’s mission rolled out in circle after circle for hundreds of years. The early Chris-

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tians in civilized Rome, be it remembered, were not long in encountering the Roman state. In the name of the state they were led to the arena. There was no such state in Ireland and no such arena. There were no Christian martyrs in Gaelic Ireland. The religion of Christ was not introduced by the Irish chiefs as it was by the excellent Olaf Trygvesson, with a cross in one hand and a red-hot poker in the other. But if Christianity flowed into Ireland with astonishing ease it must be noted that Patrick in no sense overturned or indeed challenged the political system. By preaching salvation he gave Ireland a religion that overlapped and superseded paganism and drew the whole Gaelic people to a new and wonderful preoccupation. But the self-sufficient, belligerent political units remained. Within a few centuries the king-bishop and the fighting monk were just as ready for warfare as their lay brothers. What was immediately changed was the cultural and, in time, the ecclesiastical focal centers of Ireland.

At first, apparently, the Irish Church was quite independent of Rome, since Britain, as well as Ireland, was entirely cut off from Rome for a hundred and fifty years. Armagh and Iona showed decided reluctance to combine even with the Saxon converts.

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At the Synod of Whitby, a. d. 664, the Irish Church stubbornly resisted conformity on such points as the date of Easter, the mode of the tonsure, unconditional celibacy, etc. Because Patrick had given Ireland the Jewish way of reckoning time, the Irish Church was in danger of being deemed Jewish until it yielded on its calendar in the beginning of the eighth century. This was not the first conflict with Rome.

But it is not in ecclesiastical history that one finds the blossoming of the Gaelic period. It is in the founding of schools and colleges, the building of stone churches, the illumination of beautiful missals, and the exquisite enamel and metal handicraft of the monasteries, the teaching of Greek and Latin, of history and geography and mathematics and philosophy and natural science, the enlistment of the bards, and the conversion of kings.

5

Patrick's seminary at Armagh had in it the seed of a great scholastic activity. Three hundred and fifty bishops, "mostly Franks, Romans and Britons, but with some Irish," compose Patrick's first order in Irish ecclesiastical reckoning. The second order, to which St. Columcille belonged, are the men who founded those

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schools of which the Irish manuscripts give so radiant an account.

The school of St. Enda drew to the Isle of Aran Mor such saints as Finnian of Moville, Ciaran of Clonmacnois, Jarlath of Tuam, Carthach of Lismore, Keevin of Glendalough. Clonard, near the Boyne, had three thousand students around it. Founded in 520, it flourished until the vikings raided it scores of times in the bloody ninth century. Clonfert on the Shannon, founded by Brendan in 556, had at its head the man who wrote "Navigatio Brendani." It lasted until ravaged in the twelfth century. Clonmacnois, founded in 544, became the proudest university of this period. To-day, as Dr. Douglas Hyde records, "its church-yard possesses a greater variety of sculptured and decorated stones than perhaps all the rest of Ireland put together." The kings of Connacht, the O'Conors, had their own church there. So had the Ui Neill of the South. The MacCarthys of Munster, the MacDermots of Moyburg, the O'Kellys of Hy Maine, had their own mortuary chapels. Alcuin, "the most learned man at the French court," was educated there, as a grateful letter of his testifies. On ten occasions the Northmen penetrated to Clonmacnois and commenced the work of destruction which the English of Athlone completed.

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At Bangor, on Belfast Lough, a school was founded in 550, described by St. Bernard as "a noble institution, which was inhabited by many thousands of monks." From Bangor came Columbanus, the evangelist of Burgundy and Lombardy; St. Gall, who preached in Switzerland; and Dungal, the astronomer, who founded the University of Pavia. The fate of Bangor was more dreadful than that of the other colleges, nine hundred monks being slain by the raiding Norse.

Dr. Hyde enumerates Lismore, attended by Gauls, Teutons, Swiss, and Italians in 700; Moville, whose founder became Frigidius of Lucca in Switzerland; Clonenagh near Maryborough; and the famous and beautiful Glendalough. Of these Glendalough was sacked by the Danes. Strongbow's son began in 1174 the harrying of Lismore, which, after a Norman was killed near-by, ended in its complete obliteration as a "reprisal" in 1207. Cork, Ross, Innisfallen, Iniscaltra, are other schools on which Douglas Hyde dilates in his admirable "Literary History of Ireland."

6

The degree of learning attained in these Irish schools is the subject of present discussion. The free creative mind, certainly, was not the object of medieval system.

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These schools had closed minds. But if no such fresh fountain gushed forth as distinguished the Age of Pericles, the actual service to scholarship must not be



**Great Cross
of
Monasterboice
(A.D. 924)**

minimized. Cummian's famous letter, says Professor Stokes, proves "that in the first half of the seventh century there was a wide range of Greek learning, not ecclesiastical merely, but chronological, astronomical, and philosophical, away at Durrow in the very center

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of the Bog of Allen.” “The classic tradition,” says Darmesteter, “to all appearances dead in Europe, burst out into full flower in the Isle of Saints, and the Renaissance began in Ireland 700 years before it was known in Italy. During three centuries Ireland was the asylum of the higher learning which took sanctuary there from the uncultured states of Europe. At one time Armagh, the religious capital of Christian Ireland, was the metropolis of civilization.” “Ireland,” Zimmer puts it, “can indeed lay claim to a great past; she cannot only boast of having been the birthplace and abode of high culture in the fifth and sixth centuries, at a time when the Roman Empire was being undermined by the alliances and inroads of German tribes, which threatened to sink the whole Continent into barbarism, but also of having made strenuous efforts in the seventh and up to the tenth century to spread her learning among the German and Romance peoples, thus forming the actual foundation of our present Continental civilization.”

These are big words. Professor Eoin MacNeill, who does not deal in words of this size, believes that Archbishop Theodore, who taught Greek at Canterbury from 664 till 690, was the man who gave Greek its currency in Irish schools. “During the sixth, seventh,

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and eighth centuries," says the realistic MacNeill, "Ireland, enjoying freedom from external danger and holding peaceful intercourse with the other nations, made



FROM STONE SCULPTURE AT
BRASENOSS COLLEGE, OXFORD

John Scotus Erigena

810 — 880

no inglorious use of her opportunity. The native learning and the Latin learning thrrove side by side. The ardent spirit of the people sent missionary streams into Britain and Gaul, western Germany and Italy, even to furthest Iceland. And among all this world-

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intercourse there grew up the most intense national consciousness."

One powerful original mind, however, must not be forgotten. John Scotus Erigena was an Irish layman in the middle of the ninth century whose Greek erudition astounded the Vatican librarian. But he stood for more than erudition. His thinking was independent enough to allow him to produce a system of philosophy which set the church councils in motion to condemn and demolish him.

7

Of the Irish missionaries who went afield, the fiery Columcille (also called Columba) founded his great monastery in Iona in 563. This was the base from which Scotland was evangelized. Columbanus, from Leinster, went among the Franks with a company of missionaries and from 590 till he died at Bobbio in 615 he labored among barbarians with power and intrepidity. St. Gall, an Irishman who was with Columbanus, gave his name to the famous Swiss monastery. Dagobert, the Merovingian king, who was educated in Ireland, retired in 656 to a cloister founded by an Irish abbot in France. Into Bavaria missionaries spread from Luxeuil, Columbanus's earlier headquarters. The

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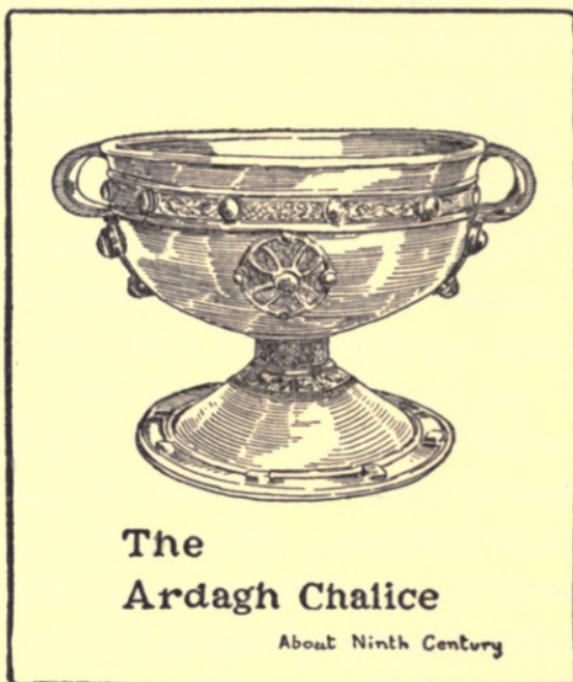
Irish pilgrims continued to pour into the continent as evangelists and scholars and scribes, a process which continued until Ireland itself came within the savage sweep of the vikings.

The English have contributed virtually nothing to the study of Gaelic relics. Continental scholars, luckily, have not been so insular. Dr. Douglas Hyde remarks "the keenness with which their relics have been studied by European scholars—French, German, and Italian. The most important are the glosses found in the Irish manuscripts of Milan, published by Ascoli, Zeuss, Stokes, and Nigra; those in St. Gall, published by Ascoli and Nigra; those in Wurtzburg, published by Zimmer and Zeuss; those in Carlsruhe, published by Zeuss; those in Turin, published by Zimmer, Nigra, and Stokes in his *Goidelica*; those in Vienna, published by Zimmer in his *Glossæ Hibernicæ* and Stokes in his *Goidelica*; those in Berne, those in Leyden, those in Nancy, and the glosses on the Cambrai Sermon, published by Zeuss." This, of course, is not an exhaustive list.

Enough has been quoted, possibly, to carry the mind beyond the circle of Ireland to that nightmare Europe of which so little is known and to which the Irishman seems to have brought sweetness and light. But one

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must return to Kells and Armagh and Durrow, where a love of beauty led the early monks to lavish on their illuminated manuscripts an almost indescribable invention and care. Theirs was not an emancipated art.



**The
Ardagh Chalice**

About Ninth Century

It was an art cloistered within the limits of a few square inches, intensive far beyond the point of naked vision. It shut out the world and looked with shining concentration at the infinite minutiae of interlacing patterns and the jewels of the spectrum shining in a drop of dew. But if the end is microscopic, the means that

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are employed toward it are ravishing. The "Book of Kells," now in Trinity College, Dublin, is of its kind incomparable. No one can contemplate it without joyous amazement.

The Ardagh chalice and the Tara brooch have the same quality of distinctive design and exquisitely refined handicraft. With such esthetic beginnings as these established in the eighth and ninth centuries much might have followed. . . .

8

But before touching upon the Northman or the Norman we must glance at the political and economic course of Ireland from the time that Patrick arrived, and with him the era of more direct and reliably recorded history. The advent of Patrick had one politico-moral effect; it put an end to the Irish raids on Britain. Saxon raids on Ireland were later chronicled; Egfrid was killed on Irish soil in 684, and from that date for nearly thirty years there were Saxon incursions, coinciding with Pictish pressure from the north and the strained ecclesiastical relations. No matter how the Irish battled, however, it was no longer on the barbaric principle of Cormac mac Art that it was the duty of a king to war on the foreigner. That

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principle, which underlies imperialism, has not appeared in Irish polity since St. Patrick. It was for power inside Ireland that the Irish chiefs contended, until Brian Boru (spelled Boromha in the Irish language) became "emperor of the Irish."

The making of the Irish state was a task of supreme difficulty, not fully achieved; but the same must not be said about the making of the Irish nation. Though there were a hundred territories and a hundred local groupings, there was a unification of land tenure and judicial habit and a community of religion. To the Firbolg or plebeian population the church gave as good standing as to the Gael. This gradually merged the two peoples into one, and quickened the process of nationality. The consciousness of Ireland, a country beloved, is to be found as early as Columcille, 563. Few poems breathe such passionate love of land as Columcille's. He looks back on the shore as he sails in his middle age to his final mission in Scotland:

There 's an eye of gray
Looks back to Erinn far away:
While life last, 't will see no more
Man or maid on Erinn's shore!

This is only one of the countless times that Irishmen of every age in Christendom have yearned to their land

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as to a person, their fiber knitted to the earth of Ireland so that to leave it is a death.

The political process in Ireland, even after the coming of Patrick, was still one of sept warring with sept. The Gaels sought rather than avoided the arbitrament of war. In the two hundred years of Connacht's dominance in the limestone plain, the men of Leinster, safe in their own fastnesses, tried continually to recover Tara. A new unrest came from within. Connacht's power was dispersed with the subdivisions that were made to provide for Niall's many sons. Through those subdivisions there were more Ui Neill outside Connacht than in Connacht. These Ui Neill, north and south, combined to displace the western branch from the monarchy of Ireland. They smashed Connacht at the battle of Ocha, 483. This gave the high-kingship to the Ui Neill for centuries, but Munster had yet to make a bid for supremacy. The kings of Cashel grew strong and aggressive until, after a predatory career of extraordinary ferocity, Feidlimid came in conflict with the reigning Niall over the domination of Leinster. In 908, at the Battle of Belach Mugna, the king-bishops of Cashel played their last game of royal chess. Their defeat and subordination left the Ui Neill in power.

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In the weakening of Cashel, however, the rest of Munster was brought into the arena. Under Brian Boru this new power combined with Connacht so as to give him the headship of Ireland. West Munster, in the end, did not hold the supremacy. This was one of the elements that gave opportunity to the Anglo-Normans.

9

But it would be unhistorical to think of these conflicts as peculiar to the Irish nation. One has only to consider the condition of Britain in the same period to realize the essential disorder of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries. The eruption of the vikings at the same time adds one more wild distraction to the predatory life of northern Europe.

The vikings came sweeping the ocean toward the end of the eighth century. The most formidable pagan fighters of the North, they mastered the seas and the islands of the seas in their swift, light, stalwart sea-craft. In 795 they first came to Ireland. In the beginning they had no political purpose: they were content to fall on the rich and pacific monasteries near the coast, kill the monks, whom they surprised, and help themselves to vestments, gold ornaments, chalices,

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fine hangings, stores, and wines. These expeditions brought terror to Christian Ireland: they stimulated the Northmen to repeat them. An uneven fight raged for fifty years. In the meantime the tidings of Christianity came to the North itself. Thereafter the invasions of Ireland became part of the tremendous and almost successful effort of the Scandinavians to conquer the British Isles.

For one must see the Scandinavians as penetrating Russia, conquering Sicily, sailing up the Seine and the Thames, settling Normandy, holding the Hebrides for centuries, dominating England, and seeking to bring all Ireland under control.

When the Norsemen first got their footing in Ireland it was as predatory chiefs. The names Carlingford, Strangford, Howth, Dublin, the Skerries, Leixlip, Wexford, Waterford, and Limerick testify to their successes, which built up towns where the Irish knew no towns. The heathens, as they were, reached a Dublin which was a cluster of huts. They made it a stockaded settlement. By 853 Olaf and Ivar were joint kings of Dublin. For many years they had no great security in Ireland, though Dublin was a safe base for their attacking Britain, but their incursions scarred and seared the eastern half of Ireland from 879 to 920.

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The downfall of Cashel allowed the Norse to slip round the coast in 914. In that year they secured Waterford, held it against Niall, and in 920 secured Limerick. Within a few years they were thick in the conflicts of West Munster. Brian beat them on the plain where Limerick Junction is now situated, twenty miles from Limerick. After his brother was murdered with the connivance of the Cashel chiefs, Brian went on to striking victories. In these conflicts, however, the Norse were not lone-handed. They merged with the Irish in the general tribal alignments of the time.

10

Brian's victories gave him a very great prestige. A man of intellectual force, he saw the waste of dissension and the necessity for a strong central power. He equally realized that Ireland must be cleared of "foreigners." He proceeded firmly, a diplomat rather than a conqueror.

Except for the forces of Leinster, which evaded the fight at Clontarf on Good Friday, 1014, all Brian's ranks stood close against the Fair Foreigners and the Dark Foreigners. The Irish chronicles describe the stupendous combat. It is such as one might expect from two races who regarded valor as the true test of

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a man and the chronicle as valor's celebration. Lined up on both sides as shock troops, gold helmets gleaming, standards waving, poisoned spears and swords the weapons, at least three thousand Norse were in the end to meet their death. "There was a field and a ditch between us and them," reports one witness, "and the sharp wind of spring coming over them toward us; and it was no longer than the time that a cow could be milked, or two cows, that we continued there, when not one person of the two hosts could recognize another—we were so covered as well our heads as our faces and our clothes with the drops of gory blood carried by the force of the sharp cold wind which passed over them to us."

The battle began at high tide. Lasting until high tide, the laboring Norsemen in armor were pursued across the Liffey and slain "in hundreds and in battalions." A heap of their weapons was dug up some years ago in Rutland Square.

Then it was that Brian's daughter spoke:

"It appears to me," said she, "that the Foreigners have gained their inheritance."

"What is that, O girl?" said Amhlaibh's son [a Norwegian].

"The Foreigners are only going into the sea as is hereditary to them. I know not whether it is the heat that is on them, but nevertheless they tarry not to be milked."

The son of Amhlaibh became angered with her, and he gave her a blow which knocked a tooth out of her head.

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Brian, too old to fight, stayed with his horse-boy behind the battle. There he prayed for victory, asking between times "how the battalions were circumstanced." "I see them," the horse-boy reports, "and closely confounded are they . . . and not more loud to me would be the blow in Tomar's wood if seven battalions were cutting it down than are the resounding blows on the heads and bones and skulls of them." Now the banner of Murchadh is standing, now it droops. . . . The old king hears that the Foreigners are defeated, and all but one group fled. He refuses to leave the field. He foretells his death, giving orders for his burial at Armagh. Then the Northman Brodir reaches him and slays him, to meet his terrible fate in a few minutes at the hands of Brian's followers.

A touch of chivalry:

Then flight broke out throughout all the host. Thorstein stood still while all the others fled and tied his shoe-string. Then Kerthialfad asked him why he ran not as the others.

"No, thank you," said Thorstein, "I can't get home to-night; I live in Iceland."

Kerthialfad gave him peace.

As described in the Icelandic record, Brian was victor:

I have been where warriors wrestled,
High in Erin sang the sword,
Boss to boss met many bucklers,
Steel rung sharp on rattling helm;

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I can tell of all their struggle;
Sigurd fell in flight of spear;
Brian fell, but kept his kingdom
Ere he lost one drop of blood.

This battle did not drive the Scandinavians from Dublin, but it saved the Irish nation. In 1016 Cnut conquered England, but Ireland could not be reckoned in the Scandinavian empire of the North.



CHAPTER III

CLONTARF TO THE NORMAN INVASION

1

BRIAN BORU had a strong policy for Ireland. “The peace of Erin was proclaimed by him, both of churches and people, so that peace throughout all Erin was made in his time.” He dealt severely with criminals, stopped trespass and robbery, repaired fortresses and forts, made bridges and causeways and highroads. He rebuilt the monasteries that the Northmen had shattered, constructed churches and at least one round tower, and reestablished the schools. He sent men abroad “to buy books beyond the sea and the great ocean.” The word boru, which means tribute, was not, however, attached to his name for nothing. We learn from mac Liag how the flocks and herds came pouring to his palace at Kincora, in Clare. Many a fat hog, and many a fat cow, and a hundred and fifty butts of wine from the Danes of Dublin and a tun of

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wine for every day in the year from the Danes of Limerick.

But, like so many strong rulers who seize power irregularly, Brian Boru conquered a sphere of responsibility which he left no one to fill. It is true that he broke the Northmen. He freed the territory where a cow "durst not be milked for an infant of one night, nor for a sick person, but must be kept for the steward or bailiff or soldier of the foreigners." But to do this effectively he had to override the succession to the high-kingship, and the men who came after him copied only his irregularity. Till well after the coming of the Normans the O'Conors of Connacht, the O'Neills of Tyrone, the MacMurroughs of Leinster, and the O'Briens of Thomond kept the kingship in contest and reigned, if at all, "with opposition." When the reigning chiefs made common cause and restored the monarchy in 1258 it was only for a few years.

This situation seems anarchical, from the point of view of modern city-dwellers, who cannot survive for six months without a strong central government. But in the age of Brian Boru, we must recollect, the modern military state had not developed. Commerce was young. Tuns of wine, we have seen, came overseas to

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Ireland. For many centuries “noble clothes” were sold at the Kildare fair by Greek-speaking Gauls, and foreign gold was weighed out and paid for Irish hides and salted meat and wool. From the sixth century Spain had traded with Ireland, and for many centuries—up to 1170—the English slave was an article on the Irish market. But, in spite of the sea-power of the Northmen and the international commerce which followed piracy, trade had not yet demanded or matured the type of state to which we are now habituated. Disorder was prevalent everywhere in the North.

The massacre of the Danes in England in 1002 was scarcely an orderly event, and yet Angle-land was too feeble to emancipate itself even by massacre. “Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria,” says John Richard Green, “remained separate political bodies which no efforts of force or policy seemed able to fuse into one.”

Under Harthacnut (1040-42) there was an inferno. “Every tenth man was killed, the rest sold for slaves, and *Ælfred*’s eyes torn out at Ely. Harthacnut, more savage even than his predecessor, dug up his brother’s body and flung it into a marsh; while a rising at Worcester against his hus-carls was punished by the burning of the town and the pillage of the shire.”

And yet it was these barbarous Northmen, now be-

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Ireland

• 1171 •



came the Normans, who, under William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy, completed the conquest of England in 1066.

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But order, as we now conceive it, was far to seek even in the France which mingled Northman with Frank. "Brute force," James Harvey Robinson tells us, "governed almost everything outside of the church. The feudal obligations were not fulfilled except when the lord was sufficiently powerful to enforce them. The bond of vassalage and fidelity, which was the sole principle of order, was constantly broken and faith was violated by both vassal and lord. . . .

"We may say that war, in all its forms, was the law of the feudal world. War formed the chief occupation of the restless aristocracy who held the land and exercised the governmental control. The inveterate habits of a military race, the discord provoked by ill-defined rights or by self-interest and covetousness, all led to constant bloody struggles in which each lord had for his enemies all those about him."

2

So much for the high civilization of these days of the first pendulum-clock. What is clear is that, underneath, (1) wealth was accumulating, (2) the contacts of the Northmen were spreading the pollen of Byzantine civilization and importing certain valuable non-feudal administrative principles, (3) the trading towns

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were growing in importance, (4) the church was becoming spiritually, politically, and economically strong, as evidenced in the Crusades. But it was a considerable period before the binding effects of a money economy, which enabled the expensively armed Normans to employ Welsh and Flemish mercenaries, swung out in the aggressive policy of Henry II. William the Conqueror, son of Robert the Devil, it is true, designed to invade Ireland after he had floored the English with a single blow, turned them into Norman tenants, monopolized their bishoprics and places of power, and bribed the Danish fleet not to attack him. But he was kept busy in England and France; a state based on feudalism was a state based on force. Good as it was for England to have the master-builders and artisans of castle and cathedral, the weavers of Flanders, the merchants of Caen and Rouen, it was still no amusement for the common people to endure the frightfulness of William.

“Fugitives he sought out and put to the sword, but even so he was not satisfied. Innocent and guilty were involved in indiscriminate slaughter. Houses were destroyed, flocks and herds exterminated. Supplies of food and farm implements were heaped together and burned. With deliberate purpose, cruelly carried out,

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it was made impossible for men to live through a thousand square miles. Years afterward the country was still a desert; it was generations before it had fully recovered.” (G. B. Adams.)

Perhaps it was better for the common English to take it lying down, but the Conquest imposed a ruling class. It stratified England economically in a manner which the Revolution of 1688 did not eradicate, and which has not yet been eradicated. The town laborer and the country laborer had a long misery ahead of them in Merrie England.

The Irish, on the other hand, had escaped the Cnuts and Harthacnutes. Not until Normandy and England were better welded, and the Papacy better linked with the new imperialism, and sea-power more secure, could the Normans try their arts on Ireland. When they did so, however, they did it with the plea that “the natives were commonly engaged in tearing the bowels of their fatherland by their intestine feuds.”

3

The church was the first Irish body to feel the pull of the changing world. Men like Cormac mac Culinan

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of Cashel (d. 908), who knew Danish, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew as well as Gaelic, left worthy successors in Clonmacnois, Armagh and Monasterboice; and the Irish monks of the twelfth century spread to Ratisbon, Würzburg, Nuremberg, Constanz, Vienna, Eichstt. But a different story was now heard from the time when the monks of Lindisfarne "looked for their ecclesiastical tradition, not to Rome, but to Ireland; and quoted for their guidance the instructions, not of Gregory, but of Columba." (Green.) Anselm and Lanfranc at Bec represent the birth of a new power in Europe. The power of Rome was working with and through feudalism. From St. Bernard (visited in 1139 by St. Malachy at Clairvaux), we find the disparaging estimate in which the ancient Irish Church is already held. It is "outside" and weak. Abuses in morality and discipline are insisted upon, but especially abuses, barbarisms, which indicate its isolation and independence. Synods in 1158 and 1162 precede the Synod of Cashel, which marks the crushing subordination of the Irish Church to the Normans. Meanwhile, up to that feudal triumph, the early Irish Romanesque architecture, the sculpture of great crosses, the illumination of manuscripts and such beautiful work as the Ardagh chalice

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and the cross of Cong, were thriving under ecclesiastical influence. After the Normans the church ceased to be free, and these creative impulses dried at the source.

Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, is the human link between Ireland and the Normans, but before telling Dermot's story one must first glance at the geography of Leinster. "The whole spirit and policy of Leinster," as G. A. J. Cole so admirably explains, "were dominated by the great chain of granite, eighty miles in length, that served as a natural fortress, approached only by narrow lateral glens. The rocky walls of these valleys, with their wooded clefts, provided ambushes that told strong in defense." ("Ireland the Outpost," p. 45.) This chain of Leinster mountains, facing the southeastern approaches to Dublin and the wooded plains, was to mean much in Irish history from the beginning up to 1550, or from the age of iron to the age of gunpowder. Unlike the chiefs of the cow country, the Leinster chiefs could take the aggressive. On the defensive they were virtually impregnable. The military road of 1798 is a testimony to the importance of holding "the barrier of Leinster." It is equally a testimony to the initial advantages of Dermot MacMurrough in being able to force his enemies to bite on granite.

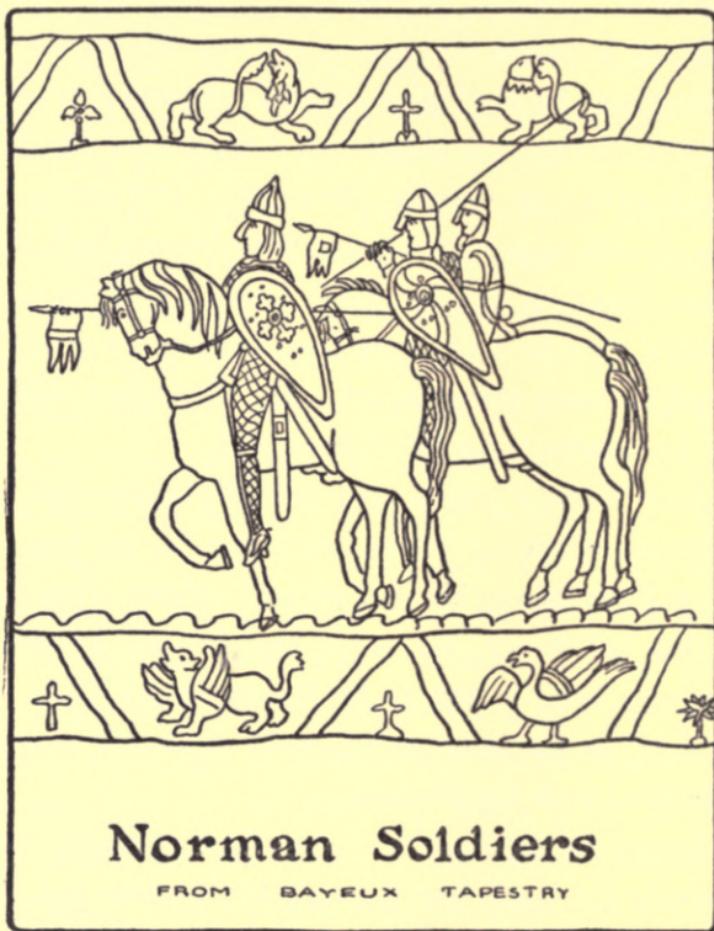
Dermot collected enemies. The dominant man in Leinster, he made life unpleasant for his compatriots in the plains by his “grievous and intolerable manner.” In 1152, during the absence of O’Ruarc of Meath, he eloped with the elderly Devorgilla, O’Ruarc’s wife. This episode apparently closed with Devorgilla’s return to her husband, but by 1166 Dermot had become so detested that he was dispossessed of his territory and forced to leave the country. He thereupon made his way to Aquitaine to enlist Henry II.

“Now Dermot was a man tall of stature and stout of frame; a soldier whose heart was in the fray, and held valiant among his own nation. From often shouting his battle-cry, his voice had become hoarse. A man who liked better to be feared by all than loved by any,” so the inimitable Gerald de Barri, who came to Ireland with the Normans.

Henry, as we shall see later, had a trump up his sleeve in the game for Ireland, but he was not ready to play. Very busy, as usual, he had little time for Dermot. “He received him kindly and graciously enough,” but despatched him to England, saying: “We have taken Dermot, Prince of the men of Leinster, into

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the bosom of our grace and good will. Wherefore, too, whosoever within the bounds of our dominions shall be



Norman Soldiers

FROM BAYEUX TAPESTRY

willing to lend aid to him, as being our vassal and liege-man, in the recovery of his own, let him know that he hath our favor and permission to that end."

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The grandiose manner was already in vogue. But at Bristol Dermot had to find the lads who would do business. He began by making a splash with Henry's money. He "made liberal offers both of land and money to many persons, but without effect." At last, however, he met his man. Richard FitzGilbert de Clare, son of Strongbow and himself called Strongbow, came to see the big, tough Irishman. What would Dermot put up? Dermot said, my eldest daughter, Eva (Aoife) and succession to the kingdom! Knowing nothing of Irish succession, this offer tempted Strongbow, but first he let a few of the lesser fellows under Robert FitzStephen go over in 1169 to try it out. And with them he took the precaution of sending his lanky uncle, Hervey de Montmaurice, "a man of broken fortunes, without equipment or money; not so much to take a part in the fighting as to act as a spy for" him.

5

Landing near Wexford with 300 Welsh archers in May, 1169, FitzStephen and his followers promptly went against the Ostmen or Northmen in the walled town of Wexford. The Northmen repulsed them hardily, but on a Sunday morning sent out two bishops and some citizens to find out what was behind the

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attack, and, debating it with MacMurrough and his mercenaries, decided to make terms. Donnell of Ossory was not so complacent. Retreating before the heavily armed Norman leaders (Maurice de Prendergast, Meiler FitzHenry, Milo FitzGerald, and the rest), he harried them desperately from the woods on their return to camp; and although they managed to kill some hundreds of Donnell's men in a flanking movement, Maurice de Prendergast was sufficiently impressed to swap masters and go over to Donald of Ossory.

The news of the knights in full armor traveled fast. The high-king, Rory (Roderic) O'Conor of Connacht, was a slow man, but he sent a messenger of peace to MacMurrough in the name of "their common country," offering to acknowledge Dermot king of Leinster. In response to this offer Dermot actually agreed to peace. He acknowledged O'Conor high-king of Ireland, gave his own son Conor as hostage, and secretly pledged himself to have no more to do with foreigners. But Maurice FitzGerald, then arriving at Wexford with two more ships of fighting men, Dermot flatly went back on his word, hurried to secure Dublin, sent Fitz-Stephen to help O'Brien of Thomond against O'Conor, and designed to become high-king himself. For this purpose he needed his Normans. To FitzStephen and

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FitzGerald in turn, who in each case were so clumsy as to be already married, he tendered his daughter Eva, and to both of them, with a broad disregard for Irish law, he gave grants in fee. Meanwhile Strongbow had learned of the successes of the preliminary force. Picking up everybody along the way to his embarkation in Wales, he rolled up 200 men-at-arms and 1000 archers. He landed near Waterford in August, 1170. The capture of this Gael-Gall town was a bloody fight. The two Sitrics were killed, and Ragnal and O'Phelan spared for good reason. At the first moment Strongbow wedded Eva, who, in the most literal sense, was given away by her father.

The situation was now sufficiently serious. Rory O'Conor was probably not alarmed by the intrusion of foreigners as such; that was no new story. But Dermot MacMurrough had the O'Briens on his side, and by the evidence of every encounter these men in armor were proving formidable. It was known that they had a new military technic, had conquered England, and were builders of castles—had aëroplanes, so to speak, and machine-guns and tanks. A religious offensive was at the same time being conducted. The fact that Henry II had not come gave some reassurance, but by a rapid excursion over the mountain ridges and through

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Glendalough Dermot MacMurrough had reached Dublin with a handful of Normans and rushed the walls while a parley was being made. The Norsemen took to their ships. O'Conor decided to act. He advanced to besiege Dublin, but was caught napping in a sally which, by Norman accounts, was quite one-sided:

At prime we numbered of the kerne
Full fifteen hundred dead;
While stricken of our Englishrie
A single footman bled.

It was a most threatening invasion. Ireland, in the language of the Four Masters, was "a trembling sod." But the very fact of this first success aroused Henry II to anger. He knew his compatriots and wanted no rivals. He was furious when Strongbow's uncle Hervey came to him in Gloucester. Hervey pledged fealty; gave him Dublin and Waterford and Wexford and the castles, and made him sole legatee of Ireland. This placated the full-blooded Henry, but he still vibrated. Ever since 1155 he had planned to devolve Ireland on some member of his house and in that year he had secured his trump card from Nicholas Breakspear, Pope Adrian—the only English pope. This was the needful moral window-dressing which was the beginning of English foreign policy. It was the papal "bull" called "Laudabiliter." It laid down that the Irish were an

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“unlearned and savage race.” It also laid down that Henry was full of enthusiasm for religion, in love with the creed, and desirous “to instruct the Irish nation in the ways of virtue.” In the most eloquent phrases, worthy of their sacred cause, Henry was despatched to check crime, correct immorality, engrift virtue, and glorify the religion of Christ—to which end the Irish people “shall receive you with fitting honor and do homage to you as their overlord.” This in 1155.

But 1170 was not a happy year for Henry II’s flourishing the “Laudabiliter.” It was the year of the murder of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, by Henry’s over-enthusiastic friends. Still angry, he assembled 400 ships, 500 knights, 4000 men-at-arms, and several thousand archers and sailed for Waterford. He reached there October, 1171. He imprisoned Fitz-Stephen and scowled generally. “The island was now tranquil,” says Gerald de Barri, “in the presence of the king, and enjoyed the blessings of peace and rest.” MacMurrough and his friends submitted to him. From beyond the Shannon Roderic said “the whole of Ireland was rightly his,” and not until 1175 did he conclude a treaty. This he did in the Treaty of Windsor, which, as G. B. Adams says, Henry II paid no attention to “any longer than suited his purpose.”

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Meanwhile, on his visit to Ireland, the "Laudabiliter" was not so much mentioned. He had still to answer for Becket. A synod of the clergy met at Cashel, presided over by the Papal Legate Christian. It was a mild synod. It ordained that children should be baptized in water, not milk; that tithes be paid to the churches; that marriages be solemnized; that church lands be exempt from imposts; that the clergy be exempt from the "eric"; that wills be made in due form and burials with due obsequies; and, the real point, that the usages of the Irish Church should conform to the Anglican. Thus the "unlearned and savage race" was to be redeemed. Henry went on to Dublin, named himself "Lord of Ireland," chartered Dublin to Bristol, feudalized the Pale, held court from November to Easter Monday, and left to answer for the murder of Becket before he had ringed the Dublin district with castles. He did not depart until he saw to it that in future Ireland should have none but Norman archbishops.

7

Now, what were the ideas of the Norman invaders and what manner of men were they?

Their ideas, we may take it, varied with their dis-

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positions, but on the whole were simple. They were strong, strong-smelling, hard-fighting, extremely definite, and hard-headed petty barons, ready to call Henry their overlord if they must, but looking on Ireland as a good thing and their own. They worked under Dermot, to begin with, but they felt the superiority that men encased in hardware always feel for opponents who have less hardware. Being Normans, however, they equally despised their English mercenaries, whose speech they could not understand, and their Welsh conscripts, who were valued merely for their nimbleness and their archery. “Our men in Ireland,” wrote de Barri concerning the second instalment in 1185, “fell into three distinct divisions—the Normans, the English, and my own countrymen [the Welsh, who were very numerous]. We of the court came mostly in contact with the first; we had few dealings with the second, with the last none.”

They nominally formed a close ring of feudal confederates, “thirsting for plunder and renown,” but inside that ring there was intense animosity and combativeness. One has only to turn to the chronicle of the Rev. Gerald de Barri (related to the FitzHenrys and the FitzGeralds and the FitzStephens) to gather the fear, hatred, and rivalry which seethed within this

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grasping enterprise. The outcome was not to be wondered at.

In history written under the influence and direction of Norman ascendancy a great deal is made of "constitutional liberties," starting with eulogies of Magna Charta (1215). But this is against the genius of history, which, unlike literature, is perverted by the romantic spirit. Magna Charta was chiefly an incident in the struggle between crown and baron. It was "a baronial manifesto, seeking chiefly to redress the grievances of the promoters, and mainly selfish in motive." (McKechnie.) In Ireland such "bulwarks of liberty" could not be erected by the scrambling barons. For four hundred years their occupation was precarious and dwindling. The main purpose of legislation in Ireland during this period did not touch the Irish, who, though "occupied," were independent. It strove in a futile way to keep the Norman occupiers in line. It was not until the wealthier country temporarily settled its own disorders and came to Ireland with gunpowder that the English path was blasted through the Irish nation.

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freckled face, bright gray eyes, delicate, even feminine features, a high voice and a short neck," seems to have been the bottle-shouldered type of aristocrat, "rather a tactician than a fighting man." "A man whose family was better than his fortune; who had more blue blood than brains, and whose pedigree was longer than his purse," he was of little importance, dying in 1176. He was, in any case, no match for Henry II, the Roosevelt of his time, "a man with reddish hair, a big bullet-head, bloodshot gray eyes which in anger flashed fiercely, a fiery face, and a broken voice. He had a bull-neck, a square chest, muscular arms, and a fleshy body. . . . He was attached beyond measure to the pleasures of the chase. . . . He was by nature not a truthful man, and would habitually break his word without the slightest excuse. . . . Scarcely could he spare an hour to attend the holy sacrifice of the mass, and even then so great, forsooth, was the press of public business that he spent more time in discussion and conversation than in prayer."

Maurice FitzGerald, related to de Barri, was an unassuming, dignified man, "his features regular, his complexion embrowned by exposure; of medium height." Reimund FitzGerald "was a man not much above middle height, but very stout. He had rather curly yellow

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hair, large round gray eyes, a somewhat high nose, and a sunburnt face of bright and cheerful expression. Although corpulent, the natural vivacity of his temperament seemed to carry off his bulky appearance. . . . Patient in trying circumstances, the extremes of heat and cold he bore with equal fortitude, and no toil drew from him a murmur.” Meiler FitzHenry, not a relative, “was a swarthy man with fierce black eyes and a keen visage. Below the middle height, yet very powerful . . . intense his thirst for fame.” Hervey de Montmaurice, not a relative, “a tall man with prominent eyes, crafty, plausible and false.” John de Courci “was a tall, fair man, with big-boned, muscular limbs, large of frame and powerfully built. He had great personal strength and his intrepidity was remarkable . . . he kept the country under by building castles in advantageous positions throughout the whole of Ulster.”

“FitzStephen was a well-favored man of burly make and sound and vigorous health; in stature slightly above the middle height. A free liver and open-handed, he had a hearty way with him; in short was a right good fellow, but given overmuch to wine and women.”

Hugh de Laci was “a swarthy man with small, black, deeply sunken eyes, a flat nose, and his right cheek dis-

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figured down to the chin by an ugly scar caused by some accidental burn; a man with a short neck and a hairy and muscular body, though small and ill-made. With all this, however, he had considerable strength of character and resolution, and for temperance was a very Frenchman. He was a careful man in his private affairs, and when in office most vigilant in the discharge of public business.”

These were not English Picts, then. They began to run the “English-speaking world” without a word of English. They were the cool, military blond type that still persists, and the dark French type, energetic and systematic, with which we are familiar. They had two rules—to build castles and hold land in fief—and they gave no more to the church than they could help, except the verbose and jocular Hervey, who gave himself.

9

Through the eyes of these confident, practical, and class-conscious adventurers the conquest of Ireland looked easy. For their part, the Irish chiefs were frankly set back by these intruders, especially by the speed with which the archers shot and “the might of the heavy men-at-arms.” But these novelties wore off. “By gradual and careful training in the use of the bow

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and other weapons," de Barri admits in a few years, "by learning caution and studying the art of ambush, by the confidence gained from frequently engaging in conflict with our troops, lastly taught by our very successes, these Irishmen, whom at first we could rout with ease, became able to offer a stout resistance." This in 1185. And he adds solemnly, "a campaign in France is a very different thing from a campaign in Ireland or Wales. In the former case it is carried on in an open country, in the latter in broken country; there we have plains, here woods; there armor is held in esteem, here it is reckoned cumbersome and out of place; there victory is won by weight, here by activity." The Irish proved to be exceedingly active. The country, said de Barri, "should be thickly sown with castles and so strengthened and protected." Connacht, too hard to conquer, too poor to plunder, must pay a tribute, but Limerick must be held. "It were better, far better, at first to set up our strongholds by degrees in suitable places, and to carry out a coherent system of castle building, feeling the way, so to speak, at every step." This was the method of bringing Ireland to Christ and "engrafting virtue." At the same time a public edict "should, as among the Sicilians, forbid on pain of the severest penalty all bearing of arms."

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10

With the Normans, it is evident, the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. From the twelfth to the sixteenth century Gerald's outspoken plan interpreted the mind behind the Irish invasion as clearly as von Bissing's outspoken plan interpreted the mind behind the recent Belgian invasion. But it was one thing to talk conquest, another thing to accomplish it. A light but flexible mesh of national custom, national personality, and national will fell upon and enwrapped the struggling Normans until, in the sixteenth century, their rulers saw that this creative and spiritual essence must be destroyed in order to subdue Ireland. The lesson of the earlier period, however, is the insufficiency of their means rather than the uncertainty of their end. From the start they meant that Ireland should follow England's example—go to work submissively for the ennobled and privileged feudal Englishman.

CHAPTER IV

NORMAN INVASION TO HENRY VIII

1

WITH its language, its land system, its art and music and literature, its church and its dynastic succession, Ireland was a nation when it came within the sphere of Norman arms. In resisting Norman arms and the lordship of England it was, for four hundred years, increasingly successful. But the price of resistance was exorbitant. Even if Ireland kept it so hot that the Normans stood from one uneasy foot to the other, changing deputy after deputy and general after general, the vitality of Ireland was enslaved to this single task of dealing with an invader.

To Gaelicize the new-comers was the involuntary instinct of the nation, which had within itself the power of all healthy organisms to turn what it consumes into the stream of its blood. But the Norman process distracted Ireland between resisting and assimilating, and did not give the Irish nation a chance.

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No sooner was a generation of Norman intruders converted into “Irish rebels,” people who could live on human terms with the “Irish enemy,” than there came a new batch of prelates, adventurers, broken men, ambitious youngsters, and gentlemen of the royal blood who believed they could saddle Ireland. They could not saddle Ireland because Ireland was a nation and a personality. But this fact was not clear even to the Irishmen of the time. Many of the chiefs contradicted their true position. They sought one modus vivendi after another, responding to the twist of circumstance. It seemed best, one year, to throw out the Norman. At another time, in different political weather, it seemed best to win him over. Whichever side of the dilemma the Irish agreed to take, if they did agree, one thing was certain, their whole natural development was being sacrificed.

“Now began,” says Dr. Douglas Hyde, “that permanent war—very different, indeed, from what the Irish tribes waged among themselves—which, almost from its very commencement, *thoroughly arrested Irish development, and disintegrated Irish life.*” The italics are Dr. Hyde’s. “It is not too much to say that for three centuries after the Norman Conquest Ireland produced nothing in art, literature, or scholarship, even

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faintly comparable to what she had achieved before.” “For four centuries after the Anglo-Norman, or more properly the Cambro-Norman invasion, the literature of Ireland seems to have been chiefly confined to the schools of the bards, and the bards themselves seem to have continued on the rather cut-and-dry lines of tribal genealogy, religious meditations, personal eulogism, clan history, and elegies for the dead. There reigns during this period a lack of imagination and of initiative in literature; no new ground is broken, no fresh paths entered on, no new saga-stuff unearthed, no new meters discovered. . . .”

For his part in the death of Thomas Becket, Henry II did penance. Head bowed and barefooted, he walked his humble way to the tomb. He kissed the spot where Thomas bled, he confessed to the bishops and lay flat on the ground weeping and praying; stripped to his shirt, he bent his head and shoulders while the clergy flogged him, five blows from each prelate and three from each monk. This for one victim, behind whom the church stood in grim power. But for Ireland, whose body was broken and spat upon by another group of his liegemen, he neither wept nor prayed. . . . Men amuse themselves with tears for single crimes, while they

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invade millions, spread famine and disaster, and bring civilizations to the dust.

2

Henry II, an English chronicler puts it, "was the first monarch to drive from their lands the loathsome Irish tribes, and to allot the conquered territory to Englishmen on feudal terms." It was indeed feudalism, as this man saw, that laid the ax to the root of Irish life. Feudalism came not simply to dispossess the chief for a landlord and to change the inheritance of the whole family group into the heritage of the eldest son; it came also to contradict the political system by which the people themselves elected the head of their territory. In England, after all, the Normans came in at the top without destroying the social foundations of every Saxon tenant. But in Ireland the chiefs were dispossessed, and when they were dispossessed the whole Irish population found itself outlawed.

However the purple cloaks and flowing locks, the easy horsemanship and free gait of the Irish chiefs might seem to the courtier Normans, these chiefs, with their brehons and bards, were at the head of a system

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which was the only one the Irish as yet desired. Theirs was a pleasant land with a way of life that suited a frugal, hardy, outdoor people. Their festivals and games, their passion for education, their enjoyment of poetry and music, pointed to a likelihood that Erinn in its own manner would move with the rest of Europe into the sunlight of the Renaissance. But a savage feudalism fell on Ireland and held it in a murderous, brainless deadlock. From that deadlock Ireland almost succeeded in extricating itself. You watch Ireland in that long fight, free to escape time and again and yet itself so murderous and brainless in the evil excitement of fighting that it could not even see the open door and the waiting road. When the O'Neills saw that Ireland must move or be destroyed, it was too late.

At first the conquest looked simple. On the one hand you had the Norman invaders superior in the art of war, frankly assured in morale, entrenched in their "legal" status (except in Connacht and parts of Ulster), and associated with a powerful monarch. On the other hand you had the invaded Irish making prompt submissions to Henry II as overlord, brave and adroit in fighting but not soldiers by profession, inferior in equipment, divided and subdivided in their social sys-

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tem and absolutely alone in the world, except possibly for Rome.

Easy as it looked, success was illusive. The seeds of tragedy and failure were in the enterprise from the beginning, and there were plenty of swords to reap them.

3

To get an idea of the first Norman settlements you may imagine a horizontal air-line about five hundred feet in the air. Below that air-line, in the plains of Meath and Leinster and Munster, the Normans hope to claim everything. Above that air-line, in the mountains of Leinster and Munster, they hope to keep the outlawed Irishmen. Their plan is to hold all the walled towns on the coast—Carrickfergus, Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, and Limerick—and to pepper the plains with impregnable stone castles; then go on brave excursions into Connacht, up to Ulster, to complete the symmetry of conquest.

The “wild Irish,” of course, are to stay in the bogs and the hills, watching Piers the Plowman, just over from England, as he whistles at his work in the fruitful fields.

If the Irish were “wild,” this was calculated to make

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them more wild. The prompt outcome was a series of unfortunate incidents. A young Irishman with an ax in his hand stood by the governor de Lacy when de Lacy stooped to mark out the spot for a new castle, and it was too much for the youth—one blow was enough. The Normans then tried to outlaw the ax.

On Easter Monday, 1209, the citizens of Dublin, five hundred in number, all loyal and not long imported from Bristol, thought they 'd have a picnic out in the enemy country, two miles out. It was too much for the O'Byrnes. Before the benefits of Norman civilization they had held that territory. Now they lived with the goshawks and the crows. The O'Byrnes massacred the picnic-party.

It began to be clear that there might be a certain amount of ill-feeling generated by the conquest. Prince John came over, and the Irish chiefs were asked to a fresh party in Dublin. They came, and many young Normans with Prince John. Being witty and well-bred, they pulled the chieftains' long hair and their cloaks, and they tried to trip them. The Irish, being unaccustomed to Norman civilization, went home feeling that the bond between the French and Gaelic-speaking peoples was not yet secure.

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It is idle to follow the process, especially through the mists of intervening hypocrisy. The Irish were "barbarians," yet de Clare had married Eva MacMurrough and de Lacy married Rose O'Conor and de Burgh married the daughter of de Lacy. In the fighting the Irish steadily improved. But a profound rottenness crept into their life. Here were the Normans with a feudal parliament at Dublin but the country was too upset, too dangerous, for them to attend. And here were the Irish without any chance to work out their own central government. The effect on both groups was precisely the same; they split into separate units which sought combinations of any and every kind for profit. What made it indescribably bad, from the Irish point of view, was the double choice that confronted every Irish chief; when it suited his interests he could elect to act feudally and favor his elder son, and when it suited him he could favor the tanist or second-chief chosen by his kinsmen. The temptation to play both games ripped Irish tribal integrity to pieces. The O'Neills, the O'Donnells, the O'Briens, especially the O'Conors, engaged in the fiercest and

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most complicated feuds. There were murders, battles, violations of sanctuary, and cold-blooded massacres. The Normans were not one atom different. De Birmingham who beat Bruce in 1315 was killed by two hundred English tenants in 1329. Edmund and Ulick Burke stole a march on their girl cousin, became Irish chiefs, took Irish names (macWilliam), and divided her estates. The Desmonds, the Geraldines, the de Lacy's, the Butlers, the Berminghams emulated the O'Carrolls, O'Dempseys, O'Reillys, O'Kellys, O'Byrnes, O'Tooles, macMurroughs, macMahons, in the blood-thirsty ferocity and political meaninglessness of their quarrels. The moral level of this activity was high as regards courage but low as regards purpose. In most of it one searches in vain for any trace of what we now call public spirit.

5

In the thirteenth century there was one brave effort to do the work of Ireland. O'Brien of Thomond saw that a combination with the North could alone help Ireland. Rising above his own claims to the kingship, he traveled the Erne in 1258 with his principal kinsmen and sub-chiefs, and there he and Hugh O'Conor agreed on naming Brian O'Neill king of Ireland. In 1260

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O'Neill made war but was defeated and slain by the Earl of Salisbury at Downpatrick. The will of Ireland, however, was at work. In 1263 an approach was made to Hakon of Norway, to offer him the kingship. From then till 1315, with men from the Hebrides landing to fight by the side of the Gael, the Irish warred with the Norman through Ulster, Meath, and Connacht. By that time Robert Bruce had fought Bannockburn. Himself declining the sovereignty of Ireland, his brother Edward accepted the crown and landed in Antrim with 6000 Scots. In 1317, the year Robert Bruce came to fight to free Ireland, Brian O'Neill's son wrote a spirited letter denouncing the invasion to Pope John XXII. But where the pope had deferred to the victor of Bannockburn he reprobated and threatened the Irish. In 1317 the friar preachers and mendicants were ordered by papal mandate "to desist from stirring up the people of Ireland to resist the king's authority."

Edward Bruce failed. At first he swept the country, but his second year was wasted. At Athenry his ally O'Conor was slain with 8000 men. He himself won every battle except his last. He defeated 30,000 at Athy and 15,000 at Kells. Besieging Dublin unsuccessfully and too late, however, he stood in the third

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year against a huge combined army, and, at Faughart, near Dundalk (where he had been crowned), he lost his life and Ireland.

These campaigns drained Ireland. Their effect was recorded in bitter reproaches to the dead Bruce, who had left a desolation, famine, and pestilence that was soon deepened by the Black Death. Friar John Clyn of the Kilkenny Franciscans says in 1348 that "pestilence deprived of human inhabitants villages and cities, and castles and towns, so that there was scarcely found a man to dwell therein." But it was the Normans and English more than the Irish who suffered. The great policy by which the mysteries or guilds were made exclusively English and by which the towns were planted "to treat with the Irish enemy and reform them, also to make war on them," could not stand the depletions of the plague.

6

The dykes of the colonists began to give way before the Irish race and the Irish language, and for two centuries to follow there was an increasing Irish resurgence, up to the rampart of the Pale. Mrs. Alice Stopford Green has shown in scrupulous detail the part that Ireland took in medieval commerce and industry.

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She has listed the names of Irishmen who went to Oxford, until the Pale decreed that "no Irishman adhering to the enemies shall be suffered henceforth to pass over the sea, by color of going to the schools of Oxford, Cambridge, or elsewhere." Already Irishmen were "on the run." But this did not prevent their taking a share of the markets that were opening all over Europe. In "The Making of Ireland and its Undoing, 1200-1600," Mrs. Green has given the surprising evidences of Irish commerce, from the great oak beams that went to support the roof of Westminster Hall in 1200 to the oaks that went to the Dutch Stadt-haus at Amsterdam in 1700. Ireland traded with England, France, Spain, Holland, Flanders, Florence, Naples, Genoa. Out from Ireland were sent fine leather, Irish cloaks, cloth and linen, gloves, baskets, shoes, hemp and flax, cheese, butter and honey. Embroidered silk, fine serge, ware of Irish and Spanish iron—these went with salmon and herring, with corn, with meat and wool. Gold came in, "with coal and fruit and wine, carpets, broadcloths and kerseys, velvet and silk, satin and cloth of gold and embroideries." And small Irish ships manned by Irishmen thronged Galway, Limerick, Cork, Waterford, Wexford, Dublin, and Drogheda. Ardglass, Trim, Youg-

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hal, and Kinsale were also ports, with Ross and Kilkenny as trading towns.

To keep the Irish out of Irish towns was the first rule of what now begins to be English imperial policy. "No Irishman nor any man with a beard above his mouth was to be lodged within Dublin walls, nor his horse nor his horse-boy." Such severe prohibitions, however, were not operative in a country where the Irish were like the moisture in the air. Who were to be "priests, doctors, clerks, nurses, messengers, harpers, porters, millers, bakers, shoemakers, butchers"? The decline of Anglo-Norman fortunes drew into Dublin "O'Byrnes, O'Tooles, Ryans, O'Heyns, Hanlons, Dermots, Kavanaghs, Connors, Coynes, Flanagans, Connells." It was impossible to hold "the rallying city for men of the 'better race.' "

But while the unfree classes in Ireland had no share in the class revolts of John Ball and Wat Tyler, there was a temporary promise of relief from invasion. "Our Irish dominions," cried King Edward in 1361, "have been reduced to such utter devastation, ruin, and misery that they may be totally lost if our subjects there are not immediately succored." This was the period of the Statute of Kilkenny—which, by the way, was written in French, still the language of the aristocracy

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and the law. The case was so bad that the crown had to make a demonstration. It made a huge one. In 1394 Richard II arrived (at Waterford, as usual) with an army of 34,000 to engraft more virtue on the wild and barbarous Irish.

A different macMurrough from Dermot the Foreigner was now king of Leinster. From 1377 to 1417 Art macMurrough was the goad of the English. Working with the O'Byrnes, O'Tooles, and O'Nolans, he showed the offense-power of the "mountaine enemie." He mauled Richard's troops on the way to Dublin, having blocked their passage by the east. The ruse which de Bermingham had worked with the Offaly family in 1305, when twenty-nine nobles were murdered at a banquet in his castle, was later tried in Dublin Castle on macMurrough. But as armed men stealthily surrounded that feasting-place of death, the unsuspecting macMurrough caught his battle-song played in earnest by a watchful harper, his only attendant; "he made his escape despite of them, by the strength of his hand and bravery, and they were not able to subdue him." This was the end of the knighthood that Richard had given to macMurrough as well as O'Conor, O'Brien, and O'Neill.

At Kells, in 1398, King Richard's deputy, Mortimer,

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was defeated and slain. In revenge thereof Richard returned with 20,000 men in 1399. Only by luck did he arrive at Dublin with his force partly intact. The O'Byrnes were beaten at Bray, with heavy losses, in the following year. But Art macMurrough persisted. He dominated Leinster. Wexford, Carlow, Kildare, he scavenged of his enemy, and held his own till he died at sixty, 1417.

7

This was an age, however, in which the primitive and desperate process of armed raids and sallies was not enough to liberate Ireland. To carve Dublin Castle out of Ireland's side was necessary; but macMurrough opened that wound without extracting the spear-head. Meanwhile great developments were taking place on the Continent and even in England. The names of Petrarch and Boccaccio spring to mind at this period; and if French feudalism was sprawling in the mud of Agincourt like a crustacean on its back, with Henry V's murderers finishing it, and if John Huss was burned alive in 1415 as Joan of Arc was burned alive in 1430, the spring of Europe was in blossom. Life surged in the medieval towns and hope in the rediscovery of workmanship. France devised a military system that ended

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“chivalry” and prepared the state for the terrible uses of gunpowder. The Hundred Years’ War concluded in 1453, the English retreating from France to enter on the miserable wrangle of the Wars of the Roses. It was, on the Continent, the beginning of the Renaissance, a movement that released the energies of man and allowed him to satisfy his most varied and colored desires. Copernicus, Cabot, and Columbus were names on the horizon. A race of subject human beings, mute and grimy, still hung on the side-lines of this vivid human procession toward knowledge and culture; only the center of the social stream flowed gleamingly in the sun. But everywhere the break-up of feudalism was the end of an enslavement to the battle-ax. The New Learning was almost within man’s grasp, to lift him out of barbarism into a reason which meant that life was to be valued, glorified, sweetened, and refined. The church, so far the custodian of the higher values, was enough in league with feudalism to become the object of contention and revision. Men who had new values, men who craved emancipation, tried their strength against Rome. In some cases tolerance and reason were most in mind, and the rights of man; in other cases a mere change of masters and formulæ. But in any case the world turned on a new axis.

For this renaissance (a Continental word) England was not yet ready; and Ireland, dragging in the troubled wake of England, was permitted no natural evolution. Poyning's law, passed in 1394, gives the best indication of the tiny extent to which "constitutional liberties" had penetrated to Ireland. So uncertain was the English crown of its feudal barons in Ireland that the exclusively Anglo-Norman parliament of Dublin was led by a strong deputy into agreeing that no bill should even be presented in Ireland until it had been submitted for approval to the English crown. This was intended to offset and hold down the Geraldines. The Geraldines (FitzGeralds of Kildare and Munster) had by now begun to show their sea-change, after four generations of Ireland. They were no longer Normans but Norman-Irish, speaking French, English, Irish, and Latin, and bidding fair to become the real lords of the realm. Set against the prudent Ormondes (Butlers by name and often butlers by temperament) these FitzGeralds rose on their manifold compromise between feudalism and the Irish land system, while the Irish chiefs marked time and collected "black rent."

The FitzGeralds grew in strength and in national

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favor until, with skill and luck, they came within sight of dominating Ireland. The degree to which the union of Irish and Anglo-Irish had proceeded may be guessed from these alliances: "A daughter of the seventh Earl of Kildare married Henry O'Neill, Prince of Tyrowen. Of the daughters of the eighth earl, Alice was married to her first cousin, Con O'Neill, Eleanor to MacCarthy Reagh and afterwards to Manus O'Donnell, Margaret to the eighth Earl of Ormond, and Eustacia to Mac-William Nachter. Mary, daughter of the ninth earl, was married to Brian O'Conor, chief of Offaly, and her sister Ellen to Fergananim O'Carroll of Ely." Here was a mighty union of Irish and Anglo-Irish against the crown, after four hundred years of conquest. But statecraft set a trap, and youth fell into it. The downfall of the Geraldines was black as the pit.

9

To English history belongs the Geraldines' espousal of the Yorkish pretenders, and the picture of Ormonde's faction and the Geraldines brawling in St. Patrick's Cathedral. It is enough to know that Ormonde "put a great stay" on Geraldine and Geraldine on Ormonde.

But with Garrett Mor (Gerald), the Great Earl of Kildare, there comes a vigorous and defiant personality.

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He died in 1513, "a mighty made man, full of honor and courage." He was the earl of whom it was said, "All Ireland cannot rule this man." "Then," said Henry VII, "this man shall rule all Ireland!" To succeed him came Garrett Oge (Gerald the Younger), again the governor of Ireland. Garrett was a man who saw aid for Ireland in Spain and France. At a time when the Pale was narrowed to a swathe of Louth, Meath, Kildare, and Dublin, he was a power in the land. At Maynooth, his castle, there was artillery that should have been in Dublin. In spite of his culture (he had a library, large for the time, in which twenty Irish books are recorded, twenty-two English, thirty-four Latin, and thirty-six French), he sneered like a frontiersman in his conflict with the sumptuous Wolsey. "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."

Lord deputy by his very courage, he was called to London in 1534 to answer to Henry VIII for treason,

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and this time he was clamped in the Tower. While he was there word was sent back to Ireland that Henry had executed him. The report traveled to his son, Silken Thomas, a handsome youth left as deputy by his father: his gorgeous trappings gave him his name.

The young man wanted no more of Tudor fealty. He rode through Dublin with his harper and a troop of horse. On the north of the Liffey he made his way to St. Mary's Abbey where the king's council was sitting. There he flung his sword of state among them.

"Now I have need of my own sword," he said, "I am none of Henry's deputy. I am his foe."

His elders trembled for him. "I will not hold him for my king," the youth cried. "If it be my hap to miscarry . . . catch that catch may. I will take the market as it riseth."

Galloping off after this defiance, Silken Thomas began a campaign which enlisted the O'Tooles, mac-Murroughs, O'Conors, O'Moores, O'Briens, O'Carrolls, O'Neills. He had enough success to enable him to control the Pale and to take the Castle. But there was no heart in the rising, and much dissension. The archbishop of Dublin being murdered by his followers, Lord Thomas was promptly condemned by the church;

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and Henry VIII sent over Skeffington the Gunner.

With the aid of artillery, Skeffington captured Maynooth; thereupon he executed the garrison. One after another the six Geraldine fortresses were assaulted and taken. A promise of pardon was indubitably given to Lord Thomas (now Earl of Kildare since his father had died in the Tower). He and his five uncles were brought prisoners to London. There they were held for more than a year, in mean neglect and misery, the gallant youth now barefoot and in rags. The delay was designed to cool off feeling. In 1537 the six Geraldines were "drawne, hanged, and quartered at Tiburne," and their heads set on six spikes on London Bridge.

Antagonists though they were, the ruin of the Geraldines was terrible enough to win the tears of Ormonde. No Anglo-Irish family was to take their place, or to weld Ireland under an outside leader. But a young boy, the last of the Geraldines, was hurried by his aunt from the reach of the English. She brought him safely to Donegal. Then, in the saffron shirt of a peasant, he was shipped to France. The English Government learned he was in Paris and demanded him. Again he escaped, eventually to Rome, to appear in middle age on the Irish scene.

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10

It has spirit, this recovery from the Norman invasion, but one thinks of that Irish priest, Shemus Cartan, in his exile in France, writing these manly lines in Gaelic, translated by Lady Gregory:

Let us put down the sum of our sins;
Oppression of the poor, thieving, robbery,
Great vows held in light esteem;
Giving our soul to the man that is the worst;
The strength of our pride was greater than our life,
The strength of our debts was more than we could pay.

It was with treachery Ireland was lost,
And the ill-will of men one to another.
There was no judge that would give a hearing
To the oppressed people whose life was under hardship.
Outcasts and widows crying aloud
Without right judgment to be had or punishment.

We were never agreed together,
But as one ox bound and one free from the yoke;
No right humility to be found.
All trying for the headship of Ireland
At the time when her enemies were doing their work.
No settlement to be made of any quarrel,
The share of the wheat-ear for the man that was the strongest;
It is long that this has been the hurt of Ireland;
It is thus that the battle ended with the Gael.

The battle had not “ended with the Gael.” It had only begun. But the age of the swash-buckler was over. Now came a period in which feudalism gave place to absolute monarchy. Ireland had to meet the policy of conquest which was dictated by Tudor fears, Stuart cowardice, and the godly brutality of Puritanism.

CHAPTER V

THE CONQUEST

1

THE Irish question was now three hundred and fifty years old. Without the existence or aid of a single Ulster Presbyterian or a single Southern Protestant, without the existence of one "Scotch-Irishman," the problem of an Irish nation was full grown in the reign of Henry VIII. With him, however, and with his comprehensive policy, commences the Ireland that we know to-day. Modern landlordism sprang from his polity. So did the religious question. So did the administration of Ireland by non-Irishmen and anti-Irishmen. So did modern Irish patriotism.

In his reign, on the surface a benign one, originated the most serious of all political evils; the implantation of a national problem which divides the will and yet cannot be solved without unity of will. That problem was first implanted by peaceful methods, in the belief that conquest would be unnecessary. But when these

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methods failed, because too arbitrary, England went to work with sword, with fire, with famine, with massacre, torture, poison, exile, and execution. Her plan was weighed and deliberate. It had the aim of legality in the beginning, but later it appeared without disguise in its desire for profit and dominance, working on the theory of race-superiority to the ends that England's success seemed to demand. "Christ did not die for the Irish." The resulting shame and ruin were afterwards generously ascribed by patriotic Englishmen to "blunders" and "mistakes." But the burning of state papers had not then become an accomplishment of the English Government. And from state papers the history of English policy is to be fully derived.

2

In 1521 the Duke of Norfolk (then Earl of Surrey) unfolded his plan about Ireland.

"The land shall never be brought to good order and subjection but only by *conquest*, which is, at your Grace's pleasure, to be brought to pass in two ways . . . "

Henry VIII did not see eye to eye with Surrey. He weighed the policy of conquest, especially after the crushing of the Geraldines, but he had no spare money.

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He had his complications with France and Spain, and he had his young Reformation to nourish. In addition he agreed with Machiavelli that it was better to win a people's confidence than to depend on fortresses. And the fiasco of the Geraldine rebellion gave him his chance.

First he planned to launch Reformation in Ireland. Since the Normans, there had, of course, been no "religious" question except the question of having pro-English bishops. The Gaels from Scotland and the Hebrides, "piratical marauders," were now firmly settled in Down and Antrim, but of course they were Catholics. The English in the walled towns were tenaciously Catholic. The Anglo-Irish lords, who traced their moral right to be in Ireland to a papal bull, were ardent in their faith. The higher clergy, appointed from England and sanctioned by Rome, had no theological difficulties.

Perhaps the only people questioned as good Catholics were the beggar friars who went amongst the country people and kept God and education alive in the windowless hovels. Now these friars, and the occupants of five hundred monasteries, were to be suppressed. Neither Irish nor Anglo-Irish welcomed this disorganization. The monasteries, for one thing, served as inns. The English who imported the Refor-

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mation found themselves intensely unpopular for reasons of heart, head, and belly. But the new bishops and their hangmen peddled their reform through the country, amid “angers, slanders, conspiracies, and, in the end, the slaughter of men.”

3

Yet this transfer of the church and the schools went hand in hand with a policy of political conciliation.

Irishmen were not citizens. They stood outside the Pale, the “little place,” and consequently outside English law. “The mere Irish were not only accounted aliens but enemies, and altogether out of the protection of the law, so as it was no capital offense to kill them . . . every Englishman might oppress, spoil and kill them without controlment.” (Sir John Davies.) Thus conciliation had a way to travel, especially as Lord Leonard Gray was about to be executed for having practised it. But statecraft is nimble.

The “five bloods” or royal septs were technically within the law. But they had helped Lord Thomas in his rebellion. So long as the Government planned to exterminate them, they would not dare to “come in.” But the Government made it plain that it wished to

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conciliate them, and they weakened. They were worn out and bled white. Years of warfare had devastated



the country. Scotland and France had delayed to help, as they always did delay, and the new deputy led them

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man by man to the door of negotiation. By promising peace and offering territorial titles a surprising number of fresh "submissions" was collected—this time compelling the chiefs to acknowledge Henry VIII as lord of Ireland and to deny and forsake the bishop of Rome. The chiefs cheerfully and unequivocally "denied" and "forsook." Then, in 1541, they came to Dublin, expenses paid, to a parliament. McGillapatrick, now the Baron of Upper Ossony, was there, and MacMurrough, now MacMurrough Kavanagh, and an O'Neill and an O'Moore and an O'Brien and an O'Reilly. Kildare's kinsman, the Earl of Desmond, was there, with Barry, Roche, FitzMaurice, and others of the "degenerate" English. Lord Ormonde, adept at languages, translated the proceedings for the Irish; it seemed that the master wished to be known hereafter as the king of Ireland. King of Ireland they made him without a pang.

This was not all. In 1542 Con O'Neill went to London to be created an earl! One of the de Veres sponsored him. Next year Ulick Burke and the O'Briens followed. The king gave them cash and golden chains, each worth sixty pound odd. The London records bulged with Irish letters-patent and sparkling professions of allegiance.

The common people of Ireland, meanwhile, were as chattels. When the O'Neill "came in" it was by English statecraft that his people must come in, and when he forsook the bishop of Rome it was assumed that they must give up Rome. What happened, of course, was nothing so automatic. The Irishmen in their great blanket-cloaks brooded at their fires over the journey of O'Neill to London, and dark eyes flashed out of the blackness, and dark oaths, at the conversion of chiefs into landlords. The women and men, foster-mothers and god-fathers to the chiefs, now meditated on being "vassals." In the hills the herdsmen made note of the rumor. The bards sang of it. The harpers played it. The beggars mused on it, huddled outside the closed monasteries. Coming with the new "religion," the patriarchial brehons and seannachies had food for thought. No more, it was said, was Gaelic to be spoken, or the Irish cloak to be worn. No more hurling. No more music. Everything and everybody was now to be English, except the bad money. The news flew from dining-tables to the kitchens, from kitchens to horse-boys and dog-boys, from these to the bogs and moors. And firearms, of course, were to be illegal. And Irish-

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men were to cut their hair like the new parsons, and to wear legal pants.

5

Here, at last, by the silken thread, "by circumspect and politic ways," his Grace had led the Gaelic chiefs into the English system. "Proceed politically, patiently and secretly," Henry VIII had told Surrey, "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." Now, by policy, patience, and secrecy, the Irish had been landed. Laws that were not their laws, customs that were not theirs, a new language, a new habit, a brand-new religion, were all condensed in the letters-patent and embraced by the gold chain. And rebellion meant—no more land.

For long the Irish chieftains had played whichever way suited them. Now they were hooked. They could take over monasteries and secretly retain the monks. They could obstruct sheriffs, judges, coroners, bailiffs, and the small fry of the English system. But their own people knew an Irish chief when they saw one; how could the people be deceived? Between the Irish folk and the English Government these chiefs were

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now to decide. Their irresponsible days were over.

For the lordlings who were Catholic on Monday and Protestant on Tuesday there was no problem except the serious problem of remembering the days of the week. For O'Neills and O'Briens and O'Conors and O'Donnells there was this choice of black or white.

In forcing the choice there was a sincere English belief that as landlords the chiefs would be better off. There was, besides, another sincere English belief, the belief that the Brito-Romo-Celto-Anglo-Saxo-Dano-Franco-Cambrian ruling class was a ruling class very superior in its way of life to the barbarous Gaelic. And at bottom there was practical politics. The English people, according to the French and Spanish naval peoples, could not tell a tub from a cat-boat, and had no place on the sea. That being the insolent Continental attitude, and the O'Neills and O'Donnells already having learned to solicit France and Spain, it was simple statecraft that the Irish should be mastered. The only way in which they could securely be mastered, in this view, was by being nationally made over. If they could be made into Englishmen, the Tudor statesmen felt, much might be done with them. It was this notion which led Henry VIII to conciliate the chieftains and offer them good feudal titles. It was this notion which

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led England to devise for Ireland (even in the seventeenth century) a system of state education. Plans for exterminating the Irish were prepared, for crossing them on the better stock by shipping in English women, for deporting them in large numbers as slaves. These plans, most of them attempted, sprang from a mixture of swelled head and cold calculation.

These crude plans were framed in the days of Sir Thomas More and Erasmus. The bird of imperial monarchy, said Erasmus, is the eagle; "a bird neither beautiful, nor musical, nor good for food, but murderous, greedy, hateful to all, the curse of all, and with its great powers of doing harm only surpassed by its desire to do it." Henry VIII applauded the immortal Erasmus. But, in those first years of the New Learning, gunpowder as well as the printing-press came into the hands of the Englishmen. Though each weapon was double-edged, printing was undoubtedly the greatest weapon ever forged for the liberation of man, and gunpowder was the greatest weapon for his enslavement. Yet while the printing-press in England was to make public opinion, and public opinion was to revolutionize parliament, the state concluded to deprive Ireland of the printing-press and to monopolize gunpowder. And so drunk were Englishmen with

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power and conceit that the very idols of English liberty could not reach Ireland fast enough to carry out their policy of conquest.

6

The first chapter of conquest is soon opened. After Edward VI, a youth who died of tuberculosis, came Mary who married Philip. Mary was "Bloody Mary" in England because she persecuted the persecutors. In Ireland her Catholicism had far less effect than her inheritance of Henry's valueless "submissions." For already the Gaelic system had revolted against the system of feudal tenure. The people of each sept had their candidate and hero. There were people's Burkes and people's O'Briens to battle with the choice made by England. In Ulster, protected by lake and wood, the fight was most unqualified. Manus O'Donnell had astonished the lord deputy by not wearing a loin-cloth; he was "an elegant, somewhat foppish gentleman, magnificently attired in crimson velvet, and attended by his chaplain." But this Queen's O'Donnell, "the lion in fight," had a battle with his son, and Con O'Neill had to duel with the man he had named his heir. The "Redshanks" or Scottish Gaels, MacNeills and MacDonnells, used the favor of disorder to expel the

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MacQuillans and to levy “black rent” on the English colonists. The English Government, on its side, gave aid and comfort to whichever Irishman would kill most Irishmen. Manwhile Shane the Proud, the Irish O'Neill, killed the English O'Neill in battle and resumed the headship of the sept.

Shane O'Neill was a rugged specimen of his race, “a great, aggressive invader of the territories of others.” He fought against Elizabeth and manœuvred with her for the return of his power, went to her court and there intrigued with France and Spain, attacked the Scottish Gaels to suit her deputies and yet defied her deputies. They, in turn, tried to poison him. As Froude says so sympathetically, “the lord deputy’s assassination plots were but the forlorn resources of a man who felt his work too heavy for him.”

Fighting the O'Donnells, Shane was in the end forced to flee to the men of the Hebrides. An English officer called Piers was with them. “At a given signal, the banqueting-room was filled with soldiers, and all the Irish were slain. O'Neill's head was sent to Dublin, and Piers received a thousand marks from the Government as a reward for the murder.” (Taylor.)

With the approach of Elizabeth's reign, as this story shows, came the finale of Henry's compromise with the

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chiefs, and the beginning of thorough conquest. Already the legal excuse of their submissions had been used by Mary against the Leinster septs of Leix and Offaly. When the O'Conors first bared their teeth, as the result of a dispute, the whole population was clean expelled from their lands, which now became King's County and Queen's County. Philip graciously gave his name to Philipstown and Mary to Maryborough. In revenge for dispossession the rebellious O'Moores and O'Conors ravaged the new settlers. It was not till 1577, on New Year's day, that the policy of conquest dealt effectively with these rebels. They were invited to a conference at Mullaghmast, thereupon surrounded and massacred. This bit of frightfulness settled one main group of Leinster chiefs for ever. The hideous massacre of Rathlin Island of 1575 was part of another clearance in Antrim. But these were curtain-raisers. The big first act in conquest was five years later, in Munster.

Since the early part of Elizabeth's reign had a religious motive, it is necessary to diverge for a minute. The Reformation in its turn called for the use of force, and force was supplied in the name of Christianity.

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In an age when Irishmen themselves could ill-treat one another as Brian O'Higinn the bard was ill-treated, it was not incredible that Dermot O'Hurley, Archbishop of Cashel, should be tortured. "We have neither rack nor other engine of torture in Dublin Castle to terrify Dr. Hurley," the commissioners complained. But they did without a rack; they oiled his feet, encased them in metal boots, and roasted them till the flesh came away with the boot. Then, after a delay of some weeks, Dr. Hurley was hanged. The finer points of doctrine were scarcely considered in this Reformation, which was in essence the establishment of a loyalist political church. There were time-servers on both sides, some of the Anglo-Irish exceeding the New English in their zeal for Protestantism. But the people in the towns, many of the nobility, and virtually all of the people remained Catholics. And the "heretic" clergy now moved through Ireland, hunted, disguised, perpetually "on the run."

8

Now we come to the drastic and ferocious conquest of Munster. It must first be said that the policy to be described hereafter did not have the hearty assent of every one in the English Government. Some balked at

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assassination, some at massacre, some at the killing of women. Lord Burghley, the great statesman of his day, said that "the Flemings had not such cause to rebel against the oppressions of the Spaniards as the Irish against the tyranny of England." But, as the English historian Froude points out, the gentlemen who actually had Ireland in their power "had been trained in the French wars, in the privateer fleets, or on the coast of Africa, and the lives of a few thousand savages were infinitely unimportant to them." Besides, the Continental powers being Catholic and Ireland being Catholic, it was assumed that the conquest could not be too soon or too savage.

So, when the FitzGeralds, faced by confiscation and beggary, at last committed themselves to a rebellion in Munster, with the aid of two thousand Scots in the North, with the aid of the O'Byrnes in Leinster, who won a signal victory, and with the aid of the Spanish from across the sea, the Elizabethans had an opportunity to carry out their frightfulness.

At Smerwick, where the Spaniards landed, the gallant Sir Walter Raleigh appears in Irish history. "When the [Spanish] captain had yielded himself, and the fort appointed to be surrendered, Captain Raleigh, to-

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gether with Captain Macworth, had the ward of that day, entered into the castle, and made a great slaughter, many or most part of them being put to the sword.” The bodies of those unarmed men whom Raleigh and his band had butchered, six hundred in all, were stripped and laid out on the sand, “‘as gallant goodly personages,’ said Grey, ‘as ever were beheld.’”

The state papers for Ireland, 1580, are blunt. “The ffortes were yielded, all the Irishmen and women hanged, and four hundred and upwardes of Italyans and others put to the sword . . . A ffrayer and others kept in store to be executed after examination had of them . . . Next day was executed an Englishman who served Dr. Saunders, one Plunckett, and an Irish Priest theire armes and legges were broken and hanged upon a gallows.”

But Christianity was already demanded by foreign policy. “The queen,” said Lord Bacon, “was much displeased at the slaughter.”

“The queen,” said a later historian, “expressed the utmost concern and displeasure at this barbarous execution.”

The queen, on the contrary, expressed herself as pleased. Her letters, “written in Roman hand by her

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Majesty," found the enterprise "greatly to our lyking." She thanked Grey for "performing this so acceptable service." In a later letter, complaining only of the cost of conquest, she renewed her thanks for great good services, "chiefly in the late exploit you did against the strangers . . . Proceed on cheerfully to do your best."

From the mouths of Bingham, Walter Raleigh, and others, we learn how the fighting proceeded. In Connacht the English planned a land settlement, provoked a rising, and slew "fourteen or fifteen hundred, besides boys, women, churls and children, which could not be so few, as so many more and upwards." Sir Peter Carew "murdered women and children, and babies that had scarcely left the breast." Malbie and Zouche report killing "men, women, and children." "There escaped not one, neither of man, woman, nor child."

A great estate fell to Walter Raleigh, in reward for his part in this "Mahometan conquest." Another estate, with two abbeys, fell to the poet Edmund Spenser. He served as a secretary. From him, who agreed in this bloody policy, we have that famous passage on the scene he himself beheld:

Munster "was a most rich and plentiful country, full of corn and cattle, that you would have thought

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they should have been able to stand long, yet ere one year and a half they were brought to such wretchedness as that any stony heart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them; they looked like anatomies of death; they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eat the dead carriions, happy where they could find them; yea, and one another soon after, insomuch as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves; and if they found a plot of watercresses or shamrocks, there they flocked as to feast for the time, yet not able long to continue there withal; that in short space there were none almost left, and a most populous and plentiful country suddenly left void of man and beast.”

9

This was the first act, as savage as the most savage Elizabethan tragedy. By 1583 Munster was a waste, with the Earl of Desmond whipped and hunted to Kerry. There, in a hovel, he was found by a few straggling soldiers. “I am the Earl of Desmond. Spare my life,” he pleaded. Instead, his rescuer

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dragged the elderly man out and killed him, for the Government reward.

Now followed confiscation, after the example of Leix and Offaly. About 250,000 acres were actually



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granted by the crown to English settlers, as Antrim had already been granted to Essex. An enormous number of legal disputes were originated, especially concerning the MacCarthys; but some of the claimants were rudely disturbed by the next O'Neill rebellion.

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10

Hugh O'Neill succeeded Shane O'Neill. He was a man of finer metal. Trained at the Elizabethan court, where his father had left him, he realized that he had to deal with a statecraft which was not nice in point of honor. He himself had no scruple to play double with Elizabeth. He was undoubtedly waiting for the Armada to come to Ireland. Up to then and after he took as good pains as any Tudor not to reveal his hand. He lied, he dissembled, he bent the knee. Secretly he armed and trained his troops. The head of the O'Donnells, Hugh Roe (Red Hugh) O'Donnell, he could not reach. When a boy an English captain had invited O'Donnell on board ship to buy wine, and had kidnapped and delivered him to Dublin Castle. That was in 1587. In 1591, on Christmas night, young O'Donnell managed, as so many Irishmen have managed, to escape from his English jail. He and Art O'Neill, who was in prison with him, dragged their way as far as Glenmalure. There, in the snow of the mountains, their strength gave out; they were numb when found by a servant of the O'Byrnes. The O'Neill boy was already dying. Hugh Roe was revived, and, although partially crippled, he recovered,

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Four years caged in Dublin Castle had made Hugh Roe O'Donnell ready to think of England as his enemy. He found Hugh O'Neill of the same judgment and faith. By 1595 the two Hughs were ready for a war which would drive out the English.

In that war O'Neill and O'Donnell gathered up all the matters of state that had created grievances in Ireland since England professed to reclaim Ireland "from barbarism to a godly government." It had previously been reaffirmed that Englishness be made obligatory, that "all brehons, carraghes, bards, rhymers, friars, monks, Jesuits, pardoners, nuns, and such like," be executed by martial law. Now O'Neill and O'Donnell demanded complete religious liberty, political independence in Tir Owen and Tirconnell, a Catholic university, freedom to go overseas for learning, and no Englishmen as churchmen.

"Ewtopia," wrote Cecil on these demands: the war proceeded.

11

Success attended O'Neill and O'Donnell. They destroyed an English army at Yellow Ford, with Burke of Sligo and MacDonnell of the Isles fighting for them. This victory aroused the whole country. Essex arrived

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to lead the English. There were still some Irish without any sense of unity. Securing the help of O'Conor Don, Richard Burke and Maelmuire MacSwiney, the English leader, Clifford, attempted to reach the North; he suffered a heavy defeat in the Battle of the Curlew Hills. A prompt truce between Essex and O'Neill brought Essex into Elizabeth's disfavor and removed him from Ireland. A cool and competent deputy, Mountjoy, took Essex's place and turned the tide.

The spirit of this rebellion was deeper than Ulster alone. Lewy O'Clery has left us a contemporary life of Hugh Roe O'Donnell which quotes his talk to his soldiers before the Battle of the Curlews: "We, though a small number, are on the side of right as it seems to us, and the English whose number is large are on the side of robbery, in order to rob you of your native land and your means of living, and it is far easier for you to make a brave, stout, strong fight for your native land and your lives whilst you are your own masters and your weapons are in your hands, than when you are put in prison and in chains after being despoiled of your weapons . . . "

But Spain was still the hope. Both O'Neill and O'Donnell knew the hopelessness of matching a country of less than a million inhabitants against a country

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of six million or so. So O'Donnell had, in his own good Spanish, implored Spain to come to Ireland's aid. Not till 1601 did 3000 Spanish arrive, however; and when they arrived Mountjoy and Carew had 12,000 troops to blockade them in Kinsale.

12

A lightning march from Ulster failed to unite the Irish with the Spanish. A day's march of forty-two miles across frozen country enabled O'Donnell to evade pursuit but when O'Neill and O'Donnell reached Kinsale, impatience (against O'Neill's advice), led them to hasty attack. A confused retreat, which became a panic, brought the insurrection to an inglorious finish. Hugh O'Donnell escaped to Spain, An English agent named Blake followed and, in 1602, earned his fee by poisoning O'Donnell in his castle at Simancas. The evidence of this assassination was revealed in letters that have since come to light.

This was a catastrophe to Irish arms and Irish courage. Carew was merciless to O'Sullivan Beare at Dunboy. The rest of Munster was cowed. Mountjoy in the North roped in Rory O'Donnell, and then he opened negotiations with O'Neill. During those negotiations Elizabeth lay dead in England but Mountjoy

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kept this news from The O'Neill until he was once again "Earl of Tyrone."

This is the Mountjoy whose family name is immortalized in an Irish prison.

Concurrently with the war, the towns which Irish and Anglo-Irish had built up were handed over to English adventurers. From 1589 onward the towns were "occupied by soldiers, crushed by impositions, and forbidden to trade." Galway, Limerick, and Waterford were marked for isolation. "With every generation," says Alice Stopford Green, "the struggle was renewed through centuries of wilful ruin, till of the flourishing markets and fair towns of the Irish nothing was left but a starving village, a dim tradition, a crumbling wall, or the name of a silent meadow, while the ports lay empty and rivers and lakes deserted."

13

The Earl of Tyrone was a beaten man. He and O'Donnell, his fellow-earl, were surrounded by Castle spies and English agents. Every needy scamp "revealed" plots to Dublin Castle. In 1607, their patience worn out, came the Flight of the Earls. O'Neill and O'Donnell entered Rome like princes, after a dangerous and terrible journey. Pope Paul V "received them with

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the utmost state and ceremony." But Ireland was never to see either of them again. Hugh O'Neill, the chief soldier and coolest leader in Ireland since the Norman invasion, lived in fruitless and melancholy exile till 1616. He and O'Donnell, who died in 1608, are buried in Rome. It was not for a generation that another of this manful race, Owen Roe O'Neill, was to attempt again to free Ireland by arms.

In the meantime Ireland lay prostrate. The plan of conquest could not be perfected until every potential rebel was actually and physically uprooted, women as well as men. But in the reign of Elizabeth the Irish had at least been permanently mown away in four Munster counties, parts of Connacht, Leinster, Clare, and Tipperary. The accompanying military treatment had cleared the path for judges and lawyers. Confiscations were in order, and the implanting of Presbyterians in Ulster.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONFISCATIONS

1

THE war after the war now began. With the abdication of the Ulster chiefs and with the impossibility of further armed resistance, the Stuarts had a comparatively free field. What they designed at first was to put Ireland at ease in Zion. They wanted to make Ireland wholly subordinate, but a real part of the English system. The conquest of Ireland had cost Elizabeth about three million pounds—a vast sum in 1600. The Stuarts saw nothing in that. They needed revenue, especially from Ireland, and they sent Wentworth to make Ireland economically sound, for that reason. This enlightened selfishness benefited Ireland. It is true that Wentworth hampered the woolen industry, which England wanted to hog, but he went out of his way and put his own money into improving the very old and nation-wide linen industry. These useful economic policies, however, were accom-

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panied by a sinister social policy which in time wrecked everything.

This policy can be defined in an Englishman's words. Before Elizabeth died Francis Bacon had analyzed the three fundamental difficulties with Ireland from the point of view of England's policy.

"The first, the ambition and absoluteness of the chiefs of the families and septs."

The chiefs, in other words, stood in the way of English "ambition and absoluteness."

"The second, the licentious idleness of their kerns and soldiers, that lie upon the country by cesses and such like oppressions."

In brief, the soldiers.

"And the third, the barbarous laws, customs, their brehon laws, habits of apparel, their poets or heralds that enchant them in savage manners, and sundry other dregs of barbarism and rebellion."

In other words, the Irish national culture and cohesion.

To root out the chiefs, the soldiers, and the national culture was now the task to which English statecraft applied itself.

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It was, on the whole, not meant to be malicious. Scotland and England were no longer embroiled, and King James was no longer in need of Hugh O'Neill's kerns or money. The royal mind could be given to the business of settling a country which had long been a distraction but which now was silent, leaderless, and limp.

It was from Machiavelli's political philosophy that England gleaned its principles at this juncture, not from the King James version of the Bible. Machiavelli counseled colonies. "A prince does not spend much on colonies, for with little or no expense he can send them out and keep them there, and he offends a minority only of the citizens from whom he takes lands and houses to give them to the new inhabitants; and those whom he offends, remaining poor and scattered, are never able to injure him; whilst the rest being uninjured are easily kept quiet, and at the same time are anxious not to err for fear it should happen to them as it has to those who have been despoiled. In conclusion, I say that these colonies are not costly, they are more faithful, they injure less, and the injured, as has been said, being poor and scattered, cannot hurt."

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This suited James down to the ground. "From Machiavelli," says Lord Acton, James "took the idea of the state ruling itself, for its own ends, through experts, not depending on the forces of society or the wishes of" common men.

James's experts agreed on the desirability of loyal colonists. Blennerhasset wanted to crush the Irish harder, on Machiavelli's theory that injury ought to be of such a kind "that one does not stand in fear of revenge." But Blennerhasset's recommendations were considered excessive. Ireland had been decapitated. It looked absolutely powerless to the advisers of James.

3

The first practical business in Ulster was to clear the Irish out, the second to move the non-Irish in, the third to let no Irish return except safe Irish, in safe territory, at double the settlers' rent.

The legality of the clearance is interesting. The crown had pardoned O'Neill and O'Donnell and had at last made the Irish people legal "denizens" of their own country. With the departure of O'Neill and O'Donnell it was held right and proper to attaint them. This brought Donegal, Derry, Tyrone, and Armagh into the receptive lap of the state. O'Dogherty's spurt

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of rebellion in 1607 cost him his life and whatever land he had held in these counties. As to Fermanagh and Cavan, Maguire and O'Reilly had also been "traitors," which gave the crown its legal grip on two more counties.

Unfortunately for British law, the judges had played fast and loose. They had made some grants on the English theory that the land belonged to the chief, but in other cases on the Irish theory that the land belonged to the clansmen: in Cavan and Fermanagh they had clearly committed themselves in respect of the clansmen as occupiers and freeholders. But to make the Irish into tenants at will was now demanded by the clearance policy, and it was necessary for England to break its word.

The English took all of these six counties except about one-eighth. Nearly three hundred Irish proprietors were given English title to 586,000 acres in view of their showing a right attitude toward the crown. The remaining 3,000,000 acres went to Englishmen and Scotsmen; "laborers in the vineyard," as the Welsh lawyer Sir John Davies termed them.

These laborers in the vineyard were recruited from two nations and two classes—but all from the state Protestant or Scottish Presbyterian religion. The

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large grants (of three thousand, two thousand, and one thousand acres) were made to English and Scottish

Pre-Cromwellian Confiscations



proprietors who were called undertakers because they "undertook" to colonize, build castles, and defend the

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territory as knights. (Hence “baronetcies” were first devised by Bacon, to give honorific standing to undertakers.) Next, these proprietors, including the London companies, who got and still have the fatness of Londonderry, brought in English settlers and Scottish settlers of the sort that seemed required for the job.

The English had a longer distance to transport their cattle and equipment. The Scottish poured in so fast that the ferrymen profiteered scandalously, pirates came all the way from Barbary to raid them, and only the efficient Dutch fleet made their passage safe in the end. Even at high rents, many Irish Tenants crept in.

4

Perhaps 40,000 Scottish came at once. They were self-selected in part, but chosen where possible on the ground that they had proved to be lively on the border and would turn that liveliness in the Irish direction. “The energetic scouring of the Scottish border,” says Henry Jones Ford, “contributed some elements to Ulster plantation that did not make for peace and order.” Vagabonds, masterless men, wife-deserters, and gentlemen sought by the law made rubble for the

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basement of the Ulster edifice. "Divine Providence," the Rev. Robert Blair declared in 1663, "sent over some worthy persons for birth, education, and parts, yet the most part were such as either poverty, scandalous lives, or, at the best, adventurous seeking of better accommodation, set forward that way."

"From Scotland came many, and from England not a few," said the Rev. Andrew Stewart, "yet all of them generally the scum of both nations, who, from debt, or breaking and fleeing from justice, or seeking shelter, came hither, hoping to be without fear of man's justice in a land where there was nothing, or but little as yet, of the fear of God."

Henry Jones Ford believes that these seventeenth century accounts are exaggerated.

5

The result, at any rate, was the transfer of seven-eighths of this Ulster property from Irish chiefs and Irish clansmen. The new occupants were strong-handed men, willing to act as despoilers and ready to defend their spoils; men differentiated from the Irish by language, religion, habit, and political allegiance. They were better agriculturists than the fighting clansmen. But their very technic brought Irishmen back to the

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land at any cost and very soon inculcated in all Ulster the old Irish custom of fixity of tenure or tenant right. What the Irish failed to do was "to grow civil and become English."

To make them English filled the colonizing mind with zeal and a kind of religious glee. The Earl of Sussex and Perrot were good governors, yes, but "they did not abolish the Irish customs nor execute the law in Irish countries, but suffered the people to worship their barbarous lords and to remain utterly ignorant of their duties to God and the king." So Sir John Davies.

God now has a place in state papers. The king's amnesty, says Davies, immediately "bred such comfort and security in the hearts of all men as thereupon ensued and the calmest and most universal peace that ever was seen in Ireland." The law reigned everywhere. "Which visitation, though it were somewhat distasteful to the Irish lords, was sweet and most welcome to the common people, who, albeit they were rude and barbarous, yet did they quickly apprehend" order and law. The people in County Wicklow "are become civil and quiet." The streams of the public justice water the land, "without distinct or respect of persons." Sir John Davies, himself secure in a big Irish estate, quotes the Bible freely.

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Lord Morley, called "Honest John" in England, does not in the least corroborate the Welshman: he sums up the treatment of the O'Byrnes to which Davies refers. If you want to understand "Irish turbulence," Morley suggested, you "should read the story how the O'Byrnes were by chicane, perjury, imprisonment, martial law, application of burning gridirons, branding-irons, and strappado, cheated out of their lands."

The British justice that the O'Byrnes received came from men who got their slice of the land. The fate of the O'Byrnes indicates why O'Neill and O'Donnell thought it better to leave while flesh was still on their bones.

6

Wentworth, afterward Earl of Strafford, now came over with his economic policy. He was a man of practical ability who stood no nonsense. He imported Flemish weavers to teach the Irish the best linen manufacture. He improved flaxseed and corn-seed. On the question of land proprietorship, however, he pursued the English policy—depress and degrade Irishmen of property who won't become Englishmen. It had been established that "no length of occupation could give an Irishman any right to lands which had once been in English hands." This had shaken out more natives

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and brought grants to Nugent, the Duke of Buckingham, etc., in Longford, Wexford, Leitrim, Westmeath. In their frantic eagerness to secure their titles, the Dublin Anglo-Irish parliament voted a large payment to the crown, on the understanding that they were now to be secure. Wentworth went behind this agreement. He invited the Galway grand jury (Anglo-Irish, of course) to decide that certain titles were the crown's. The jury refused. The sheriff went to jail, where he died, and the jurors were fined £4000 each. A more imaginative jury found a title for the crown in April, 1637.

The O'Brennans' territory in Kilkenny went to Wandesforde, Wentworth's secretary. Wentworth chuckled sardonically at the alacrity with which the other landowners did anything and everything in order to retain their means of livelihood. "I, that am of gentle heart," he wrote, "am much taken with the proceeding."

The Irish, meantime, were beginning to be acutely conscious of their fate as a nation despoiled. We know from Geoffrey Keating, whose Irish history was written in this period (1610), how the English propaganda of the period was revolting Irishmen. Keating wrote: "I belong, according to my own extraction, to the Old

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Galls (foreigners) or the Anglo-Norman race. I have seen that the natives of Ireland are maligned by every modern Englishman who speaks of the country. . . . There is no historian who has written upon Ireland since the English invasion, who does not strive to vilify and calumniate both Anglo-Irish colonists and the Gaelic natives. We have proofs of this in the accounts of the country given by Cambrensis, Spenser, Stanhurst, Hanmer, Camden, Barclay, Morison, Davies, Campion, and all the writers of the New Galls [English new in Ireland] who have treated of this country." But Keating's contempt for the dung-beetles, as he called the propagandists, was nothing to the growing exasperation and rage and despair of those who experienced what has been termed "systematic iniquity." The outcome was the insurrection of 1641.

7

In this insurrection, which extended into a war, there was a serious conflict of motives. In the world at large Rome strove to intensify and force Catholic claims and England commenced to be intolerant. This enlisted against England such divers groups as the Scottish Covenanters, the Anglo-Irish Catholic aristocracy, and the Irish common people. The Covenanters

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were already in revolt in the Lowlands and soon put an army into Ireland. But the question at once arose, which England to fight, the Royalist England or the Parliamentarians. The Parliamentarians were "England" as much as the Royalists; they indeed believed that, underneath, Charles was not only an absolutist but a papist. Since the Thirty Years' War, really religious war, was raging on the Continent, it was natural that the religious passion should enter into every phase of this crisscross conflict.

Rory O'Moore (an O'Moore of Leix), Richard Plunkett, Sir Phelim O'Neill, a Maguire of Cavan, were all engaged in planning an insurrection. Spain was to help, and General Owen Roe O'Neill to come from Flanders. This plot was complicated by the fact that the Anglo-Irish gentry had their own general, Preston, a Royalist, who later took the field. The crown authorities in Ireland learned of the plot from a drunken babbler (drunkenness now appears in Irish chronicles), but before they could act the North was in upheaval with a rising of the "injured and dispossessed." Because the Scots were in arms against England about the prayer-book, Sir Phelim O'Neill's people picked no bone with the Scottish settlers. They concentrated against the English settlers, and started

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a clearance. At first there was little manslaughter, though ruthless expulsion and cattle-driving. But the Scottish settlers would not stand by. They joined with the troops from Dublin to stop the insurrection. What began as a clearance became a mêlée of disorder, violence, and vengeance. It alarmed and enraged the English in Ireland as nothing had before. It meant that confiscation might not work. A great number of English were killed by the Irish, in many cases under ferocious and cruel circumstances worthy of Raleigh, Gilbert, and Carew. The number used to be given as 300,000, but, under modern analysis, is believed to have been 4029. To make matters worse, Sir Phelim O'Neill, the leader of the insurrection, had cut a great seal of Scotland and tacked it on to a forged "commission" from Charles I, which was supposed to sanction a rising of the papists. The object of this dishonesty was to enlist the Anglo-Irish Catholics. O'Neill eventually was captured and executed. He admitted the forgery, and declined to accept a Puritan pardon on condition that he assert the commission to be authentic.

Now Owen Roe O'Neill arrived in Ireland—"a good soldier," according to Morley, "a man of valor and

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character, the patriotic champion of Catholic Ireland."

He found, of course, that Gaelic Catholic Ireland needed coördination above everything; coördination with the Catholic Anglo-Irish and peace with the Royalist Anglo-Irish. For this purpose the Confederation of Kilkenny was called. It was virtually a supreme council of the allied Irish, which lasted most of the nine years.

In August, 1642, England split asunder. The Parliamentarians took the field against the Royalists. This gave Owen Roe O'Neill and Preston and Ormonde a common enemy in the Parliamentarians, but they were not ready yet to make common cause. The Old Irish were still "papist rebels" to the conservative Ormonde: his idea of a sound alliance with the papists was to whittle their aims. The terms of such compromises were bitterly contested at Kilkenny, where the allies met with much pomp. The papal nuncio Rinuccini stood out for the Old Irish and complete freedom. The Anglo-Irish landlords and the Anglo-Irish townsmen had too much race prejudice to care for their Old Irish rural confederates. The Parliamentarians, meanwhile, had managed under Parsons, Coote, and Lord Inchiquin to live up to the best traditions of savage warfare. Lord Inchiquin, known as Murrough

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the Burner, was an O'Brien of the old stock, now more Protestant than the Protestants. "Nits will make lice," was the principle on which Coote killed infants. The Scottish Covenanters, at first shocked by Charles's execution, at last joined Coote and company on the side of the Parliamentarians. They came down through Ulster. At Benburb (July, 1646), they were badly beaten by Owen Roe O'Neill. Murrough the Burner won in Munster, however, and massacred his own countrywomen at Cashel. Ormonde, beaten by the parliamentarians at Dublin, threw in the sponge. Later, after Owen Roe had tried direct methods, Ormonde manœuvred the Old Irish out of the policies of the Confederation. In 1649, on the last day of January, Charles I was executed. In November, frustrated and worn out, Owen Roe O'Neill died at Cavan.

9

This left the field in Ireland to Ormonde: he was already working for young Charles II and the ascendancy of his own class in Ireland. But Ormonde had a tough nut to crack in Oliver Cromwell.

This brutal fanatic arrived in Ireland August, 1649. He got to Drogheda in September. At Drogheda the Ormonde soldiers, in part English and in part men

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from Kilkenny, were stormed and beaten. Their commander was disarmed and, "being in the heat of action," as Cromwell expressed it, "I forbade them to



Oliver Cromwell

spare any that were in arms in the town." About two thousand disarmed men were stabbed and slashed to death. Eighty ran for their lives, to a steeple. "Whereon I ordered the church steeple to be fired, when one of them was heard to say, 'God damn me, God con-

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found me; I burn, I burn!" Fifty were dragged from the steeple and killed. Thirty burned to death. A thousand more had taken refuge in the church. There, on the previous Sunday, the crime of saying mass had been perpetrated. These also were followed up and killed. The friars were now sought for. "All the friars," Oliver tells his parliament, "were knocked on the head promiscuously but two. The enemy were about three thousand strong in the town. I believe we put to the sword the whole number of the defendants. I do not think thirty of the whole number escaped with their lives."

Cromwell had 10,000 Ironsides with him against 3,000. He lost sixty-four killed.

"It was the spirit of God," he told the parliament, "who gave your men courage . . . and therewith this happy success. And therefore it is good that God alone have all the glory."

This is not the verdict of commentators like Theodore Roosevelt. "It was the fighting of the Puritan troops in the battle itself which won, and not their ferocity after the battle," says Roosevelt, "and it was Cromwell who not merely gave free rein to this ferocity but who inspired it. Seemingly quarter would have been freely given, had it not been for his commands.

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Neither in morals nor in policy were these slaughters justifiable. Moreover it must be remembered that the men slaughtered were entirely guiltless of the original massacres in Ulster, more than a decade before.

“Drogheda and Wexford,” Roosevelt adds, “are black and terrible stains on Cromwell’s character.”

Cromwell’s account of his behavior sounds as if he were conforming to the current usages of war. What he did at Drogheda and later was contrary to the usages of Owen Roe O’Neill in the same period. O’Neill, in 1642, according to Lecky, “expressed, in the most emphatic manner, to his predecessor his horror of the crimes that had been tolerated. He sent all the English who were prisoners in his army safe to Dundalk. He burnt many houses at Kinnard, as a punishment for murders which had been committed on the English. He openly declared that he would rather join the English than permit such outrages to be unpunished. He enforced a strict discipline among his riotous followers, and showed himself, during the whole of his too brief career, an eminently able and honorable man.”

The massacres of 1641, however, had inflamed English feeling to fever-heat. For nine months Cromwell conducted his crusade of Jesus, who died that men may

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live, in the familiar spirit of reprisal. Against the Royalists, Anglo-Irish Catholics, and remnants of the Old Irish, he waged his war. With his celebrated guns and his big army he took Dundalk, Wexford, New Ross, Kilkenny, Clonmel. At Clonmel, however, Cromwell lost more than 1000 men in one assault, and disease had eaten away hundreds of others. After Clonmel he left Ireland. His General Ireton took Waterford, Limerick, Athlone, and Galway, while Ormonde's frightened garrisons gave up nearly all the Munster towns.

In addition to his method of slaughtering men who had laid down their arms, Cromwell deported a large number of Irishmen and of boys and girls to the West Indies and the American colonies. These were sold as slaves.

10

The eleven years from the 1641 insurrection to the peace of 1652 were enormously destructive. From a population of 1,500,000, as estimated by Petty, slaughter and disease had brought the number down to 900,000. The extinction of these lives was accompanied by a ravenous consumption and wilful destruction of property. But more was to follow. A peace was dic-

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tated by which both Irish and Anglo-Irish were to pay for their conquest out of whatever land they had left. In this remarkable settlement two strains of reasoning were combined. One was the reasoning of the Round-head who wished to punish the Anglo-Irish Royalist. The other was the effect of a rabid fear and hatred of the papist. Cromwell was a fanatical extremist of that dangerous type which substitutes righteousness for history. "Remember, ye hypocrites, Ireland was once united to England," he shouted in a manifesto answering the Catholic bishops. He talked in this strain as only a profoundly ignorant and ferocious righteous man can talk, declaring that Ireland had had "equal justice from the laws." Thereupon he arranged for more confiscations, his supporters and kindred having subscribed for Irish land in advance of the conquest.

This Cromwellian settlement conveyed every acre in Ireland. Unless men could show that they had been right all the way through (anti-papist, anti-Royalist, anti-Irish, but also pro-Parliamentarian *and* pro-English), they lost their shirts. Cripples, invalids, infants, old men, and old women who failed to *prove* that they had borne arms for the Parliamentarians—all lost their land. Only twenty-six Catholic land-

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lords in Ireland were able to qualify under terms that so heavily taxed both honor and invention. These white blackbirds proved their "constant good affection" and retained 80,000 acres.

Eleven million acres were confiscated in all. "Of these," says W. F. T. Butler in his masterly book on "Confiscation in Irish History," "about half a million belonged to loyalist Protestants such as Lords Ormonde, Inchiquin (who had quarreled with Parliamentarians), and Roscommon. The other ten and a half millions belonged in 1641 to Catholics."

Of the eleven million acres confiscated, Catholic landowners received back 1,100,000 in Connacht and Clare. The remaining ten million acres—half Ireland—were the spoils of war.

Half the forfeited lands were given to civil "adventurers" who had ad-ventured £360,000 for the suppression of the rebellion. The other half went mainly to Cromwell's officers and soldiers. These latter received Irish land in lieu of back pay. Contractors were included in this scheme of reparation, and seventy eminent republicans helped themselves to 120,000 acres "of some of the best lands." Cute men like Sir William Petty did very well a few years later in buying out bored or improvident settlers for a little ready money.

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11

“To hell or Connacht” was a hope, not an achievement. Mr. Butler points out that the first men threatened with transplantation were those Scottish denizens of Down and Antrim who had bought land there from Montgomery and Hamilton. (Down and Antrim had never been confiscated. The crows that followed the plow of confiscation got good pickings, but Down and Antrim were private pickings.) But these Ulster Covenanters escaped, dangerous as their proximity to Scotland was felt to be. And most of the unfree Irish escaped. These men, at the bottom of the Gaelic social system, were now at the bottom of the new system. Who else were to hew wood and draw water for the New English landholders? A tremendous plea went up for “poor laborers, simple creatures.” In the end, “only landowners, their families, and such of their tenants as chose to accompany them were forced to move into Connacht or Clare.” “In all,” Mr. Butler computes, “there were 1073 landlords and nearly 27,000 persons” driven from Munster and Leinster to new lands. The people who suffered most were the chiefs and free clansmen who had retained half Ireland up to Cromwell’s time. About six thousand

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Catholic landowners who had established their titles were now debased in the social scale by being entirely deprived of lands.

The serfs had to endure it, but not the fighting Irish or the Catholic townsmen of Anglo-Irish stock. More than thirty thousand of the population, depleting the trading towns of Waterford, Galway, and Kilkenny in particular, went out of Ireland. Countless Irishmen enlisted in the armies of France and Spain.

When Charles II came back the lingering gentry cheered up. The lawyers got a stupendous crop of clients. But this was a test of cleverness and sophistification in which the people who recovered their estates were Ormonde, Clancarthy, Clanrickard. "The lesser men," Mr. Butler assures us, "were deprived of everything." MacCarthy, O'Sullivan Bere, Viscount Magennis of Iveagh, the O'Conor Don—they "lost every acre." "There is something curiously modern about all these proceedings," Mr. Butler drily observes. "On the one side we have the credulous optimism of the Irish, their idea that logic and right should override might, their belief in the justice of the cause leading them to ask for the unattainable, their inability to realize the dislike with which they were regarded by all parties in England, their failure to perceive that in the minds

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of Englishmen the interests of England outweighed all other considerations, their want of union, the selfishness of their great men, in other words a complete absence of political insight and ability.

“On the other side there is the grim determination to make no concession without a struggle, the threat in the last resort of the sword, the appeal to race hatred and religious prejudice, the amazing dishonesty of individuals seeking for place and profit.”

12

The English, in short, had won. Out of the 1,100,000 in Petty's estimate, 600,000 papists were living in one-room hovels without any hearth. “If you value the people who have been destroyed in Ireland as Slaves and Negroes are usually rated,” says the pragmatic Petty, “the value of the people lost will be £10,335,000.” Petty's tone is unmistakable; the tone of complacent victory. Trinity College, founded by Elizabeth to convert the papist, is flourishing. So is the established church. But the Catholics are already half-fed, mangy, dingy, pulling the devil by the tail. Old bores tell the young people about “the flight of the earls.” The young yawn, partly from fatigue, partly from hunger. The women of the family listen to great

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talk about the Restoration and wonder in secret what is in the cupboard—half a candle, perhaps, a cracked pitcher, a broken rosary beads, a few pages of a torn genealogy. Those were great times, but now who is here? A wild, shy retainer who creeps to his corner without a word, a seannachy with gray beard who is like a violin with one string, a hunted priest with hollow eyes in a frieze mantle, a purple-faced ex-chief who used to have six thousand acres in Kerry—these are all that come to windy rooms where the Restoration of big estates is cogged and conjured. There is “credulous optimism,” a bottle of it, right by the man who has lived from 1610 to 1690, who has remembered well the day when the New Englishman arrived at Liss: he went to the roof of the castle and said, yes, this was now his property, as far as the eye could reach. That happened not to one, but to every Catholic proprietor. It tore a thousand heart-strings. And our dreary friend with red-rimmed eyes had been born when the scorpions and whips of Elizabeth still left their welts. He had lived through Wentworth’s jolly assizes; had watched the hand of confiscation creep over one province, then another; had heard the rumors of Catholic jacquerie, of Coote and Murrough the Burner; had learned that Sir James Craig the undertaker was busy

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defending his rights. He had sat inside the circle of Cromwell's scourge, and harbored the breathless and the hunted. They had been warm and kind people, these optimistic Irish. The Normans had mingled with them, come to understand and unite with them. But now this debased man with a few debased coins had to go among the jackals of the law in London. People would shirk him, and his melancholy history. He would not know the right lawyer, or the right minister, or the right minister's mistress. His Gaelic would amuse Mr. Smithkins. He would stoop to bribe—the wrong people. He would, like Pitt, get drunk. And he would brag and boast, and perhaps brawl, like Captain Costigan. A dingy history, a damp ruin of a history, ending with a person called Petty who now owns the very beautiful land of Kenmare.

13

Well, there is one more shake of the dice, even after Oliver Plunkett has been tried, tortured, and executed for a non-existent Popish Plot, in 1681.

That shake of the dice is on an exposed card, which is James II, against a concealed card, William. James is a Catholic king—at last. He makes Tyrconnel head of his Irish Government, who favors the Catholics.

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James is safe enough on the throne of England till he breeds an heir. Then the English, not relishing a renewal of political seasickness, send for the solid Dutchman, William III.

A parliament is held in Dublin in 1689. It affirms tolerance to the Protestants but takes back the land. This is inflammatory. But the Catholic Irish are now pawns in a great European game. The French fleet under Tourville brilliantly defeats the combined Dutch and English at Beachy Head. James comes to Ireland. With a French army and Ormonde's Irish and the most militaristic of French advisers (who want to massacre all the Protestants, to start with), he meets William and his Dutch and his Danish and his Scottish at the battle of the Boyne.

On July 1, 1691, "the battle of the Boyne was won, not in the legendary manner, by William, with his sword in his left hand, or Schomberg, plunging into the river to meet a soldier's death, but by the younger Schomberg, who crossed higher and outflanked the French. Tourville's victory, after that, was entirely useless. William offered an amnesty, which was frustrated by the English hunger for Irish estates." So, Lord Acton.

In the previous fighting at Londonderry, against the

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Jacobite army, the 'prentice boys and Protestant settlers had stood siege magnificently. Now Limerick was to repulse William, with Patrick Sarsfield as the bril-



Patrick Sarsfield

liant Irish figure. Sarsfield's courage and daring enliven the somber picture. But the battle of Aughrim, where the French general St. Ruth was killed at a crucial moment, turned the tide against absolutism, James, Louis XIV—and the Irish.

This ended the Stuarts. Beneath the drums that beat Sarsfield's honorable exit from Limerick one listened in vain for the breathing of the Irish nation. Englishmen had not only conquered Ireland but had removed from it everything that seemed worth having. Was anything left? A flicker of culture, and the Catholic religion—these were allowed to remain, by the treaty of Limerick.

So the history of the seventeenth century limps to a close. It began in a lurid, bloody dawn. A gray morning followed, which was almost steady. But clouds gathered storm for the fierce noonday outbursts of 1641. For eleven years thereafter the skies were torn, the earth deluged, the country convulsed and desolated. After Cromwell, whose bloodshot eye saw the Irish as papist monsters, the afternoon was livid. With the restoration of the Stuarts, there came a quiver of watery sunlight, a thin flush of rose—for a few years of attempted and apprehensive reconstruction. Then James II brought Ireland his lost cause, and drew on her the ugly, brutal wrenching tornado of the Williamite wars. Night at last descends. It is

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a night of such blackness, cold, and horror that it reminds one only of a no-man's-land in which two bands of crouching men are at work in the blackness; one to kill the wounded, the other to rob the dead.

CHAPTER VII

THE ABYSS

1

THE native Irish were now broken, disorganized, and underfoot. When Sarsfield had capitulated at Limerick a treaty had been formally signed by which the Catholics should be safe from further persecution; and the Catholics meant five-sevenths of the people. "Both sides," says the English historian Green, "were, of course, well aware that such a treaty was merely waste paper, for Ginkel had no power to conclude it, nor had the Irish lords justice." The treaty was waste paper, to the English. William, a disbeliever in persecution, tried to honor the pledges that had been made to the Irish. But he was king on sufferance: the parliaments of England and Anglo-Ireland were too strong for him. Public opinion was the new ruler in England, and at the moment public opinion was cowardly, vindictive, and resentful.

Out of these moods came the penal laws. These

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were laws intended to finish the work which England had begun in the reign of Henry VIII. From 1550 to 1700, as the English viewed it, the Irish had shown a diabolic spirit. First, they were foreign: they spoke Gaelic, had a strange land system, wore queer clothes, resisted when attacked, were rustic and yet not convinced of their inferiority.

Henry VIII had tried to solve their “problem” (the problem, that is, of conquering them) by making their chiefs into earls and giving them a parchment title to the land which their kinsmen had always held. This ignored the claims of the sub-chiefs and their adherents. The work of forcing all these hot-headed people to take the “solution” made in London for English convenience was too much for English temper. When England added a state church to the rest of its superiorities, it developed a cold anger toward Ireland and did not take long to discover a moral basis for that anger.

From the age of Elizabeth we derive the authorized English version of Irish character. By the time the war was over it was already clear to the English that the Irish were (1) barbarous, (2) lawless, (3) treacherous, (4) malicious. In other words, the enemy. At this very time, unluckily, the English had learnt how

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to deal with the enemy in savage lands. They saw in Ireland another America, peopled by equally wicked aborigines, and they thought it perfectly proper to



FROM A STATUE BY HEINRICH BAUCHE, PRESENTED BY
KAISER WILHELM TO ENGLAND IN 1907.

seize their possessions. The insurrection of 1641 was, in their view, the attempt of red Indians to massacre white people. Hence the popish, Gaelic-speaking, blanket-wearing Irishman became an object of moral

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reprehension. A good Irishman was a dead Irishman. A natural desire for easy profit and “honest graft” heightened this feeling. Cromwell saw the Irish as hardly human: he massacred them with a complete conviction of outraged Puritan ideals, half hoping that his use of force might drive out the devil. But the devil in the Irish combined with the devil in the Stuarts and Jacobites. When James II was in power he had the reckless audacity to appoint Tyrconnel as viceroy, whose friendliness to Catholics revived every fear of the English settlers. The wickedness of this procedure was evident. Whatever terms were agreed upon at Limerick, English-in-Ireland, hereafter to be called the Ascendancy, had no use for them. Nothing appeared more natural, in the flush of victory, than to devise a succession of laws which would humiliate, injure, and forever weaken the remnants of the Irish nation.

What resulted, according to Green, was a hundred years of “the most terrible legal tyranny under which a nation has ever groaned.”

2

The penal laws were based on the fixed Catholicism of the common Irish. Accepting Catholicism as a

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superstitious and idolatrous practice to which the Irish were too ignorant not to cling, the men who had benefited by confiscation now proceeded to put the finishing touches to the conquest. They first limited the number of priests to eleven hundred, and banished the bishops who might ordain successors. They illegalized mass, except in the case of registered priests. Having thus endeared the church to the common Irish, they turned their attention to the laymen.

The Irish Catholic was excluded from the vote, from municipal and parliamentary offices, from even sitting in the gallery of the parliament. He was not allowed to become a barrister or solicitor, a sheriff or a constable. He was prohibited from residing in either Limerick or Galway. He was compelled to pay special and extra taxes. He was not allowed to carry arms, make arms, sell them, or join the army. He was forbidden to print books or newspapers, to take more than two apprentices in any trade except linen manufacture, or to become an apprentice in any trade to any Protestant.

He was forbidden to teach school. He was forbidden to attend Catholic school or college. He was forbidden to send his children abroad to school or college.

He was not allowed to lease land for more than

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thirty-one years, or to make more than a certain profit on leased land, or to lend money on land. He was forbidden, under automatic penalties as regarded property, to marry a Protestant. He was forbidden to leave his land to his eldest son. His eldest son could inherit all the land by turning Protestant: otherwise the land was to be split up among all the sons.

Any child who turned Protestant could escape his parents' custody and obtain an allowance. Any eldest son who turned Protestant could immediately become the proprietor of the family estate, making his father a life-tenant. A wife who turned Protestant could receive an allowance and a legal separation. Children left without parents were given to a Protestant guardian to be brought up as Protestants.

No Catholic could own a horse worth more than £5, or keep a horse for which a Protestant tendered him £5.

These laws were not for the exclusive benefit of the Catholics. The nonconformists were included in some of them. The ground was now laid for the republicanism of Northeast Ulster, and for the fellow-feeling, sympathy, and magnanimity which the Quakers have so steadily manifested toward Ireland.

These penal laws, it is important to note, were religious but also deftly economic. They were well-

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planned. Their object was to deprive the native Irish of capital, to drive them into the position of agricultural serfs and there give them the alternative of being endlessly sweated or of adopting the lowest possible standard of life. The Irish, need it be said, tried it both ways. When they worked themselves to the bone for their English masters, they were regarded as harmless poor slaves occupying the station to which it had pleased a Protestant God to call them. When they declined to slave, they were called lazy, idle, shiftless, dirty, and drunken. English agriculturists like Arthur Young pointed out with much sagacity that it was slovenly of them to raise no crops except potatoes, foolish of them to drink cheap whisky, stupid of them to raise a houseful of children. All of these observations were important and edifying, and have been quoted ever since by innumerable writers who never tried the experiment of raising a family on sixpence a day.

3

British justice, at any rate, was in the saddle. The hunt was on, and the hounds hot after the Irish for three generations. The black art of persecution can only be applied, however, at the price of public infamy; and we witness the enslavement of the common

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Irish going hand in hand with the corroding of the Anglo-Irish character. No one can dispute the breakdown of the Gaelic population. Equally no one can dispute the rottenness of the Protestant Ascendancy. What is commonly called Irish patriotism in this period is mainly the effort of this Protestant Ascendancy to purge itself. The names of Molyneux, Swift, Berkeley, Lucas, Flood, Charlemont, Grattan are associated with the Irish nation in the eighteenth century. But these men belong to Ireland scarcely more than Congreve, Goldsmith, Burke, Sterne or Sheridan. One of them, Grattan, put political resurrection in a single line: "The Irish Protestant could never be free till the Irish Catholic had ceased to be a slave." But when the Irish Catholic gave signs of ceasing to be a slave, Pitt and British policy tore the flimsy independence of the Anglo-Irish to shreds, and rammed both slaves and slaveholders into the political internment-camp called the Union.

Jonathan Swift, a disillusioned man with no sentimentiality and a tortured heart, was compelled to spend his days in penal Ireland. He has left his picture of the common people after one generation of penal laws.

"It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town or travel in the country," he wrote

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from Dublin in 1729, "when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants, who as they grow up either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country to fight for the pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes."

Why not, says Swift in savage irony, stew, roast, bake, or boil these superfluous babies? They would make succulent food.

The old, he declares, are taken care of. "It is very well known that they are every day dying and rotting by cold and famine, and filth and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young laborers, they are now in as hopeful a condition; they cannot get work, and consequently pine away from want of nourishment, to a degree that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labor, they have not strength to perform it; and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come." Destroy the babies, then, and the Irish prob-

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lem is solved. "For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of papists, with whom we are yearly overrun, being the principal breeders of the nation as well as our most dangerous enemies; and who stay at home on purpose to deliver the kingdom to the pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence [absenteeism] of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate."

4

Swift's irony is sound history. It enables us, even without the aid of innumerable documents that support it, to see the abominable servitude to which the Irish are reduced.

Some hundreds of thousands of Irishmen are pouring to the Continent, to fight as willing mercenaries in the ranks of France, Austria, and Spain. From these refugees came the famous Irish Brigade. Count Thomas Arthur Lally, Major O'Mahony, the Duc de Feltre, General O'Meara, Prime Minister Wall in Spain, General Peter Lacy in Russia, Field-Marshal Lacy in Austria, John Barry of the American navy,

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O'Higgins of Chile—these were some of the Irish flung far from Ireland.

Those who remain at home have sunk in the social scale. Most Irishmen now have the rank of day-laborers. They live in mud huts on potatoes, skim milk, or water. They are liable to typhus and famine. A great famine kills 150,000 in 1740-41. Yet they breed fast, and as the young grow up they become cottiers; men who pay a high rent for a tiny holding, on which they hope to keep a cow or two, a pig, a few ridges of potatoes. They work for their landlord as well as pay rent, and if they displease him, he (or more likely his agent) evicts them at will. The land, for which they are not educated, is the main Irish occupation. A pipeful of tobacco is the one luxury they permit themselves. They live in rags, afraid of the land-agent's estimating eye, the tithe-collector who is entitled to their Catholic pennies for the established church, the gombeen-man who lends them money for the frequent funeral, the hearth-money man who collects their taxes though they have no hearth. Their furniture is a black pot, a basin, a wooden stool, one cup or perhaps two, a heap of straw for a bedstead. The manure-pile in front of their door is filthy. To keep clean, or to keep the children clean, is literally impos-

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sible, and yet kind ladies already exist who want them to be clean and energetic and self-respecting and Protestant. But most of the gentry are content to ride galloping by, to live a life which centers around the claret-bottle and the punch-bowl, dueling and gambling, to sit as the stern magistrate on the bench and order men and women flogged for trivialities, to avoid fair dealing as weakness, and to regard mercy as treason.

We may leave the native Irish out of history for three generations. Many of them have traditions to which they adhere, despite the fate of serfs. They have enough spirit left to compose religious songs and love-songs in Gaelic. The blackbird does not know of the penal laws, and an Irish heart lifts to the voice of the blackbird. The sun is not Protestant or Catholic, and it shines for youth in spite of everything. Ireland, the Dark Rosaleen, Roseen Dhu, is the object of intense yearning and pity and love. Men still dream of freeing Ireland. The hedge schoolmaster shambles into being. Children in bare feet kneel in the protected corner of thick hedgerows, and pluck a daisy or a dandelion with straying hand while their eyes follow the earnest man who teaches them their Latin. And, finally, there is the priest or the hunted bishop. There

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are humble homes, hovels even, in which the secret network of religious life is woven. The priest is becoming the leader, the counselor, the consoler. He is threatened by law with the branding-iron. He risks everything to shepherd his people. And upon him the people concentrate the loyalty in which England alone finds them deficient, the loyalty which is of all loyalties the strongest—the loyalty of the oppressed.

There was a certain joy in whipping the Irish because the Protestants had been ill-treated in France; it was easier than whipping the French themselves. A number of valuable by-products, in addition, seemed to be promised by persecution. There was a career for spies, for informers, for Charter School teachers, for priest-hunters. There was a great deal of rack-rent, to be spent at Bath and in London; and a good living to be made by rent-rackers and men who “farm” the tithes. The wounds of Ireland attracted many flies.

5

But these were small advantages, and the Anglo-Irish governing class of the eighteenth century had by no means an easy time. They represented not only the landed interest and church interest of Ireland but the mercantile interest; and this was the era of that

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famous English mercantile theory by which an excess of manufactured imports was regarded as the road to ruin. It was England, the English parliament, which took the mercantile theory so seriously, which looked on Anglo-Irish manufactures with jealous apprehension, which looked on the colonies as the God-given dumping-ground of its own products, and, in general, spread both elbows on the table and circled with eager arm the heaping platter of industrialism.

Nothing could have been worse for Anglo-Ireland. For early in the eighteenth century the English parliament, having completely eliminated the native Irish as citizens, took a severe tone toward the Anglo-Irish parliament in Dublin. By Poyning's Law (1495) the Norman-Irish had themselves agreed that the assent of the English privy council must be procured before any bill could be introduced into the Irish parliament. They had also agreed that laws made by the English parliament could be applied to Ireland. But it surprised and pained the inheritors of this colonial statesmanship to find that, in the day of their triumph over the native Irish, they were themselves to be curtailed. The English parliament had on previous occasions brutally prohibited the export of Irish cattle and Irish provisions. Now they set out to destroy Ireland's

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chief textile industry. They forbade the export of woolens.

This was an act of tyranny for which the Anglo-Irish were neither socially nor constitutionally prepared. What, after all, was their status? "Though English to the Irish," said a Norman, "we are as Irish to the English." This was still their status in the days of George I. When Ormonde had gone about improving Irish business in 1665—importing Huguenots and other Continentals to make lace, linen, gloves, and glass—he had done so with a shrewd idea of the proper Anglo-Irish attitude. "If it prove or be thought that Ireland's being above water hurts England, some invention must be found to sink it." But this trade policy did not suit the Protestant bourgeoisie. The iron-works were continued until all the Irish forests were cut down for fire-wood; that was all right, because the Anglo-Irish feared the "wood kerns" or wandering soldiers who prowled in the shade. But what about prohibitions that were an obsequious answer to the protests of English merchants? And Scottish merchants? What about the Navigation Acts, which crippled the Irish carrying-trade? What about a law that did not allow the Irish to export glass, or to import glass except from England? What about a law that pre-

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vented Ireland trading with the colonies, that put a duty on salt needed for the fisheries, and on coal, needed for everything?

The struggle of Irish trade to establish itself in the eighteenth century against the commercial restrictions of England is best to be understood by remembering the Boston Tea-Party. Ireland, or rather Anglo-Ireland, could have had a similar tea-party once a week.

6

But the Anglo-Irish parliament had not only no standing in the eyes of constitutional lawyers; it was hopelessly corrupt within. Of its 300 members, 172 were nominated. Of these 172, half were owned by the Government, half as private property with a cash price on them. The others were elected by something not remotely resembling a modern popular election.

Till the middle of the century this corrupt little body was run in the "English interest." "Burgundy, closeting, and palaver" were later employed, but the greatest victory scored was simply the transfer of the most powerful boss from England to a small inside group of Anglo-Irishmen.

The tail-light of history has not yet illuminated every crevice of these packed, non-representative as-

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semblies; but we know enough to say: foul. And yet Swift's voice was raised as early as 1720 to urge the Anglo-Irish to behave as freemen. He coined a famous phrase: "In reason all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery. . . . The remedy is wholly in your own hands, and therefore I have digressed a little in order to refresh and continue the spirit so reasonably raised among you, and to let you see that by the laws of God, of nature, of nations, and of your country, you are, and you ought to be, as free a people as your brethren in England."

Carpet-baggers, however, are not "of nature" free. The best men in Anglo-Ireland did not go so far as to call their associates carpet-baggers. They were, however, sincere in their desire for reform; they wanted a definite term put to the life of a parliament, control of the money-bills, an abolition of sinecures, a rescinding of Poyning's Law, control of the militia, a tax on absentees. It revolted them to be treated as inferiors, to be run from England, by England, for England, at the cost of so much per vote. They never learned to like the manner in which their Majesties unloaded on Ireland the more subtle and intimate obligations which the English parliament brutally cold-shouldered.

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Lecky enumerates these items for which Ireland had to pay: "The Duke of St. Albans, the bastard son of Charles II, enjoyed an Irish pension of £800 a year; Catherine Sedley, the mistress of James II, had another of £5000 a year. William III bestowed confiscated lands, exceeding an English county in extent, on his Dutch favorites, Portland and Albemarle, and a considerable estate on his former mistress, Elizabeth Villiers. The Duchess of Kendal and the Countess of Darlington, the two mistresses of George I, had pensions of the united annual value of £5000. Lady Walsingham, the daughter of the Duchess of Kendal, had an Irish pension of £1500. Lady Howe, the daughter of Lady Darlington, had a pension of £500. Madame de Walmoden, one of the mistresses of George II, had an Irish pension of £3000. The queen dowager of Prussia, sister of George II, Count Bernsdorff, who was a prominent German politician under George I, and a number of less-noted German names may be found on the Irish pension list."

The Anglo-Irish parliament is an instructive spectacle. If topics arose to excite public opinion—the debasement of the currency if not the debasement of the Catholics, the suppression of the woolen industry if not the suppression of dissenters—there immediately

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was revealed the morbid political condition of the country. On what moral principle could the Anglo-Irish rally their opposition to the English conqueror? Swift said, "the consent of the governed." But Swift was too keen a mind to attempt to limit this principle to the Ascendancy. In resenting the fact that England could prohibit Irish goods while Ireland was not free to retaliate, Swift and the honest men who reasoned with him were in the way of ceasing to be hyphenated and definitely becoming nationalist Irishmen.

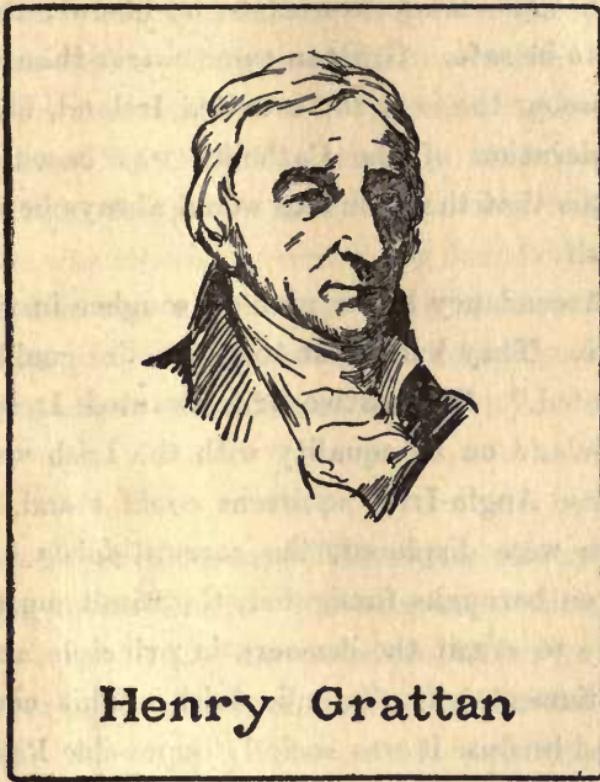
It was thus, in fact, that Protestant nationalism started, as a natural outcome of humane conviction and philanthropy. But in the sturdy refusal of such men to call themselves Englishmen so long as they were treated as colonials, there was as yet only a negative nationalism. The Anglo-Irish had a long way to go before they became really Irish.

7

The history of the eighteenth century is, in great measure, the failure of this Anglo-Irish parliament to become national. Out of their local ascendancy the meaner of the Anglo-Irish were content with the plums of bribery. The nobler of the Anglo-Irish hated bribery and the bribed. They saw that Ireland must have

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autonomy, and they risked a great deal to secure it. But it was only the few who perceived that no parliament could be free unless it were representative, and



Henry Grattan

no parliament could be representative unless it were popular—it was only these few who undertook the real task that confronted an Irish parliament. That task, of course, was to resurrect the Irish nation. It meant renouncing ascendancy and reversing the penal code.

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It meant breaking with England on its policy of imperialism. This was more than the Anglo-Irish desired. They wanted to be democratic; they also wanted to be on top. They wanted to be liberal; they also wanted to be safe. Grattan came nearer than any one else to seeing the need for a united Ireland, but Grattan's toleration of the Catholics was based on the hypothesis that the Catholics would always be as loyal as himself.

The Ascendancy had a plainer, rougher instinct for the facts. They knew that the Catholics could not be "conciliated." The native Irish wanted Ireland: to share Ireland on an equality with the Irish was more than these Anglo-Irish squires could stand. If the placemen were displaced, the corruptionists expelled, the rotten boroughs fumigated, the result must necessarily be to admit the democratic principle and flood the parliament with Catholic Irish. This could not be. And because it was socially impossible Pitt found inside Grattan's parliament the seeds of corruption which he was to ripen with such art and care. The Act of Union was, of course, infamously manipulated. Honest policies do not require such manipulation. But it was the racial bigotry of the Anglo-Irish parliament which made it in the end so easy to destroy.

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It had, however, British grandiloquence. Before it was destroyed a great many grand gestures were to be made in College Green and much rhetoric was to be expended. The bull-baiting and cock-fighting of the squires were nothing to the denunciation of tyrants and oppressors which was to entertain the parliament. And because the Catholic native was already meek and debilitated, the penal laws were nobly relaxed. A Catholic was allowed to rent a bog for sixty-one years provided it was a mile from a town, more than four feet deep, etc. An innocuous Catholic Committee was tolerated about the middle of the century.

8

Very different were the Whiteboys, who sprang into existence in the South. The commons which had previously been used by the poor people for grazing had been forcibly enclosed, and as a result small bands of men who wore their shirts outside their coats (hence Whiteboys) roamed through the country threatening the obnoxious landowners, sometimes beating and cruelly injuring them. This was the beginning of the peasant revolts. In the North a serious agrarian war was also being waged. Lord Donegal, the descendant of that Chichester who by fraud had secured his big

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estates, was declining to renew leases except at a heavy premium. Other landlords were driving their tenants to work on the roads. The Oakboys (1761-62) and Hearts-of-Steel Boys (1771) were Presbyterians who would not stand forced labor, or eviction as the result of resisting fines. In the end the Ulster Land War was won by the tenants, after much violence, cattle-maiming, tithe-refusing, and general insubordination. But during this period, North and South, a steady emigration took place to the American colonies. The Southern emigration was the greater of the two. More than one-third of Washington's army was composed of Irishmen. The records exhibit thousands of Ulster Presbyterian names and thousands of Catholic Irishmen. Both classes had left Ireland for about the same reason, and for this good reason enlisted in force to fight against the English in the War of Independence.

9

The War of Independence made a profound impression in Ireland. A genial corruptionist named Lord Harcourt had managed, after a long campaign, to get the "patriot" Henry Flood to take a job at £3500 a year; and Flood's secession made it possible for the Government to win a favorable, anti-American vote in

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the Anglo-Irish parliament. But Chatham's phrase expressed the Irish feeling: "Ireland is with America to a man." "All Ireland is America-mad," said Horace Walpole. The main political advantage to Anglo-Ireland, however, came from the fact that America, in order to beat England, had appealed successfully to England's most dangerous enemy, France.

By years of insistence on the popery of France, England had made of France the greatest bogey and bugbear in the world. Louis XIV, in addition, had shown the evil possibilities of French militarism. The Anglo-Irish, genuinely alarmed at the fact that there were no soldiers in Ireland, were glad to seize the opportunity to arm in self-defense. It was impossible to get recruits in Ireland to fight the American colonies, but the Irish quickly raised 40,000 volunteers to defend their coasts from the invader. Having done so, they were in a somewhat better position to reason with the "mother-country."

The temper of Anglo-Ireland had not been improved by embargoes on export, to suit certain enterprising English hucksters; the victory of the Americans at Saratoga had additional stimulating value. And, with volunteers in arms, Grattan did all in his power to unite the Anglo-Irish and the native Irish.

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The feebleness of the British parliament in meeting this situation was combined with an executive's privately bewailing the lack of a secret-service fund. Concessions were rushed to Anglo-Ireland and to native Ireland, in the hope of averting a declaration of independence.

Carlisle, the lord lieutenant, informally told the English Government that the Irish could no longer be bamboozled. "It is beyond a doubt," he said, "that the practicability of governing Ireland by English laws is become utterly visionary. It is with me equally beyond a doubt that Ireland may be well and happily governed by her own laws. It is, however, by no means so clear that if the present moment is neglected this country will not be driven into a state of confusion, the end of which no man can foresee or limit."

The Volunteers did not stand inactive. In 1779 they had demanded free trade. At the foot of King William's statue in Dublin, opposite the houses of parliament, they had placarded two cannon, "Free Trade or This." In 1781, with free trade conceded, they assembled in Ulster. They now numbered 80,000 men in arms. Early in 1782 they held a convention at Dungannon under Lord Charlemont to formulate a political program. They insisted on the independence

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of the king, lords, and commons of Ireland. They passed two resolutions drafted by Grattan which revealed the great distance they had traveled toward nationalism. "We hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves; that as men, as Irishmen, as Christians, and as Protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland."

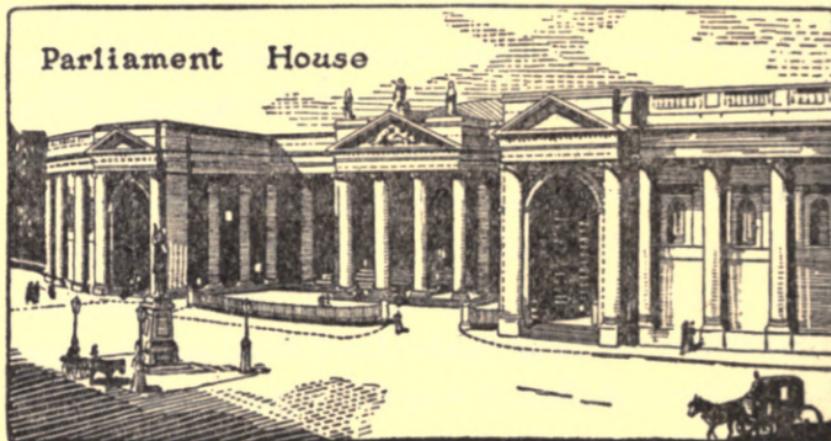
Here was an expression of public opinion which even a privately-owned parliament could not ignore. "We know our duty to our sovereign, and are loyal; we know our duty to ourselves, and are resolved to be free." This moderation of the Volunteers, plus the proposed repeal of most of the penal laws, created an irresistible mood in Ireland. Lord Portland, the new viceroy, declared that it was no longer a question of the aroused parliament of Ireland. It was "the whole of this country." Fox insisted that there was only one thing to do: "to meet Ireland on her own terms and give her everything she wanted in the way in which she seemed to wish for it." On January 22, 1783, Ireland—that is, colonial Ireland—enacted its perfect auton-

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omy, "hereby declared to be established and ascertained forever, and shall at no time hereafter be questioned or questionable." After this achievement, but before the parliament was reformed, the Volunteers ceased to have influence.

"Ireland is a nation," exulted Grattan in full emotion. "In that character I hail her, and bowing in her august presence, I say, *"Esto perpetua!"*"

The "perpetua" parliament lasted about seventeen years.



CHAPTER VIII

THE ANGLO-IRISH PARLIAMENT

1

WE now enter on a drama with four main conflicting personages: the “English interest,” the Anglo-Irish interest, the submerged native Irish, and the suppressed dissenters in Northeast Ulster.

The drama falls into three acts. From 1782 to the French Revolution there was no serious social conflict inside Ireland. The native Irish made no stir, neither did the dissenters. The chief struggle was that of the Anglo-Irish parliament to overcome English jealousy and achieve commercial emancipation. But a great change in the mind and soul of Ireland took place with the French Revolution. From 1791 to 1798 the drama became political, with the native Irish returning to the stage under the leadership of Protestant radicals and Presbyterian republicans. Against these radicals and republicans, with the Catholic masses in the rear, stood the “independent” parlia-

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ment and the English government. At first the Government inclined to temporize. It planned to emancipate the Catholics. But with the aggressiveness of the radicals and republicans it soon changed its tactics. The radicals were disloyal. They desired French intervention. And gradually their society, the United Irishmen, became a revolutionary body, with the plan of establishing an Irish republic. It was this program, and the danger that it threatened to British imperialism so long as the native Irish had to be submerged, that decided Pitt to bring about the union of the British and Anglo-Irish parliaments.

The second act was mainly occupied with leading up to this union, in spite of the wishes of the Anglo-Irish. A great help in this direction was the revival of social and religious antagonism in Northeast Ulster. The educated Presbyterian was, as a rule, a republican, and desirous of a united Ireland. But in the rural districts there was latent rivalry and hostility among Catholics and Presbyterians, and out of this came the Defenders and the Orangemen. The Orangemen gave efficient aid to British imperial policy. When the United Irishmen had extended their organization, the Government provoked a leaderless rebellion, and then turned the Orange militia loose on the Southern peasantry. The fright-

The Anglo-Irish Parliament

fulness was so great that the viceroy and the military commanders sickened at it, but it paved the way for the short third act in this chapter of history: the “independent” parliament was destroyed.

2

The “independent” parliament began, however, without any apprehension of English treachery. A feeling of intense gratitude to England pervaded it. One of its first acts was to vote £100,000 to the navy, and a contribution of 20,000 men. The fact that these naval recruits were sometimes countrymen knocked down and lashed and dragged on board the ships of his Majesty’s fleet did not lessen the surging loyalty which filled the breasts of Grattan and his friends. These statesmen gloried, to tell the truth, in the strange sensation of legislative freedom. And because they felt free they felt generous, especially to the country which had freed them.

One of the first results of this emotion was a body of the most amiable and enlightened municipal legislation. To make Dublin into a handsome capital, the second city of the empire, was the ambition of the young parliament, and such public buildings as the custom-house and the viceregal lodge (of which the

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White House is a copy) were promptly undertaken. Public baths were opened, and charming town-houses were planned by the lords and the commons. The aristocratic Dublin of this period was lifted into being on a rising tide of hope and prosperity, and the receding waves have left to Dublin a remarkable number of fine Georgian establishments.

In this expansiveness a few important facts were allowed to lurk in the shade. The first of these was the exact nature of Ireland's "independence." All that the Anglo-Irish parliament had gained, in fact, was the right to frame its own bills. In England's hands it had left the whole executive apparatus. Thus the viceroy and the chief secretary were responsible not to Dublin but to London. The appointees of the Government all through the country were English appointees. The office-holders looked to England; so did the office-seekers. The bishoprics and good livings went by the favor of England. The house of lords was, in essence, England's creature. The English war office controlled the Irish army. Dublin Castle, in short, had not been transferred to the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy but remained the stronghold of English authority in Ireland.

This was one structural oddity of Ireland's "inde-

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pendence.” Another, of course, was the fact that the “nation” had, by the ingenuity of English rhetoric, come to consist of the Anglo-Irish minority, possibly a fifth of the people. One-tenth of the people, the Ulster Presbyterians, were still unpopular outsiders, while seven-tenths of the people, the native Irish, did not politically exist.

The supreme one-fifth, however, could now dispense with the odium of brute force. England-in-Ireland became the Nation. The great achievement of rule by public opinion, as the English conceived it, did not consist in installing the Anglo-Irish in Ireland by conquest, confiscation, and legal tyranny. It consisted rather in the quiet art by which this Anglo-Irish party of force and theft and fraud and deceit was, without giving restitution, turned around into the dignified and of course “salutary” custodian of law and order. Within 150 years the native Irish had been reduced from their dominance in property and position to a state of servitude. In this servitude they sometimes showed a restless, reprehensible spirit. The wicked Irish, as solemn legalists and solemn historians saw them, had not that respect for the Law which one must have before one can be “entrusted” with self-government. If four-fifths of the people came in conflict with

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this one-fifth, their real offense was not their objection to the privileges of the fifth. Heaven forbid. It was their offense against the great body of noble principle on which this fifth was solidly squatting. The Anglo-Irish had pulled securely under them, and now warmly held, all the staple goods that were in sight. Here they were perched on these goods like the chancellor on his woolsack in the house of lords: the vulgar, greasy, useful commodity of earthly possessions became the base from which the ethics of law and order were laid down. And in due time the world could be trusted not to see the bag of wool on which these ethics were bolstered, but only to hear the deep inspiring organ-tones of Public Opinion, the Reign of Law, the political genius of England, Representative Government.

3

That this division of power was reasonable, in the Ireland of 1782, was held to be proved by the low condition of the native Irish. Owing to the bodily and economic damage and consequent social damage which had been inflicted on the native Irish by the penal laws, and their fixed place in the community as serfs, it seemed impossible in the current aristocratic view even to hold with them politically. They were politically

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beneath contempt. It was not until the French Revolution had gathered all the fumes and furies of the oppressed into one terrific explosion, blowing a hole through the thickest of complacencies and showering molten rocks among the Higher Orders, that the minds of the higher orders were awakened in alarm.

The degree to which the native Irish were actually impaired and degraded by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is important to estimate. One interesting witness in America in 1782, is de Crèvecoeur, who wrote "Letters from an American Farmer":

"Out of twelve families of emigrants of each country, generally seven Scotch will succeed, nine German, and four Irish. The Scotch are frugal and laborious, but their wives cannot work so hard as German women, who on the contrary vie with their husbands, and often share with them the severe toils of the field, which they understand better. They have therefore nothing to struggle against, but the common casualties of nature. The Irish do not prosper so well; they love to drink and to quarrel; they are litigious, and soon take to the gun, which is the ruin of everything; they seem beside to labor under a greater degree of ignorance in husbandry than the others; perhaps it is that their industry had less scope, and was less exercised at home. I

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have heard many relate how the land was parceled out in that kingdom; their ancient conquest has been a great detriment to them, by oversetting their landed property. The lands possessed by a few are leased down ad infinitum, and the occupiers often pay five guineas an acre. The poor are worse lodged there than anywhere else in Europe; their potatoes, which are easily raised, are perhaps an inducement to laziness: their wages are too low, and their whisky too cheap."

Was de Crèvecoeur biased? One finds an even more painful and absolutely unguarded witness to the "detiment of conquest" in Wolfe Tone, the famous Irishman, who came to America in 1795. Tone was not enchanted by the people of Philadelphia. "They are the most disgusting race," he observes in a private letter, "eaten up with all the vice of commerce and that vilest of all pride, the pride of the purse. In the country parts of Pennsylvania the farmers are extremely ignorant and boorish, particularly the Germans and their descendants, who abound. There is something, too, in the Quaker manners extremely unfavorable to anything like polished society, but of all the people I have met here the Irish are incontestably the most offensive. If you meet a confirmed blackguard you may be sure

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he is Irish. You will, of course, observe I speak of the lower orders. They are as boorish and ignorant as the Germans, as uncivil and uncouth as the Quakers, and as they have ten times more animal spirits than both they are much more actively troublesome. After all, I do not wonder at, nor am I angry with them. They are corrupted by their own execrable government at home and when they land here and find themselves treated like human creatures, fed and clothed, and paid for their labor, no longer flying from the sight of any fellow who is able to purchase a velvet collar to his coat, I do not wonder if the heads of the unfortunate devils are turned with such an unexpected change in their fortunes, and if their new-gotten liberty breaks out, as it too often does, into pettiness and insolence. For all this it is, perhaps scarcely fair to blame them—the fact is certain.

“In Jersey, the manners of the people are extremely different; they seem lively and disengaged in comparison, and that, among others, was one reason which determined me to settle in this State.

“But if the manners of the Pennsylvanians be unpleasant, their government is the best under heaven, and their country thrives accordingly.”

Three years later Wolfe Tone was to die for these

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Irish people about whose manners he was so frank. That he saw them as he did, indicates the human groundwork of class distinction in this epoch. And what Tone could see in terms of cause and effect the Ascendancy saw simply as an unchangeable condition which called for and justified the policy of ascendancy.

4

Hence the “independent” parliament began without the least intention of enfranchising the Irish slaves.

“The distrust of Roman Catholicism,” says James Ford Rhodes in his history of the United States, “is a string that can be artfully played upon in an Anglo-Saxon community.” It was the main string of Grattan’s parliament. The Know-Nothing movement or the later Ku-Klux Klan movement of the United States expressed an acute but futile desire to make government a Protestant Anglo-Saxon monopoly. Government in Grattan’s Ireland was in fact such a monopoly. “A Protestant king of Ireland; a Protestant parliament; a Protestant hierarchy; Protestant electors and Government; the benches of justice, the army and the revenue, through all their branches and details Protestant; and this system supported by a connection with the Protestant realm of England.” This was the plat-

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form of the corporation of Dublin, which by law was exclusively Protestant. And the "liberal" attitude, as revealed by Henry Grattan, was this: "I love the Roman Catholic; I am a friend to his liberty, but it is only inasmuch as his liberty is entirely consistent with your ascendancy, and an addition to the strength and freedom of the Protestant community."

So the Protestant monopoly had to be iron-clad. "I love the colored folk," but "only inasmuch as entirely consistent with white ascendancy." What the law called the "common Popish enemy" did not appear to have a look-in.

The Catholic gentry did not arouse any fears in the monopolists. By this time they were indescribably meek. They took a mouse-like interest in Irish archeology. They hastened to assert their extreme respectability and unswerving loyalty whenever they could. By the connivance of a smooth graftor named Hely Hutchinson they were permitted to creep through Trinity College, Dublin, and even to receive degrees. Their Protestant friends were willing to hold property for them in many cases, and thus to show that monopoly is not always monstrous. But the Catholics of "respectability and position" had no leadership in them. Lord Kenmare was afraid of his shadow. So

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was Lord Fingall. Lord Dunsany turned Protestant though anxious to help his brethren. The eminent Father O'Leary was a secret pensioner of the crown.

The lower classes of the populace, as Lecky describes them, were less spirited than the emigrants to America; merely ignorant, turbulent, impoverished. "The Catholic gentry were as sensible as the Protestants of the utility of a law which kept arms out of the hands of the poorest, the most ignorant, the most lawless and riotous portion of the population."

But the Protestant Ascendancy reckoned without the one uncontrollable factor in social affairs—the world circumstance of French Revolution.

5

From 1782 to the French Revolution, as has been said, there was no serious social conflict inside Ireland. In the breasts of radicals like Wolfe Tone the conviction was forming that the "Revolution of 1782" was worthless. It simply "enabled Irishmen to sell, at a much higher price, their honor, their integrity, and the interests of their country; it was a revolution which, while at one stroke it doubled the value of every borough-monger in the kingdom, left three-fourths of our countrymen slaves as it found them, and the gov-

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ernment of Ireland in the base and wicked and contemptible hands who had spent their lives in degrading and plundering her. Who of the veteran enemies of the country lost his place or his pension? Who was called forth to station or office from the ranks of the opposition? Not one."

This was the latent feeling out of which the United Irishmen were to arise. But in immediate view there was Pitt's England with its restraints on Irish trade. The statesmen of the Anglo-Irish parliament were concentrated on nothing so much as Ireland's economic development, and they fought with truly British spirit for a share in the trade of the world. At this distance it may seem like a pigmy striving against a giant, but that was not the idea current among British traders. High, even prohibitive, duties were imposed on Irish manufactures intended for England, while Ireland was compelled to receive English manufactures at a low tariff. To remove these restraints and discriminations by arranging a treaty was the aim of the Anglo-Irish parliament. Pitt was not unwilling to make such a treaty, provided he could couple with it the promise of an Irish contribution to the empire. He did not deny that in the past English policy "had been that of excluding Ireland from the enjoyment and use of her

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own resources; to make that kingdom completely subservient to the opulence and interests of this country, without suffering them to share in the bounties of nature, in the industry of her citizens, or making them contribute to the general interests or strength of the empire."

The proposed treaty, however, excited the most lively opposition in the new England of the industrial revolution. Ireland was believed to be a place of incredibly low wages, incredibly cheap productiveness, incredibly dangerous rivalry. Pitt yielded to the protests of the manufacturers and the attacks of the Whigs. He changed his whole policy. He sought to compel Ireland to play the ape to the British parliament in return for some minor advantages. This new attempt at subordination the Anglo-Irish parliament shelved. It turned instead to home legislation. This, and the feeling of national confidence, helped Ireland toward an industrial revival. "The woolen manufacture showed some signs of reattaining its old prosperity; the cotton manufacture grew at a very rapid pace, and in a few years attained considerable dimensions; the progress of the linen manufacture was uninterrupted; the brewing industry was reestablished in Ireland, without, however, in any way injuring its

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flourishing rivals, the distilleries; the glass manufacture became a serious rival to that of England; and, in spite of the greatly increased export of corn, the provision trade did not suffer, but, on the contrary, continued to expand." In his excellent "Economic History" Mr. O'Brien further shows that rents went up, wages increased, and the population rose from about 3,000,000 in 1782 to almost 5,000,000 in 1800.

But this manifestation of Irish strength, with the French menace, was the very thing to alarm Britain. It was decided by Pitt as early as 1792 that the simplest solution for Britain would be to take away the Anglo-Irish parliament. He could do this all the better because he believed that the Union would safeguard "the British interest."

Some concession to the Catholic majority, Pitt believed, was absolutely necessary. In 1791 the plebeian elements had come to dominate the Catholic Committee. Under the secretaryship of Wolfe Tone, the democratic program of the French Revolution seemed to these native Irish the most inspiring doctrine in the world, and among the dissenters of Belfast the Catholics found their warmest supporters.

The Anglo-Irish parliament, needless to say, was not Jacobin. It was thoroughly frightened by the

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prospect of any “democratic” advance in Ireland. In 1792 Pitt was of the same mind. But believing he could achieve the Union he felt that the admission of



Theobald Wolfe Tone

the Catholics to a share of suffrage could not then be dangerous. “The Protestant interest, in point of power, property, and church establishment,” he said in 1792 in a private letter, “would be secure, because the decided majority of the Supreme Legislature would

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necessarily be Protestant; and the great ground of argument on the part of the Catholics would be done away; as compared with the rest of the empire, they would be a minority."

There was, besides, the conservative formula for Catholics. As against the Jacobins he thought that the ignorant, downtrodden Irish peasant would be a social bulwark. George III smiled on a delegation of loyal Catholics. "In the great struggle that had broken out Catholicism appeared the most powerful moral influence opposed to the Revolution."

It was this sort of reasoning which led Pitt's henchmen to enfranchise the Catholic peasant in 1793. So long as the peasant voted as his landlord dictated (which he did), this enfranchisement really meant nothing. The gesture had only one disadvantage: Pitt could not explain to the Anglo-Irish parliament how little this liberalism meant without divulging his plan as to the Union.

Not possessing the indispensable clue to Pitt's behavior, the Anglo-Irish resented enormously his concession to the Catholics. Their own policy was different. They aimed to resist the democratic influence of the French Revolution, to drive a wedge in between the lower order of Catholics and the Presbyterians of

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Belfast, and to keep property on top by giving a place in parliament to the conservative, propertied Catholics.

The United Irishmen, founded in Belfast in 1791, were not placated by Pitt's concession to the Catholic voter. They had a national as well as a democratic program, and they began an agitation for the uniting of the dissenters and the Catholics. Theirs was, at its start, a natural secession of the younger radicals—lawyers and writers—from the non-popular Anglo-Irish parliament, and at first their program was a broad civil and religious liberty. But with the Franco-English war of 1793 the leaders—Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Arthur O'Connor, Thomas Addis Emmet, Oliver Bond, W. J. McNevin, and above all Wolfe Tone—made up their minds to follow America's example, invoke French aid, declare war, and go republican.

6

This development of policy was gradual. Before it was mature Pitt agreed that the appearance of virtue was desirable. He sent an honest liberal to Ireland as viceroy, Lord Fitzwilliam.

To Grattan, who now realized that the Catholics must be placated and “emancipated,” Fitzwilliam's was a splendid appointment. All the decent forces in

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Angle-Irish politics rallied to him. And above everything the reformers impressed on Fitzwilliam the hopeless corruption of the parliament under Fitzgibbon, a cynical bully who was Pitt's lord chancellor, and under Fitzgibbon's brother-in-law, John Beresford, who was the head of the Tory machine.

Poor Fitzwilliam, being honest, made up his mind that he could get nowhere unless he reformed parliament. He had pledged himself not to touch the truculent Fitzgibbon, but he promptly removed John Beresford and two of Beresford's chief henchmen and spies.

This created a remarkable situation. So long as the parliament was thoroughly corrupt, the inclusion of a few Lord Kenmares and Fingalls made no real difference. But if Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform both occurred, Pitt's check-and-balance policy was sure to miscarry. The recall of Fitzwilliam was the only move left open to Pitt.

Fitzwilliam's disastrous indiscretion is still the theme of British politicians. Lord Rosebery records that Fitzwilliam dismissed Beresford, "one of Pitt's confidential agents." "He made the unfortunate assertion that Beresford had been guilty of malversation"—in other words, was a crook. Lord Rosebery tells us

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that Fitzwilliam "seems to have been a man of generous sympathies and honest enthusiasm; but not less wrong-headed than headstrong; absolutely devoid of judgment, reticence, and tact."

In other words, he shared Edmund Burke's "living loathing of the Irish system of corruption." He was one British viceroy who took his honor seriously. He ventured to interfere with the perfect machinery which existed to cancel reform.

Fitzwilliam's recall ended a complicated intrigue. It was the occasion of great popular lament in Ireland. It decided Pitt to abandon his connivance at Catholic emancipation. In 1791 it had been clear to the United Irishmen that "the chief support of the borough influence in Ireland was the weight of English influence." This was now proved by the Anglo-Irish rejection of Catholic emancipation by 155 to 84. Pitt's spokesmen reversed their stand. They were now vigorously anti-Catholic. The bigotry of George III was suddenly remembered. "The exclusion of Catholics from Parliament and the State," declared the chief secretary, "is necessary for the Crown and the Connection."

"About 1795," Lecky mildly notes, "the persistent and successful opposition of the Government to reform

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made the United Irishmen for the first time disloyal."

The republicanism of Belfast was now a pronounced factor in Irish politics. The Government threw a sop to the Catholic Church by endowing Maynooth, the seminary for priests. But the English Government did not disguise from itself the large task it had in hand. That task was to strengthen the Government machine inside parliament, to deprive Grattan's pious liberalism of all effectiveness, to multiply spies, detectives, and *agents provocateurs*, to build up a big army and a big militia, to inflame religious prejudice wherever possible, and to provoke and quell a rebellion. After the rebellion, which was in everybody's mind, it would be unnecessary to force the Anglo-Irish parliament into a union at the point of the sword. It would be sufficient to spend several million pounds and lavish a few dozen peerages.

7

Against this policy there was only the agility and daring of the United Irishmen. When Wolfe Tone was allowed to leave the country in 1795, he found Belfast full of the most warm-hearted and patriotic Irishmen. Before he sailed from Belfast he and Neil-

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son and Russell and McCracken and Simms met on a hill in the neighborhood and "took a solemn obligation never to desist in our efforts until we have subverted the authority of England over our country and asserted our independence."

Tone had traveled the full distance along the road on which Swift and his fellows had only set their foot. He was, without an illusion, the advocate of the native Irish. Born in Dublin the same year as Lord Edward Fitzgerald, 1763, he was the son of a farmer-coach-maker of English stock who lived in Kildare. His mother's name was Lamport. Wolfe Tone, Theobald Wolfe Tone in full, was a man of the most blithe and spirited temperament, of deep political sense, resource, and courage. He was the most notable Irishman of his time. His autobiography is one of the most fascinating autobiographies in the English language, distinguished as much by its color and gaiety as by its thrilling theme. From his first negotiations with citizen Adet, the French minister in Philadelphia, to his negotiations with the French Government in 1796, he had nothing to rely on except his own initiative, confidence, and address. Monroe, then American minister to France, received him warmly. He advised him not to bother with "subalterns." He sent him straight to

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Carnot, and Tone undertook the audacious task of procuring an army to free Ireland.

After immense effort an expedition under Lazare Hoche sailed from Brest December 15, 1796, Tone accompanying it as a French adjutant-general.

The expedition was under the orders of Admiral Bouvet while at sea. It had taken Hoche several months to get the forty-three ships he needed for 15,000 men, artillery, and munitions for thousands of Irishmen. In the fogs that enveloped the sea after leaving Brest the force split into three divisions. Hoche's ship never reached Bantry, but thirty-five ships of the expedition came within sight of Bantry Bay. A tremendous wind, blowing unceasingly from December 20 to 27, made it difficult for them to land, though a more daring commander than Grouchy could not have been found. Of the forty-three ships thirty-five returned safely, five were wrecked, and six were captured by the English. The English fleet never came out to engage this expedition, but Bouvet was dismissed by the French for sailing home too soon. Grouchy, who took the command in the absence of Hoche, was investigated for not making a landing, but the investigation cleared him. Wolfe Tone himself said "the winds ruined us."

While Tone remained in France to renew his efforts, the situation in Ireland became more strained. For some time in Armagh and elsewhere in the North there had been friction between the Presbyterian and Catholic rural workers. In Armagh, where the Catholics were in the minority, they called themselves Defenders and the aggressors called themselves Peep-o'-day Boys. A clash between these two bodies in September, 1795, occurred at a place called the Diamond. Though said to be the aggressors, the Catholics had more than twenty of their number killed. After their victory that evening the non-Catholics formed themselves into a new body called Orangemen, after William of Orange, "the conqueror of the Catholics."

These Orangemen went on the war-path. "A terrible persecution of Catholics," Lecky declares, "immediately followed. The animosities between the lower orders of the two religions, which had long been little bridled, burst out afresh, and after the battle of the Diamond the Protestant rabble of the county of Armagh, and of part of the adjoining counties, determined by continuous outrages to drive the Catholics from the country. Their cabins were placarded, or,

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as it was termed, ‘papered,’ with the words ‘To hell or Connacht,’ and if the occupiers did not at once abandon them, they were attacked at night by an armed mob.”

The Government was soon being assured that the Orangemen were full of the “strongest spirit of loyalty.” This spirit of loyalty was shared by many local magistrates, who gave the Orangemen a free hand. And Dublin Castle did nothing to keep the outrages from flourishing. A revival of bigotry and hatred was just the feeling to counteract that rapprochement between Catholics, Protestants, and Presbyterians for which the United Irishmen were striving. “Loyalists” of the Orange type did not wait long to make this plain, and there were plenty of Government officials to listen to them. The Government, Grattan declared repeatedly in parliament, had one law for the Defenders, another for the Orangemen. He asked pointedly how it happened that with 40,000 soldiers and summary laws, they could not reduce Armagh to order. “I cannot but think,” he stated flatly, “the audacity of the mob arose from a confidence in the connivance of Government. Under an administration sent here to defeat a Catholic Bill, a Protestant mob very naturally conceives itself a part of the state.”

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In one sense this extended and extreme persecution of the Catholics helped the United Irishmen. It turned thousands of "Defenders," North and South, into their order. The Catholic militia, according to the Government, could no longer be depended on. But the very essence of the United Irishman policy was the transcending of religious division. "To subvert the tyranny of our execrable Government," said Tone, "to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of our past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishmen in place of the denomination of Protestant, Catholic, and dissenter—these were my means." The enormous enrolment of Catholics, previously apathetic, was loudly welcomed; but even though the Defenders were excommunicated by their church, their keenest emotion was not that disciplined policy which inspired the United men.

From their spies in the ranks of the United Irishmen—Leonard McNally in particular—and from the proprietor of the "Freeman's Journal," Francis Higgins, the Government judged the time had come to enroll a loyal yeomanry. This yeomanry was, in effect,

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the deliberate enrolment of Orangemen against Catholic. And this enlistment of Orange enthusiasts proved to be exceedingly efficacious, once the policy of disarming and coercing the country was accepted.

9

So began the campaign which preceded and produced the actual rising of 1798.

Georg Brandes, the Danish man of letters, accurately sums up the action of the yeomanry in his essay on Robert Emmet. "The Government formed a force of Protestant constabulary, 37,000 strong. These troops were permitted, under the pretense of searching for concealed weapons, to capture, torture, and put to death any unfortunate person whom an enemy, or any ruffian whatever, chose to accuse of suspicious behavior. Hundreds of unoffending people, who were guilty of no other offense than professing the creed of their fathers, were flogged until they were insensible, or made to stand upon one foot on a pointed stake, or were half hanged, or had the scalp torn from their heads by a pitched cap. Militia and yeomanry, as well as the regular troops, were billeted in private houses; and this billet appears to have been construed

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as an unlimited license for robbery, devastation, ravishment, and in case of resistance, murder. It was boasted by officers of rank that within certain large districts no home had been left undefiled; and upon its being remarked that the sex must have been very complying, the reply was that 'the bayonet removed all squeamishness.'"

Grattan had foreseen the violence of the Government. He made one final attack in parliament, pointed out that more than 200 of the 300 members were in bond, reminded the Government that its own rottenness had fomented the United Irishmen, and refreshed its memory concerning the American war. "Suppose you succeed, what is your success? A military government! A perfect despotism! . . . a Union! But what may be the ultimate consequence of such a victory? A separation!" He made his last appeal, won 30 votes out of 147, and walked out of the parliament with his followers.

The Government expected a French invasion as well as a rising. Hence the Government policy of terrorism. Tone had been negotiating with the Dutch before their defeat at the Battle of Camperdown. Now, since Hoche had died of consumption, he was dealing with the lukewarm Bonaparte. Through McNally and other

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agents Dublin Castle was aware that Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor were simply biding their time. In this period of apprehension and alarm a new commander-in-chief came to Ireland, Sir Ralph Abercromby, a Scot of high reputation. He found the loyalists semi-hysterical and the military demoralized. He determined, in Lecky's words, "to put a stop to the scandalous outrages which were constantly occurring, if not under the direct prompting, at least with the tacit connivance of Government officials." The burning of houses in reprisal was one of the practices which Abercromby had to condemn. In February, 1798, he announced without disguise that the army was "in a state of licentiousness which must render it formidable to every one but the enemy." This open statement created an uproar, and in private he told his own relations that "within these twelve months every crime, every cruelty that could be committed by Cosacks or Calmucks has been transacted here. . . . Houses have been burned, men murdered, others half hanged." Abercromby resigned, and "took away the last faint chance of averting a rebellion." A general named Lake, with an exceedingly bad record, was given Abercromby's place and within a month had driven the people to revolt.

The United Irishmen planned and desired an insurrection, to be launched May 23. They claimed to have 279,896 men enlisted and armed, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald was to act as commander-in-chief. The actual plans were not in the Government's hands, however, until Thomas Reynolds, one of the inner circle, turned informer and enabled the Government to arrest fifteen of the leaders in March. Thomas Addis Emmet, Sweetman, Jackson, and W. J. McNevin, were arrested at the same time. It was following these arrests that "martial law and free quarters" were proclaimed, leading to the incidents narrated by Brandes and provoking the country to a leaderless rising.

The Tyrone Militia, the North Cork Militia, the Welsh and two Hessian regiments showed what Orange-men and aliens could do among the popish enemy. "More than one victim died under the lash," records Lecky, "and the terror it produced was to many even worse than the punishment. Gordon mentions a case which came under his own notice, of a laboring man who dropped dead through simple fear. Another case is related of a man in Dublin, who, maddened by the pain

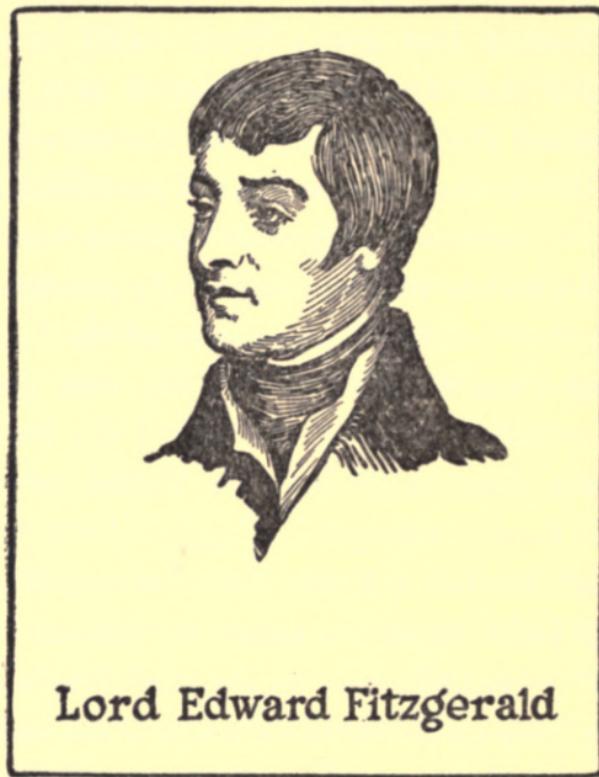
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of the pitched cap, sprang into the Liffey and ended at once his sufferings and his life. In a third case, which occurred at Drogheda, a man who had undergone 500 lashes in order to compel him to reveal some concealed arms, fearing that his fortitude would be overcome, pretended that arms were concealed in a particular garden, and availed himself of the few moments of freedom which he thus obtained, to cut his throat. Flogging to extort confessions appears to have been nowhere more extensively or more successfully practised than in Dublin itself, under the very eyes of the Government, and under the direction of men who were closely connected with it.”

During these happenings the United Irishmen had suffered further betrayals. Higgins of the “Freeman’s Journal” secured a £1000 bribe for one Magan, who secured Lord Edward’s arrest in Thomas Street on May 17. He had been “on the run” for two months. He was lying on his bed when Major Swan and Captain Ryan came to arrest him. With a dagger he fought against these two men, mortally wounded Ryan, and himself received a pistol-wound of which he died three weeks later. Lord Edward was described by a French agent who negotiated with him as a man incapable of

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falsehood or perfidy, frank, energetic, and likely to be a useful and devoted instrument, but "with no experience or extraordinary talent." He was thirty-five



Lord Edward Fitzgerald

years old at the time of his death, the last of the Geraldines to risk his whole being and fortune in despair of the methods of the English in Ireland.

An army officer Armstrong, urged by Lord Castle-reagh not to indulge "in delicate scruples," dined in-

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timately with the family of two men named Sheares, sons of a Cork banker. Armstrong obtained the material for a state trial. John Sheares and his brother Henry were defended by John Philpot Curran. They were found guilty in seventeen minutes. Lecky asserts that John Sheares was "a man of ability and great energy, a reckless and dangerous fanatic." On July 4, 1798, the day he was condemned, he denied with dignity and simplicity the main accusation which Lecky's history complacently repeats. He was accused of urging that no quarter be given to the enemy. "If any acquaintance of mine can believe that I could utter a recommendation of giving no quarter to a yielding and unoffending foe, it is not the death I am about to suffer I deserve: no punishment could be adequate to such a crime." He turned from this to urge the court to give his brother time to arrange his affairs. "In short, my lords, to spare your feelings and my own, I do not pray that I should not die," but that the brother be granted a short respite. The respite was not granted until next day, when the man who brought it arrived too late. James Sheares had already been hanged before the mob in Green Street, and his head cut off, and held up to the mob by the hangman, crying, "Behold the head of a traitor."

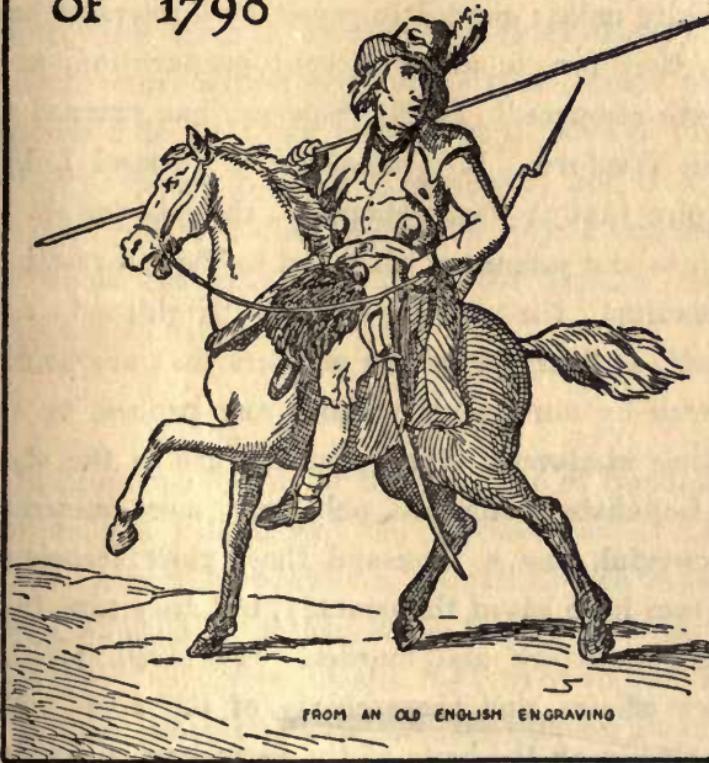
The concerted rising was destroyed by the arrests at the center, but it broke out in Ulster and Leinster in spite of everything. Henry Joy McCracken, a spirited friend of Wolfe Tone's, led the attack on Antrim. His force of 4000 was repulsed, he was captured, tried, and hanged in Belfast. His sister walked with him to the place of execution. Forty years later she said of her beloved brother that she would not have had him do otherwise. Henry Munroe in Down was defeated at Ballynahinch, and executed in Lisburn. In these Ulster battles the insurgents were mainly Presbyterian, led by men of substance who had long been connected with the United Irishmen. In Leinster there were scattered engagements in Kildare, Carlow, and Meath, and a massacre on the Curragh of insurgents about to surrender.

The war in Wexford was not premeditated. Lord Mountnorris had been busy securing oaths and protestations of allegiance before the arrival of the North Cork Militia. It was their activities, especially the burning of the Catholic chapel at Boulavogue, and Father John Murphy's house and twenty farm-houses near-by, which started the rising in Wexford.

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At Oulart Hill and Vinegar Hill the country people collected in huge numbers, aroused to extraordinary

An Irish Insurgent of 1798



FROM AN OLD ENGLISH ENGRAVING

passion and activity by the recent work of the yeomanry. Father John Murphy, Father Michael Murphy, Father Philip Roche, and Father Kearns led in

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a number of engagements which included the capture of Enniscorthy, Wexford, Gorey. At Vinegar Hill General Lake with 15,000 troops finally overcame the magnificently courageous but unorganized bodies of leaderless and badly armed insurgents.

“Under no military control, undisciplined, and practically unled; goaded to revolt by intolerable barbarity, they flew to arms, without preparation, as a desperate resource.” So Dr. Sigerson has summed up 1798 in Wexford. It is admitted in General Lake’s biography that it was, unhappily, the misconduct of the militia and yeomanry which led to the insurrection.

Cornwallis, the viceroy, was “frightened and ashamed” at “the numberless murders that are hourly committed by our people without any process or examination whatever. The yeomanry are in the style of the Loyalists in America, only much more numerous and powerful, and a thousand times more ferocious. These men have saved the country, but they now take the lead in rapine and murder. The Irish militia, with few officers, and those chiefly of the worst kind, follow closely on the heels of the yeomanry in murder and every kind of atrocity, and the Fencibles take a share, although much behindhand with the others. The

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feeble outrages, burnings, and murders which are still committed by the Rebels, serve to keep up the sanguinary disposition on our side; and as long as they furnish a pretext for our parties going in quest of them, I see no prospect of amendment.

“The conversation of the principal persons of the country all tend to encourage this system of blood, and the conversation even at my table, where you will suppose I do all I can to prevent it, always turns on hanging, shooting, burning, etc., etc., and if a priest has been put to death the greatest joy is expressed by the whole company. So much for Ireland and my wretched ‘situation.’”

12

In August, 1798, after the execution of Bond, Byrne, Neilson, and others, and the imprisonment of Thomas Addis Emmet and McNevin, a small French expedition landed at Killala in Mayo, under General Humbert. At Castlebar the crown troops that were so ruthless in Wexford celebrated their valor by running away from Humbert in a battle known as the “Races of Castlebar.” Lord Cornwallis with 15,000 men finally took Humbert’s surrender at Longford. Matthew Tone and Bartholo-

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mew Teeling, who had come with him, were executed, as well as five hundred captured Irishmen. The French soldiers were treated as prisoners of war.

In September another futile expedition came from France. It comprised 3000 men, with Wolfe Tone on board the *Hoche*. At the entrance to Lough Swilly, October 10, he was urged by his French associates to leave in their sloop. He absolutely refused. "Shall I leave the French to fight the battles of my country?" he asked. A bitter naval battle took place between the battleship *Hoche* and four British vessels. For six hours the *Hoche* fought, with Wolfe Tone commanding a battery and taking his part "like a lion."

The *Hoche* was eventually beaten and Tone was one of the prisoners of war. He was invited with the other French officers to breakfast with the Earl of Cavan. At table he was recognized by an old Trinity College mate, Sir George Hill, and by that gentleman he was handed over to the authorities. On November 10, he was put on trial before a court-martial.

He admitted his hostility. "From my earliest youth," he said to his judges, "I have regarded the connection between Ireland and Great Britain as the curse of the Irish nation, and felt convinced that while it lasted this country could never be free or happy.

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My mind has been confirmed in this opinion by the experience of every succeeding year, and the conclusions which I have drawn from every fact before my eyes."

He asked to be shot. He was refused. He was ordered to be hanged on November 12. On November 11 he cut his throat with a pen-knife. He lived till November 19.

Of few Irish leaders is there such a full personal memorial as Wolfe Tone has left in his autobiography. From this book, and from the history of his time, we can judge his character and his disposition, his philosophy and his practice, his hopes and dreams. In its personal vividness it is an alluring story. His love-story is one of the most charming ever recorded. His picture of Paris in 1796 has drawn warm admiration from so severe a critic as Lecky. But it is for the qualities of mind that Wolfe Tone brought to Irish strategy that he is most to be remembered. Wolfe Tone was not a sentimentalist or a theorist, neither was he a callous realist. He was a candid, critical, imaginative, and resolute man who set himself about the complicated and heroic task of freeing Ireland. He came nearer complete success than any other man in modern times.

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Barry O'Brien quotes one interesting witness. "Wolfe Tone," said the Duke of Wellington, "was a most extraordinary man, and his history is the most curious history of those times. With a hundred guineas in his pocket, unknown and unrecommended, he went to Paris in order to overturn the British government in Ireland. He asked for a large force, Lord Edward Fitzgerald for a small force. They listened to Tone."

With the death of Tone the insurrection of 1798 expired. "In a cause like this," he had said, "success is everything. Washington succeeded, and Kosciusko failed." But his tenacity, his clarity, his ardor, his courage, remained to inspire his countrymen. And it could never be forgotten that he had unselfishly and unreservedly espoused the cause of the people. With all his deep and fine seriousness he had, moreover, a touching simplicity. At thirty-three he wrote, "I will endeavor to keep myself as pure as I can, as to the means. As to the end, it is sacred—the liberty and independence of my country first, the establishment of my wife and our darling babies next, and last, I hope, a well-earned reputation."

He was thirty-five years old when he died.

CHAPTER IX

THE UNION AND THE REPEAL MOVEMENT

1

THE rebellion of '98 was at last suppressed," observes Lecky, "and the ministers determined to avail themselves of the opportunity to annihilate the Irish parliament."

One main reason for this annihilation, curiously enough, was the pressure of the non-represented Catholics. It was no longer pretended by English statesmen that the native Irish could be kept out of parliament forever. A century of servitude had been forced on them, but the French Revolution had stirred their numb political instincts, and the day of crass penal laws was at an end. To admit them fully, however, was to make parliament popular and national. The British or English governing class could not tolerate the idea of a national Ireland. Seriously lacking in foresight and obsessed with No Popery, the cabinet could imagine no better way to dispose of Ireland than to smother it in a union.

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Wolfe Tone had long seen these underlying realities. He knew, and the United Irishmen knew, that England had no policy except to submerge, if necessary destroy, the Irish nation. Hence he and his companions had worked hard to organize the Catholic Irish. Through Edmund Burke's son Richard (a "puppy"), John Keogh, the leading man of the Catholic commercial classes, and others, every effort had been made to stir the will of the masses. The Government, on its side, had played two clever counter-games. One was to keep the ascendancy of the Protestants an irritated issue, both for the Anglo-Irish and the Orangemen. The other was to buy off the more genteel and respectable Catholics. Among those "Shoneen" Catholics, Wolfe Tone had moved as a national diplomat, and with great success; but the failure of the insurrection of 1798 gave the Government the trump it was looking for.

That insurrection was a Government asset. It became an asset the moment it was given the aspect of mob violence. By removing the leaders at the last minute, having previously quartered the soldiers on the people to search for arms, torture, flog, rape, and burn houses and chapels, the right mood of insane desperation had not been so hard to produce in

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Leinster. Honest Abercromby was a hindrance, but Abercromby was deleted. "The fact is incontrovertible," Lord Holland said, "the people of Ireland were driven into resistance, which possibly they meditated before, by the free quarters and the excesses of the soldiers, which were such as are not permitted in civilized warfare, even in an enemy's country."

Nothing played better into the hands of the English than the fact that priests led the people in Wexford. Another valuable item was a sequence of atrocities in Wexford, on both sides, by which it appeared that a wicked Native Mutiny was threatening the Protestant ascendancy. In the medley of passions—passions of pride and property—which this phantasm excited, the Government triumphed heavily. The United Irishmen's controlled revolution had been turned into a brawl and a shambles. It had made Ireland a slaughterhouse. Fifty thousand, gentle and simple, had been killed. The Government, which had created a White Terror, retained the prestige of dominance.

But the struggle had forced England to shed one moral garment after another. It was now stripped to the sheer buff of brutality. The English executive in Dublin Castle had used the Anglo-Irish parliament as its bailiff. It had inflamed the feeling of ascendancy

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to a pitch that made Catholic emancipation unthinkable. The Irish “nation” as conceived by Grattan and as lovingly described by Judge Morris—“a free parliament, and a powerful landed gentry, the respected superiors of a contented peasantry”—was not likely to sprout out of the graves of Father John and Father Michael Murphy. The insurrection being well lost by the native Irish, it was necessary to twist this victory against the “independent” parliament.

So far the Ascendancy had traveled with the English. They looked on the “rebellion” as a piece of peasant devilishness. But this did not mean that they wanted parliamentary union with Britain. In Ireland there was no public opinion in favor of the Union.

2

The Presbyterians of Ulster had lost much of their fervor as United Irishmen, owing to the bitterness of the Orangemen, the enlisting of yeomanry, the “religious” atrocities in Wexford. But what was the use of ascendancy unless one had an Ascendancy parliament? “On this great question there was a perfect agreement between the more liberal Protestants who followed the banner of Grattan and Ponsonby, and the

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Orangemen who represented the fiercest and most intolerant form of Protestant ascendancy.” The Catholics, likewise, were unfavorable. Outside the bishops, the rising traders, and the gentry, the masses were once more huddled into political limbo, but their feeling was fixedly opposed. The legal profession, still mainly Protestant, was scathingly against the Union. Those who alone were ready to end Grattan’s parliament were the absentees, the English officials, and their political henchmen.

On their side, however, were all the resources of the state. The carrying of the Union was a question of marshaling resources. The soldiers employed by the Government during the insurrection now broke up meetings. The presenting of petitions was at first illegal. Castlereagh took with pleasure to the business of manufacturing loyal petitions, discharging men like Sir John Parnell who refused to pledge themselves for the Union. He saw the Presbyterians and held out a Government donation to them. At Maynooth in 1799 the four archbishops and six bishops “agreed,” as Lecky puts it, “to accept with gratitude the payment of the priests, and at the same time to grant the Government a right of veto over all future episcopal appointments as a guarantee of their loyalty.” Castle-

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reagh shrank from no promise or no connivance. With Cornwallis, the viceroy, to help him, "the whole patronage of the Government was steadily, profusely, and exclusively employed in its favor."

Cornwallis did not relish the job. As viceroy he was compelled to traffic with unwashed and shameless grafters, and he showed his "sterling splendor of character" by holding his nose with one hand as he bribed with the other. "The political jobbing of this country gets the better of me," he said. "It has ever been the wish of my life to avoid this dirty business, and I am now involved in it beyond all bearing." "I despise and hate myself every hour, for engaging in such dirty work, and am supported only by the reflection, that without an Union the British empire must be dissolved."

The bluff, hearty, honest Englishman is liable to such moods. Like the *Second Murderer* in "Richard III," Cornwallis was frequently attacked by the "holy humor." As the honest murderer lamented, "some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me . . . It makes a man a coward; a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; a man cannot swear, but it checks him! a man cannot lie with his neighbor's wife, but it detects him: 'tis a blushing shamefast spirit, that mutinies in a man's bosom; it fills one full of obstacles . . . "

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These obstacles, so commendable in a “frank, honorable, soldier-like” *Second Murderer* of Cornwallis’s type, did not affect Castlereagh. Castlereagh had no humors. He was Robert Stewart by name, afterward Lord Londonderry. He slew the parliament, as Lecky says, “with a quiet, businesslike composure; nor is there the slightest indication that it caused him a momentary uneasiness.” He was perfectly ready to use the coarse word “corruption.” He sent to Pitt for raw cash with which to bribe the Press. McKenna, the Catholic scribe, was a useful tool. Like a strong-framed fellow “that respects his reputation,” Castlereagh planned to drown the Anglo-Irish parliament in a malmsey-butt of bribery. A cool *First Murderer*, he had his high moral reason for the murder. It was left to Cornwallis to moan:

A bloody deed, and desperately despatch'd!
How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands
Of this most grievous murder.

It was indeed a bloody deed, but the filth of it was outspokenly excused on the grounds of imperialism.

As the measure advanced in the Anglo-Irish parliament, the Protestant “patriots” flung themselves in front of it like fanatics before Juggernaut. At first the wheels of the machine were clogged with these ardent

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lovers of legislative freedom. But more grease was applied. Twenty-eight fresh Irish peerages were bestowed on the kind of people who believed and stated that "on the Continent Rank is inestimable, and even at home it is no small addition." For £1,260,000, eighty rotten boroughs were bought out, and charged to the Irish national debt. More than sixty favorable votes were registered by new office-holders. Liberal annuities, to be charged against Ireland, were promised right and left. Grattan, dragged from his sick-bed, spoke for two hours against the slaying of his own creation. "The thing he proposes to buy is what cannot be sold—liberty." Petitions, especially from the North, at last were issued; twenty-seven counties and 107,000 signatures against, and 3000 signatures not against. But Dublin Castle, plus its favors, obtained 158 votes to 113 and overpowered Anglo-Ireland.

3

No whitewash has ever covered up the means by which the Union was carried. "The corruption," Lord Rosebery admits, "was black, hideous, horrible; revolting at any time, atrocious when it is remembered that it was a nation's birthright that was being sold"—and bought. As a former British premier, however,

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he defends it. He points out that "the purchase of that parliament was habitual and invariable." Was it not better, he asks with Castlereagh, once and for all to end it, than "to go on in the vile old way, hiring, haggling, jobbing, from one dirty day to another, from one miserable year to another?"

To transplant the legislature to England, rather than to transplant the executive to Ireland, was the masterly statesmanship of the Union. Rosebery explains it and excused it as a war measure. Napoleon threatened England. How was England to know that Ireland was "loyal?" No matter how loyal Anglo-Ireland might seem, the ghost of the conquered nation could at any moment arise. To England's statesmen "struggling in a great war, unity and simplicity of government were everything." Thus Pitt enforced on England and on a preoccupied British legislature the task of handling Ireland not as a partner-nation, but as a subject-nation. Pitt consecrated this imperial idea of Ireland a subject-nation, to be ruled in whatever way suited the game of British politics, working especially on the class and religious dissensions in Ireland.

This masterpiece of political genius was concocted under the influence of profound English snobbishness.

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It not only ignored the commercial interests of Anglo-Ireland, which had thrived under the parliament. It also patronized the Anglo-Irish and despised the native Irish. This condescension was, however, soon to be converted into bitter race animosity, under the provocative personality of Daniel O'Connell.

4

The act itself went into effect January 1, 1801. It united Great Britain and Ireland "for ever" as the United Kingdom; gave Ireland thirty-two peers in the house of lords, four of them churchmen and twenty-eight of them elected for life by all the Irish peers; fixed one hundred members as Ireland's permanent representation in the house of commons; solemnly and fundamentally joined the Irish Protestant Church with the English as "the Established Church of England and Ireland"; arranged a customs union; decided that Ireland contribute two-seventeenths of the common expenditure; that any excess of revenue should be applied on Ireland's national debt; that if Ireland's debt became as great as two-seventeenths of the English, the exchequers could be amalgamated and taxation

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made equal, subject to whatever remission Ireland's case required.

The Irish viceroy remained, with the separate exchequer, separate judiciary, and separate administration.

The administration continued to be definitely alienated from the native Irish all through the nineteenth century.

In 1802 Lord Redesdale, chancellor at £10,000 a year, declared that Ireland must be kept as a "garrisoned country." The administration became the "garrison." Of the viceroys, chief secretaries, and under-secretaries up to 1906, five out of 157 were Catholic and "about sixteen only in touch with Irish public opinion." So said Barry O'Brien in his detailed book on Dublin Castle. When he wrote in 1909, three of the seventeen high court judges, eight of the twenty-one county court judges, five of the thirty-seven county inspectors of the police, sixty-two of the 202 district inspectors, 1805 of the 5518 ordinary justices of the peace, and eight of the sixty-eight privy councilors were Catholic Irish. The rest were "garrison." However "well-meaning" the British Government became, it never became so well-meaning as to allow the native

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and nationalist Irish to have an influential share in their own Government.

5

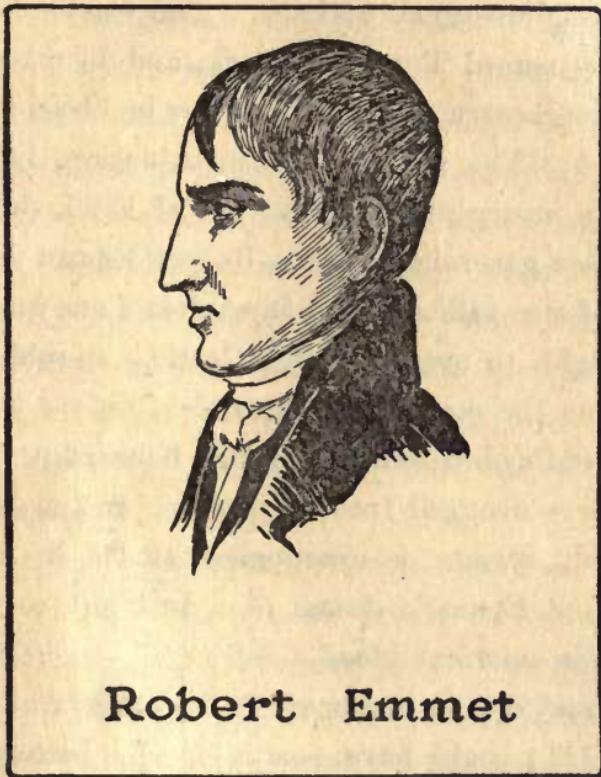
In the first somber years of the Union there came a flaming epilogue to 1798. Among the many Dublin professional men—Whitley Stokes, McNevin, Dowdall—who were devoted to Ireland, no family was so spirited as Dr. Emmet's. He was state physician to the vice-regal court, of English and Cromwellian stock, a man of swinging, original mind, who kept his household in Stephen's Green in a ferment of unconventional discussion. His able son Thomas Addis Emmet had been imprisoned in Scotland since 1798, but had been allowed to go to the Continent after peace was declared in 1801. Robert Emmet, born in 1778, entered Trinity College early. He was a warm friend of Thomas Moore, to whose cherubic appearance his own lean, dry, wiry person, with his pock-marked face, was in great contrast. It was typical of Trinity that in 1798 the Earl of Clare should have held an inquisition to rout out the United Irishmen—and typical of Robert Emmet that his protest brought his dismissal.

It was in this period that Moore wrote "Let Erin Remember the Days of Old," sung to an old Irish air

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which made young Emmet cry: "Oh that I were at the head of twenty thousand men marching to that air!"

In 1801 he went to Paris, meeting his brother later



Robert Emmet

in Brussels. There was talk of help in August, 1803. For three months, at the head of a small but absolutely reliable organization, he worked to collect men and munitions for a sudden movement to seize Dublin Castle, thus to paralyze the Government and to await a general

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rising. On July 16 in Patrick Street, Dublin, a gunpowder explosion, killing one man, was traced to a store full of pikes, blunderbusses, powder. This revealed fresh insurgent activity. The Castle had an Ulster spy named Turner at work, and Leonard McNally, "the incorruptible," but neither had been trusted by Emmet. The ill luck of the explosion, however, forced the insurgents to strike out of hand, July 23. In his green general's uniform, Robert Emmet and his handful of men sallied from Marshalsea Lane in golden evening light, to overpower the Castle. A rabble collected from the quays and slums, fast on the heels of Emmet's uniformed men; old Judge Kilwarden and his nephew were dragged from a carriage and murdered; the assault became a meaningless scuffle in narrow streets; and Emmet's dream of a brilliant coup was quenched in innocent blood.

He retreated from the brawl to his cottage at Rathfarnam. He could have escaped. His housekeeper, Anne Devlin, was tortured by the soldiers but refused to betray him, and he remained hidden. But his love for Sarah Curran gave a clue: he was arrested in September. He offered to plead guilty to keep from implicating the daughter of the great lawyer, was instead trapped by a letter he had sent to her, and had the

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anguish of seeing their love revealed. John Philpot Curran angrily threw up his brief, and Dublin Castle rejoiced to have their spy McNally become his attorney. All through the trial the highest English officials studied Emmet's secrets as Emmet entrusted them to his counsel. But this charming example of state chivalry (disclosed in detail in "The Viceroy's Post-Bag" by Michael MacDonagh) was of no personal consequence. Robert Emmet was guilty. The jury found him guilty without retiring. For twelve hours on his feet, he then delivered that immortal speech, one hour long, which ended, "When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written."

The effect of Emmet's oration, delivered in round, clear, cadent tones, was so sincere and moving that even Norbury, the "hanging judge," is reported to have wept. His counsel, McNally, kissed him as he was taken away. He was hanged the next afternoon.

"My friends," he said from the gallows in Thomas Street, "I die in peace, with sentiments of universal love and kindness toward all men."

Emmet was twenty-five years old. His execution took place September 20, 1803. His comportment from the beginning was that of a rapt and disinterested

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spirit, whose love of Ireland burned like a flame. But his light did not pierce the grayness after the Union. The provost of Trinity was more in the spirit of the times when, writing to the viceroy the morning after Kilwarden's nephew was murdered, he intimated faithfully, humbly, and obediently that he had two sons in orders who'd like to be kept in mind, since "the horrid murders of last night have left a living vacant." Dogs did not lap blood in the gutters more quickly than did these gentlemen lick up patronage.

6

At this time Daniel O'Connell was twenty-eight years of age. His was an extremely different spirit from that of Robert Emmet, and though he detested the Union, and had said so as a young barrister in his first public meeting, his whole temperament and training were opposed to violence. From St. Omer, where he was a schoolboy in France, he learned to hate the French Revolution.

He was reared in the bland airs of Kerry, in the midst of the O'Connell clan. His father and mother cared enough about devolving property legally to be married in a Protestant church as well as in a Catholic chapel, but a strong tribal tradition showed itself in

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his being placed with foster-parents in a cottage till he was four. He talked Gaelic from infancy. He was brought up close to the people, close to their folk-ways and legends and passions, and close to their life of the soil. His education in France gave him social unction—the unction of an abbé—and as he matured he became very much the chieftain; lavish, hospitable, generous, paternalistic. But what made him most different from the “intellectuals” of the United Irishmen was his genial knowledge of country-people, his flashing human intuition, his ability to read them, to lead them—to lead them astray. He was the supreme example of the jury-trial lawyer. He was agile in mind, even more agile in emotion, enormous in vitality, in vivacity, and in perseverance. A big man in height and frame, he had a ruddy face which grew heavy in age, a small snub nose, singularly lovely blue eyes. His voice was golden, of great range, sweetness, and carrying power, with deep notes and that ability to sustain a flight without apparent effort, as of a mighty eagle soaring on level wing. In the incredible repeal meetings of 1843, which were attended by crowds as great as 250,000 people, O’Connell’s voice could naturally not be heard to their reverential limits, but few human beings have ever exercised such power of

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oratory. He conjured with the people of three provinces. He swayed multitudes with the caress of a syllable.

This extraordinary emotional power was soon employed by O'Connell in a cause he sincerely loved. It was the kind of cause that suited his nature—a concrete, simple, obvious reform within strict legal and constitutional limits to which he could devote his strenuous, combative disposition without enduring for a moment the acute loneliness of a departure from the mob. This was the cause of Catholic emancipation, or seats in parliament for Catholics.

7

The exclusion of Catholics from the British house of commons was the result of double-dealing. When Pitt and Castlereagh were touting the Union, they conveyed to the Catholic archbishops a definite understanding that the Union would mean Catholic emancipation, the commutation of the tithes, and state payment of priests. "When the devil was well, the devil a saint was he." With the Union safely delivered, "Pitt was under the strongest moral obligation to do the utmost in his power to carry the measure," says Lecky. "It is, however, quite plain that Pitt, having obtained

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the service he required from the Catholics, had very little wish to incur for their sakes any serious difficulty he could possibly avoid."

This "definite betrayal of the Catholic cause" was aided by George III's insanity. George went off his head when Pitt broached the subject, and Pitt, after a noble resignation, came back to office on the old terms. He took King George's attitude as final, and pledged himself to silence. This pledge was congenial, and he kept it, but it drove the Catholic hierarchy from nibbling at loyalty to a position in which, under O'Connell's leadership, they defied even the Vatican on the subject of the veto, and rejected forever any idea of being paid by the state.

O'Connell was thirty-six when he came to the front with the Catholic Committee in 1810. The extreme subdivision of the land, owing to the demand for corn as well as meat during the Napoleonic War, created an abnormal condition of high rents, high prices, and swollen prosperity. It was not till the collapse of rents and wages and the beginning of evictions, after 1815 and peace, that the Catholic agitation became keen. Up to 1820, the year he died, Grattan had striven for Catholic emancipation (with the veto) in the house of commons. His death cleared the way for

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O'Connell. In 1823, working through the Maynooth-educated, national-minded priests, he organized the Catholic Association, began collecting the peasants' pennies as Catholic Rent, and linked with the measure



Daniel O'Connell

of emancipation a promise of justice, legal aid, and advocacy to the exploited tenant class. As the foremost Catholic barrister, earning £9000 a year, O'Connell had colossal legal prestige. He spent himself lavishly on his combined work as Liberator and Tri-

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bune. The Government, through the dry and anti-pathetic Peel, had now determined to hold Ireland by the quiet means of an imperial constabulary and paid magistrates. Its land policy was landlord-made. It facilitated cheap ejectments, in case of non-payment of rack-rent. The Government had also quietly stimulated Orangeism and converted the Presbyterian Church to great loyalty by giving it an annual grant. In 1826 an election in Waterford saw the tenants break away from the landlords. In 1828, a parliamentary vacancy occurring in Clare, O'Connell decided to bring his agitation to a head by the bold method of seeking election to a parliament in which it was not legal for a Catholic to sit. His opponent, Vesey Fitzgerald, was a respected liberal, who had the support of the gentry to a man. But O'Connell's speeches and pamphlets, the new Catholic press and the aroused priests had at last turned abject submissiveness of the feudal peasant voter. The tenants defied their landlords and elected O'Connell. This more than anything else secured emancipation in 1829.

With this movement for emancipation, O'Connell had begun the first popular constitutional agitation in Ireland. It was, of course, an easy issue on which to appeal to Irish pride. It concerned the Catholic gentry,

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the peasant voters, the priests themselves. Because it concerned the priests, O'Connell was able to seize the one existing nation-wide, popular machinery for creating and binding national opinion, combining it with his aid to oppressed tenants, parish by parish. And because of O'Connell's personality, his ready wit, his brusque and scathing humor, his broad brush-strokes and primary colors, he gave Ireland what it had not possessed for two hundred years—a national chieftain. His was chieftaincy in a cause that at first was utterly simple, racial, and religious. It enabled O'Connell to forget he had ever joined the free-masons or admired Godwin or agreed with Mary Wollstonecraft. He drank deep of enthusiasm, applause, unanimity. Like many big men with little noses, he was something of a physiological conservative, and he became confirmed very early in his great career in his need for a tremendous volume of popular support. He was like a vast balloon, that sagged and flapped ingloriously until pumped from outside. But on some elemental issues he was self-supporting. He hated negro slavery, and sent back to the Southern States some large subscriptions from slaveholders. He had stubborn conservative opinions on the subject of trade-unions, and a decided belief in the sacred rights of property. These

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he declared even when inexpedient. And he had a rough, satiric genius, which he employed from the start to affront and outrage the Ascendancy.

He and his handful of supporters were eventually seated in the house of commons.

8

The British house of commons was no place for an Irish agitator. It had already developed "that tone of gentlemanly moderation, that well-bred pungent raillery which is so characteristic of the English parliament, and of successful British ministers." It did not suit O'Connell's temper or mission to meet the mood of this house. He could not flute politely about questions of national subordination, enslavement, or starvation. "The best club in the world" did not squirm at dishonesty: they squirmed at the mention of it. O'Connell called Lord Alvanley "a bloated buffoon" and Peel "Orange Peel," and said of one statesman that he was "a lineal descendant of the impenitent thief" and of another that he was "a fellow whose visage would frighten a horse from his oats." The house left its answer to hired bullies. The well-bred raillery of the "London Times" was to retort that O'Connell was a rancorous, foul-mouthed ruffian. England named him

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the Big Beggarman. And, on achieving Catholic emancipation, he was blackballed by a ladylike English Catholic Club. It was, of course, the natural fate of an agitator. A wise statesman did not exactly wag his tail when he saw O'Connell approaching with a string and a can.

O'Connell's immoderation and exuberance were trifles. His serious faults were deeper than those of taste. He was a national leader but not a national architect. On some questions like the poor law system he thought widely. He grasped the horror of Irish famine in ample time to give England a policy and a lead. But among the trees of politics he did not see the national wood. He had no education policy except to reject the queen's colleges as "godless" colleges. He was quite ready to give up his native tongue on utilitarian grounds. He advocated state-aided emigration. He doted on Victoria as "our darling queen." He required and yet denounced the use of force. He actually contemplated the Irish as West Britons, provided they gained certain reforms. As between Grattan's parliament and federal home rule he had no spiritual compass. He was, in these matters, an opportunist. With all sail set and a high heart, he caught the breeze of Catholic emancipation and carried the freight to port. Where he was

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lost was in the campaign that followed, running before the infinitely stronger wind of repeal. In advocating the repeal of the Union O'Connell collected those streams of feeling with which conquest and confiscation still flooded the Irish air. But he had disowned the use of force. He was permanently "constitutional." All England needed to do to defeat him was to become illegal and unconstitutional herself, which she did.

9

Before O'Connell entered on the agitation for the repeal of the Union, he gave the British parliament a fair trial. One hand had taken away the vote from the poorest class of Irishmen at the time that the other extended Catholic emancipation, but even if the Government conspicuously declined to make O'Connell a K. C., to which distinction he was entitled, he and his clan soon made an alliance with the Whigs. O'Connell associated himself with the 1832 Reform Bill, and when Melbourne returned to power in 1835 an Irish agitator was for the first time consulted as to Irish appointments in Irish government.

It was, on the whole, a period of democratic tendency, with the state ready to give Ireland those means of popular uplift of which England thought it stood in

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need. The ideas of the time were rational, and it seemed sensible to bestow on the Irish a primary school system on the English model, prohibiting Irish language, Irish literature, Irish history, and all mention of religion. Following this scheme—which aimed to make the Irish rural population read, write, and cipher—there was devised a poor-law system and a dispensary-doctor system. The main feature of the poor-law system was to be the erection of one hundred vast barracks, each capable of holding 1000 paupers, scattered through the country. In these great storage-warehouses, called “workhouses,” the idle poor were to be lodged in permanent idleness, branded as paupers, and grouped in pauper uniforms according to sex. Another reform, much desired by the rising Catholic mercantile class, was popular municipal government. Till 1840 no Irish Catholic had ever been admitted to the Dublin Corporation. So important did the concession seem that O’Connell himself became the first lord mayor of Dublin, in the interval before the repeal agitation.

But the poor law, the education scheme, municipal reform, Catholic emancipation, did not go deep into either of the real issues—the festering issues created by conquest and confiscation. To undo confiscation, which had dispossessed the Irish clansmen, was the som-

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ber, sleepless desire of the starving masses of the Irish people. This desire was put in words by James Fintan Lalor some years later: "The cry of Irish nationality, and the cry against the Union, are of little use; they have no real hold on the minds of the people; what the peasantry want is the land for themselves; this cry must be combined with the others; the British Government can be only attacked successfully through an attack on the Irish landed gentry." It was, however, not as an attack on the gentry but as an attack on the established church that the fight was first waged.

One of the quite barefaced acts of the Anglo-Irish parliament had been to exempt pasture-lands from tithes. This threw an extra burden on the Catholic cottiers. The cost of maintaining the Protestant established church was, in fact, saddled in the South "exclusively on the poorest of the Catholic tenantry."

This was an exaction that aroused a peculiarly fierce anger in the otherwise suppressed and impotent Catholic peasant. He was the victim of a land system which he could not throw off, dependent for his very life on landlords—often absentee—who gave him no vested interest, raised the rent because of improvements, charged what rent they pleased, and evicted at will. In this unsound and inhuman caste system the

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tenant felt himself bewilderingly entangled, with the law against him, the police against him, the military against him, the agent against him—every one except the priest and the “counselor.” But in the case of tithes he did not feel so helpless or so bewildered. He could grasp the dastardly injustice of his being compelled to support the church of the Ascendancy, and on this issue he was prepared to do battle.

Peel’s Protestant constabulary did what they could from 1831 on, to protect the tithe-collectors. In 1832 there was a massacre in Waterford, and 242 homicides within the year. The next years saw hideous episodes. A Scottish under-secretary, Thomas Drummond, then arrived on the scene. He was a sympathetic liberal. He made up his mind that the Castle might at last dispense with the amiable custom of raising the British flag to celebrate the Battle of the Boyne. He strove to give the Catholics a part in the administration, to admit them to the royal Irish constabulary, to cut off the secret stimulus to Orangeism which had been supplied by Government policy since the Union, to admonish magistrates not to counsel massacre, and to remind landlords that “property has its duties as well as its rights.”

By 1838 the British Government acted. It passed

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a bill making the tithe part of the rent, and reducing both the exasperation and the extortion.

10

But this left the land system where it was. In 1836 a royal commission revealed the utter rottenness of a depressed, neglected, exploited, non-educated people. Out of work and in distress, there were 585,000 men with 1,800,000 dependents, making 2,385,000 in all. The average weekly wage had sunk to about two shillings six pence a week. Lord John Russell thought that if these 2,385,000 gradually moved into workhouses they could live in a "superior degree of comfort." But the native Irish did not show any inclination to be stored in workhouses, on two meals a day, with men segregated in one yard, women in another, the children in another. "Confinement of any kind is more irksome to an Irishman than it is even to an Englishman," said the commissioner, "and hence, although the Irishman may be lodged, fed, and clothed in a workhouse better than he could lodge, feed, and clothe himself by his own exertions, he will yet never enter the workhouse unless driven there by actual necessity."

The population in 1841 was 8,175,000, with fourteen workhouses just completed. And the population con-

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tinued to rise. In this period O'Connell began his agitation for the repeal of the Union. While his "monster meetings" were in progress, and Father Mathew's great temperance campaign, the people gathered steadily and mutely for an economic disaster which English statesmanship looked upon as deplorably "inevitable." For ten years before the great artificial famine the house of commons mooned about it. They watched Ireland in fascinated apprehension, as contractors might watch fresh arrivals climb to an unsafe platform, already overloaded. But the O'Connell formula was constitutionality. "No human revolution," he declared, "is worth the effusion of one single drop of human blood." He went ahead organizing the people for larger and larger assemblies and meetings, until more than 500,000 were believed to be assembling for a Sunday demonstration at Clontarf in October, 1843. On the Saturday before it Peel decided to meet constitutional agitation and "moral force" with unconstitutional prohibition and a few guns. He "proclaimed" the meeting. O'Connell had either to risk an Amritsar or to admit that the Government could always treat peaceful assembly as criminal. He yielded, and his submission ended the constitutional movement for repeal.

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The economic crash came in 1846. Out of 8,500,000 nearly 6,000,000 were still living in the kind of hovels that Petty had described in their "nasty brutishness" in the seventeenth century. Their food was potatoes. When the potato crop failed in 1845, and again in 1846, nothing but the landlords and the Government and private charity stood between them and death from hunger. The Government behaved with sodden lethargy and stupidity. Daniel O'Connell, now over seventy, a broken man, dragged himself in 1847 across to the house of commons. In a voice so feeble as to be virtually inaudible he said to them: "Ireland is in your hands, in your power. If you do not save her she cannot save herself. I solemnly call on you to recollect that I predict with the sincerest conviction that a quarter of her population will perish unless you come to her relief." It was a plutocratic body but not without a dramatic sense. O'Connell's voice came almost from the grave. They were impressed, moved, reverential, sorry for the poor old boy. But their god was Property. The Irish, powerless to legislate, counseled by the priests and by O'Connell to trust the Government, allowed this food to leave Ireland.

The old leader was powerless. Already afflicted by softening of the brain, he left Ireland in 1847 to travel

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to Rome, where he was regarded as perhaps the greatest living Catholic layman. He was so ill that he halted at Genoa, and died there May, 1847, his mind almost completely crumbled. His last journey has the twilight sadness of the Flight of the Earls. It was more sad, because he had left the Irish nation forever. His body was returned to be buried in Glasnevin: his heart was sent to Rome.

CHAPTER X

THE LAND WAR

1

THE O'Connell formula in this period, that "no human revolution is worth the effusion of one single drop of human blood," had never appealed to Young Ireland, the successors to the men of 1798. In 1841 this ardent group, comprising Thomas Davis, Charles Gavan Duffy, and John O'Hagan at first, had begun a movement of which "The Nation" was their organ.

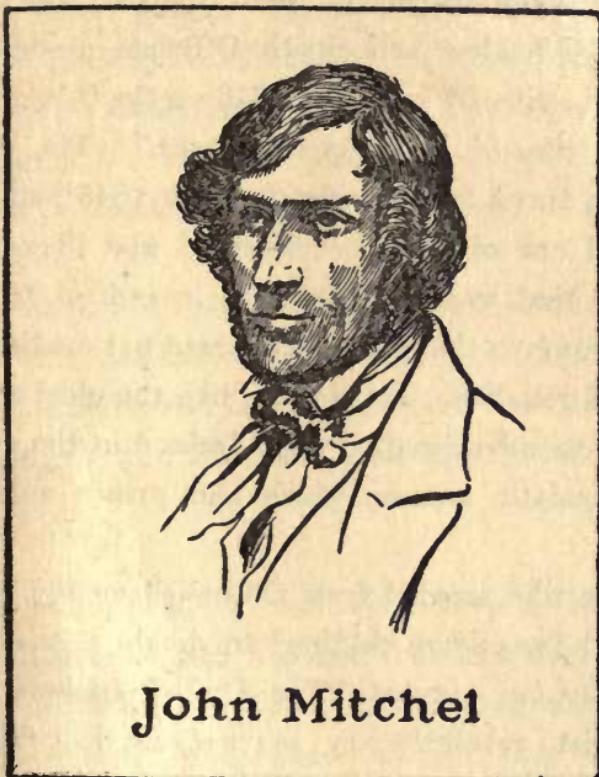
They were not mob orators or revivalists. They were not agitators. They were not social radicals. They saw that Ireland was intellectually infantile, that the job of public thinking for Ireland could never be done by the stolid, selfish English parliament, and must be done by Irishmen, in Ireland. These men loved Ireland. The respected and understood the Gaelic period, they saw that Ireland's present state was due to the wreckage of savage conquest and greedy confis-

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cation. They knew that the removal of this wreckage would only be accomplished by an Ireland with brain and muscle, a cool, deliberate, and disciplined Ireland. Dan O'Connell they rather despised. He was warm, fluent, optimistic, grandiose, uncritical. They were tired of him and his theatrical promises, his great glistening green foliage and his barrenness of fruit. As against O'Connell these men of Young Ireland attuned themselves to the new world of republican Europe of '48. They went to Lamartine. They knew German history and sympathized with the German movement. James Clarence Mangan, a poetic genius, influenced by the current enthusiasm, translated from the German. The iron will of this group was John Mitchel, son of an Ulster Presbyterian clergyman, grandfather of the late John Mitchel, Mayor of New York. He wrote not with ink but with corrosive. He was mordant, grim, eloquent, unbending. He saw the scabbard of liberalism that concealed the blade of England's imperialism, and he had contempt for "old Dan." He was, above everything, a nationalist. He wrote a passionate "Life of Hugh O'Neill." He wrote a "History of Ireland." He did not want acts of parliament on the terms of Irish subjection. He wanted, like Wolfe Tone, to resurrect the Irish nation.

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“The Nation” was the mouthpiece of this desire. In a few years this brilliant sixpenny paper had achieved a circulation of 10,000 a week. It disliked and



John Mitchel

criticized O’Connell’s apparent belief that Ireland was a mere annex to Irish Catholicism. It did not believe in boycotting the queen’s colleges. They were necessary for higher education, a good in itself. It disliked his pro-royalism and his slobbering loyalty. It

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had no great sympathy with him when, in spite of his loyalty, he was tried for conspiracy by a packed jury after the break-up of the repeal meetings.

With John Mitchel in their counsels, and Thomas Francis Meagher and Smith O'Brien, an open split had come with O'Connell in 1846 on the theoretic question of the use of "physical force." The death of Thomas Davis from scarlet fever in 1845 had already removed one of the most elevated and liberating influences that was ever exercised in radical Irish politics. But even this wise and tolerant nationalist O'Connell had rebuffed. He sought, like the old paternalist he was, to subordinate Young Ireland in the overbearing, dogmatic manner which had grown on him for years.

Those who seceded from O'Connell on the policy of physical force were destined to divide a second time. John Mitchel started "The United Irishman" as a separatist, revolutionary journal, leaving "The Nation" to those who thought the advocacy of force less expedient.

Mitchel's outspoken enmity to England led to his arrest in March, 1848. O'Brien and Meagher, taken at the same time, were released after the jury disagreed. Mitchel was convicted of treason-felony. He was sent

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to Tasmania on that voyage of pained separation which gave the world his "Jail Journal." The discharge of O'Brien and Meagher restored the lesser men to their plans for direct action. The famine, however, had been another Cromwell, confiscating life rather than land. There was no revolutionary pulse in a stricken Ireland. In August a few hundred men followed Smith O'Brien in an insignificant attack on a small body of police at Ballingarry.

This display of physical force was so futile that O'Brien and Meagher were not executed. Ireland was helpless. The British Government rested on its laurels. The Young Ireland movement went underground.

2

The famine, 1846-49, was not a mere accident. It was the climax of political and economic degradation. Up to that time the modern Irish had protested and appealed against misgovernment, but they had not really revolted. They had not killed their oppressors and seized control of their destinies. Now their quiescence and docility escorted them to death. Daniel O'Connell had told the native Irish that they were the finest peasantry on earth. A Catholic bishop had rolled his eyes to heaven because the good creatures

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had "bravely paid their rent." John O'Connell, the Protector's son, had said: "I thank God I live among a people who would rather die of hunger than defraud the landlords of their rent!" (Why, asked Michael Davitt, was he not kicked into "the sink of the Liffey?") The Young Irelanders had toyed brightly with the name of revolution, but there was no revolution in Ireland. It had the glazed eye of starvation, the cough of death.

A cry was wrung from Lord John Russell: "We have made Ireland—I speak it deliberately—we have made it the most degraded and the most miserable country in the world . . . All the world is crying shame upon us; but we are equally callous to our ignominy, and to the results of our misgovernment."

This English politician out of office, and desiring office, did not distract the Irish nation from its hideous catastrophe. Ireland sat in the center of its 729,000 dead, musing on the counsel of landlords and statesmen and bishops. A nation that had abounded in life lost its buoyancy. A nation's laughter died within.

When the people knew in 1846 that the potato crop was again a failure, they saw their doom. A kind of stupor, A. M. Sullivan said, "fell upon the people, con-

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trasting remarkably with the fierce energy put forth a year before. It was no uncommon sight to see the cottier and his little family seated on the garden fence gazing all day long in moody silence at the blighted plot that had been their last hope. Nothing could rouse them. You spoke; they answered not. You tried to cheer them; they shook their heads. I never saw so sudden and so terrible a transformation."

The British parliament could not, and did not, feel its responsibility. It was a parliament of landlords and bankers, comfortable men. It said: This famine is creating a multitude of beggars; we must firmly discourage beggars. It did everything it could to regulate and discipline the people who came in suppliant thousands for relief. The Government required that men in the tremor of death should labor to build useless roads, useless piers, useless mounds, because to give something for nothing was to pauperize, and to build useful public works might interfere with "competition." Government did not supervise the "coffin ships" which bore away the famine refugees because that, also, might interfere with competition. One vessel taking 200 steerage passengers from Sligo to Liverpool packed its victims so close in the hold that seventy-two were trampled

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or suffocated to death before the short voyage was over. That was one incident of hundreds of incidents in the episode of 1846-49.

The landed gentry in some cases slaved to help the people. So did many volunteers. So did many charitable English persons. But in 1846 alone 50,000 families—quarter of a million people—were evicted for not paying their rents. Their huts were leveled to the earth and they were left to die. During those hunger years there was bountiful food in sight of the famine victims. During 1846-49 the English imported from Ireland 572,485 head of cattle; 839,118 sheep; 699,021 pigs; 2,532,839 quarters of oats; 1,821,091 hundredweights of oatmeal; 455,256 quarters of wheat; 1,494,852 hundredweights of wheatmeal. The Irish peasants ate grass. They ate seaweed. They ate the rotting potatoes. In the midst of plenty, at the door of the wealthiest nation in the world, 729,033 victims died—more than the British Empire lost in the four years of the World War. Each death was a preventable death. Each death was due to causes over which mankind has control.

3

The failure of England to prevent or avert the famine was the beginning of acute public thinking in

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modern Ireland. Of the million Irish who were wrenched from their country in that period a great number were filled with hatred of the British Government and the Anglo-Irish landlord; a perceptible number were also filled with contempt for Irishmen themselves. The craven spirit of the people, their ignorance, their apathy, their despair, generated a fierce and permanent anger in the manlier Irishmen. Thousands upon thousands had needlessly perished from starvation in a period when nearly £50,000,000 worth of available foodstuff had left the rich fields of Ireland. This fact nerved intelligent men to the land war that was to follow.

As to England, the famine seemed an act of God, or else the purging of overburdened nature. Only at nightmare moments, seldom permitted, did it appear credible that England had originated, enforced, and protected a fatal land system. The more insolent Englishman was ready, like the "London Times," to speak of the tragedy in terms of racial hatred and contempt: "The Celt goes to yield to the Saxon. This island of one hundred and sixty harbors, with its fertile soil, with noble rivers and beautiful lakes, with fertile mines and riches of every kind, is being cleared quietly for the interests and luxury of humanity." This vicious

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tone was not, however, the tone of the more educated Englishman.

He saw the famine, however, in terms of class. He felt quite clear that Ireland, like England itself, was mainly inhabited by "the lower orders of mankind." He felt that the "democracy," as it was called, was the tedious problem of the upper class, and that both in England and in Ireland it was primarily important that this dangerous democracy be kept in its place. The extension of the suffrage, the development of education, the multiplication of public utilities and services—these were, on the whole, very debatable and risky reforms. What one desired, in England as well as in Ireland, was the right moral outlook on the part of the people. One sought a loyal and devoted yeomanry, a God-fearing and obedient and dutiful people, a people that went in for no nonsense like trade-unions or combination, that respected its superiors, revered its church, loved its gracious sovereign, and knew its place. In this mood the feudal upper class inspected the lower class. The tragedy of Ireland was that the Irish people failed to be (1) dutiful, and (2) a sturdy English yeomanry.

But this aristocratic landlord attitude was not universal. The governing class was almost strong

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enough, a few years later, to swing England for the Southern States in the American Civil War. The aristocracy and its parasites, full of class prejudice, frankly saw Lincoln as a baboon or gorilla. Even Gladstone, on the eve of liberalism, favored the South. But with the growing industrialism of England a new public opinion had also begun to grow: the middle class did not share essentially feudal sympathies. John Bright was to stand like a rock for the North. And the middle class joined him. It was prosperous, sober, practical, peace-loving, tending toward the humane and philanthropic, and attracting toward itself some of the gentlemanly, chivalrous representatives of the older order.

It was Protestant in its religion, and prone to link the greatness of England with the greatness of Protestantism. It was, in general, good-natured and complacent. It regarded the Continent of Europe as a queer and wicked place. It already said "Paris" with a wink, and "Rome" with a shudder. The apprehensions of the Middle Ages were, in a sense, being recapitulated by the emerging Saxon. But in John Stuart Mill and the lesser utilitarians there was a resolute attempt to rise above prejudice, and to see life in a clear, even if a chilly, light.

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4

By this rising liberalism of England, Ireland scarcely ever was considered in its national aspect. It was now a fixed fact in the liberal English mind that Ireland was physically and historically part of the United Kingdom, indissolubly wedded. It was also a fixed fact that the native Irish were distressful and troublesome. But, granting the difficulty of the Irish temperament, the English liberal felt that something ought to be conceded to the Irish in time. How much? This conundrum was strictly concerned with the "concession" of self-government. That Ireland should want separation from England was already unthinkable. Neither liberal nor conservative politician mentioned separation except as a diabolical and half-savage idea, generated only in the brains of treason-criminals. As the empire grew wealthier and acquired more territory, this notion of the wickedness of separatism steadily intensified.

Separatism, indeed, was in no man's mind immediately after the famine. The prudent Irish program, as represented by Cardinal Cullen, was to attempt, without O'Connell's personality, to continue the O'Connell compromise in the house of commons. In

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complete disagreement with this program were Gavan Duffy, the Young Irisher; George Henry Moore, a landlord whose son became famous as George Moore the novelist; and Sharman Crawford and Frederic Lucas. These men knew that Ireland could gain nothing by sending to London a handful of Whig parliamentarians. Such loose representatives could too easily be bought off with a judgeship or a job at the Castle. The radicals realized that in this emergency Ireland needed a parliamentary party consciously independent of all opposition, and behind it a tenants' organization in Ireland.

The tenants' organization was especially needed because, after the famine, an Encumbered Estates Act had been passed to enable landlords to sell out. By this process, it was hoped, a number of unencumbered Scottish and English proprietors could start anew. They did start anew with three years of "clearance." Nearly 200,000 families were uprooted, compelled to go to the workhouse or to leave Ireland. These inhuman clearances, even more than the artificial famine, filled the Irish peasants with indignation. But their secret society of Ribbonmen was banned by the church, and within a few years Duffy's league was captured by the conservatives, who became known in parliament as the

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Pope's Brass Band. "Three-fourths of the representatives elected by the people," said Duffy, "assented in silence [to this extermination policy] and three-fourths of the bishops, born and bred among them, sanctioned the perfidy."

Cardinal Cullen was not fortunate in his parliamentary party. Sadleir and Keogh, the leaders of it, could not stand temptation. Of their group, "one was a forger, and committed suicide; the other was a forger, and was expelled from parliament; the third was a swindler, and fled; and the fourth was made a judge."

Gavan Duffy sailed for Australia in 1855. "There is no more hope for Ireland," he said of his period, "than for a corpse on the dissecting-table."

5

Ireland, in reality, was not like a corpse. It was like the dumb victim of a shattering accident. But after that accident its weakness was not so great as it seemed. Though the total number of living Irish had been reduced to possibly eight million, the Irish were now implanted in Canada, Australia, England, and above all the United States. They did not lose their desire to help Ireland. The agony of emigration was in many cases only sentimental. It transferred to the

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broad shoulders of the United States the burden of illiteracy and technical backwardness which had been created by bad English government. By the shifting of this burden the Irish were the gainers. In a few years the children of 1848 were grown, and they were men with more material resources, a better smattering of education, and a livelier will than any group of native Irishmen had possessed for many years. Their will, indeed, often outran their sagacity, yet it was only by the combination of Irish and American Irish that the liberation of the Irish tenant was at last to be secured. The Irish and Anglo-Irish landlords resisted land agitation even more than the British Government. The whetstone of the land movement was supplied by the Fenians. This society sprang from a small group called together in New York as the Emmet Monument Association, in 1854. The men most prominent in this group were '48 insurgents—John O'Mahony, Michael Doheny, and others. And they joined, through James Stephens, with the I. R. B., or Irish Republican Brotherhood, which was founded in Dublin in 1858.

James Stephens, born in Kilkenny in 1828, had escaped to France after the fiasco of '48. There he at first supported himself by the grim labor of translating Dickens into French. The great lesson which the

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failure of Young Ireland had impressed on this energetic, handsome, arrogant man was the weakness of intellectual middle-class propaganda. He made up his mind, according to Michael Davitt, that he would rely solely on the "common people" in building up the I. R. B. He spent 1858 and 1859 scouring Ireland to recruit the young men for this secret society, to which America was to supply arms. The work attracted the more adventurous and the wilder temperaments. O'Donovan Rossa of Skibbereen was one of his aides. John O'Leary and Thomas Clarke Luby were two of his intellectuals. A sensational impetus, fostered by Stephens, was given in the funeral of a '48 man, Terence Bellew McManus, conducted from San Francisco to Dublin as a national memorial. In the United States, Stephens placed the Fenian Brotherhood "in proper auxiliary relation with the home organization." During the early stages of the Civil War he was busy among the Irish-American regiments working at the front and having "free access both to the Federal and Confederate forces." He returned to Ireland, and, as Michael Davitt caustically remarks, "founded a newspaper to be a mouthpiece for a secret organization."

It was Stephens's belief that he could promise a rising. He had his connections all over the United States,

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in South America, in Paris, London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester. He had a great number of Fenians in the British army. "The Irish People," run by O'Leary and Luby, was filled with "wicked diatribes" such as: "I am free to admit that Thuggism has never produced the death by starvation of two millions of people, and is therefore, compared to Irish aristocracy, a harmless institution." But "The Irish People" gave Dublin Castle the excuse it needed. By swooping down on it in good time the Government upset the Fenian game. It filled Ireland with troops. It arrested Stephens. Through Fenian aid Stephens made a dramatic escape and promised a rising in 1866, but the English, unusually alert, squelched every move or even sign of insurgent activity. So far as Ireland was concerned, the Government was crowned with success. And yet Fenianism made a startling impression elsewhere.

6

This was in England. In September, 1867, a prison-van containing two leading Fenians was ambushed on its way through Manchester, and the prisoners enabled to escape. A police sergeant, refusing to give up the keys, was killed by the single shot that was fired to blow open the lock. Five youths in the party were

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seized. Three of them—Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien—were found guilty of murder. They met their sentence with the cry, "God save Ireland!" There was much public protest before they were hanged. "The trial," said T. P. O'Connor, "took place amid a hurricane of public passion and panic." Its effect was greatly deepened by an attempt in December to free Ricard O'Sullivan Burke from Clerkenwell Prison, in London. The idea in this criminally reckless exploit was to blow a hole in the prison-wall with a barrel of gunpowder. The barrel was misplaced, however, and twelve poor people were killed and more than one hundred injured. The Irish famine made far less impression on the bulk of middle-class England than the Clerkenwell explosions and the executions of Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien. These two affairs, both occurring in 1867, stirred a new England. It was, in part, the England of no-popery, race hatred, and race contempt. But it was also an England politically virginal. With its great industrial connections in Scotland and Wales, it was, on the whole, quite different from the old-fashioned country which had always supported the lord, the bishop, and the squire. Fed by the same newspapers and looking to the same parliament, it still beheld in Fenianism a problem which it could not quite understand. It felt

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astonishment at the outrages, and indignation and fear. It also felt curiosity. Politically-minded men woke up to this change. They discovered that one barrel of gunpowder exploded inside the city of London does infallibly promote thinking. John Bright shook England. He declared that he did not consider the execution of the “Manchester Martyrs” just. Not so long afterward he said of Ireland in general: “Force is no remedy.” And Gladstone not so long afterward made the tremendous admission that there was more in Fenianism than Irish wickedness.

This carefully guarded utterance came in 1869. In 1868 Lord Stanley, standing closer to the Fenian outbursts, had confessed “the painful, the dangerous, the discreditable state of things that unhappily continues to exist in Ireland.” English public opinion, it is clear, was at last bestirring itself, after centuries of that stone-age policy which is more politely termed imperialism.

What did Gladstone see when he himself rubbed his eyes and woke up, in 1868?

The policy of England-in-Ireland since 1801 had been suppressive, except in Melbourne’s time. Peel, a capable, stiff administrator, had substituted paid

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magistrates and an imperial constabulary for unreliable and irregular military forces. By this means Dublin Castle had been given eyes and ears everywhere. A complete espionage system enabled the Government to control explosive nationalism: the insurrections of 1848 and 1867 had been instantly curbed. But the skill of the Government in paralyzing national feeling could only be compared to the skill of a guard who keeps a prisoner in manacles. The triumph of the Government was simply to illustrate the unsuccessful paroxysms of Ireland attempting to escape. And the insurrections of 1803, 1848, 1867, had to be accompanied by stories of tithe war, Ribbonmen, Orange disturbances, famines, and vast clearances. The legend of the so-called union was one which mocked every pretense of consent:

- 1800-01. Insurrection Act, Suspension of Habeas Corpus, Martial Law.
- 1803. Insurrection Act.
- 1804. Habeas Corpus Suspended.
- 1807-10. Insurrection Act, Martial Law, and Habeas Corpus Suspended.
- 1814. Habeas Corpus Suspended.
- 1814-18. Insurrection Act.
- 1822-24. Habeas Corpus Suspended, Insurrection Act.
- 1825-28. Act Suppressing Catholic Association.
- 1830. Arms Act.
- 1831-32. Stanley's Arms Act.
- 1832. Arms and Gunpowder Act.
- 1833. Suppression of Disturbance.
- 1834. Disturbance Amended.
- 1834. Arms and Gunpowder Act.

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- 1835. Public Peace Act.
- 1836. Arms Act.
- 1838. Arms Act.
- 1839. Unlawful Oaths Act.
- 1840. Arms Act.
- 1841. Outrages Act.
- 1841. Arms Act.
- 1843. Arms Act.
- 1843. Act Consolidating Coercion Acts.
- 1844. Unlawful Oaths Act.
- 1845. Constabulary Enlargement.
- 1845. Unlawful Oaths Act.
- 1846. Constabulary Enlargement.
- 1847. Crime and Outrage.
- 1848-49. Habeas Corpus Suspension, Crime and Outrage, Removal of Arms, Treason amendment.
- 1850-55. Crime and Outrage.
- 1856-64. Peace Preservation Act.
- 1866-68. Habeas Corpus Suspension.

These triumphs of government under the Union, listed by Michael Davitt and Barry O'Brien, show the continuance of coercion. And the Coercion Acts were by no means improperly named. "Many of them abolished trial by jury, some of them established martial law; transportation, flogging, death, were the ordinary sentences." (T. P. O'Connor.) Daniel O'Connell said: "I have known instances where men have been nearly flogged to death." The whole ludicrous and hideous panorama simply illustrated Dean Swift's text of 1720: "In reason all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery: but in fact eleven men well armed will certainly subdue one single man in his shirt."

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The counterpart of this picture of suppression is Davitt's list of remedial land legislation. Of the twenty-three bills introduced from 1829 to 1858, none was passed.

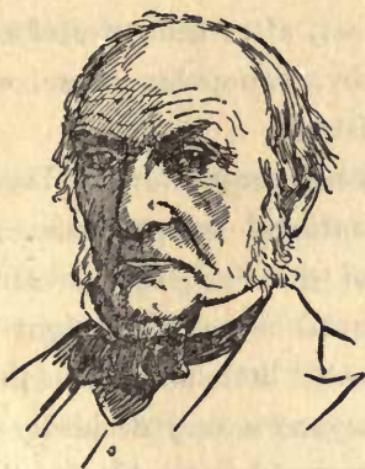
8

What did this mean? It meant, when Gladstone looked at it with the reverberation of Clerkenwell in his ears, that British government in Ireland had never become civilized, that the Irish resented and hated it, that the Union was a failure. It meant, moreover, that John Bright's words in 1849 were true: "When law refuses its duty; when government denies the right of the people; when competition is so fierce for the little land which the monopolists grant to cultivation in Ireland; when, in fact, millions are scrambling for the potato—these people are driven back from law, and from the usages of civilization, to that which is termed the law of nature, and if not the strongest, the laws of the vindictive; and in this case the people of Ireland believe, to my certain knowledge, that it is only by these acts of vengeance, periodically committed, that they can hold in suspense the arm of the proprietor, of the landlord, and the agent, who, in too many cases, would, if he dared, exterminate them. Don't let us disguise it from ourselves; there is a war between land-

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lord and tenant—a war as fierce and relentless as though it were carried on by force of arms."

Were the native Irish perverse to make it war? Never, until Gladstone came to power, was any toler-



William E. Gladstone

able alternative offered to these Irish. They were invited, indeed, to think of themselves as English. They were given an English established church, English school-books in the "national" schools, an English queen and English loyalty. But the fact that they

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were not West Britons resulted in an *impasse* between the administration, the legislature, the landlord garrison, and themselves. The native Irish had no option except to resist or to fight, until W. E. Gladstone rose up in the house of commons.

The fact that an English statesman of Gladstone's caliber had at last, after centuries of evasion, spoken about this shabby, unpopular cause, was a turning-point in Irish history.

Gladstone was not pro-national. He had no idea of giving Ireland national independence. He knew virtually nothing of the Gaelic past. He never set his foot in Ireland until he was sixty-eight years old, and then his visit "lasted little more than three weeks, and did not extend beyond a very decidedly English pale." Though forty years old at the time of the famine, that event had made no real impression on him, and in 1853 he himself blithely began the overtaxation of Ireland. This "fiscal iniquity," which was exposed by a Liberal commission in 1896, was part of his "carnal satisfaction at abundant revenue." But with these limitations and qualifications, the great fact remains about Gladstone that he had turned on Ireland his capacious, ominous, cavernous political gaze.

What he saw was not a sick nationality, for all his

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Italian sympathies. What he chose to see, in the first instance, was merely a large Catholic community with a Protestant church established over it, a large Catholic community without a university, and a large Catholic community with a bad land system. What he undertook to tackle first was the established church. It fell at the first grapple.

9

The established church had easily survived the tithe war, in which police, Lancers, Highlanders, and artillery had on occasion been necessary to seize a single cow that no one would afterward buy. But the establishment could not withstand any rational assault from an English statesman with backing. In 1861 there were 5,800,000 people in Ireland. Of these only 690,000 were Protestants. It was the Catholics, in the main, who were forced to support the church. One of the great, and of course conscientious, purposes of the establishment had been to convert the papists. To this their own pennies were applied. But even in the famine time, when "bread and Protestantism were offered to the starving in the same hand," as Locker-Lampson puts it, the converts were not worth counting, or having. The prosperity of the established

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church had not, however, been seriously affected. For 1400 benefices it had, during the tithe war, an income of £600,000 a year. For twenty-two overpaid bishops its income amounted to the vast sum of £150,000 a year. This abnormality could not survive serious political inspection. The Orangemen, whose clergymen had received an annual grant, objected to disestablishment. The Rev. Mr. Flanagan declared, "If they ever dare to lay unholy hands upon the church, 200,000 Orangemen will tell them it shall never be." The disestablishment went through quite without trouble. The property of the church, mainly confiscated land, was worth fourteen million pounds. The vested interests of the church were all respected, and capital was left over for land-purchase, rent-arrears, and various other humane provisions: £1,000,000 was eventually devoted to intermediate or secondary education.

10

Once Gladstone began to bring Ireland into liberal focus he had his work cut out for him. He was told that he was destroying the constitution. He reminded his hearers that eight times within his own recollection the constitution had been wholly ruined and destroyed. He realized, in truth, that if the constitution was to be

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saved, it could only be saved by tackling this question of Ireland. Fifteen years before he even murmured home rule Gladstone honestly faced the English aspect of Ireland: "The state of Ireland after seven hundred years of our tutelage is in my opinion so long as it continues an intolerable disgrace, and a danger so absolutely transcending all others, that I call it the only real danger of the noble empire of the queen." So, in 1870, he told Lord Granville.

His conviction was, in great degree, the result of Fenianism. But England itself had to have a much larger dose of Fenianism before it would wake up. Gladstone's first Land Bill was almost as hopeless a straddle as his Irish University Bill. This, however, was certain: He no longer disguised to himself the cardinal fact that the state of Ireland was the "ultimate result of our misgovernment."

The state of Ireland, in reality, was economically and socially rotten. Those who saw land simply as property and who looked on English government mainly as a device to protect English property in Ireland could never understand the unhealthy condition of Ireland. They asked: Why can't the Irish look on land tenure as a simple case of contract, the tenant taking his lease and the landlord taking his rent? The

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unreasonableness of the Irish appeared clear to thousands of well-meaning Englishmen. Gladstone had to take his pointer in hand. He had to explain to his own cabinet, bit by bit, that Ireland had never come to accept the landlord, especially the absentee landlord, as the owner of the land. It was the tenants, the cultivators, who had themselves reclaimed the swamp, dug the drain, hauled the manure, built the wall, raised the house. The land to them was their sole means of vital production, and they, the rude peasants, had given the land its "working value." They looked on the landlord in most cases as an alien usurper. In the best case they saw in him only a part-proprietor, a man entitled to receive rent but not entitled to anything more. The transfer of the land from one tenant to another was, in the cultivators' view, a transfer involving the improvements. And the tenants set their hearts on three things: fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale. Only with these guarantees could they be secure against eviction, famine, enslavement. And no matter how many imperial laws and how many imperial police and troops, how many Arms Acts and Coercion Acts, were to girdle the landlord, the war for their *Magna Charta* must go irresistibly on. In this war, as the Irish peasants saw it, they fought with a worse

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enemy in the rear than in front. If the alien parliament, the alien constabulary, the alien judge, threatened the advance of the tenant, he knew that behind him was the bottomless pit of famine. He was not, in any case, becoming a millionaire out of his occupation. It was all he could do to support himself on potatoes, skim milk, perhaps American bacon and American flour, in the simplest, the ugliest, the meanest, of houses. The feudal aristocrats against whom he went into combat, and the new mercantile proprietors, had a somewhat higher standard of living. The disproportion of his sacrifices, against the lurid background of his history, made the Irish tenant unconquerable once he became organized.

11

While he was still fighting instinctively against the machines of the law which the landlord set in motion, a curious development was taking place in the political field. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century the Protestant Anglo-Irishman had been slowly and surely driven into protest against English misgovernment. Swift, Grattan, and Flood were not Irishmen; they were the sons of English clerks and officials in Ireland. But in precisely the same way that the colonists

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in America had rebelled against arrogant privilege, these Anglo-Irish rebelled against it in Ireland. The spirit of 1782 was the spirit of Washington and Franklin, except that the Anglo-Irish colonists held on to the "connection" because of the inimical native Irish.

Ever since that revolt of the Anglo-Irish, two contrary processes had been working: (1) the process of weaving the native Irish into the "connection" with Britain; (2) the process of weaving the Anglo-Irish into the policy of separation. The emphasis in the first case was on the British constitution and the need of a new constitution granting autonomy or self-government. In the second case the emphasis was on Irish nationality. The behavior of England had never driven Grattan completely into the Irish nationality. Excellent administrators like Thomas Drummond understood nationality but advocated home rule, and O'Connell himself had no real desire except for self-government.

The Irish Catholics, it is true, had no monopoly of national or separatist spirit. Before 1798 the Ulster Presbyterians—Henry Joy McCracken, Russell, Orr—were republicans first of all, but Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, were Protestant Irish nationalists. So, in 1848, the cause of nation-

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ality was uncompromisingly urged by the son of an Ulster Presbyterian clergyman, John Mitchel; by the son of a Welsh Protestant, Thomas Davis; by men of non-Gaelic name like Kickham and Stephens. The fact remained, however, that the desire for home rule flourished in many Anglo-Irishmen who had no separatist feeling. And now, under the leadership of an Ulster Protestant, the son of a clergyman, another drive was to be made in the direction of self-government.

This extremely amiable and gifted Ulsterman, Isaac Butt, had once debated in favor of the Union against O'Connell. But when Gladstone had disestablished the church, in contempt of the Union, Butt and a group of irate Protestant conservatives met in Dublin in 1870 and propounded the theory that "the true remedy for the evils of Ireland is the establishment of an Irish parliament with full control over our domestic affairs."

A Trinity College professor suggested the name Home Rule for this venture, and so Home Rule was launched. Its immediate popularity in Ireland meant nothing, however, to liberal England. "Can any sensible man, can any rational man," asked Gladstone in withering tones next year, "suppose that at this time of day, in this condition of the world, we are going to

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disintegrate the great capital institutions of the country for the purpose of making ourselves ridiculous in the sight of all mankind, and crippling any power we possess for bestowing benefits, through legislation, on the country to which we belong?"

The rottenness of electioneering in Ireland, under a franchise which polled about 90,000 voters out of 5,500,000 people, made any attempt at a constitutional movement absurd. But, in spite of an illiteracy in Ireland that in 1895 still affected 40,000 voters out of a total of 220,000, the Ballot Act of 1870 enabled the Irish tenant at last to vote "without the fear of eviction, with the attendant risks of hunger, exile or death." (T. P. O'Connor.) In thus vindicating his belief in "public liberty," Gladstone paved the way for the colossal popular agitation which engrossed the rest of his life.

Isaac Butt did not arouse Ireland on Home Rule. He was a man of penetrating mind and high integrity, but he was one of those advocates of self-government who never learn to govern the self. He was a large, lax, limpid man, extremely good-natured and easy-going. He was everybody's friend, incapable of making a budget either of his time or his money, and not even able to keep two steps in front of the debtor's jail.

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In the election of 1874 he enlisted A. M. Sullivan, Joseph Biggar, Richard Power, and some other nationalists, but he also enlisted a number of genteel, conservative squires who went to the imperial parliament mainly for its social distinction.

12

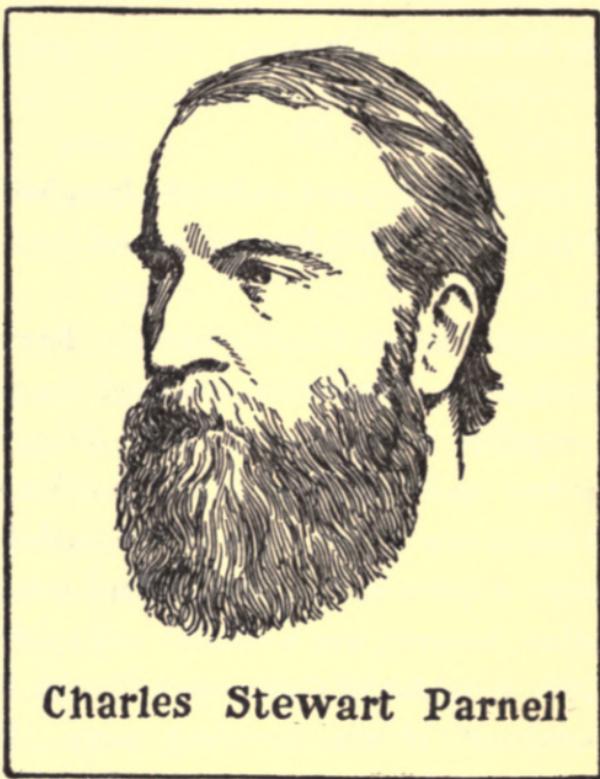
It was in this party, and under the lymphatic leadership of Isaac Butt, that Parnell entered the house of commons.

Like Robert Emmet, Charles Stewart Parnell was the descendant of a Cromwellian. Parnell the poet and the incorruptible Irish chancellor, Sir John Parnell, were his two most distinguished antecedents. His father, John Henry Parnell, was of the landed gentry in Wicklow, a quiet and undistinguished man. Parnell's mother, however, was a decided and spirited personality, the daughter of Commodore Charles Stewart, "Old Ironsides," of the American navy. Parnell's father met her on a tour in America in 1834, and brought her back to Ireland. She bore him eleven children, her son Charles Stewart Parnell being born in 1846.

When Parnell entered the house of commons he was not yet thirty. He was in no sense a traditional Irish-

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man. He was tall, of slim American build, unassuming and reticent in manner, and stately in bearing. He had gone to Cambridge University, and he had the



Charles Stewart Parnell

accent and the style of the Anglo-Irish gentleman. No eye discerned in him a popular leader, or anything but a young squire turned Home Ruler.

Parnell's public career was short. He died at forty-five years of age, in 1891. But curtailed as it was,

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and little effort as he made to court personal favor, he did more to change the fortunes of the entire Irish nation than any of its previous popular leaders.

He found the native Irish in the grip of the feudal system. He knew that the brain which controlled the feudal hand was in England, in the British cabinet. By the policy which he developed, and the inflexible will with which he applied his policy, Parnell operated on British politics as no Irishman had operated before him. He saw Britain and British methods with the eye of a military engineer. As a cold realist he forged the weapon he needed out of the Irish parliamentary party. His use of that weapon was military. He changed the house of commons from a pompous court-room in which Ireland was periodically pronounced guilty into a battle-field on which Ireland put Britain on the defensive. By his program of attack he convinced Englishmen, as nothing else had done since Elizabeth, that Ireland was an "inveterate wound in the flank" of their country. He made that wound bite and rankle. He educated Britain in its pretension, its sluggish complacency, its insolence, its condescension. His attack was contemptuous and unfriendly. By repeated moral abrasion, he forced Tory and Liberal into realizing the moral fraud of the British position in

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Ireland. Before he was thirty-five the heads of both parties had to consider doing business with him. Both Tories and Liberals sought an alliance. When, in the end, Gladstone made Home Rule his own, Parnell moderated his parliamentary tone. But out of his strategy, before he died, the land war was brought to a reasonable armistice and the Union was upset forever.

13

In politics, as in other forms of warfare, the general alone cannot win. Parnell profited by the situation in England, in America, in Ireland. Gladstone he called the "grand old spider" and he knew how slippery and sinuous, how plausible and casuistic, was that eminent exponent of Liberalism. Yet, with the full knowledge that Gladstone had a mind with as many entrances and exits as a summer hotel, that he never uttered a moral sentiment without taking up a political collection, the fact remained for Ireland that Gladstone had moved from the Tory valuation of life to the half-mystical, half-deceived, Liberal valuation, in which a policy of "trust" enabled him to propose to Englishmen a program of power. To keep such a program before the British public, with its Tory German queen, its bilious civil service, its choleric colonels, its slow

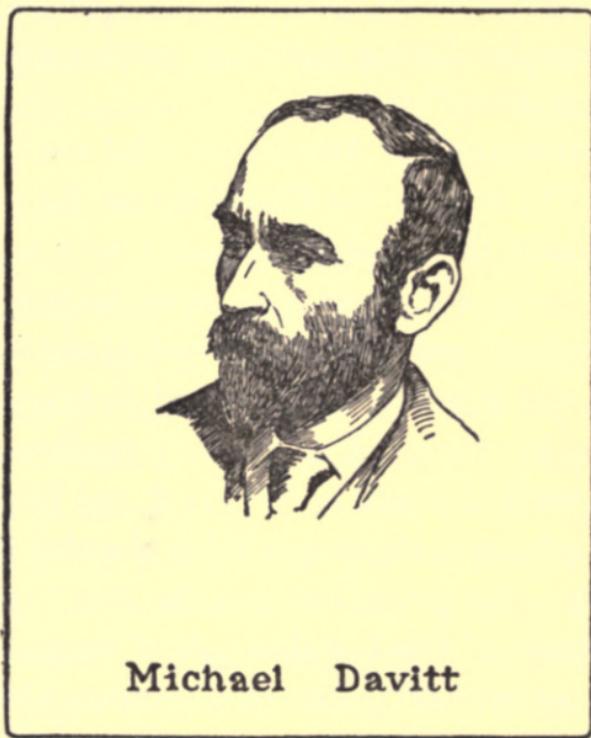
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omnivorous banking class, its thumpingly dull squires, its anemic clerks, its imperialistic Union Jackals, was in itself a work of moral genius. And while Gladstone had to be watched, because there was a lie in the compromise of Liberalism, the mere fact that he was an Englishman inculcating morals in politics was an advantage to Parnell.▼

The advantage that America provided was quite different. The Irish in the United States did not want to overwhelm the house of commons with argument. Most of them wanted to blow it up with dynamite, Irish members and all. They had themselves been wronged and injured. They desired to injure, if not to wrong, in return. A great many Englishmen were slain by word of mouth in New York and Boston and Chicago saloons in the decade which preceded Parnell's leadership. But young Irishmen like John Devoy were contemptuous of this brainless talk of vengeance, this "rat-hole conspiracy." Like the Americans who sought to undermine the Austrian army during the World War, John Devoy had done his work for Ireland among the poverty-recruits of the British army, and he had helped to make England uncertain whether Irishmen in uniform would kill Irishmen not in uniform as promptly as they should. The prospect that spread before Ire-

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land in 1875 was not, however, one of armed resistance. The fiasco of 1866-67 ended that hope. What John Devoy believed, after Parnell had developed his policy, was that he could lend Parnell just that kind of non-



Michael Davitt

contractual assistance which Parnell was later to lend to Gladstone. It was the intelligent coöordination of constitutional and illegal agitation. But it needed no treaty, no document, no conspiracy. All it needed was confidence on the part of the supreme council for

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Ireland in the genuine national tendency of Parnell's parliamentary activity. (The Fenians called themselves the National party.) Once it was clear that Parnell was at least dead in earnest about landlordism, John Devoy was with him; and while the supreme council did not follow Devoy, the local Fenians did.

14

The man who made the bridge between Parnell and the American Fenians was born, strangely enough, the same year as Parnell himself, and, like Parnell, he was to spend most of his youth in England. But while Parnell was reared in a country-house and lived in England with tutors, Michael Davitt came into the world in a hut in Mayo, and when eviction swept his father and mother out of their holding they "had to beg through the streets of England for bread." They settled, at last, in Lancashire. Michael Davitt went to work as a child in a cotton-mill. Before he was twelve his right arm was mangled and had to be amputated. He became a messenger in the local post-office. Later, he found himself at home among fellow-immigrants, and, while Parnell was still a student at Magdalene College, he was carrying a rifle in the attack on Chester Castle, 1867.

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In 1870 he was tried for shipping arms to Ireland, and sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude. After serving seven years and seven months he was released from Dartmoor. He was a pre-Celt of the Connacht type—tall, dark, swarthy, with a marked combination of fire and gentleness. He and his fellow-Fenians—McCarthy, Bryan, and Chambers—were received in Ireland not as ticket-of-leave convicts but as political prisoners. Parnell asked them to breakfast the morning after their arrival in Dublin. On that morning one of them—McCarthy—had barely reached Parnell's room at Morrison's Hotel before he collapsed and died. The fact that many churches refused his body shows the strong clerical feeling against Fenianism that still remained.

Davitt was much impressed by the young parliamentary leader. Possibly, he says in "The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland," one is very impressionable on coming back to the world after years in prison. "It is like coming into the sunshine and among the flowers after a lifetime in the depths of a coal-pit. Making due allowance for this exceptional state of mind, Mr. Parnell appeared to me to be much superior to his recommendations. He struck me at once with the power and directness of his personality. There was

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the proud, resolute bearing of a man of conscious strength, with a mission, wearing no affectation, but without a hint of Celtic character or a trait of its racial enthusiasm. ‘An Englishman of the strongest type, moulded for an Irish purpose,’ was my thought. . . . He expressed, as I am sure he felt, a genuine sympathy for those who had undergone the ordeal of penal servitude, with its nameless indignities and privations. ‘I would not face it,’ I recollect him saying. ‘It would drive me mad. Solitude and silence are too horrible to think of. I would kill a warder and get hanged. . . .’ ”

Still a Fenian, Davitt had reflected much in prison on the defects of secret societies based on quantity rather than quality. He had made up his mind that Ireland needed, first of all, an organization of men of separatist principles, whether moral-force men or not, and then immediate issues kept alive before the people —“A war against landlordism for a root settlement of the land question, the better housing of laborers, doing away with the need for workhouses, and capturing the municipalities for nationalism.”

This policy he discussed with Parnell on a railroad journey to Lancashire. To the public program Parnell assented. As to becoming a Fenian, he answered,

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“slowly but clearly: ‘No, I will never join any political secret society, oathbound or otherwise. It would hinder and not assist me in my work in Ireland.’”

Perhaps from this, perhaps from other things, Davitt concluded that “Mr. Parnell never went in thought or in act a revolutionary inch, as an Irish nationalist, further than Henry Grattan.”

15

It was in 1878 that Davitt reached America. He found John Devoy entering “loyally into the most difficult task of inducing men who had hitherto opposed all moral-force politics to give support to the new line of action.” Devoy “brought most of the leading members of the Clan-na-Gael round to his views, and the work done by him in this way, and in line with a corresponding labor by Patrick Ford of the ‘Irish World’ and John Boyle O'Reilly of the ‘Boston Pilot’ . . . paved the way for the success of Mr. Parnell’s and Mr. Dillon’s tour a year subsequently, and to the starting of the auxiliary Land League of America in 1880.”

It was on this visit that Davitt became a friend and disciple of Henry George. Later he tried to launch Ireland into the enterprise of land nationalization. It was an idea for which neither British nor Irish parlia-

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mentarians were prepared; and Davitt yielded to the counter-policy of peasant-proprietorship.

By organizing America for Parnellism, Davitt gave an immense resource in money and sympathy to the land war. Now he returned to build up the support of Ireland.

During the period that Davitt was in prison Parnell had looked over the house of commons with his engineering eye. He had no romantic notions as to this stuffy, muddle-headed assemblage of political pawns. And he had no towering respect for English public policy. He had learned from his fiery mother the patriotic American version of the English. "We have no objection to the English people; we object to the English dominion. We would not have it in America. Why should they have it in Ireland? Why are the English so jealous of any outside interference in their affairs, and why are they always trying to dip their fingers in everybody's pie? The English are hated in America for their grasping policy; they are hated everywhere for their arrogance, greed, cant, and hypocrisy. No country must have national rights or national aspirations but England." So Parnell's mother, who was Early American.

It was, perhaps, in the memory of such prejudices

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that Parnell, with Joseph Biggar, the little Belfast pork-butcher, began the famous game of obstruction in the house of commons. This game was a retaliation on the pooh-poohing of Irish questions. While Isaac Butt squirmed and agonized, the strange team of Parnell and Biggar would take turns at wasting hours of parliamentary time. But their sabotage was not merely mechanical. They probed the British soul. They asked awkward questions about recent attempts to destroy the independence of the Transvaal. They forced the Government into an enraged defense of flogging in the army. They irritated, goaded, and outraged those comfortable gentlemen who for years had yawned at Isaac Butt.

16

Meanwhile, among the small tenants especially in the West of Ireland, the blind resentment of the land system was becoming acute. The days of the sailing-vessel were over. Steamships were already bringing colonial and American produce into the British market. This promoted the clearance policy, by which large tracts of good land were turned into grazing ranches. The occupiers of these tracts were being automatically forced on poor land at rack-rents.

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Davitt was much closer to economic realities than Parnell. He saw that this misery could only be ended if Irishmen grasped an economic policy and learned to organize. He went back to the people in the West of Ireland. He met farmers, talked with provision-dealers, stood with the men at work in the bogs or reclaiming the stony fields. He saw unmistakably that a storm was gathering. There would be a famine again in 1879; that was likely. Lord Leitrim and his two body-guards had been killed in 1878. Leitrim happened to be a brutal man who took his tenants' daughters by force, but his assassination was a sign of rising passion. The problem for Davitt was to control and direct this passion for an economic and political end.

The neighborhood mind, as usual, was muddled or incoherent. But in disturbed Mayo he found a case made to his hand. A priest, executor for his brother, had decided to evict the tenants whose rack-rents were in arrears. The local press was silent: it would not help the tenants against a priest. But the local Fenians had no such scruples. They were Catholics, but they did not regard Irish politics as a legitimate piece of church property. They knew that the priest, in affairs of this world, was often quite as ruthless and dangerous as the British Empire itself, and that over

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and over again he had lined up with the British Empire to fight against Ireland. Many Irishmen did not forget the famous edict that "hell was not hot enough or eternity long enough" for Fenians; Father Burke's landlordism was not an entirely unwelcome object-lesson to the seven thousand Mayo men who attended the meeting.

17

The success of this meeting was a people's success. It immediately brought the Catholic church into action. Dr. MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam, made a brave attempt to compel orderly agitation, even though the people might endure famine in 1879 as they had endured it in 1846. He declared in an open letter that "night patrolling, acts and words of menace, with arms in hand, the profanation of what is most sacred in religion—all the result of lawless and occult association," was impious and disorderly, and must be stopped. He did not explain the degree of educated public opinion and organized self-government which the oppressed must control before they can dispense with terrorism. He simply stated that "unhallowed combinations lead invariably to disaster," and said nothing about the hallowed servility which had equally led to disaster in 1846. He condemned a meeting at Westport which

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Parnell had been asked to attend. But to Parnell, so used to the British lion, the Lion of the Fold of Judah was not so terrifying. "Will I attend? Certainly. Why not? I have promised to be there, and you can count upon my keeping that promise." For a Protestant leader, Davitt felt, it was the most courageously wise act of his political career. He came to Westport. He told the tenants: "A fair rent is a rent the tenant can reasonably pay according to the times, but in bad times a tenant cannot be expected to pay as much as he did in good times three or four years ago. If such rents are insisted upon, a repetition of the scenes of 1847 and 1848 will be witnessed. Now, what must we do in order to induce the landlords to see the position? You must show them that you intend to hold a firm grip of your homesteads and lands. You must not allow yourselves to be dispossessed as your fathers were dispossessed in 1847."

Parnell understood the landlord's position. He was a landlord. There was reasonableness in his speech, and clear confidence, but that phrase, "hold a firm grip of your homesteads," was meat and drink to the Irish tenant. It was repeated a hundred times a day, like St. Patrick's prayers in the sleet and the rain. It became the core of the Land League. It stood between

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Ireland and famine. The opportunism of the church, not unnatural considering the back door which was always open to English diplomats at the Vatican, had at last been met by a man of independent mind. Parnell was not like the O'Connell of 1847, an inaudible old man tearfully pleading to rows of relaxed stomachs in the house of commons. Parnell pointed at the stomach of the house of commons a steel blade to whose language that organ defers. Five thousand tenants marched into Tuam to give the archbishop a sample of their earnestness. And to the Gaels of Mayo came a Norman-Irishman, John Dillon; a Dano-Irishman, A. J. Kettle; a Cambro-Irishman, Matthew Harris, all giving heart to the feudal slaves of Ireland.

There were many priests, sons of the soil, to see at once that the abject submission of the great famine could never be tolerated. Within a few years, indeed, the church itself was using these whole-hearted men to capture the land agitation.

18

The Land League, formed in 1879, had four extremists among its seven officers—Davitt, Biggar, Brennan, and Egan. It was obvious policy for Parnell to visit America, which he reached early in 1880. He was well

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received by the Irish, addressed Congress in a speech that reposed sedately on the wisdom of John Stuart Mill, found himself called a liar by the New York "Nation," and was asked to withdraw his banking account by the discreet Morgans. His attitude was definite regarding landlordism. "The men who till the soil," he said, "will also own it." But he linked self-government with land reform. "When we have undermined English misgovernment we have paved the way for Ireland to take her place among the nations of the earth. And let us not forget that that is the ultimate goal at which all we Irishmen aim. None of us, whether we be in America or in Ireland, or wherever we may be, will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England."

These words were spoken not only to the Clan-na-Gael, but to America, to the self-governing colonies, to Gladstone. No one knew their significance better than the Liberal leader. More than seventy years of age, nearly forty years older than Parnell, he saw beyond obvious disturbances to the "New Departure" in the Irish struggle. He realized that with the land war there was now opening a war on the British Empire. He realized that his prime antagonist was Parnell. So far as the land went, Gladstone saw that the Irish ten-

ants must prove irresistible. He was prepared to sacrifice the landlords, as he had sacrificed the established church. In 1881, after a year of assassination and coercion, he carried fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale. But he had vision. He perceived plainly that the Land League was in the hands of men bent on something besides economic revolution, and he made up his mind that he could only destroy that revolution by competing with Parnell for Ireland. On his side in this tremendous duel was, above everything, his vast moral prestige. He could, emancipated as he was from Tory prejudices, convince the world that Parnell was a lawless, a seditious agitator and he himself the broad, sane, large-minded friend of Ireland. To convey this idea to sentimental middle-class Britain would be simple. He had racial suspicion on tap when the Irish were too active, and moral fervor on tap when Britain was too slow. But the real fight, as he saw in 1881, was to cut off Parnell from his base of supplies, to sever him from the parliamentary party and to sever him from the Irish people. By "severe and strong denunciation" of Parnellism he hoped to arouse the Catholic Church and the timid Irish. By coming forward with local government he hoped to draw off the Home Rulers. "All we can do," he said in 1881, re-

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garding the Parnellites, "is to turn more and more the masses of their followers, to fine them down by good laws and good government," and sweeten them by "judicious releases from prison."

To kill Irish separatism by alternate coercion and conciliation was the Liberal policy of Gladstone. As a foil to Gladstone's sweetness and light Parnell could count on the invaluable stupidity of the landlords. Gladstone did not fear an armed insurrection. "The strength of this country is tenfold what is required for such a purpose." But, as he confessed, "a social revolution is a very different matter." And with inflamed class feeling to help him, Parnell could always meet coercion with the cry of atrocity and conciliation with the cry of constancy rewarded. A chief secretary like Forster talked loudly of Ireland being in the hands of "village ruffians" (a "murder gang"). Forster simply played into the hands of the Irish with his frenzied pouncing and prodding after "a certain limited number of unreasonable and mischievous men." So England made agitation easy. The land war, the devotion of the Irish people, the glamor of strength and silence, his restraint and stately dignity—these weapons of Parnell's, Gladstone could not parry. He could only gather, from using Mrs. O'Shea as a messenger be-

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tween himself and Parnell, that the Irish hero was, after all, an Achilles. Parnell's difficulty would be England's opportunity. He could only watch and wait.

19

Parnell never underestimated this master with whom he had to deal. A Tory democrat himself, he could easily measure and appreciate Lord Randolph Churchill. A skeptic himself, he could do business with the callous Joseph Chamberlain. But in Gladstone he touched a creator as well as a manipulator, a man with a suffusing religion. In the duel between the British Empire and the Irish nation it was no simple task to meet the political and parliamentary resourcefulness of Gladstone. Moreover there was the awkward moral fact that Gladstone was increasingly willing to encounter and did encounter "a giant mass of secular English prejudice against Ireland." The queen, as Gladstone admitted, had an attitude of "armed neutrality" toward a Liberal minister. In the country itself an "inveterate sentiment of hostility, flavored with contempt," had "from time immemorial formed the basis of English tradition" about Ireland. These were Gladstone's words. Such hostility and contempt, to which he himself was superior, was political senti-

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ment of real importance. It penetrated every class. It represented a strong conviction that the Irish were inferior and alien—if not different in color, certainly different in culture, in character, in faith, in ethics, and neither to be trusted nor respected. It amounted to virulent race prejudice. In rising above this sacred egoism (which was never fully shared by Wales or Scotland), Gladstone was a pioneer of the finest public spirit. Parnell had to admit it, though he knew only too well how public spirit itself could be used to undermine the national position.

The fiercest years of the land war were 1879, 1880, and 1881. In those years, under Parnell and Davitt, the people of Ireland became thoroughly aroused. By arresting Parnell, Davitt, Dillon, Biggar, Egan, Brennan, and the rest of the Land League for “seditious conspiracy,” the Government simply intensified the bitterness of the struggle. Outrages increased, shootings and burnings and murders. With each act of coercion the cabinet yielded on the Land Bill it was drafting. Finally, after twenty-two spasms of concession it produced the act which gave to the Irish clansmen the modus vivendi which Henry VIII had failed to give to them. It was the execrated Parnell-Davitt organization that won this victory: “Without the Land

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League," Gladstone said in 1893, "the Act of 1881 would not now be on the statute-book."

By establishing a land commission to fix rents, the English handed the agitators a new weapon. To "cow the tyrants" became an Irish formula, and the land commission found itself powerless to please any one. The English were furious. Gladstone determined to have Parnell arrested, asserting grandly that "the resources of civilization are not yet exhausted." He did have Parnell imprisoned, locking him up in Kilmainham, but by doing so, by vindicating law, order, the rights of property, and the freedom of the land, Gladstone once more inflamed the Irish, leaving them without their coolest head. A no-rent manifesto was sent from Kilmainham by Parnell and his associates. "Captain Moonlight," as the bands who attacked landlords and land-grabbers named themselves, stepped into Parnell's place. Twenty murders occurred in ten months: a landlord's life was not a happy one. But the no-rent manifesto, inspired by the left wing, was condemned by the priests and bishops, and a wedge was inserted for negotiations which ended next year in the Kilmainham treaty between Parnell and the Government. The Land Leaguers were released: an Arrears Bill was guaranteed to take care of the handi-

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capped tenants, and Parnell guaranteed to slow down agitation.

By this treaty Gladstone estranged himself from his viceroy Cowper and his chief secretary "Buckshot" Forster who had labored to apply coercion: they resigned. At the same time he formed a vague, promising alliance with the dreaded Parnell, and Parnell in turn had reason to think that through Gladstone and Chamberlain he could work for a genuine national settlement.

20

These plans soon received a shock. The new chief secretary, young Lord Frederick Cavendish, was Mrs. Gladstone's nephew. He and Mr. Burke, the under-secretary, were waylaid in Phœnix Park, Dublin, on the evening of May 6, 1882, and stabbed to death. It was the first time that any prominent official had been killed. The murder of Cavendish, who tried to beat off the assailants with an umbrella, gave a sensation of horror and pity to the world. Who were the murderers? Parnell, Dillon, and Davitt at once issued a statement to the Irish people saying that the cowardly and unprovoked assassination of a "friendly stranger" "stained the hospitable name of Ireland." Behind the scenes the unimpassioned Parnell went to pieces. He

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wrote to Gladstone, saying that if Gladstone thought that his leadership prejudiced the Irish cause, he would resign. Gladstone thought his conduct "very praiseworthy" and counseled him to remain. But the conciliation policy was impossible with England frantic; coercion, and outrage, were renewed.

It was not till next year that a Dublin alderman of the most respectable and even sanctimonious character, Carey, by name, turned informer on the small unknown group which had arranged the assassination of Burke. This group called itself the Invincibles. It believed the time had come for a policy of terror, and had prepared most carefully its plot against Burke. Through Carey's information five of the Invincibles were convicted and executed, and nine others imprisoned. Carey was later smuggled on board a steamer for Australia, but a man named O'Donnell booked on the same steamer and shot Carey off Cape Colony. O'Donnell was hanged.

21

The Phœnix Park murders, the Maamtrasna agrarian murders, and several attempted political assassinations—judges and policemen—gave England a moral leg-up which was badly needed. Parnell looked with disfavor on this development. He valued, as Mr. Ford

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of New York did not value, the chance to extract a measure of self-government out of the house of commons; and he had no desire to hand his opponents unlimited ammunition. The Clan-na-Gael, however, suspected Parnell of moderation and was decidedly restive. Davitt was impatient to bring forward land nationalization, and Dillon wished to keep up the fight against landlords. Parnell was under this severe political strain. The strain was increased by his personal relations. In 1881 he had met, and fallen in love with, an Englishwoman. She was the daughter of Sir John Page Wood, a clergyman, and the wife of Captain O'Shea. O'Shea was a dashing young soldier in a crack regiment when he had married twenty-year-old Katherine Wood. By the time she was thirty-four (when she met Parnell) they were living in friction and partial separation, O'Shea being more interested in his racing stable and his mining adventures in Spain than in anything else. At first, he had quarreled with his wife about Parnell, and actually challenged Parnell to a duel. Then he backed down. "From the date of this bitter quarrel," Katherine O'Shea recorded in 1914, "Parnell and I were one, without further scruple, without fear, and without remorse." O'Shea and Mrs. O'Shea remained on friendly terms till 1886, and Par-

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nell actually forced O'Shea on the Irish party in that year. Mrs. O'Shea's biography of Parnell, published in 1914, revealed the tortuous deception, the intense and devoted passion, the hateful tragedy, of this relationship. She and Parnell were not married till 1891, four months before Parnell died. Their intimacy was generally known, however, for years before the O'Shea divorce suit. Mrs. O'Shea constantly acted as the intermediary between Gladstone and Parnell. Whenever Gladstone needed Parnell in an emergency he sent for him to Mrs. O'Shea's house.

22

The stresses of Parnell's life and of his party were relieved in 1883 from an unexpected quarter. With the connivance of the English Government and at the instance of a person called Errington the pope took it on himself to condemn a "tribute" which was being collected for Parnell. The tribute had languished at £7,700 until the pope denounced it. It thereupon rose steadily to £37,000. The Parnellite stock was high.

It was so high that both parties in England quickly conceived of a home rule program. On every side, in every well-organized party, there is a wide assortment of ideals. Lord Carnarvon, who had made a reputa-

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tion in Canada, came forward as the Tory Irish viceroy with an address on colonial self-government. In a few months Irish crime was no longer the topic, but Irish needs, Irish rights. In an empty London drawing-room, vacant for the summer, Lord Salisbury's Irish viceroy had a secret interview with Parnell. Even Lord Salisbury, feudal to the limit, talked of revising the constitution.

The election came in 1885. The franchise had been enlarged in Ireland by 400,000 votes. It was guessed that this new army of country voters might reveal a "deep conservatism." Instead they obliterated Tory candidates forever. Parnell was now ready to do business with the Tories.

The Tory vote, however, was too low to be secure. Even with the help of the Irish, it could barely pull through. And the alliance of the Irish was too dear at the price.

In this predicament of the Tories Gladstone made an interesting political move. He knew that, imperially considered, an Irish solution was most desirable: a moderate, safe, non-nationalistic solution. He knew that with a house of lords anti-Irish to a man this solution could only be carried with and by the Tories. He guessed that under these circumstances Parnell

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would take virtually anything he was given. So he invited Arthur Balfour to tell his uncle, Salisbury, that the Liberals would support the Tories if they'd legislate. But the party game is the party game. Salisbury saw nothing for the Tories, as such, in this joint-stock limited liability venture. He rejected it, turned from conciliation to coercion, and soon was dislodged by the Irish vote. Then Gladstone took the Government with the Irish on his side. His Home Rule Bill was defeated, however, and within a year Salisbury, back in office, was announcing that the native Irish, like the Hottentots, were incapable of self-government. They were only fit to use knives and slugs, he said. He recommended twenty years of "resolute" government. And he suggested, instead of sinking money in a state purchase of land, the deportation of a million Irishmen.

Gladstone's defeated home rule measure cost him the support of Chamberlain, John Bright, Hartington, and many others. John Bright's defection was the most serious. It exhibited at one and the same time an impatience with Gladstone's craftiness and an impatience with Gladstone's tolerance of "rebels."

The rejection of this bill, and of a Land Bill to meet the slump in agricultural prices, had an apparent effect

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in relaxing Parnell's will. He was "sick unto death" after the nervous drain of ten years' warfare. When the landlords became aggressive, under Lord Salisbury and Arthur Balfour, he was not anxious to renew the fight. A perpetual Coercion Bill was part of the "resolute" program. This did not arouse him. Balfour's prompt assertion that "the police were in no way to blame" when they wantonly killed three onlookers at the Mitchelstown meeting drew from Gladstone, not from Parnell, the agitator's cry: "Remember Mitchelstown!" The Plan of Campaign, devised by Dillon and O'Brien to countenance the tenants in reducing their own rents and paying these reduced rents into a political fund, only aroused him to the point of condemning it. And, in accepting £10,000 from Cecil Rhodes, he spoke of the Home Rule Bill as "a final and satisfactory settlement of the long-standing dispute between Great Britain and Ireland."

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So constitutional did Parnell seem that even the Irish Unionists might have cultivated him. Instead, the "London Times," the journalistic holy of holies, enlivened the victorious Conservatives of England in 1887 by a series of articles called "Parnellism and

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Crime.” One feature of this series was a facsimile letter of Parnell’s, apparently indicating that Parnell had been hypocritical in condemning the Phoenix Park murderer. Parnell laconically informed the house that this letter was a forgery. The attorney-general, retained by the “Times,” went out of his way in a lawsuit to revive suspicion. Parnell asked the Tory house of commons to appoint a committee to investigate. They refused. Instead, they appointed a judicial commission to sift Parnellism and “crime” without any inquiry into agrarian law, economic facts, or the social circumstances attending the land war—in Lord Morley’s words, “one of the ugliest things done in the name and under the forms of law in this island during the century.”

The “Times” had spent £30,000 in procuring through the secretary of the Irish landlord alliance the material with which to destroy Parnell. It actually had paid £2530 for eleven precious letters. It had made no investigation or test of the authenticity of the famous facsimile letter. On the word of Houston of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union it gave its readers the corroboration of their favorite prejudices in the looking-glass of facsimile.

But what the “London Times” had mirrored in its

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campaign of malice and hatred was simply the poor invention of a broken, quailing graftor called Pigott. On the witness-stand Pigott's forgery was pitilessly exposed, mainly by his misspelling, "hesitency." His guilt was complete: it led back from this expensive screed to years of "investigation" in which he had lived well after many lean years; required only to produce political skeletons and unwholesome garbage of every description. He had a good run for the "Times" money, but so agonizing was the undressing of this life of shame, and so awful the figure beneath, that Pigott fled to Madrid before his testimony was finished and, traced by a detective, killed himself rather than return.

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The boomerang that the "Times" had hurled at Parnell recoiled on itself. Its circulation collapsed. The Tory plot to annihilate him failed. But his triumph was not to last long. For an inducement placed at £20,000, believed to have been supplied by a practical politician of the new school, Captain O'Shea named Parnell in a divorce suit in 1889. The suit was pending for nearly a year. A defense was expected but it was not defended, and on November 17, 1890, the decree was granted to Captain O'Shea.

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This verdict was calmly received by the Irish party, by the National League, by the Nationalist sympathizers, and by the church. From the envoys visiting America—Dillon, O'Brien, T. P. O'Connor—came enthusiastic support for Parnell. But these prompt endorsements and assertions of loyalty were not unanimous. England of the upper class was not shocked to hear that Parnell's long devotion to Mrs. O'Shea was at last disclosed. Intelligent people did not confuse this sincere devotion with the lechery, the drunkenness, the homosexuality, the multiplied scandal and shame, which were not unknown in England. Nelson's name, moreover, had been mentioned in England. There was a statue in Trafalgar Square. But it was not the real values, the honest estimate, of this divorce suit which mattered in the least. It was its effect on votes. What would the National Liberal Federation meeting say at Sheffield? Gladstone, more than eighty, had his ear to the ground, solemnly shaking his grave politician's head. Wait and watch, he wrote Morley. Look out for "our Nonconformist friends." He recalled with some humor that Nelson's "Life" had been circulated by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, but he guessed that Parnell would n't get away with it. And, if he did n't, if the scales went down against him,

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Gladstone knew that he could jump in on the heavy side, pedestal and all.

Parnell had never concealed his hatred of English hypocrisy. Now he was doomed. Morley reported to Gladstone from Sheffield, "the deep instinct for moral order is awake." W. T. Stead, the discoverer of White Slaves and the voice of Puritanism, condemned Parnell as immoral. So did the leading Methodist, Hugh Price Hughes. So did Michael Davitt in the "Labor World." These sincere accents swelled audibly; and with them the yelp of the man-hunt, the keen snarl of passion and prejudice, the baying of the wolves.

Five days told Gladstone everything. He approached the Irish party with his suave, benignant air: "Notwithstanding the splendid services rendered by Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland. . . . The continuance I speak of would not only place many hearty and effective friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the leadership of the Liberal party, based as it has been mainly upon the prosecution of the Irish cause, almost a nullity."

Almost a nullity! The Irish members suddenly real-

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ized that for five years they had been depending more and more on British sympathy, British assistance, British association. They had learned to repose on Gladstone as on Abraham's bosom. And now, because of the invaluable nonconformist conscience, Gladstone could plead to them his immense, his pathetic difficulties. The cause of Ireland, the Irish cause, was his life-work. Would they not dethrone Parnell?

That was Gladstone's frontal attack. In the rear, of course, was the Catholic Church. "The pope," murmured Gladstone, "has now clearly got a commandment under which to pull him up." In 1881 it was Gladstone who, through Cardinal Newman, had forwarded the police-notes of speeches by Irish priests to the supreme pontiff, out of sheer regard for Ireland, "in this hour of her peril and her hope." The scandal of the church in politics still appalled him, but the supreme pontiff had played the English game on that occasion. Now the cleric in politics could be counted on again.

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What would Parnell do, placed between Gladstone's Irish party in front, and Gladstone's Catholic Church in the rear? Would he acknowledge that he and the

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woman he loved were caught in sin, and would he, as Gladstone's messenger, Morley requested, withdraw from leadership "as a concession due to feeling in England"? Parnell declined. He said that "if he once let go, it was all over." "His manner throughout was perfectly cool and quiet, and his unresonant voice was shaken. He was paler than usual, and now and then a wintry smile passed over his face."

26

That was the end of Parnell. In Committee-Room 15 his party chose Gladstone and English Liberalism. And in Ireland, first in the by-election in Kilkenny and later elsewhere, the priests marshaled the country-people to the voting-booths. By two to one the people voted against his candidates.

Dr. Croke, the archbishop of Cashel, put the case against Parnell in a few words: "All sorry for Parnell, but still, in God's name, let him retire quietly and with good grace from the leadership. If he does so, the Irish party will be kept together, the honorable alliance with Gladstonian Liberals maintained, success at general election secured, home rule certain. If he does not retire, alliance will be dissolved, election lost, Irish

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party seriously damaged if not wholly broken up, home rule indefinitely postponed, coercion perpetuated, evicted tenants hopelessly crushed, and the public conscience outraged. The [Parnell's] manifesto flat and otherwise discreditable."

The truth was that Gladstone's published terms, compelling the Irish party to reverse their election of Parnell as leader, spelled subjection to English policy. The center of Ireland's political gravity had shifted to England. This suited Gladstone. And so long as Parnell was beaten in Ireland he had succeeded in his main object: reducing the Irish problem to a municipal problem. He never wavered in his desire to see Parnell beaten. "I would rather see Ireland disunited than see it Parnellite. . . . We are now, I think, freed from the enormous danger of seeing Parnell master in Ireland." He called the Parnellite voters of Kilkenny "rogues" or "fools."

The rogues and fools fought for Parnell in every community, and Parnell threw himself into every contest with despairing energy. After his first attempt to domineer, though cornered, he had offered to resign, provided Gladstone would give certain guarantees to Ireland. But Gladstone was already sure of the party, sure of the church. He offered no guarantees. The

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fight was carried through Kilkenny, Sligo, Carlow. The spirit of each election was savage.

What will be the result of the general election, he asked his biographer Barry O'Brien.

"I should think that you will come back with about five followers, and I should not be surprised if you came back absolutely alone."

"Well," he answered, "if I do come back absolutely alone, one thing is certain, I shall then represent a party whose independence will not be sapped."

The strain of the fight, the conflict and confusion of motives, the physical exhaustion, brought him to the danger-point. A chill at Creggs sent him back to Brighton with acute rheumatism. On October 6, 1891, he failed and died, at the age of forty-five.

So long as Parnell had rallied the people, the constitutional movement kept its national spear-head. Without Parnell it became no more revolutionary than a broomstick. A great deal of legislative power was still controlled by the Irish members, and in the generation following Parnell a great deal of admirable legislation was secured. But without being a declared or even convinced separatist, Parnell gave the Irish

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Gael what he needed—a leader who had not one drop of slave-blood in him. John Dillon, T. M. Healy, T. P. O'Connor, William O'Brien—these men had been brought to heel by Gladstone as against Parnell, and even if they were as free as the wind, their action seemed bloodless and timid. It was not Parnell's so-called aristocratic bearing which won the Irish; it was his mettle. His nature had something cold and hard in it. "I am a man and I have told these children what they want." So he said in 1890. This arrogance hurt him; but in the English parliament he had changed the hunted to the hunter. He was like the race memory of a hero, half-God, half-human—"tameless and swift and proud." He held the Irish heart until he was seen as a furtive lover, a man in shame and disguise.

When he was gone the champions and heroes who hooked laborers' cottages out of the imperial grab-bag did not enable Ireland to dream dreams. The breaking of Parnell was more than the loss of a parliamentary leader. It was the loss of a national idol. The Irish let their weapons fall when their leader was slain.

To become leaders in themselves, no longer enslaved to a personality, was the task of the rebuilders of the Irish nation. It was a slow process, but in the dreary

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emptiness of politics after Parnell the Irish imagination sought this escape from England and Westminster. Meanwhile, Gladstone believed that Ireland was at last frock-coated and in its right mind.

CHAPTER XI

THE COMING OF SINK FEIN

1

ON the surface of events the downfall of Parnell looked more tragic, more ruinous, than any episode of two centuries. It tore the nation in two: it ended a great militant's career.

✓ Parnell in one sense was the best general Ireland had ever had. When he entered the house of commons he found the Irish parliamentarians like sheep without a shepherd, contemptuously patronized by British Tories and mildly tolerated by Liberals. Parnell contrived in a few years to get rid of those Irish members who took their tone not from Ireland but from the house of commons, feeling they were members of a gentlemanly club in which their chief duty was to conciliate their Tory neighbors. He recruited earnest men who saw themselves as the representatives of a nation perhaps the most desolate and surely the most outraged in northern Europe. This new party, organized as shock troops under a strict command, stamped the

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Irish cause and Parnell's personality into British political consciousness. Anxious apprehension supplanted the old tolerant, patronizing attitude. Parnell aroused class superstition and race prejudice, he was feared and hated, but he forced British Liberalism to make the Irish cause its own, and he drove the Tories into competition for his support. Even when he relaxed his agitation and followed the Liberals in their conduct of the fight, he remained the most formidable figure in British politics.

With the fall of Parnell this instantly changed. The constitutional movement passed from Ireland to Britain, from nationalism to Liberalism, from insistence to compromise, from life to death. Gladstone did not relax. In 1893 he re-introduced the Home Rule bill and fought for it with supreme skill, but his greatest efforts could not procure a British majority inside the commons. The Irish vote alone brought the bill to the house of lords: there it was dismissed with disdain.

When Gladstone retired in 1894 the Irish cause lost its position even in the Liberal program. The gallantry of English sympathizers like Wilfrid Scawen Blunt had done little to alter the leaden indifference of Britain. But this feebleness of Liberalism was the negative side

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of the Parnell tragedy. The positive side was felt in Ireland itself, where counsel was divided and passion was fierce and barren.

At no period, perhaps, had the faults and pitiful weaknesses of human character been more revealed than in this day of Parnellism: the politicians running here and there looking for the best bargain, the newspapers full of windy preachments, the priests and the bishops influencing the people in outrageous partisanship, the whole country a seething mass of prejudice, anger, savage insult, personal abuse, and terrorism, with England enjoying the spectacle and feeding the flame. Such rancorous words were spoken in this period, and so little charity was preserved even by the heroes of the occasion, that sane public life seemed an impossibility for the future. It was, without bloodshed, a period of civil war.

So, to all appearances, the fall of Parnell was a dark calamity. It cost Ireland its leader, it created a mania of controversy, revealing above everything else the lack of trained political mind.

But this wildness of Parnellite and anti-Parnellite was not fatal to Ireland. In its destructive eruption

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the country was to purge itself of its preoccupation with parliament. It was to turn away from Westminster and to regain its national spirit.

For conflict with England was, in the end, an accident and interruption of Irish life. Since 1800 politics had indeed been compulsive. The Penal Laws had stripped the native Irish of property and power in the eighteenth century. The rising of '98 had been a convulsion due to the return of native vitality. Brought handcuffed into the Union, the Irish people had been forced to seek whatever practical social amelioration was possible. The people were without Catholic representatives even in the imperial parliament. They were, as observers like Sir Walter Scott had testified, the most miserable of serfs. They had no capital, no economic or political control, no strength even to throw off so unjust an exaction as the tithe. Poverty, the result of bad land tenure, was the first fact of Irish life. It swamped Ireland like a Holland with the dykes open. It kept the land in a sub-national condition. Until the nineties a few thousand landlords lived luxuriously but most of them really lived meanly. A few thousand merchants and liquor-dealers had good bank-accounts and fat investments (outside the country), but most of the small traders and hun-

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dreds of the publicans were submerged in dingy, melancholy, poverty-stricken routine. The bishops received many large contributions from generous and pious Catholics. New cathedrals and numerous churches, one or two of them beautiful, replaced the poor chapels which had served Ireland during its harassed centuries. But outside Northeast Ulster, which was independent of agriculture, Ireland was a land the most wretched and forlorn in northern Europe. Two million of the people were practically in servitude still. Two things were needed to change this abnormal social state—one, to get rid of landlordism; the other, to move from agrarian to agricultural reform. Only by new laws could land tenure be corrected; and this necessity drove Ireland to Westminster.

3

Driven to Westminster in the fight against landlordism, the native Irish naturally kept their eyes on Westminster so long as Parnell was battling for home rule. But home rule was of little or no interest to Ireland, regarded simply as a measure of autonomy. It was not discussed in Ireland in its details as an intricate piece of legislation. It was of interest and concern only as a symbol of nationalism; and when

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nationalism turned into a war between Parnellites and anti-Parnellites the actual terms of home rule troubled no one in Ireland.

The real Ireland, in fact, could never be understood merely by tracing its constitutional relation to England. The real Ireland could not be measured, as Australia's well-being or Canada's or New Zealand's might be measured, by a happy constitutional adjustment. These commonwealths and dominions were, after all, offshoots and children of England. Ireland was not an offshoot or child of England, any more than France was. Years before the Angles or Saxons had sprung from their lairs, Ireland had flourished as a civilization. It had welcomed St. Patrick a thousand years before the American continent was discovered by Europe. It had a memory, a personality, a substance quite distinct from the memory and personality and substance of John Bull's island. It was never John Bull's Other Island except by military conquest. In no mystical sense, but in the true sense that one child differs from another or one handclasp from another, Ireland reserved within its borders a something which was beyond the scope or competence of British governing. It was the sense of this difference, not a desire for federation with the empire, which gave Ire-

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land its interest in the home rule question. And once Parnell was gone as a national leader the vitality of Ireland groped for a new national expression.

4

That nationalism sought to revive the old forms of the Gael. An Irishman by affiliation, Dr. Douglas Hyde, saw with something like agony the threatened death of the spoken Gaelic tongue. This, in any normal country, would have been the concern of legislators, but Dr. Hyde knew that the Gaelic inheritance meant less than nothing to England. England had smashed down the Gaelic inheritance. By statute and by educational policy the English in Ireland and the Anglo-Irish had done their best to kill Gaelic culture. Dr. Hyde saw more clearly than any one else that if the lovers of Ireland did not act for themselves this barbarity of England would succeed. He did not go to Westminster for help in this struggle. He believed in self-help. He knew that he could not prevent the emigration of the Gaelic-speaking Irish or of the English-speaking Irish who were also Gaelic-speaking. These numbered 700,000. But he knew that with the live coal of Gaelic he could still touch the lips of

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Ireland, and he and a small group of disinterested, non-political enthusiasts started the Gaelic League.

In this group there was no more conventional politics than there had been in the archeological ardor of Sir William Wilde and Dr. George Petrie, in the editing of texts by O'Donovan and O'Curry, Standish Hayes O'Grady and Whitley Stokes. The Gaelic revivalists were primarily scholars. Eugene O'Growney of Maynooth, a priest; Dr. Hyde, the son of a Protestant clergyman; and John MacNeill of Antrim, founded the Gaelic League in 1893. From this beginning, apparently so academic, a powerful popular development was to come.

It did not come easily. The native speakers were in most cases the elders. In ten years a great number of them died out. But while it took a little time to reach them, it took much more time to reverse the dispirited or contemptuous attitude of the younger generation, to make them see the proud treasure it was to have the Gaelic and to bridge the morass of Anglo-Irish history back to the Gaelic past.

The labors of Dr. Hyde and his associates in the first fifteen years of the Gaelic League are in themselves a thrilling history. The men and women of the

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Gaelic League won a decided victory in the end. Ignoring England, in the first place, they taught all Ireland its racial distinctiveness. They lifted the country-people out of the mire of the road and the track of the plow to a cultural life which was their own. And with the revival of Gaelic came annual Gaelic festivals which included singing, music, drama, dancing, story-telling. Dublin at last became a center for the interior life of native Ireland.

The middle-class Irish, who had little characteristic culture outside reading library books, playing the violin on wet afternoons, struggling with Italian love-songs, and painting on china, were at first inclined to laugh at Gaelic, but at last they shed their mad craving to perform "Pinafore" under the patronage of the local bishop and they broke through their vulgar affectations into the real tradition of the people. The Gaelic League did something to scour away the dreary provincialism of the Irish towns. It revealed a beauty, a sincerity, a dignity in the disparaged past of Ireland which were totally omitted from the stupid school-books of the government system.

A somewhat grudging appreciation of the Gaelic League was yielded by the Irish parliamentarians. But the young men and women who saw no England to edify

them except the contemporary England of the Boer War were deepened in national feeling by Gaelicism. In this way the Gaelic revival was inherently political. But for many years and against high pressure Dr. Hyde maintained the principle of neutrality. The league drew strength from each province and from every kind of Irishman. Gael and Gall, until 1915, hung their shields on the wall side by side and greeted one another as human beings.

5

Another enterprise, less embracingly national, was the dramatic movement which began with the Irish Literary Theater in 1899. Edward Martyn was the begetter of this theater, and with him were George Moore and William Butler Yeats. After some years of distinguished work on the lines of an independent "literary" theater Yeats led the experiment to the "four beautiful green fields" of Eire. With his own creations of genius, most of them drawn from Gaelic sources which had been opened afresh by the revival, he and Lady Gregory turned the National Theater into the medium of a genuinely national expression. It was far from Yeats's idea, however, to subordinate the pursuit of beauty to the utility of patriotism. He wished instead to liberate

the Irish mind from its fierce preoccupation with means to the lovely and glorious ends of the national being itself. John Millington Synge and Padraic Colum shared this passion with him, Synge in flaming idiom and Colum in the sober hues and warm notes of a quieter countryside. Lady Gregory and William Boyle were to follow, dramatists in a flight of creativeness such as Ireland had never attempted before. Their subjects were in nearly all cases the "democracy" about whom so many political scientists had trembled in their armchairs. The actors of this movement (W. G. Fay being the genius among them) were, for the most part, men and women of the native Irish. Had they come into Ireland before Yeats and Lady Gregory had organized this rare theater they would have died, as so many Irish died before them, "with their music in them."

The Gaelic revival and the dramatic and literary renaissance (to which Ernest A. Boyd is the most competent guide) had a great deal to do with the subsequent triumph of national Ireland. Padraic Pearse, to mention only one of their later leaders, was a disciple of Douglas Hyde's. In 1913 he said, "I have served under him since I was a boy. I am willing to serve under him until he can lead and I can serve no

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longer. I have never failed him. He has never failed me. I am only one of the many who could write thus." It was in Connacht that Pearse studied Gaelic among native speakers and renewed his sense of the Gaelic inheritance. From Connacht he took the name of his famous school, St. Enda's—a school which embodied ideals of Irish culture and nationality which the British occupation of Ireland had seemed to submerge.

6

In this period of non-political, cultural activity which was to show such extraordinary national results twenty years later, the parliamentarians by no means regarded themselves as obsolete, or even secondary in national importance. The amiable Justin McCarthy, the ingenious and gifted T. P. O'Connor, the grave, parochial John Dillon, the salient T. M. Healy, the dignified John Redmond, the romantic William O'Brien, the radical Michael Davitt—these striking personalities attracted a far greater share of public attention than their inhibited programs justified. In 1895 the Unionists or Tories returned to power in Britain, and the natural reaction from Gladstone's compromise with nationalism was Salisbury's policy of "killing home rule with kindness." Land legislation was not aban-

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doned, and the Balfours identified themselves with the building of light railways and the establishment of the Congested Districts Board to relieve the worst poverty and hardship in the west of Ireland.



John E. Redmond

Until 1897 the "split" between Parnellites and anti-Parnellites persisted, with John Redmond as the chivalrous advocate of Parnellism and John Dillon the new chairman of the Gladstonian party. In 1897 Redmond took up the revelations of the Childers Commission on

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the overtaxation of Ireland. Instead of paying one-twentieth of Britain's expenditure, the gross ratio, Ireland had been compelled to pay about one-eleventh. (Ireland's net ratio would, however, be about a thirty-sixth.) This overtaxation had amounted, at the lowest, to about \$2,750,000 a year, and had been going on for nearly forty years. To reform this abuse seemed to Redmond an adequate program, with the addition of home rule, manhood suffrage, political amnesty, and land reform. The Tories were not unwilling to make concessions. The Local Government Bill, which came in 1898, transferred the county councils to farmers "without experience" from a select committee of landlords in each county. These new popular bodies soon were granted by Dublin Castle to be better administrators than the Tory cliques which had preceded them.

The state purchase of the land was now generally advocated. The Anglo-Irish Bourbons said: "Peasant Proprietors would be wasteful, extravagant, and not industrious. They would subdivide, sublet, and encumber their lands. Whole counties would fall into the hands of money-lenders. The payment of less than a 'natural' rent would complete the ruin of a race of slaves." But the United Irish League, formed by William O'Brien, agitated successfully until, in 1903,

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the Wyndham Act came after a round-table conference between landlords and leaguers. The financing of this act was imperfect: it was remedied in 1909. Two hundred million pounds of state credit was required to capitalize the voluntary transfer of two-thirds of the land to peasant proprietors. The Bourbons were utterly wrong in their predictions. The program, not yet wholly completed, has been a social and economic success. The landowners as a class have lost their position of privilege, but many of the "old stock," so-called, have frankly given up Anglo-Ireland as their country and have accepted Ireland. This change in national ideal completes a transformation that was promised from the day of the Geraldines.

But agriculture in Ireland remained seriously backward. Not long before he died Michael Davitt spoke witheringly of the tenants: "Nothing short of absolute danger or necessity will rouse them out of their dirty, slovenly habits of living from hand to mouth, a shiftless, thriftless, ignoble existence. When I return home from little countries like Denmark, Holland, and Belgium, it makes me mad to look on at the criminal misuse of the best land in Europe, which you see in our midland counties and around where I live. Next (in my view) to the long experience of English rule, I blame

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our whole education system for this economic ruin of our fertile soil."

It was with critical perceptions like these that Horace Plunkett started his great national coöperative



Horace Plunkett

movement in 1897. In 1895 he had taken advantage of the fact that the Unionists (Tories) were favorably disposed toward constructive legislation. So far as killing home rule with kindness went, it was about as intelligent as trying to kill a baby with milk. Nation-

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ality threw on the process. But Plunkett's share in the procedure was that of a practical diplomat who gathered a representative allied committee to frame the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. John Redmond so far gave him his aid.

Davitt's idea of agricultural education was subordinate in Plunkett's program to the organizing of co-operative societies. But by the unselfish and arduous missionary work of Plunkett, Russell (AE.), and Anderson, a tremendous economic advance was made in the four provinces, particularly in the milk country of Ulster and the midlands. And men came together in the coöperative movement, as in the Gaelic League, who had never before imagined the possibility of accommodation and good-will.

7

To wheedle Ireland out of its national feeling, however, was a policy doomed to failure. As English critics of Gladstone had always insisted, this was the inherent falsity of home rule. It joined in common harness two types of men whose purposes ran in contrary directions—one which was inspired by national feeling and wanted to strengthen the Irish nation, the other which was inspired by a desire to make a more

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comfortable place for Ireland inside the British system.

In converting a considerable body of British opinion to home rule, Gladstone had not preached Ireland a Nation. For a moment he had pondered the desirability of establishing Britain and Ireland as a dual monarchy, an Austro-Hungarian empire. But this idea of equal partnership he had rejected. Britain, in the first place, had become immensely rich. It had actually twenty times the resources of Ireland; it held the balance of power in Europe; it was the policeman (and dictator) of the seas. As against its great, muscular, brawny presence Ireland looked pitifully weak and thin: a potato-fed peasant condemned to a "dunghill civilization." In Morley's life of Gladstone the words dreary, sad, sordid, squalid, are associated with virtually every mention of Ireland; and the sharpness of Irish wrangling was of itself enough to convince Britain that the Irish were unfit for equal partnership. Hence a local, subordinate, home rule parliament, decided upon by British statesmen as an act of the British parliament and extended as the bounty of the great British Empire, was the outcome of Gladstone's Liberalism. The native Irish were invited to forget their history, to sink their desires. They were

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warmly promised, and after thirty years granted, "on the statute books," a lower constitutional status than Newfoundland.

8

Working with the British Liberals on a home rule program, the parliamentarians completely lost their sense of Ireland a Nation. They favored the Boers during the Boer War on the principle of the rights of small nations, but in their own case they did not hold to the principle. An Irish parliament without control of taxation, without control of army or navy, without control of the militia or volunteers, without any yes or no as to conscription, without any voice as to customs or excise, without a word as to free political utterance, without immediate control of police, with an anti-democratic upper house and with a fixed, excessive imperial contribution as a first charge on revenue—that was the great Liberal Gladstone's idea of home rule. In time, too, it became John Redmond's. "To talk about Ireland separating from the empire," he said in 1910, "is the most utter nonsense. . . . We have none of these heroic ambitions and harebrained ideas. . . . We simply ask for permission quietly to attend to our own business in our own way."

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It seems hardly possible that any so-called liberal empire could have refused a once-free people this measure of self-government. But the fact is that Britain refused even to consider this degree of self-government for Ireland. In 1906 the Liberals under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, abetted by Sir Edward Grey and H. H. Asquith, proceeded to dole out an Irish Council Bill. By this bill the Irish, under paid nominees of the crown, were to be permitted to act as committees in superintendence of certain departments of administration. This bill, proposed by the strongest Liberal government that Britain had ever elected, was too grotesquely undemocratic to be argued before an Irish convention, and the parliamentarians found themselves driven to force the Liberals to take up home rule. The accession of Asquith, a weakling, did not promise well, but one substantial achievement in 1908 was the founding of a national university which at last, in the twentieth century, gave the Irish Catholics a real opportunity of higher education. The worst effect of the Penal Laws had undoubtedly been Ireland's deficiency in institutions of higher learning. The extension of education in 1908 was of national importance: for one thing, it gave Pearse and MacDonagh material which had been lacking in the Rising

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of '98 and in the work of the Old Fenians. This, with the spread of secondary education through the Intermediate System begun in 1879, had much to do with the subsequent strength of Sinn Fein.

9

While John Redmond was preparing to fight for a new home rule bill the people of Ireland were not excited. John Redmond was a parliamentary chairman, not a popular leader, and he took Irish support almost completely for granted. His opportunity, in addition, was a somewhat technical one. The angry house of lords had pulled the "citadel of privilege" about their ears by daring to reject Lloyd George's radical budget. They invited the Liberal day of reckoning which they could not escape. In 1910 Asquith tried to temporize: he did not enjoy overriding the lords at the instance of the Irish. But the second election of 1910 confirmed Redmond in his balance of power and gave him a right to force the issue against the chamber which had repeatedly blocked self-government for Ireland. The parliament act gave the house of commons the power to override the house of lords and to carry home rule into law.

But home rule was not to pass unopposed. On the

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Unionist side it was to meet the intense hostility of the Tory Old Guard in England. It had also to stand the assault of Belfast and Northeast Ulster. On the national side it was to be sharply attacked by the skirmishers of Sinn Fein.

10

The opposition of the Old Guard in England has been vividly recorded by H. G. Wells in his novel, "Joan and Peter." After some impatient, contemptuous, hectoring pages on the subject of nationalism, Larkinism, Sinn Feinism and everything else, Mr. Wells turns to the Old Guard and declares that to Ulster "they owed their grip upon British Politics, upon army, navy, and education; they traded—nay! they existed—upon the open Irish sore. . . . The arming of Ulster to resist the decision of parliament was incited from Great Britain, it was supported enthusiastically by the whole of the Unionist party in Great Britain, its headquarters were in the west end of London, and the refusal of General Gough to carry out the precautionary occupation of Ulster was hailed with wild joy in every Tory home. It was not a genuine popular movement, it was an artificial movement for which the landowning church people of Ireland and England were chiefly responsible.

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It was assisted by tremendous exertions on the part of the London yellow press. When Sir Edward Carson went about Ulster in that warm June of 1914, reviewing armed men, promising 'more Mausers,' and pouring out inflammatory speeches, he was manifestly preparing bloodshed. The old Tory system had reached a point where it had to kill men or go."

In spite of this cold Tory plot, the opposition of Belfast to home rule was in great part genuine. During the nineteenth century Belfast had built up considerable industry in linen, cotton, shipbuilding, whisky and tobacco. Though situated on Irish soil and drawing on a population still to some extent Gaelic, it had become a modern capitalist city of the second or third rank and it had combined with its grim industrialism an intense conviction that the Ulster Protestant is superior in race and creed to the Southern Catholic, and that home rule would mean Rome rule on the model of the Inquisition. This narrow faith was held not only by the Presbyterian workman and his woman-folk but by the employing class, their clergymen, their teachers and their newspapers. The exclusion of Catholics from public office in Belfast turned occasionally with amazing swiftness to the combing of Catholics from shop and factory. The Catholics entrenched

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in Ulster did their best to retaliate for these upheavals, and the Ancient Order of Hibernians was a Catholic counterpart of the bigoted Orange organization.

As the most intolerant city in the world Belfast presented an acute political problem to the Catholic nationalist. The Catholic nationalist had devised no real treatment for his inflammation.

“The great barrier to Irish success,” Professor R. M. Henry quotes an old Fenian as saying, “is the fear of the Protestants—unfounded and unreasonable, but undeniably there—that their interests would be in danger in a free Ireland. Remove that fear and the Irish question is solved.” To this end many Irishmen, Fenians and non-Fenians, argued. But neither the Liberals nor the Nationalists could think of anything better to do in regard to Northeast Ulster than to say, like Mr. Wells’s Peter, “nonsense” or “Fixed Ideas” or “foolery” or “it’s a nuisance.”

11

The nationalists to the left of John Redmond were definitely willing to give home rule a chance. There were a few Fenians still in Ireland, but the tone of most Fenians was that of John Devoy in 1911: “I would not incite the unorganized, undisciplined and unarmed peo-

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ple of Ireland to a hopeless military struggle with England." Padraic Pearse had a similar attitude. In 1912, in fact, at the opening of the home rule campaign he spoke at the same great O'Connell Street meeting as John Redmond: "We have no wish to destroy the British, we only want our freedom. We differ among ourselves on small points, but we agree that we want freedom, in some shape or other. There are two sections of us—one that would be content to remain under the British government in our own land, another that never paid and never will pay homage to the King of England. I am of the latter, and every one knows it. But I should think myself a traitor to my country if I did not answer the summons to this gathering, for it is clear to me that the Bill which we support today will be for the good of Ireland and that we shall be stronger with it than without it. I am not accepting the Bill in advance. We may have to refuse it. We are here only to say that the voice of Ireland must be listened to henceforward. Let us unite and win a good Act from the British; I think it can be done. But if we are tricked this time, there is a party in Ireland, and I am one of them, that will advise the Gael to have no counsel or dealings with the Gall [the foreigner] for ever again, but to answer them hence-

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forward with the strong hand and the sword's edge. Let the Gall understand that if we are cheated once more there will be red war in Ireland."

Arthur Griffith in his weekly paper *Sinn Fein* showed a similar tolerance, and in 1912 the executive of the Sinn Fein organization expressed the earnest hope that the home rule bill would be a genuine measure of reform. But Sinn Fein warned the Parliamentarians: "They have had the government 'in the hollow of their hands' for years—they have removed the house of lords from their path—there is nothing to prevent the Liberal government introducing and passing a full measure of home rule save and except its enmity to Ireland. With a majority of over 100 and the lords' veto removed the fullest measure of home rule can be passed in two years. It is the business of the parliamentary party to have it passed or to leave the stage to those who are in earnest."

When the terms of the bill were made known Arthur Griffith spoke these candid and practical words:

"The definition of the third Home Rule Bill as a charter of Irish liberty is subject to the following corrections: The authority of the proposed parliament does not extend to the armed men or to the tax-gatherer. It is checked by the tidal waters and

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bounded by the British treasury. It cannot alter the settled purposes of the cabinet in London. It may make laws, but it cannot command power to enforce them. It may fill its purse, but it cannot have its purse in its keeping. If this be liberty, the lexicographers have deceived us. . . . The measure is no arrangement between nations. It recognizes no Irish nation. It might equally apply to the latest British settlement in a South Sea island. It satisfies no claim of the Irish nation whose roots are in Tara, or the Irish nationalism which Molyneux first made articulate."

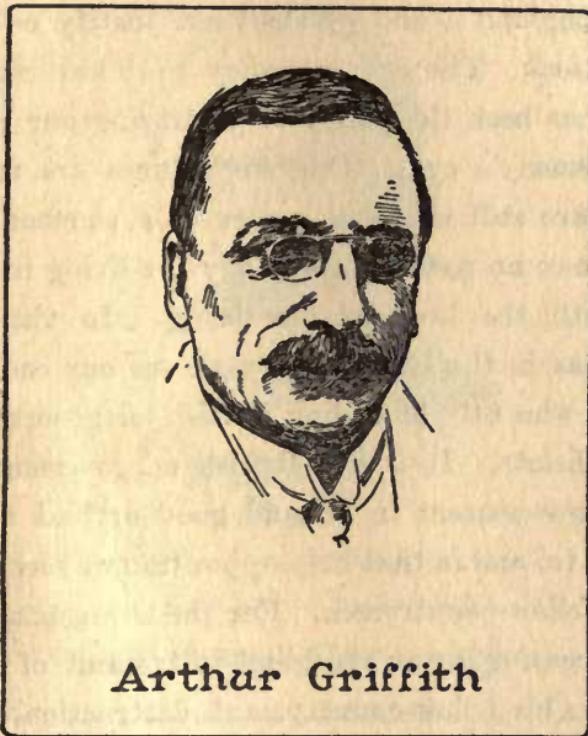
12

From these words of Pearse and Griffith, and from the utterances of contemporary Irish labor papers, it is evident that new forces had been taking shape in Ireland under the surface of conventional politics.

Arthur Griffith was the son of a Dublin typographer. He had founded his weekly the *United Irishman* in 1899 and changed its name to *Sinn Fein* in 1906. In 1904 he had printed a series of articles entitled the "Resurrection of Hungary" and in November, 1905, he outlined his *Sinn Fein* program at the first annual convention of the *Sinn Fein* national council, Edward Martyn presiding. His was a non-parliamentarian

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program based on the experience of Hungary. It followed the German economist List in its nationalistic economics and it advocated self-help on Hungarian lines in the belief that it would lead to the ultimate



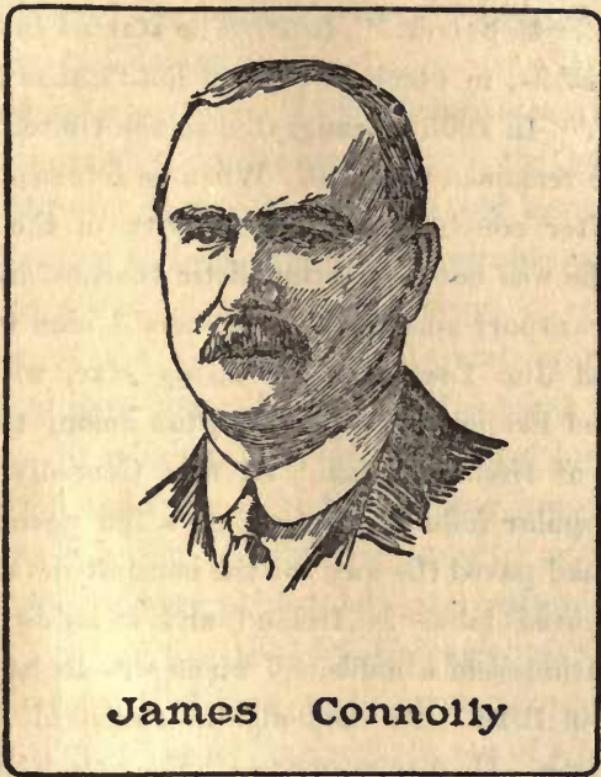
freedom of Ireland: "I say ultimate, because no man can offer Ireland a speedy and comfortable road to freedom, and before the goal is attained many may have fallen and all will have suffered. Hungary, Finland, Poland, all have trodden or tread the road we

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seek to bring Ireland along, but none repine for the travail they have undergone. We go to build up the nation from within, and we deny the right of any but our own countrymen to shape its course. That course is not England's, and we shall not justify our course to England. The craven policy that has rotted our nation has been the policy of justifying our existence in our enemy's eyes. Our misfortunes are manifold, but we are still men and women of a common family, and we owe no nation an apology for living in accordance with the laws of our being. In the British Liberal as in the British Tory we see our enemy, and in those who talk of ending British misgovernment we see the helots. It is not British misgovernment, but British government in Ireland good or bad we stand opposed to, and in that holy opposition we seek to band all our fellow-countrymen. For the Orangeman of the North, ceasing to be the blind instrument of his own as well as his fellow-countryman's destruction, we have the greeting of brotherhood as for the Nationalist of the South, long taught to measure himself by English standards and save the face of tyranny by sending Irishmen to sit impotently in a foreign legislature while it forges the instruments of his oppression."

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Ireland's freedom was no less the dream of James Connolly, who in 1896 had led a forlorn hope in founding the Irish Socialist Republican Party.



James Connolly

James Connolly was born in Monaghan in 1870 and at the age of ten was working for his living in Edinburgh, where his father was a municipal garbage-man. After a peculiarly hard youth, in which he combined a variety of occupations with continual study, Con-

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nolly came to Dublin in 1896. Already he had formulated his belief that the Irish question was at bottom economic and that "the Irish socialist was in reality the best Irish patriot." In 1898 he started the *Workers' Republic*, in which he printed his "Labor in Irish History." In 1903 he emigrated to the United States, where he remained till 1910. When he returned to Ireland, after constant socialist activity in the United States, he was not less nationalistic than before. The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union was then new, and Jim Larkin was a rising star, with Fred Ryan and Francis Sheehy-Skeffington among the intellectuals of Irish socialism. At first Connolly had no great popular following but within a few years he and Larkin had paved the way for the immense development of organized labor in Ireland and in addition had given nationalism a militancy which was to be demonstrated in 1916. To Connolly the home rule bill was play-acting. He was no more a home rule Republican than he was a Fabian Socialist. But it was far below the surface that men like Padraig Pearse, Sheehy-Skeffington, Connolly and Larkin were affecting opinion. Politicians who believed they knew Ireland, like John Redmond, dismissed these figures as "isolated cranks."

The obvious and striking situation was provided by Sir Edward Carson in Northeast Ulster and by the Unionists in England.

It had long been clear to the beneficiaries of Protestant ascendancy in Ireland that if the home rule bill should ever become law there would have to be a transvaluation of Irish values. Undesirable as this appeared to a limited class inside Ireland, it served the purposes of the Unionists in England as no other issue could have done. It gave the Unionists a chance to appeal to religious prejudice, to tribal loyalty, to race hatred and the cult of the superior people. Kipling wrote a poem, as might be expected, and all the old animosities were deliberately and enthusiastically aroused. As early as 1911 the Unionists of Northeast Ulster declared that they would never submit to home rule; and Bonar Law in England, the son of a Canadian Orangeman, promptly asserted that armed resistance to home rule would be justifiable. "I can imagine no length of resistance," he said in 1912, "to which Ulster will go in which I shall not be ready to support them." With Bonar Law and Carson stood Lord Londonderry, Lord Charles Beresford, Lord Hugh Cecil, the Duke

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of Abercorn, Lord Roberts, Lord Willoughby de Broke, F. E. Smith and the whole Unionist party. By September, 1912, over 250,000 Ulstermen of fighting age were asserted to have signed a solemn league and covenant to "stand by one another in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a home rule parliament." "In the event of such a parliament being forced upon us," the oath concluded, "we further solemnly pledge ourselves to refuse to recognize its authority."

The organizing of the Ulster rebellion was no secret. It was fully advertized to the British cabinet, the Irish government, the secret service and the police. From 1911 onward, rifles and machine guns were freely imported and the Ulster forces openly drilled, chiefly by reserve officers of the British army. In April 1914, when war with Germany was almost in sight, Sir Edward Carson's followers imported 35,000 rifles and 2,500,000 rounds of ammunition from Hamburg, which the Germans were pleased to supply. A few weeks previously Sir Edward had been presented with a silver sword at the Ritz hotel in London; Lord Londonderry, Lord Salisbury, the Duke of Marlborough, Sir Bryan Mahon, Lord Milner and various other Tories giving it to him "in sure hope that God will defend the right."

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A week later a number of officers at the Curragh, in Kildare, resigned rather than serve against the Ulster Protestants, the British government being constantly advised in public speeches that Northeast Ulster cared nothing for the law or the constitution. Contempt for the government, in fact, was expressed by nearly every leading Unionist. As Lord Birkenhead, then F. E. Smith, summarized it: "You are dealing with a government which understands one argument—the argument of force."

14

These were dangerous words to bandy in Ireland, and they were not wasted on the Republicans, the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, the Sinn Fein advocates and the labor forces in the South. For a long time the rank and file of the nationalists could not believe that the Ulstermen were really importing cannon, machine guns and rifles. "King Carson" was jeered at, and the cabinet was echoed when it cried, "opera bouffé." But while the Ulster rebellion was, no doubt, a staged hold-up by which the Liberals were to yield reluctantly to the partition of Ireland under the threat of civil war, the fraud required for its effectiveness the use of genuine military properties, and this was all that was needed by the radical nationalists in the South.

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The fact was indisputable that Carson had made arrangements for a provisional government, that £1,000,000 had been publicly appropriated for Volunteer widows and orphans, that the British League for the Support of Ulster was active, that Carson glорied in the fact that "the Volunteers are illegal, and the government know they are illegal, and the government dare not interfere with them." These concessions to style might or might not be preliminary to a Liberal betrayal of John Redmond on the plea of avoiding the horrors of civil war. They established the precedents, at any rate, for which radical nationalists had long been waiting, never daring to hope or dream that the grammar of anarchy would be supplied by the Tories, the army and the lords.

As soon as the British government saw that the South of Ireland was going to copy Carson they prohibited the import of arms. But there had been a horrible strike in 1913, in which the Dublin employers had banded together to break down the unionizing of labor, and Jim Larkin elected to form a Citizen Army for Irish Workers "by taking a leaf out of the book of Carson." The founding of the Irish National Volunteers, November, 1913, under the leadership of Eoin

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MacNeill, vice-president of the Gaelic League, had the effect of slowing down the formation of this Citizen Army. But within a few months, under Captain White and Madame Markievicz, the body was well organized on Carsonian lines. By June, 1914, the Southern Volunteers were estimated at 80,000, as against 84,000 Ulster Volunteers; and by July 9, 1914, they were reckoned by the police to number 132,000, of whom 40,000 were army reservists. This retort to Carson created an interesting situation.

15

It was a situation in which John Redmond as a professed constitutionalist felt obliged to act. He knew that if the Volunteer movement proceeded independently of his party his power in Ireland was gone forever, and he at once negotiated with Eoin MacNeill and Sir Roger Casement for a share in the control of the Volunteers. Eight of the provisional committee, including Pearse, resigned when Redmond's nominees were accepted. But it was only a question of a few months when the body split into two sections: the National or Redmond Volunteers and the Irish or Sinn Fein Volunteers.

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Three events in July, 1914, helped to precipitate the situation which British politics had created in Ireland.

On July 10, armed Ulster Volunteers marched through Belfast, and Sir Edward Carson held the first meeting of his provisional government.

On July 24, Mr. Asquith, the prime minister, announced that the Buckingham Palace conference on the partition of Ireland had failed. "The possibility of defining an area for exclusion from the operation of the Government of Ireland Bill was considered, and the Conference being unable to agree either in principle or in detail on such an area, it concluded."

On July 26, the British troops (King's Own Scottish Borderers) killed three persons and wounded thirty-two in Bachelor's Walk, Dublin, on returning from their futile attempt to stop the gun-running at Howth.

These three events did much to disillusion even moderate home rulers with the British government. The successful gun-running in the North had taken place with the probable connivance of the authorities. In the South it had led to the killing of innocent persons. The defiant attitude of Carson and the establishment of his provisional government had involved nothing more terrible than a conference with the King at

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Buckingham Palace. And out of this conference had come the news that Carson would not accept Redmond's concession of four Ulster counties. In addition he wanted Tyrone and Fermanagh to be excluded from home rule, even though the nationalists were in a majority in those two counties.

This Tory position was consecrated by the Liberals some weeks after the European war had broken out when, on September 18, the home rule bill was signed but its amendment arranged for and its operation indefinitely suspended.

CHAPTER XII

THE IRISH REPUBLIC

1

WITH the outbreak of the European war John Redmond did not wait an instant to consult the will of Ireland. "I honestly believe," he told the house of commons on August 4, 1914, "that the democracy of Ireland will turn with the utmost anxiety and sympathy to this country in every trial and danger with which she is faced."

Believing that the home rule act was Ireland's magna charta, John Redmond did not hesitate for a second to haggle because it was amended or suspended. In the hour of Britain's urgent need he committed himself and Ireland as deeply as possible on the side of the Allies. He made up his mind at once, and never altered it, to recruit for Britain among Irish nationalists, and he gladly and proudly saw his son and his brother join the British army and go to France.

This pledge of loyalty from John Redmond was hailed with delight by Englishmen in politics and out of

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politics, and it netted 50,000 Irish Nationalist fighting men within a year. But the guarantees which it drew from Asquith, the prime minister, in regard to a distinctively Irish corps and in regard to the use of the National Volunteers for home defense were never lived up to. Instead the pro-war Irish were deeply distrusted by Kitchener, and, in Lloyd George's phrase, were treated with a stupidity which sometimes almost looked like malignancy. The truth of Redmond's loyalty to Britain was only apparent to men like Pearse and MacNeill who split away in disgust from his organization of National Volunteers.

Sinn Fein, the Republicans and the Citizen Army did not espouse the cause of the Allies. The intimation that Britain was engaged in fighting for the rights of small nations left critical Irishmen singularly cold. The statement of the *Liverpool Post* in September, 1914, that "the capture of the German trade is almost as vital to the existence of the Empire as the destruction of Prussian militarism" was treasured as more accurate than most of the stories of atrocities, and Sinn Fein insisted that "the fact that out of 200,000 Unionists of military age in Ireland—men who talked Empire, sang Empire and protested they would die for the British Empire—four out of every five are still

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at home, declaring they will not have home rule, is proof that the Irish Unionist knows his present business." These sharp comments, however, did not represent the current popular feeling in the South of Ireland. Out of 170,000 National Volunteers, according to Stephen Gwynn, "only a trifle over 12,000 adhered to Professor MacNeill. But in Dublin the opponents were nearly 2,000 out of 6,700; and two strong battalions went almost solid against Redmond."

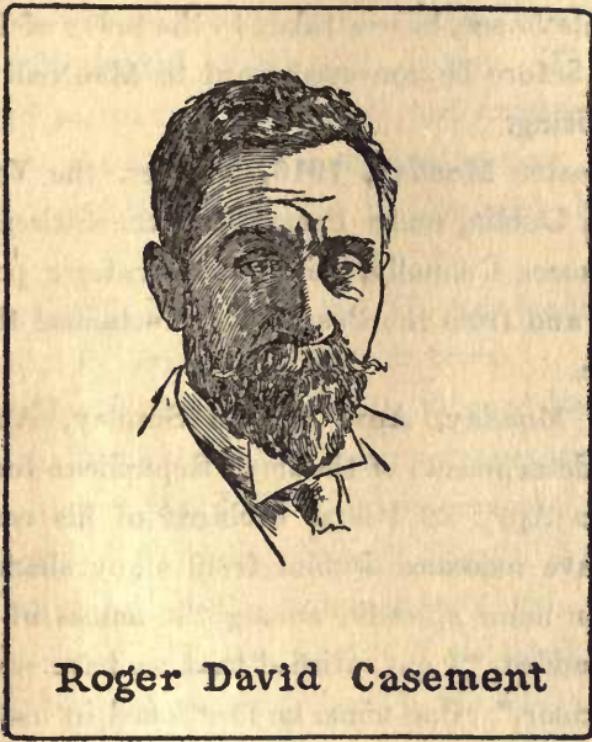
The "raising of the Irish Brigades," as Mr. Gwynn calls it, kept John Redmond busy in spite of such insults to national Ireland as the accession of Sir Edward Carson to the cabinet. But no recruiting campaign could alter the drift of radical feeling. That feeling was impatient from the start of Britain's pretensions in the war. The suppression of nationalist weeklies, the deporting of Volunteer organizers and the imprisonment of an anti-militarist like Sheehy-Skeffington simply added to the intense conviction that unless some positive step was taken the Irish nation would eventually be conscripted for imperial purposes and so confirmed in subjection.

2

Early in the war Roger Casement had gone from the United States to Germany to procure German aid

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for a rising in Ireland. In this difficult mission, for which he was not equipped by a knowledge of the language, Casement did not succeed in convincing the Germans of Ireland's military importance, nor did



Roger David Casement

he convince himself of German sympathy or understanding. Early in 1916, indeed, he made up his mind that the Germans were anxious to provoke a hopeless rebellion in Ireland merely for the sake of creating a

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temporary "diversion," and he resolved to stop it if possible, since the only aid he could secure from Germany was a consignment of Russian rifles.

On Good Friday, 1916, Roger Casement landed on the coast of Kerry, with two companions. Arrested by stupid mischance, he was taken to the tower of London, but not before he conveyed word to MacNeill to call off the rising.

On Easter Monday, 1916, however, the Volunteer forces in Dublin, under Pearse, and the Citizen Army, under James Connolly, seized the strategic points in the city and from the Post Office proclaimed the Irish Republic.

From Monday, April 24, to Sunday, April 30, various detachments of the small Republican force held out. On April 28 Pearse declared of his comrades, "they have redeemed Dublin from many shames, and made her name splendid among the names of cities." And he added, "I am satisfied that we have saved Ireland's honor." One name he mentioned in his proclamation. "I will name only that of Commandant General James Connolly, commanding the Dublin division. He lies wounded, but is still the guiding brain of our resistance."

One of the last leaders to surrender was Eamon de

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Valera, professor of mathematics at Maynooth College, who held Boland's Mill until Sunday noon.

3

The leaders who surrendered to General Maxwell were not treated as prisoners of war. They were regarded as conspirators, rebels and criminals; and the soldiers, therefore, of a conquered nation. They were court-martialled in batches and ordered shot, day by day.

On May 3, Padraic Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Thomas J. Clarke were shot at dawn.

On May 4, Joseph Plunkett, Edward Daly, Michael O'Hanrahan and William Pearse were executed.

On May 5, John MacBride was executed.

On May 7, Cornelius Colbert, Edmund Kent, Michael Mallon and J. J. Heuston were executed.

On May 8, Thomas Kent was executed.

On May 12, James Connolly, nursed back from his wounds, was carried from an ambulance, and shot. Sean McDermott was also shot on May 12.

About 500 lives were lost in the rising, with 1100 combatants wounded.

Roger Casement was executed in August, after a

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state trial, while over a hundred participants in the rising were given long terms of imprisonment.



Padraic H. Pearse

4

The rising was neither nation-wide nor popular, in spite of several years' recruiting for the Irish volunteers. But the stealthy military executions which followed Easter Week struck like successive blows on Ireland's imagination. One coming after another, day

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after day, the killing of these young men reverberated through Ireland like the deliberate accent of a mighty, somber bell. It was the bell of Ireland's history which General Maxwell had tolled, the death-bell of Emmet and Tone.

To an Ireland which had observed the condonation of Ulster, these executions opened before its eyes the glowing illuminated page of a terrible and sacrificial history. Ireland read again the names of glorious rebels who had borne their arms on the open field. It read the names of rebels who had died on the scaffold. To those names it now added Pearse, MacDonagh, Connolly, and a litany of others. Labor had taken up arms with Gaelic scholarship, and the statesman with the poet. Their crime was treason. Their crime was love. Their crime was rebellion. Their crime was the resurrection of Ireland.

Once the Irish people looked again to this past, across the abyss of conquest and confiscation, they realized that they still formed the nation which England branded as criminal. The deliberate plan of conquest, the Elizabethan wars, the settlement of Ulster, Cromwell's savagery, Cromwell's confiscations, the broken treaty of Limerick, the penal code, the White Terror of '98, the infamous Union, Pitt's broken pledge to

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emancipate the Catholics, the tithe war, the artificial famine, the Insurrection Acts, the Coercion Acts, the clearances, the land war, the broken pledge of home rule—this unhappy legend simply to prove the truth of Lincoln's words: "No man is good enough to rule another man, without that other man's consent."

After the rising, Britain scoured Ireland to find every man of quick national feeling and spirit, and obeying the least hint of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the wildest suspicions of Dublin Castle, swept 3,000 or more into internment camps across the Irish Sea. Then, when the world had pondered how Francis Sheehy-Skeffington had met his death during the rising, at the hands of an officer reputed insane, Asquith set out for Ireland to see what statesmanship could add to General Maxwell's contributions.

Having himself made home rule into a tragic farce, having shown neither character nor intelligence in his dealings with Redmond, having yielded to the military on the executions, Asquith could do nothing except make empty and pretentious proposals which deceived no one.

5

The next great effort of British statesmanship was Lloyd George's. Before he became premier in Decem-



ber he undertook the rôle of negotiating an Irish peace. As a temporary expedient, Redmond agreed to the exclusion of the six Ulster counties and with the aid of Devlin secured local consent to temporary exclusion. But when this side of the agreement was completed, Lord Lansdowne went back on the Unionist side of the bargain, and Lloyd George and Herbert Samuel tried to corner Redmond into accepting permanent exclusion. This treachery ended Redmond in Ireland, as his biographer Stephen Gwynn testifies. "We had incurred the very great odium of accepting even temporary partition—and a partition which, owing to this arbitrary extension of area, could not be justified on any ground of principle; we had involved with us many men who voted for that acceptance on the faith of Redmond's assurance that the government were bound by their written word; and now we were thrown over."

Lloyd George as premier, however, made another spectacular effort. In May, 1917, he sent out invitations for a convention of Irishmen who were to frame their own proposals for self-government, "within the Empire." And he guaranteed that, "if substantial agreement should be reached as to the character and scope of the constitution for the future government

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of Ireland within the Empire," his government would give legislative effect to it.

Under the chairmanship of Sir Horace Plunkett this convention sat from May, 1917, to April, 1918, John Redmond dying in the course of its proceedings. By the term "within the Empire," and by the fact that the delegates were appointed, Sinn Fein was excluded from the convention, but even if it had participated "substantial agreement" could never have been secured. The Ulster Unionist Alliance controlled its delegates as a body and had Lloyd George's pledge that "Ulster" would never be coerced. The actual outcome of the convention was five separate reports, the Southern Unionists agreeing to the principle of home rule and the Nationalists presenting their case for a "dominion" home rule, the Ulster Unionists dissenting.

The findings of the convention were hardly in Lloyd George's hands before he announced that, without regard to anything else, he proposed to apply conscription to Ireland.

No British proposal could have had a more profound effect on national Ireland. The Catholic bishops declared the law was "an oppressive and unjust law, which the Irish people have a right to resist by all means consonant with the law of God." Several

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Protestant bishops assented, and Sinn Fein, parliamentarians and labor united in pledging themselves against conscription. The impossibility of enforcing it was evident, no matter what the need for men might be, and the discovery of a famous "German plot," which led to the arrest of prominent Sinn Feiners, in no way helped the government.

6

Not till the armistice and the election which followed it was the victory of Sinn Fein certainly indicated. But the 1918 election left no doubt. Out of eighty nationalist constituencies, seventy-three had voted for the Irish Republican candidates. On January 21, 1919, these members met in the Dail Eireann and issued Ireland's declaration of independence:

"Whereas the Irish people is by right a free people;

"And whereas for seven hundred years the Irish people has never ceased to repudiate and has repeatedly protested in arms against foreign usurpation;

"And whereas English rule in this country is, and always has been, based upon force and fraud and maintained by military occupation against the declared will of the people;

"And whereas the Irish Republic was proclaimed in

The Irish Republic

Dublin on Easter Monday, 1916, by the Irish Republican Army, acting on behalf of the Irish people;

“And whereas the Irish people is resolved to secure and maintain its complete independence in order to promote the common weal, to re-establish justice, to provide for future defense, to insure peace at home and good will with all nations and to constitute a national policy based upon the people’s will, with equal right and equal opportunity for every citizen,

“And whereas at the threshold of a new era in history the Irish electorate has in the general election of December, 1918, seized the first occasion to declare by an overwhelming majority its firm allegiance to the Irish Republic;

“Now, therefore, we, the elected representatives of the ancient Irish people, in national parliament assembled, do, in the name of the Irish nation, ratify the establishment of the Irish Republic and pledge ourselves and our people to make this declaration effective by every means at our command.

“To ordain that the elected representatives of the Irish people alone have power to make laws binding on the people of Ireland, and that the Irish Parliament is the only parliament to which that people will give its allegiance.

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“We solemnly declare foreign government in Ireland to be an invasion of our national right, which we will never tolerate, and we demand the evacuation of our country by the English garrison;

“We claim for our national independence the recognition and support of every free nation of the world, and we proclaim that independence to be a condition precedent to international peace hereafter;

“In the name of the Irish people we humbly commit our destiny to Almighty God, who gave our fathers the courage and determination to persevere through centuries of a ruthless tyranny, and strong in the justice of the cause which they have handed down to us, we ask His divine blessing on this, the last stage of the struggle which we have pledged ourselves to carry through to freedom.”

7

The policy on which Britain now embarked was to repress the Irish Republic. Denying the Irish an opportunity to present their case before the Peace Conference at Versailles, the British sought to coerce the Irish in a fashion which they themselves had reproached in the case of Northeast Ulster. The Irish Re-

The Irish Republic

publicans, however, had useful armed forces. They soon drove the Royal Irish Constabulary into the larger towns and cleared the way for the establishment of arbitration courts and the functioning of Sinn Fein officials in many districts. In the course of 1919-1920 the number of British troops in Ireland was steadily increased, and by the middle of 1920 a new force popularly known as the "Black and Tans" was employed to carry out repression and the destruction of life and property. The assassination of prominent Republicans, the torturing and murdering of prisoners, the killing of innocent men, women, and children, the destruction of houses, villages, and sections of towns, the use of gasoline sprays and bombs in the way of terrorism, the burning of factories and creameries, the destruction of crops and of animals, the practice of "reprisals"—these were the distinguishing features of the British military policy in which about 80,000 troops were eventually employed, using full war equipment, bayonets, rifles, bombs, machine guns, tanks and airplanes.

These troops might have cowed an Ireland which had not heard of the rights of small nations and the principle of self-determination. But in the election of

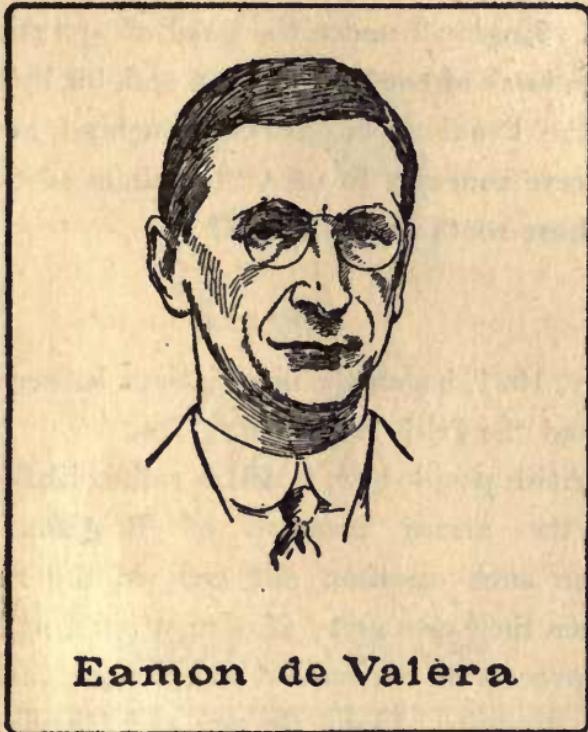
The Story of the Irish Nation

1918 the Irish people had overwhelmingly affirmed their independence, and they were prepared, weak as they were, to wage their fight for freedom. Nor were they the open enthusiasts of the United Irish days who revealed all their plans, nor the simple men of Wexford who rushed to arms in a frenzy of indignation. The Irish Republic had an educated and disciplined citizenship to rely on. And it had paid attention to the stern and bitter words of Michael Davitt in 1899: "I have for four years tried to appeal to the sense of justice in this house of commons on behalf of Ireland. I leave, convinced that no just cause, no cause of right, will ever find support from this house of commons unless it is backed by force."

Under de Valera and Griffith, every type of Irishman and Irishwoman united—the moral-force advocates, the men of physical force who remembered Mitchel and Tone, the "one big union" of labor who remembered Lalor and Connolly, the believers in an ideal Catholic state. The heroism of Terence MacSwiney in his slow vigil of death, the heroism of Michael Collins in his swift embassy of war—these made possible the triumph of Ireland. So did the steadfastness of hunger-strikers, tortured prisoners, occupied areas, a whole country coerced. The wickedness of conquest was

The Irish Republic

reënacted, with English soldiers shouting "Halt!" to Irishmen as in the days of Elizabeth, and English mercenaries burning houses and murdering prisoners as in



Eamon de Valera

the days of '98. But not the whole wickedness of conquest, not the war on the Catholic religion and the venom of the yeoman, not the quartering of the soldiers and the demonism of rape. And the Irish Republican Army fought back, harassed the enemy,

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planned ambushes and carried out the killing of hundreds of individual men.

The war in Ireland, 1920-21, was to the Irish people an intolerable and hateful revival of a conquest steeped in shame. England, under the goad of agitation, had undone its work of confiscation. It had, bit by bit, unlatched the Penal Laws. Could England now have candor, have courage, to meet "the claim of the Irish nation whose roots are in Tara"?

8

In July, 1921, began the negotiations between Lloyd George and the Irish Republic.

The British people had, in 1914, rallied like one man against the armed invasion of Belgium. They showed no such emotion, not even in the ranks of labor, when their own army of occupation held Ireland. But the process of re-conquest was not genuinely supported in Britain. Lloyd George and Hamar Greenwood could not go the limit. The negotiations, therefore, were in some measure a response to conscience, though Lloyd George refused from the start to debate "any abandonment, however informal, of the principle of allegiance to the King, upon which the whole fabric

The Irish Republic

of the empire and every constitution within it are based.”

On September 30, 1921, de Valera consented to a



Michael Collins

conference “with a view to ascertaining how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire may best be reconciled with Irish National aspirations.”

The treaty of December, 1921, later accepted by a

The Story of the Irish Nation

bare majority of the Dail Eireann, became early in 1922 the subject of perhaps the most searching controversy in which Irishmen ever engaged.

9

For Ireland, much more than for England, the present treaty is a problem. The wise Irishman knows that this treaty forces him into an undesired association with England. He also knows that many peoples have lost everything they desired because they could not read their fate.

Beneath these modern nations, his own and England's, there still lurks the savage Northman, the savage Celt, the barbarous Briton or Saxon, only a few hundred years out of his cave. In those few hundred years, by the trembling light of reason, in the search for the good life, men have gained a little security and civilization. But the process is slow, and the war-mind distorts it. For a thousand years Ireland has been afflicted by the war-mind. Would it now be wise to engage solely in the slow, laborious, rational processes of peace and consent?

Is the poem of Seumas Cartan still worth remembering?

The Irish nation has suffered. It can blame conquest,

The Irish Republic

theft, tyranny, for much of its sufferings. But in this world of half-savage, half-reasonable, wholly human beings it can only expect its absolute rights if it forgets its own humanity.

As Ireland purges itself of the war-spirit, understanding its enemies as well as fighting them, it will see its way to accepting or rejecting the imperfect measure which its human agents have wrought.

Perhaps even that imperfect measure may help it to stride to a new and happier history. So its agents hoped. And Ireland's history can scarcely continue to be so incomparably unjust and tragic. It is destined to be free, and to belong to the whole world. For everywhere there are hopes that attend Ireland. Men look especially to those who have served the Irish nation in its worst crisis—de Valera, Griffith, Collins, the men and women of the Dail Eireann. These men and women are responsible to something deeper than names and phrases. They have a positive, creative task before them. They will be judged by their charity, their wise tolerance, their divination. They will be judged above all by their unity as Irishmen for Ireland.

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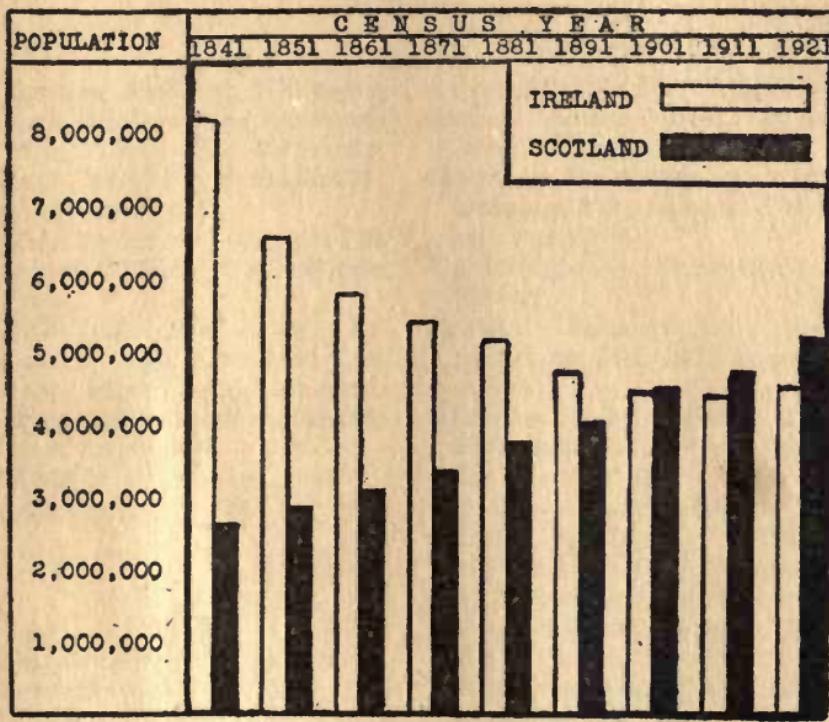
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