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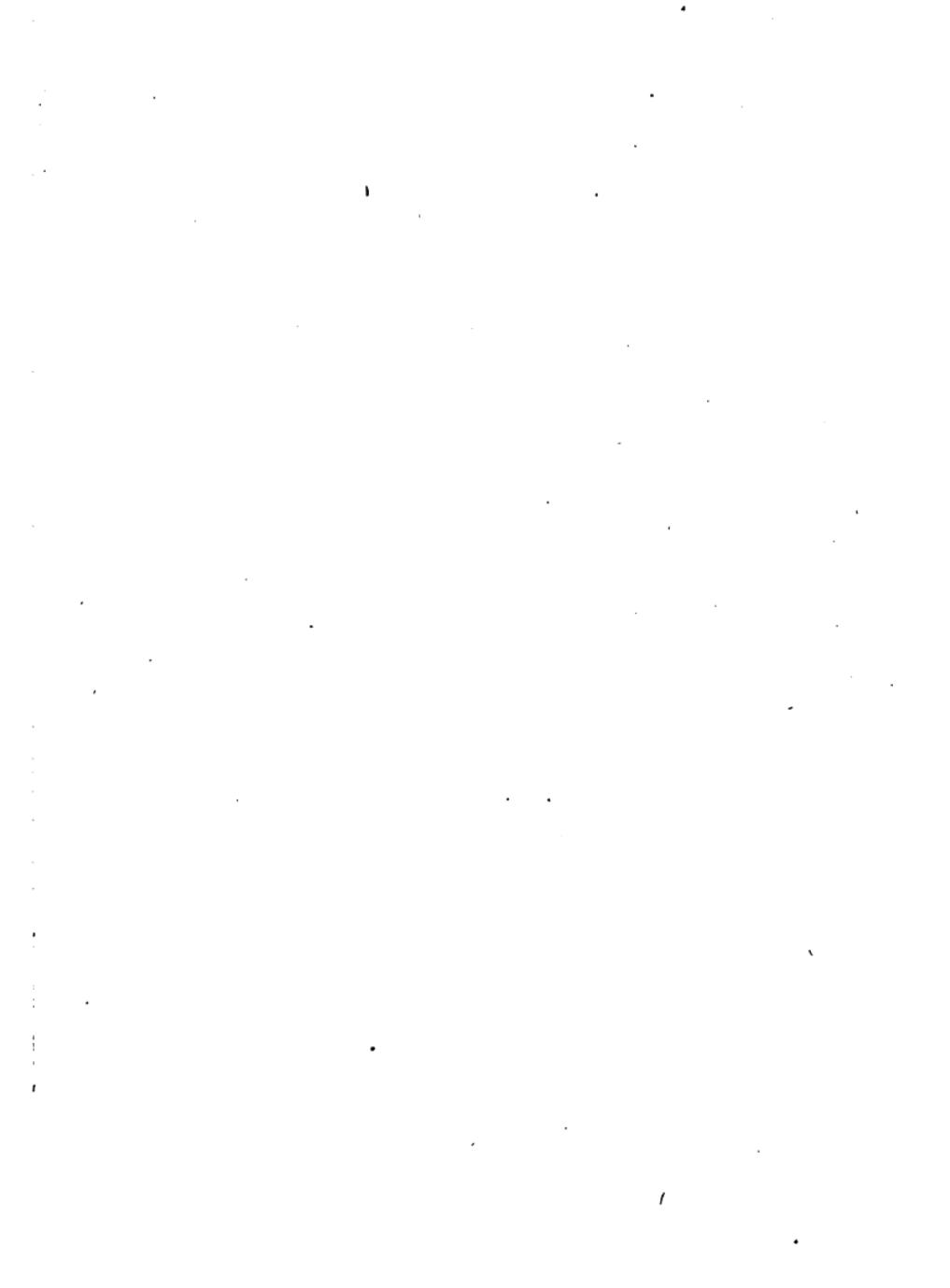
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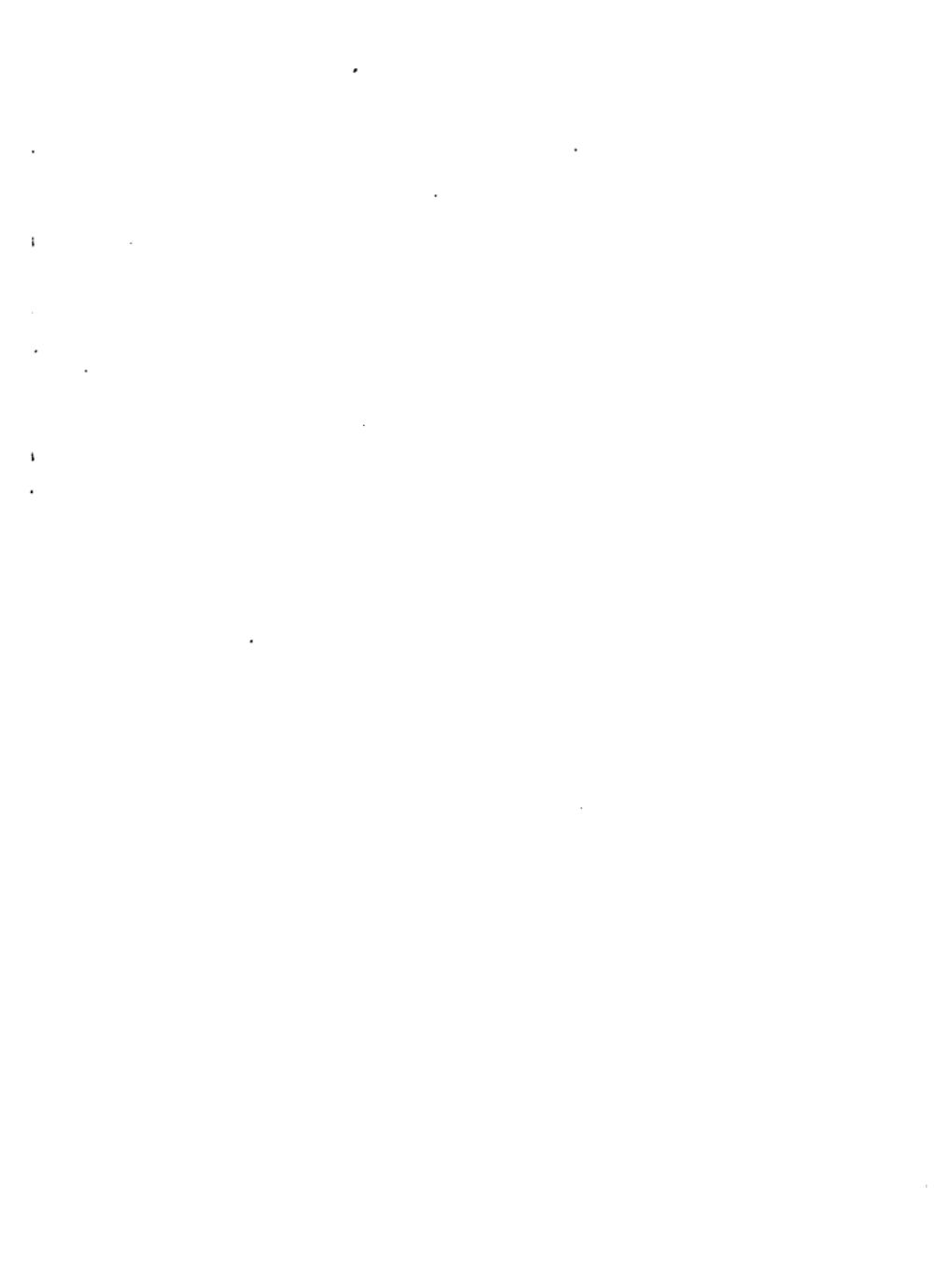


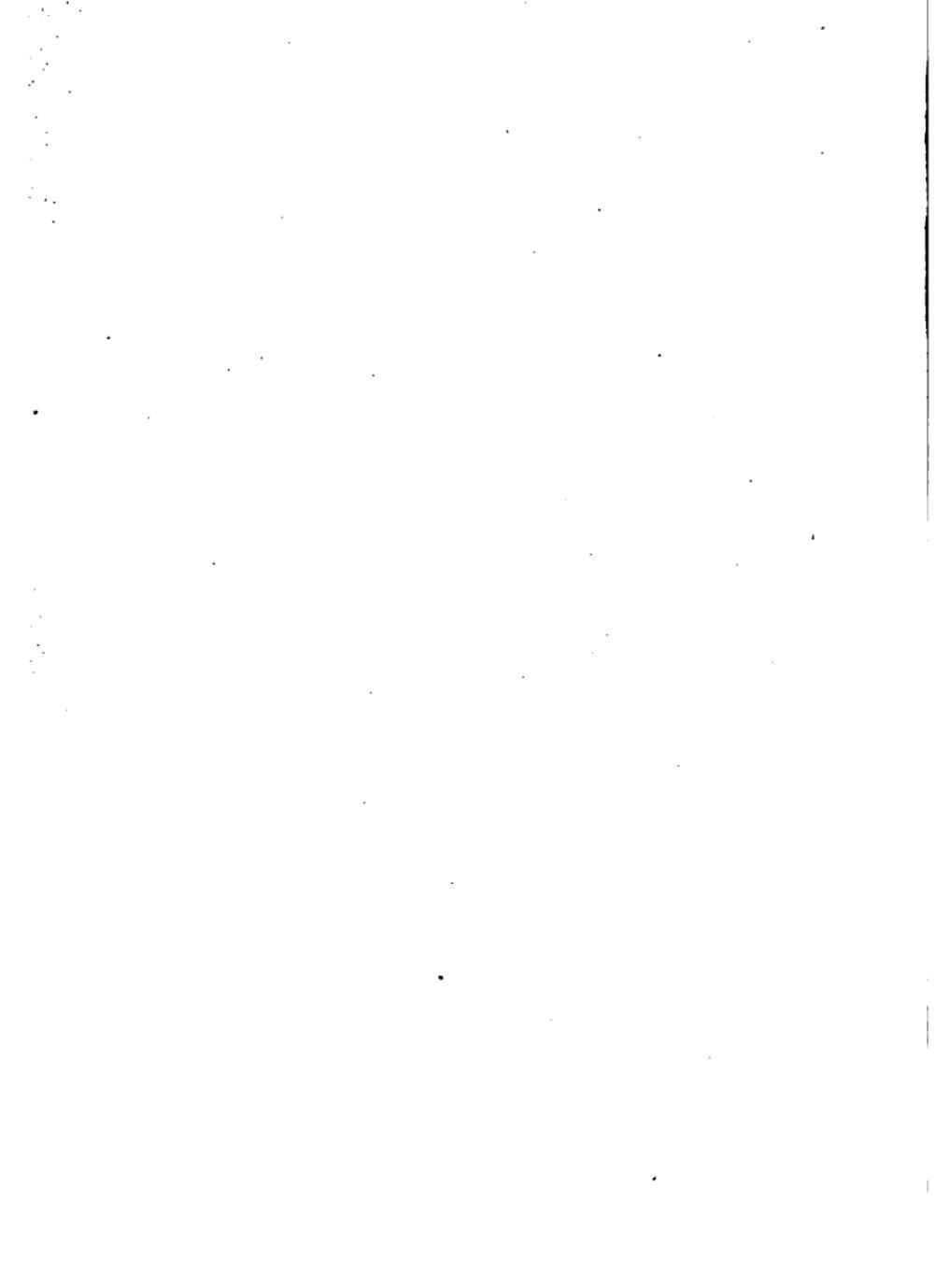
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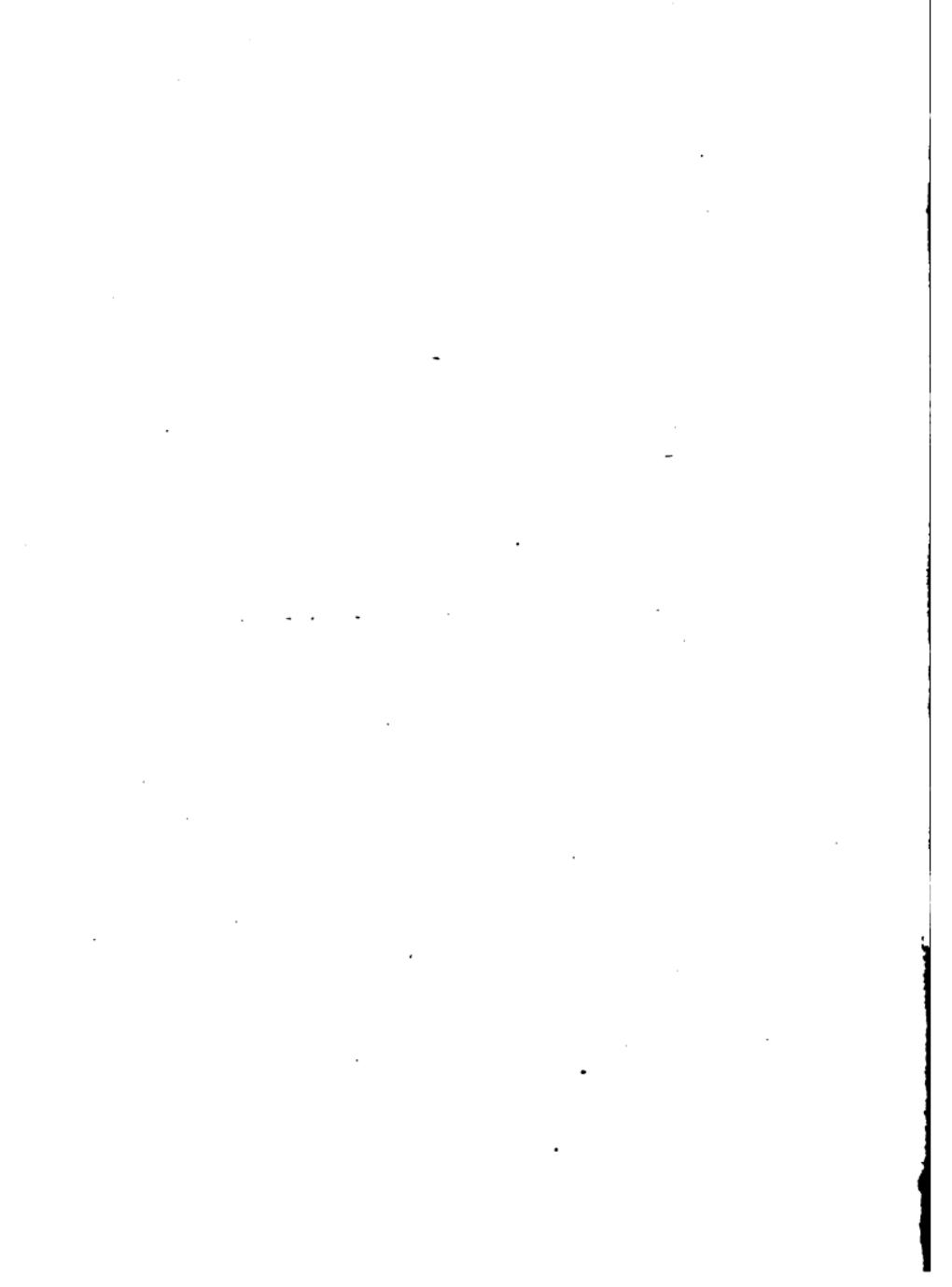
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ALL IRELAND.



ALL IRELAND.

BY

STANDISH O'GRADY,

AUTHOR OF

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“The Flight of the Eagle,” “Ulrick the Ready,”
“The Bog of Stars,” “The Coming of Cuculain,”
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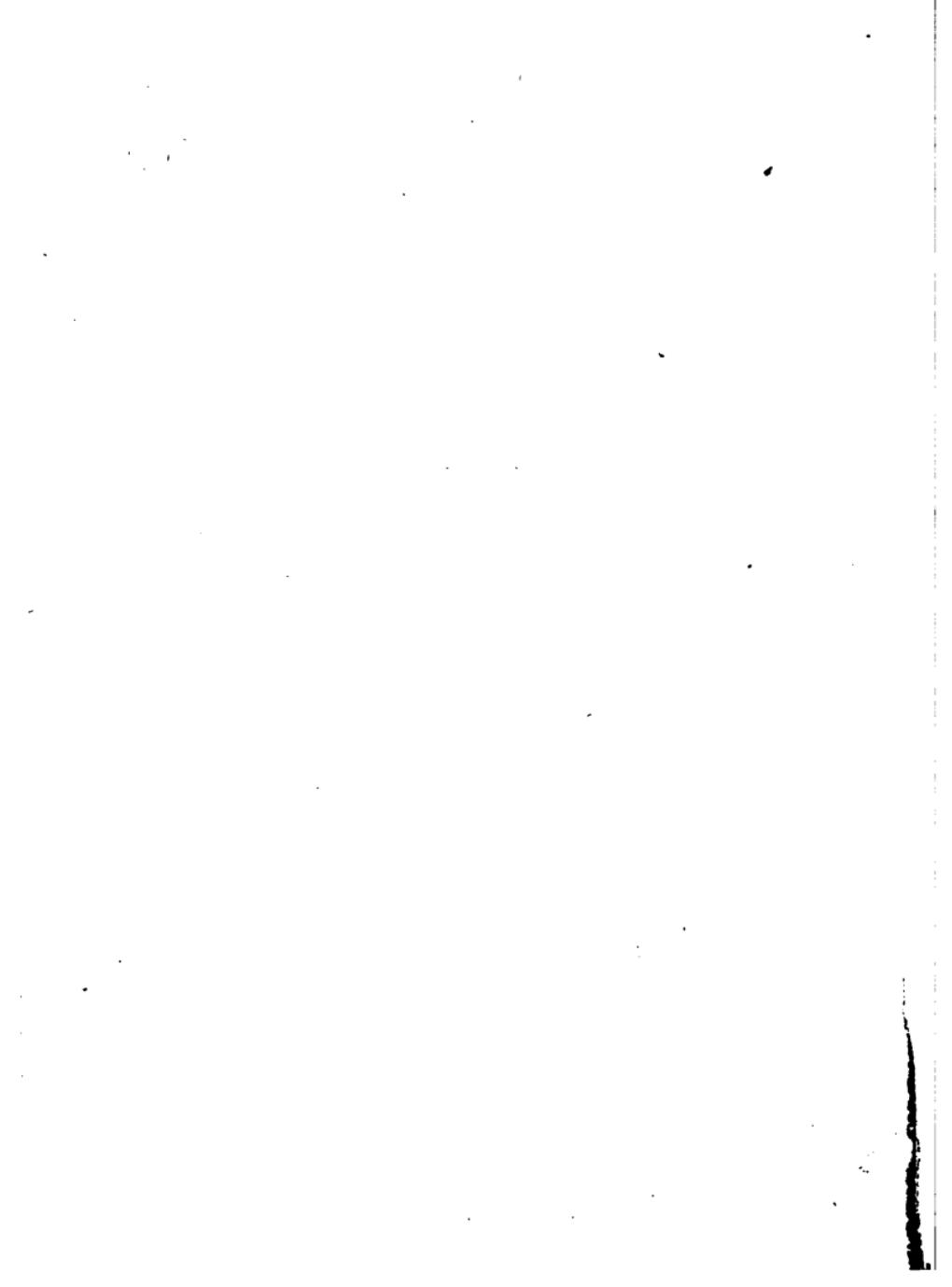


P R E F A C E



HIS book will not swell the growing mass of published matter in which the international Financial Relations are being so admirably expounded, and illustrated by many able, earnest, and disinterested Irish statisticians. Many roads lead to town, and there are more ways than one of approaching the Financial Relations. My way is the way of the literary man, the way of my order; it is through the Heart and the Imagination of the people of Ireland.

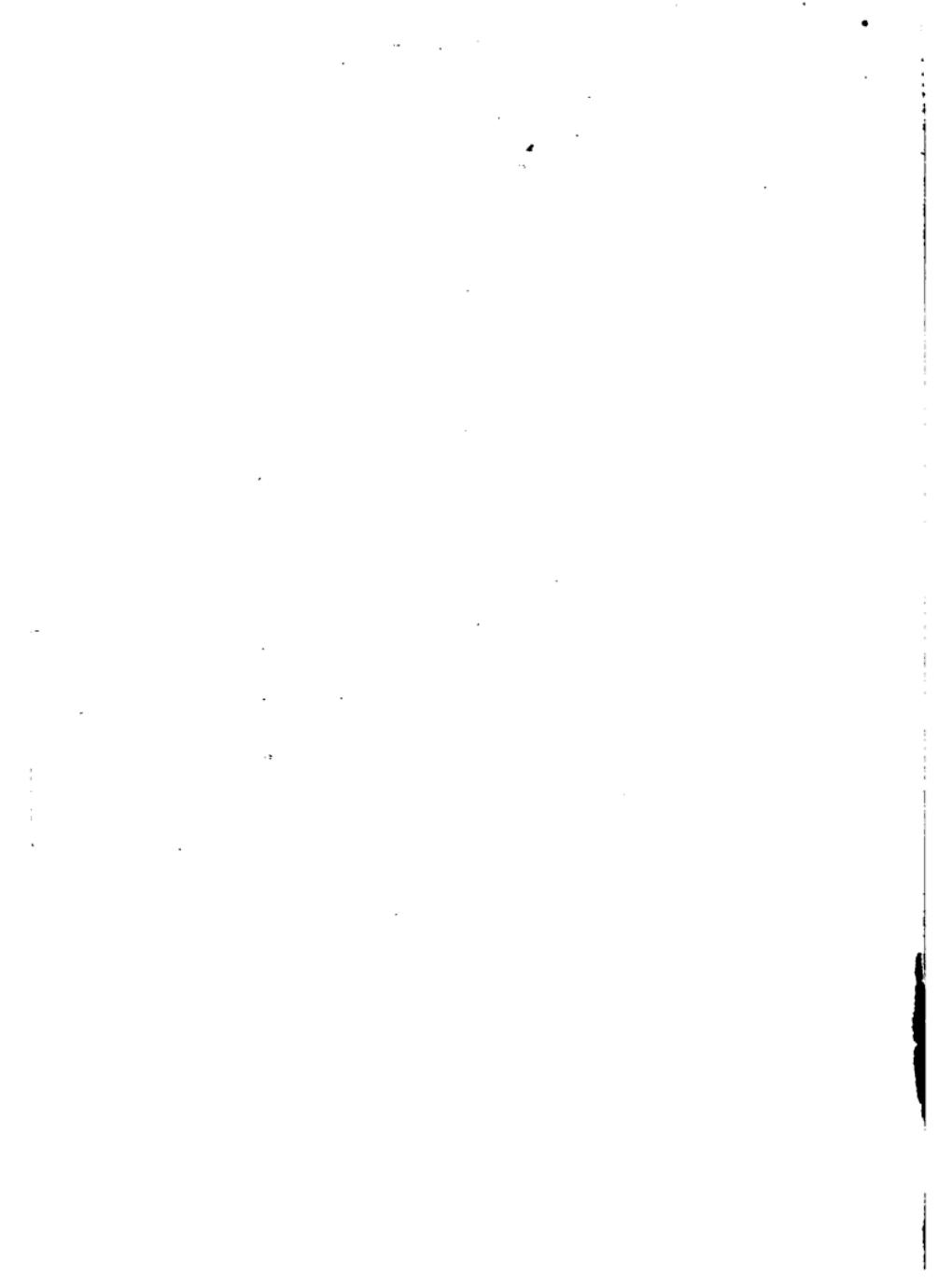
STANDISH O'GRADY.





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ALL IRELAND.

I.

OUR POWER.



T the present time with this new and strange Ireland emerging around us so eager and inquisitive, and so willing to be taught, we need especially public utterances, by pen or speech, not inspired by political partizanship, or addressed to party passion or prejudice, but springing from a true regard for the national welfare, illuminated by the most candid consideration of facts, and addressed to the public conscience, the public reason, and the general interest. Speakers and writers of this type will surely appear—for not only are they greatly needed, but the

times are most favourable to their appearance, and the people of Ireland well inclined, as they never have been before, to listen with attention. Many views will be now respectfully considered which a short time since could not get a hearing at all. Voices inaudible amid the stormy and sounding controversies of the past will be heard in the general lull which prevails at present. Especially will those advisers be attended to who aim at the promotion of Unity and the elaboration of a policy which shall be general and comprehensive and non-controversial in its domestic aspects. We in Ireland are beginning to suspect that the management of our affairs by parties is a political method, the trick of which we do not rightly understand; parties with us having such a fatal tendency to the development of savage and almost cannibal propensities. We begin, too, perhaps, to perceive that while a very rich country, prosperous, contented, and progressive, the seat of an ordered and almost immemorial civilization, may afford the costly luxury of parties, we cannot. Nations, and not so many of them, if the matter be narrowly considered, may endure the waste and loss of party strife,

not a people struggling and feeling their way towards nationhood. One party is enough for us. Indeed the social and economical condition of this country would seem to warn us away from such forms of political self-indulgence, for we are essentially an agricultural country having but one serious interest in common, and one staple industry, while we stand already related to each other nearly enough in the ties of a common poverty. One party we can afford and no more—one party, and that party, Ireland.

As if designed and prepared to that end by Providence, or the good genius of our land and race, there has emerged in our time the great international finance question, an issue of such magnitude that in its presence all causes of intestinal discord, if such there be, dwindle into insignificance. Beside the great common wrong pressing upon all alike, peer and peasant, robbing the merchant of his profits and the labouring man and woman of the fair fruits of their toil, a wrong wreaked upon the poorest people in Christendom by the richest that the world has ever seen, a wrong still continuing and still insolently ignored or denied, what other wrong of any

Irish class can be mentioned? The proved fruits of it exceed the capitalised value of all Ireland. The fiscal spoliation of Ireland by successive Chancellors of the Exchequer, known all along intuitively by many of us, and suspected, on general principles, by many more, stands now established beyond the reach of cavil. We know that it is gross and palpable, and that it has been conducted upon a colossal and still expanding scale. One hundred millions does not express the aggregate amount of the plunder raked into the Imperial coffers out of this country, or two hundred millions, or three. The more the international accounts are investigated the huger is perceived to be the sum total of that plunder. In quarters new and unsuspected, new and unsuspected forms of fiscal fraud are being brought to light; in transactions long forgotten robberies are found concealed under plausible arrays of figures.¹ Mr. Balfour and his friends did unwisely in struggling against the Report of the Financial Relations Commission, unwelcome as was that exposure, and enormous the injustice which

¹ See Sir T. G. Esmond's articles in *The New Ireland Review*, 1897.

it revealed. That at least was the report of Englishmen, and the great wrong was thereby defined and limited from an English point of view. We, the wronged party, have not yet examined these accounts in Ireland, and from an Irish point of view. When we are awake and alive to the full meaning of the issue we will. Some day we shall appoint our own Commission, charged with the duty of ripping up these accounts *ab initio*, and will stand by the report of our own financiers till some approximation to justice is arrived at. Ireland has not so far pronounced upon those transactions. We have not, indeed, as yet, shown any of the spirit in which such things are possible ; but then we have not so far realised either the significance of the figures or the extent of our power. Time, however, is on our side. The great wrong stands and endures in all its magnitude, the suffering endures, and the cynical indifference and robber insolence of the spoilers show no sign of abatement. Time is on our side. Slowly but surely the new movement swells and grows, with many a pause and relapse, for its action is undular, like all such. In the wake of that poor little wave of agitation which we have

witnessed, other and greater waves are gathering, and behind all is the rising tide.¹ Forces of utterly incalculable strength are by their very nature bound ere long to mingle with this movement and carry it forward, not only to the abatement of that wrong, but over it and beyond it, to unknown and unapprehended but mighty and far-reaching issues and developments.

Meantime we can abide by the Report of the Commission of 1896 as representing the minimum of the Irish demand, knowing well—for it had been proved—that the Ministerial allegation of a “set² off,” on foot of an imaginary over-expenditure upon Irish Administration, is not even a plausible pretence, and is, in any case, nullified by the distinct terms of the deed of partnership between the nations. That Report is quite sufficient for current purposes, for it reveals as due to Ireland by the Imperial Treasury a debt which is, at the lowest, some 150 millions of pounds sterling, the recovery and wise application of which, or even a small proportion of which, and the suppression of the fiscal system which has

¹ Written in the summer of 1897.

² “Expenditure Account,” by Mr. Arthur Samuels, Q.C.

rendered such spoliation possible, are enough to occupy our best energies for years to come.

Here, then, beyond all doubt, is our base of unity ; hence the summons to combined and patriotic action. This is the centre around which Irish politics in the future must revolve, and upon which the chaos of our intestine confusions must subside. Ireland has been stripped so bare that there is nothing left about which it would be worth while for us to quarrel. The great financial wrong is steadily compelling us all into a single camp. From that camp, in due time, and after having submitted there to the necessary drill and discipline, we shall emerge again, no longer a disorderly, insensate, and helpless rabble of parties and factions, but, as it were, an army with captains, a combined and determined nation resolved to prosecute our quarrel to all issues. We have Right on our side and, what avails still more in a world such as this, we have Might.

Final victory is assured ; of that let no one entertain a doubt. United and determined we have the power to do more than compel the payment of a just debt, one, too, whose justice has been guaranteed by the debtor's

own scrutineers; we have the power to do many things, of which in our present divided and distracted condition we do not even dare to dream.

This financial movement has arisen about gross material wrongs, and is so far concerned only with stolen millions, but there is more than millions in this movement. It is approved and supported by many men who care little about the millions, but care a great deal about the splendid ulterior issues and developments which are sure to follow this our national demand for bare financial justice and the restoration of stolen property. Starting with a gross material wrong which presses alike upon all, and inflicts suffering upon all, the track of the new movement is seen, as if with the naked eye, expanding on all sides into vistas of the most glorious possibility. It is no little peasant and pauper Republic rejoicing in the possession of a toy Parliament while governed absolutely by a foreign power, that one sees far away down the shining road, but something radiant, nay, Imperial, moving onward in strange ways to the fulfilment of world-wide destinies. The heroic age of Ireland is not a tradition, but a prophecy; unfulfilled, but which is to be fulfilled.

It is forgotten, or not known, that we as a nation have the absolute command of our own destiny ; none but ourselves can really do us wrong, just as none but ourselves are really responsible for the past. We can settle this international finance question exactly as we please, and compel the redress which, we believe, to be our due. We need not petition that justice should be done, but direct it to be done. The power wielded by Ireland, within the Constitution, enables us to dictate our terms and compel their acceptance. We need not argue, or plead, or implore, unless we have a passion for such humble amusements. Our leading men act, speak, and write as if utterly unaware that Ireland can plead Might as well as Right in this controversy. Within the Constitution while we pursue just aims in a rational manner, making no bad blunders by the way, our power is irresistible, though the fact may be for the present concealed from us under a veil of illusion, the glamour and prestige of the Imperial Parliament hiding from us at the same time its own essential weakness and our essential power.

True, the British Empire might withstand the shock of half the world in arms, and yet it

may be equally true that the Imperial Parliament, despite its seeming supremacy and power, is after all only a kind of mechanism which may be taught to work this way or that according as it is subjected to the application of a particular sort of force. That force, under the Constitution, we possess ; therefore, to achieve the desired results all that we need is unity in order to evolve the necessary force, and a little common sense and practical sagacity to direct and govern its application. We can rule our rulers and dictate the policy of Ministries if we but please.

The Imperial Parliament in spite of all its glare and glitter, is to a great extent a fraud and a delusion, offering itself as an easy prey to the first body of bold and determined men who have realised the fact of its essential weakness. Terrible to the simple, it is despicable to the wise, for all entities become essentially despicable when their action ceases to be governed by principle and purpose. The great parties rule Parliament and are themselves ruled by opportunism. They are essentially unprincipled and therefore can be bought and sold, or sent on errands, and will fetch and carry at our pleasure.

It is singular that we in Ireland should have forgotten these things while the career of Parnell is still fresh in public memory. Parnell had against him the Protestants of Ireland almost to a man; he had against him the once powerful now failing landlord class and all its affiliated interests—against him the merchants and professional men, while, as was apparent in the sequel, many of his apparent followers were not, to say the least, very fanatical believers in the practicability or the wisdom of his purpose. Yet Parnell, wielding only the power of a party, shook the State as he passed, compelled the two Imperial parties to approach him with competitive proposals, and despatched the greatest statesman of the day round England as the preacher of his doctrine. He perceived what is, after all, a staring fact in contemporary politics, viz.—that neither of the two great parties is animated by principle or purpose, but solely by the spirit of opportunism and political expediency, and dared to act boldly upon that perception. He was strong because he was a man of purpose in the midst of men of no purpose in that High Court of Parliament from which principle has long since vanished and whose action is almost

avowedly governed by considerations arising out of votes. The man who is without purpose or principle is justly contemned. Why should we respect these great Imperial parties which present themselves periodically in the market place and all but advertise their price? We have a nation where Parnell had a party, we have all Ireland—Protestant, Catholic, and Presbyterian; we have the whole Irish race, and the sympathy of the world, and plenty of ready-made British allies too, if we need their help—which we do not. We have a proved and gigantic wrong where he had an idea—an idea of questioned and questionable utility. Like a man he fought and like a man he fell, but he fell before omnipotent Destiny as he fought against the courses of the stars. To a far greater extent than he, we can bend these venal parties to our will, and send their leaders forth over Great Britain as the preachers of our doctrine—the doctrine of financial reform and redress for Ireland. These great parties and their leaders are our slaves if we choose to make them so. The game is in our own hands if we can bring ourselves to recognise the fact.



II.

OUR FOLLY.



HE game is in our own hands;" we hold all the winning cards, yet we are not winning, nor indeed deserve to win.

This great game, the greatest we were ever called upon to play, in which hundreds of millions of pounds sterling are concerned, in which the weal or woe of our children and their children, and in which the prosperity, power, and glory of our country are at stake—with all the winning cards in our hands, we play it like children, or fools, or men besotted. Politics are an art of which we do not as yet understand the rudiments.

The All-Ireland Committee waited on the

Chancellor of the Exchequer and in his hostile ear delivered our tale of wrong.

“Assuming that we admit the debt,” replied the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urbanely smiling, “how would you like it paid?”

The Committee of All-Ireland looked dubiously upon one another, and were dumb.

“Would you like it in a cheque or cheques?”

The Committee could not tell.

“Or perhaps in cash?”

No response.

“Paid in kind perhaps, or in useful expenditure and the development of the resources of your country?”

The Committee of All-Ireland could make no suggestion.

“Or, perhaps, in the remission of taxation off the poor woman’s tea and snuff, the poor man’s tobacco, the hard-earned incomes of your middle class?”

“We were of opinion, Chancellor, as you are so much wiser than we, and know so much more about Ireland than we do, that perhaps you might have some plan.”

“No, I have no plan. And as you have none this interview had better reach an end. Good morning, gentlemen.”

"Good morning, Chancellor."
Exit the All-Ireland Committee, not flushed with victory.

These gentlemen thought themselves astute. They would not permit the Chancellor to "draw" them.

Perhaps so, but what business had these gentlemen in London at all, and in the presence of insolent ministers, before evolving here in Ireland that which alone commands the attention of any British minister—Force?

Yet, the All-Ireland Committee deserve well of their country. When the first wave of our agitation broke and fell they supplied that continuity of things out of which the second has arisen. They kept the flag flying when everywhere else it had become a memory. They did their best under circumstances most depressing. They gave their time and labour to the cause. They opened their purses and spent money on it, though, at the same time, dismally conscious that the All-Ireland which lay behind them was torpid and stupid, if not actively sneering, scoffing, and malignant.

So we play the great game when, with a voice reaching to the world's ends, we might bid our All-Ireland Committee present all Ireland's

demands with clearness, purpose, and specification, and supported by the whole constitutional representation of this island, 103 members of the Imperial Parliament, counting 206 in a division, and with any number of British "friendlies" to aid and abet. Before such a deputation and so supported, the Chancellor of the Imperial Exchequer is not made, or can be made, who would not bow low and reply:—

"Gentlemen, we are but servants of the public; your will shall be done."

Yet we prefer to "sit $\ddot{\sigma}\alpha\mu\alpha$ " on the doorstep of the oppressor, the rich man, the debtor; to "sit $\ddot{\sigma}\alpha\mu\alpha$ "—fasting—and exhibit our sores and emaciation, and generally make ourselves a nuisance to the rich man, the debtor, who understands plain speaking backed by evident power, but does not at all understand this ghastly ceremony of sitting $\ddot{\sigma}\alpha\mu\alpha$. There is but one way of dealing with John Bull, and that is the strong way, and assuredly he will never pay this debt unless we make him.

The root of all our woes is not in England but in ourselves. We lack will, purpose, and political intelligence. Were they ours, even to a moderate degree, we would witness the

cheerful, nay amusing, spectacle of these great Imperial parties tumbling over each other in their haste to anticipate our wishes or fulfil our commands. The Imperial Parliament, divided against itself, and utterly devoid of principle or purpose, is, in relation to Ireland, exactly what we choose to make it, good or bad, cruel or kind, tyrant or slave, predatory or helpful.

It is our own likeness which we see there, flung in unrecognisable and gigantic proportions on that gigantic screen. If Parliament misgoverns us it is we misgoverning ourselves out of London. No one can oppress us except ourselves ; not one. We have but to will that Parliament shall radically alter its Irish policy, fiscal or otherwise, and Parliament will radically alter its Irish policy, fiscal or otherwise. For Parliament is no living entity ; it is animated by no soul ; it acts in obedience to no internal volition. Of itself, like Chance, it is nothing, and can do nothing. That august Parliament is a weather-cock which revolves to face every mutation of the breeze ; it indicates the direction and registers, accurately, the force of the wind. Let a wind set in steady from the *West* and its serene countenance

will turn this way, and with looks of amiable inquiry.

Recall, here, the results, on the other side of the water, springing out of that poor little agitation of ours in December, '96, and January, '97, when for a moment it seemed as if our factions were about to combine. Cork had hardly spoken when a first-class British statesman (of the current type) sprang forth in the eye of England as our declared ally. Kerry had hardly spoken when he was joined by a second. Amazing but true! Two possible Premiers—superior men, either of whom offered the materials of a Premier—stood out as our staunch friends and the fervent preachers of our doctrine. Let it not be supposed for an instant that I attribute anything like moral or political turpitude to these excellent Englishmen. Perish the thought! But, then, the world is full of rights which cannot vindicate themselves, and wrongs which groan in vain to be avenged. Witness “the sweated” crying out of their pit since and before the publication of *Alton Locke*, nigh sixty years ago, and crying still, and crying in vain. The “sweated” command no votes, therefore nobody regards them. Let the sweated combine, and determine the

fate of a few constituencies, and they will find their political paladins. For the world of politics, as it exhibits itself at St. Stephen's, is rotten with a rottenness which cannot be described ; like the liar in the *apologue*, it is brave to God and cowardly to man. Let men anywhere show a little spirit, and appear to command votes, then the statesmen will rush forth to welcome them, and the Imperial Parliament will be found their friend.

So in December, '96, when we showed a little spirit, and when it was fondly, too fondly, believed in England that we were men and meant business, not children meaning only play, two statesmen of the foremost rank stepped out as champions of our cause and expounders of our doctrine. Soon they were joined by a third, an Adullamite possibly, and recalcitrant member of the party in power, but, too, in the foremost rank, of first-rate abilities, and of superior forensic and political reputation. This gentleman, Sir Edward Clarke, joined them as a third. So by Christmas, 1896, after less than a month's agitation, by merely *playing* at union, and by stirring up a little storm in the Irish tea-pot, whose singing was supplemented, it is true, by the immense roar-

ings of the *Times*, we secured the loyal services, the patient industry, the superior abilities, and the weight and reputation of three British statesmen—Mr. Morley, Mr. Asquith, and Sir Edward Clarke. Nor was this all. More were coming. In January, while our counties were still proclaiming themselves, a paragraph ran round the Press to the effect that the leader of one of the two great Imperial parties was spending “his days and nights in a close study of the Report of the Commission.” As the leader of a great party it behoved Sir William Harcourt to be cautious. Action on his part would commit the whole party—a very serious matter—and, after all, that disturbance in Ireland, though the *Times* kept intermittently bellowing over it like a lion afflicted with tooth-ache, or some other ache, might in the end prove to be nothing. In the meantime some such newspaper paragraph would serve. And it was nothing. In the latter end of January the combining Irish forces fell asunder in order to pursue, with more diligence, each its own small and divulsive class purposes, or its small and divulsive party purposes. That disbandment of our forces was a great relief to England; the *Times* felt better, and Sir William

Harcourt, smiling at his own astuteness, pigeon-holed the Report. But how the mere wind of that little agitation stirred England, and all but secured to us the pledged services of one of the great parties! And this, too, is a fact worthy of the most serious consideration. Had the Conservatives been in Opposition instead of in power the Conservatives would have been with us and the Liberals against. The *roles* of the two parties would have been reversed. Lord Salisbury himself declared once in Parliament that the treatment of this country under the Imperial fiscal system was "a slur upon the fair fame of England." Here we have "the germ" of another "idea," which would grow beautifully under favourable circumstances.

Remembering that all modern statesmen are opportunist we should take care to provide the favourable circumstances. Under favourable circumstances, that financial idea will spring and grow and blow and bloom in the mind of the Premier. Ours was, indeed, the poorest little agitation imaginable. We shall do better next time. With more matured and experienced minds we shall, one day, resume this agitation. Let us remember, then, that it is through their own statesmen we are to instruct

the English people concerning our financial rights and wrongs. To us they will not give heed, though we speak to them with "the tongue of men and angels." All our efforts in that direction are worse than useless. They attract an unnecessary and embarrassing attention to our private affairs. When the wolf-hound is swift enough and strong enough to pursue and overtake and drag down, then let him bay, and with his baying startle the nations. But the snappish and yelping proclivities of the wolf-hound puppy must be repressed.

The people of England must be taught our rights by their own trusted leaders, while we, on our part secure the services of those leaders in the usual way. This battle, observe, is to be fought and won here at home in Ireland. When we shall have created here the necessary political force everything else follows. British statesmen will do all that is necessary in England, performing with English exactitude and precision the orders which they receive from us. Our financial reformers, then, need not open their mouths in England, or raise a debate in Parliament, or go on deputations to Ministers or write a line in English newspapers and

magazines. Our work is at home.¹ This is one of the simplest, clearest, and most primary laws of the situation, yet how it has been ignored, and is ignored! Such tactics, however they may serve the vanity of individuals, or their ambition, are worse than useless. They are a help to the enemy.

Parliament is with us or against us as we are true to ourselves or not true. Exactly as we exhibit unity and concentration of force, or dissipate, in internal convulsions, the great and sufficient strength which we possess, Parliament will be our friend or our foe. So far as I can judge we shall be fools for a season. We Irish are not naturally stupid; we have made ourselves so through our feuds and factions and the mutual wrath and suspicion which they engender. Love is proverbially blind, nobly blind. So is hatred, but ignobly so. The road which we have to tread, the road which leads to happiness, prosperity, power, lies in light before us, but we cannot see it. We have put out our light—the light of reason—and wander darkling. Protestant and Catholic, Unionist and Home Ruler, clerical and independent,

¹ This, which was a paradox last winter, is now a common place, or nearly so. The fact shows rapid progress in political intelligence.

landlord and agrarian reformer, sectarian and non-sectarian, Fenian and Imperialist, we fight about nothing or about trifles, while our country fares quietly to perdition. To the power of Ireland, acting within the Constitution, no bounds can be assigned. It arises from our ample Parliamentary representation, combined with the venality of both the Imperial parties and the ease with which their policy can be taught to flow in any direction commanded by votes. Outside the Constitution we are nothing, a bubble under the bows of an ironclad, a blade of grass in the path of an elephant ; within the Constitution we can assume the absolute command of our own destinies, we can make and unmake our laws, administer our own country, and from that guarded Imperial treasure-chamber take and withdraw, in open day and in the face of the world, in such amounts, and at such times as we please, all that we need for the promotion of our purposes, always provided that we are united, in earnest, determined ; always provided that we have purposes, and know clearly whither we go, and what we want. Our voting power in the House of Commons, brought to bear upon the disorderly and contentious forces there, is sufficient for all our

needs. Add to this merely mechanical force of votes the vital compelling power of a justly indignant nation ; superadd the immense interest and fascination affecting externs, and affecting them profoundly, which must surround an ancient and famous and unfortunate people beginning to stir, and against the grossest and rankest of all modes of oppression, that of sheer theft ; superadd the dense ignorance of all Englishmen concerning our affairs and their readiness, being ignorant, and knowing that they are ignorant, to yield to our wishes when clearly formed and clearly expressed ; and it must be plain to the simplest that we alone, owing to the difficulty which we find in uniting, are responsible for this or any other wrong which we endure.

United and determined, acting within the Constitution, and pursuing just aims by rational methods, there is no power on earth that can check or retard us upon our way, but powers, of a thousand kinds, clear or dim, seen or unseen, material or spiritual, ready to welcome us and assist us upon the way. In Great Britain itself, throughout the whole range of the Empire, and in the world at large, we have our prepared friends and allies from the very

moment that we, on our part, begin to stir. Their help will not be forthcoming for an Irish party, no matter how strong that Irish party may be ; it is reserved for Ireland united. And now, time and events have supplied us, for the first time, with a wide, sure, and enduring base of unity, a foundation upon which we can strongly build, and without any fear of "a settlement," a foundation as strong as the Earth's rind, and co-extensive with the land in which we live. Never before in all the two thousand years of her history has Ireland once, till to-day, been supplied with a base of unity. This is a fact, and should provoke very serious reflections upon our part, seeing that to us have been granted opportunities denied to all preceding generations. Never before has anything of the kind emerged to still our broils and contentions and enjoin peace and unity, common action, and a combined front. Long we were a host of petty principalities and warring kingdoms, a prey to all the sturdy thieves who might cast their eyes this way. The Dane, the Norman, the Tudor English, came in succession and did with us as they pleased. It was not then that we would not unite but that we could not. We can now.

In the seventeenth century arrived the age of great parties, parties springing so vitally each from its own principle, religious or political, or so based on exclusive interests that the only form of unity to which they could attain, if at all, was that of a fleeting and ephemeral confederacy. Such were the armed and fighting parties which divided Ireland in the seventeenth century. Union was impossible to those warring parties, for men will only combine, to any effect, around common interests and upon a common principle. Now we have great interests in common and a great principle which, if not higher, is deeper, stronger, and more universal than any of those for which our ancestors drew the sword. It is a principle which brings into play the elemental instinct of self-preservation. It bids us proclaim and assert the doctrine that what we earn by our labour shall not be stolen from us by Chancellors of the Exchequer and Clerks of the Treasury. It is not so romantic as that of those who fought for the Crown or for Religion, or drew for the "little dark Rose;" but it is sound and just, it can awaken more elemental and powerful passions, it embraces all Ireland, and every mode and form of romance and

heroism may grow out of it. If it begins with money it will not end with money. It begins at all events with a demand for Justice, than which there is nothing greater.

It would be a problem surpassing the wit of man to invent and elaborate a cause round which our people could better rally and organise themselves into a single party than that which in the international financial relations question has been supplied to us without thought or preparation on our part.

It is pecuniary and affects all—the gross as well as the refined, the stupid as well as the clever. Therefore it supplies the broadest conceivable base of combination. Again, it is huge ; nay, colossal ! It stands out, like a mountain on the political horizon—everyone can see it and everyone understand.

It is enduring ; it waxes but does not wane : it is greater this year than last year, and will be greater next year than it is this year. If we cannot grapple with it, it remains for our children, and, if they cannot, it remains for our grandchildren.

It is not like the land question, which splits up the island along one line of cleavage, or the Home Rule question which divides it, along

another line of cleavage. It does not split at all, but unites and compacts. Unionist, Nationalist, and Fenian are at one here, for the Nationalist desires a squaring of accounts prior to separation of Parliaments, and the Fenian can have no objection to that. Let the Fenian, too, consider with himself and perpend how a well-fed, proud and prosperous nation of eight millions is more likely to give a good account of itself in the war for which he sighs than the Ireland of to-day. As for the Unionist, his right to be in the movement is clear, for it is through the Union and through our power in the Imperial Parliament that we can secure the squaring of those accounts. When we shall have squared these accounts we may divide again and resume the delightful and profitable pastime of faction-fighting, but meantime let us unite in earnest for this thing at least, and carry this thing through. Sure am I that if we unite for this work, and in earnest, we shall never separate any more.

Ireland, by virtue of constitutional right, lies coiled around the roots of England; her power runs under the foundations of the Empire. If driven to transmarine action we

can act effectively beyond Ireland. In the Imperial Parliament we can intervene, if necessary, as a third Imperial party, with British allies in abundance if we want them. "The Celtic fringe" is ours to start with. Agricultural and fair trade England and the overtaxed poor of England—they are all our natural allies. Driven to our shifts by an unusually powerful Administration or by a combination of the two historic Imperial parties, we might flutter many dovecots. Our programme and purposes lend themselves beautifully to such an expansion of the war-theatre. Thwarted in the task of setting our own house in order we might carry the war into Africa with very interesting results. But, in fact, we do not require such an embarrassing expansion of the area of hostilities. It needs very little political intelligence to perceive that Ireland united and determined, bringing her power to bear upon the party strife of a moribund political institution like the Imperial Parliament is, in fact, Ireland irresistible.

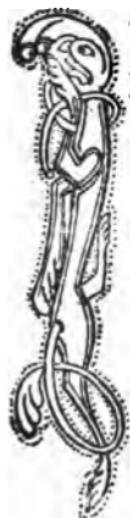
Once only in our two thousand years of history did we unite. The results were instructive. In the latter part of the eighteenth century we united to demand that stout-

thieving exercised at our expense should cease ; and it did cease. We went further and demanded a free field for the activity of our Parliament, and the Imperial Parliament, then a very different entity from what it is now, bowed low, politely responding, "As you please." And, observe, at the time we had not a man in that Parliament. Now, theoretically, we own a sixth of it ; practically we own more than half, for one of the two great contending parties there is ever at our service. Compared with the Parliament which Grattan cowed, this with which we have to deal is a mere bogey, fit only to frighten children and fools. Our ancestors cowed an Empire which was governed by gentlemen and men of honour, high-principled and high-purposed. Are we to be bullied out of our rights, and reduced to a little community of grasers and herds—for that is the future meant for us—by political prostitutes and public liars ?



III.

A LESSON FROM OUR HISTORY.



N 1778, in spite of many and profound causes of dissension, we combined to secure the suppression of stout-thievery and the emancipation of our Parliament from an external control asserted mainly with a view to the fiscal spoliation of Ireland. Protestants, Catholics, Presbyterians, we then, in spite of profound causes of dissension, drew together and combined ; united, in earnest, and determined, under the leading, not of elected captains, but of a Protestant Oligarchy, against whose dominance the Irish people had no political and few civil rights. Yet we saw the right road then as the Genius of the Hour pointed it out ; we saw it, and we travelled it,

like men, nothing doubting. We combined, and we conquered. We put down the stout thieves, and to that oligarchical Parliament—oligarchical and tyrannous, but also native Irish, and our own—we gave a free hand that it might work unshackled for the common welfare. So we entered on our brief but shining career as a nation. We bade an Empire stand aside, and afford full scope and free room and passage for the progress of the Irish nation, and the Empire hesitated, dubitated, and obeyed.

Now, of that great movement an unintended result, noticed by all the historians, was not only a relaxation of the despotic rule of the Oligarchy, but a universal social amelioration arising from the diffusion of a spirit of mutual kindness, trust, and good-will between the jarring and discordant elements. This was the unexpected outcome of a combination which was primarily political and international only.

So it was then, and so will it be now, if we who have no profound causes of dissension, nay, no real causes of dissension at all, draw together again, and combine for the suppression of worse spoilers. Just as surely as then, every existing wrong and evil will be mitigated

as a direct consequence of our union, and all things good will spring and grow. At the very lowest such co-operation will reduce internal friction to a minimum, and impart to every energy its highest value. Universal harmony, mutual good-will, common action for common ends—a moment's reflection will convince any thinking man that from these must flow boons and blessings innumerable, and quite incapable of specification. Apart altogether from the immense direct and calculable results secured thereby, and from the very start, in our campaign against fiscal tyranny and oppression, all manner of ethical, and even religious considerations, will be found to mingle here with the international financial question. Looked at from one point of view, it is a commonplace action by a debtor against a creditor; looking at it from another, it is a holy war, a crusade against all the dark and evil powers which afflict humanity in this quarter of the world, and not in Ireland alone.

The National movement of 1778 abated internal friction by concentrating upon a common foe the energies which were being worse than wasted in mutual hatreds, converting for a while many base passions into heroic aspira-

tions, or kindly and human sentiment. As our financial agitation grows clearer and more determinate, and its aims and methods are better understood, this essentially educative character of the movement, the social and moral amelioration inherent in it, will be perceived, and all that is best, most virtuous, and most wise in the Irish nation will be inevitably drawn into its current as strong tributaries. Men who through a certain natural instinct avoid our wolfish party politics, men of the very highest aims and noblest temper, men of the saintly and heroic type—opulent Nature is sending us always a fair proportion of such—the born sayers, too, the best writers and the best speakers—all these will be swept into the movement, and will urge it forward with that unconquerable energy of theirs which is derived from worlds of thought and emotion, of which we in our current politics take little account, but which exist, nevertheless, and are the source of everything great in politics and in war since the beginning of time. Such souls are by no means uncommon in holy Ireland, but they are altogether too few and too scattered and too unknown to each other to be able as yet to draw together, and are, there-

fore, so far a negligible quantity. No doubt it is best so. Thus, at all events, the world is made.

But now and henceforward they will mingle with the National life.

Instinctively and of necessity they will join this movement, financial though it be, for it means, and from the start means, the realization of their dreams and hopes ; it means harmony, brotherhood, kindliness, gentleness, mutual toleration, growing surely towards mutual sympathy and respect, and the incalculable and indescribably beautiful results flowing into actuality and form from the prevalence of such a spirit. And it means, too, the emergence in our midst and in the political sphere of things of the manliest and most heroic qualities, of courage, daring, and stern determination exercised against a common foe—a foe who is dark, dull, selfish, brutish, and material, and against him only in so far as he stands for injustice and wrong. Such men—they are not so few as one might think—lost now to all public ends during this dominance of the spirit of party and faction will come into our movement, kindling it with their fire, and illustrating it with their light. For an All-

Ireland movement we can have them but for none which is less than that, for to them our internal strifes are both despicable and hateful.

Consider, too, the numbers of quiet, well-conducted virtuous people, the salt of the earth wherever they appear, men of great personal and civic worth, absorbed now in the duties, charities, and courtesies of private life, but who are destined to be ours to a man from the moment that we assert ourselves. Excellent, well-intentioned, self-respecting men—all these we shall have as soon as the movement exhibits a little more clearness, force, and direction, as soon as we show that we are in earnest, and mean to carry this thing through. Civic virtue is abundant enough, but it is not, for every cause that it will descend into the political arena, for it is shy and unobtrusive, and shuns crowds and clamour and the garish day. The gross physical strength of the multitude will, of course, be with us, imparting to the movement that elemental force and fire, without which nothing is possible, crowding our mass meetings, charging the air with their electricity and enthusiasm, supplying the voting power, the agency of our transmarine work.

But this movement is not democratic and popular only, it is an All-Ireland movement, inviting, and in a sense compelling, the co-operation of all. It is aristocratic quite as much as democratic and plutocratic. The nobility and gentry of Ireland are with us, or will be with us, in this business, and fewer still and also better when we come to close fighting with the foe—those who, in the language of the Ayrshire ploughman-poet, have received their patent of nobility direct from Almighty God.

No history affects men's judgment equally with domestic history. Let us, therefore, go back for a little upon that brief but glorious career of the Irish nation consequent on the combination of 1778, and consider how its light was quenched, and the bright promise of that marvellous springtime so quickly blasted.

In 1778, in spite of profound causes of dissension, we united, accomplished all our purposes with ease, and were passing onward visibly from strength to strength. But the profound causes of dissension endured, and were ere long forced to the surface by the passion and precipitation of headlong and violent men. The Catholics and Presbyterians,

dissatisfied—we may add, rightly dissatisfied—with the narrow limits of political liberty within which they were restrained by the Oligarchy, demanded full and equal rights before the law. Their demands were resisted—perhaps unjustly, yet with a certain inevitability, for the concession of them would assuredly have meant a root-and-branch Irish revolution, the overthrow of the Protestant-ocracy, the disendowment of the Church, and a general confiscation of land. The air was charged not only with revolutionary French ideas, but filled too with memories of the great civil wars in which the island had changed owners. It was the conquered and expelled who asked for the sword of political power. The instinct of self-preservation, the most powerful of all, urged that Oligarchy to refuse the popular demand. Then the Catholics and Presbyterians conspired to carry Parliamentary reform by force, and with the points of pikes to break open the closed doors of the Irish Parliament. They failed, for the Oligarchy and its retainers beat them, but they did drive the governing class to lean more and evermore upon their kindred, the aristocracy of England, and finally to lean altogether on that support.

Hence the Act of Union, and thus strangers became the keepers of our accounts and the controllers of our destines.

Without attempting the very invidious task of allocating the blame, this great fact is at least clear—that the nation which while in union was seen advancing gloriously, permitted differences and controversies upon the Reform question to progress into the stage of furious and implacable partizanship, and also that in the ensuing confusions the weaker interests, Catholic as well as Protestant, looked to England for protection. The Oligarchy, though victorious in the civil war, dazed and panic-stricken, leaned that way; so, too, through their Hierarchy, did the Catholic Reform Party, in spite of its numbers. United, we went on from strength to strength; disunited, we lost everything.

Such is the fact no matter how we may allocate the blame. We quarrelled—quarrelled desperately and furiously as our manner is—fought and killed each other over the quarrel—and the weaker interests, or those which thought themselves the weaker, turned to England for protection.

So it has ever been from the time of Dermot

M'Murrough. The weak or oppressed interest in Ireland turns ever to England, and so it will be while we manage our affairs through the agency of parties. Dismissing for a moment all prepossessions, look closely at the present political situation and you will find *all* the Irish Parties leaning heavily like cripples, upon some English support—all except our *intransigente* Fenians, who have some instinctive perception of the right road.

What is the moral? With this powerful neighbour at our very doors, always ready to utilise for our undoing and its own aggrandisement the services of every discontented Irish Party, let us have no Irish Parties, let us avoid Parties as we would death. I know a little of Irish history, and a good deal of contemporaneous politics, and see the historical cause of our miseries repeating itself in the absurd political squabbings of our times, which always present an Irish Party or Parties, interest or interests, leaning heavily on some trans-Channel support.

Had the Catholics and Presbyterians in the closing decade of the last century shown a little more patience and a little more loyalty, trusting more in reason, justice, persuasion, and

fair constitutional pressure, and less in violence and the point of the pike, they would surely have gained all their rights long before they actually did gain them under the Imperial Parliament. The great tragedies of '98 and 1800 would have been avoided. Historically, all our modern troubles began with the formation of the so-called United Irish Party. The name was a misnomer, for the territorial classes, whose overthrow was the aim of that Party, *could* not join in such a movement, but, by the law of necessity and the instinct of self-preservation, were bound to oppose it to all lengths, which they did, even to its suppression in blood and flame. Warned by the past, let us at least take care that we shall never break the combination towards which Ireland is moving to-day, for within the wide circuit of things imaginable no sufficient reason appears which under any possible circumstances would justify any of us in doing so. To us it is everything, and everything else is nothing. It is our sheet anchor; moored to that we ride in safety and can laugh at hurricanes, for no winds that blow, if we ourselves do not cut the cable, can tear that from its bed. It is not our chief reliance but our sole reliance. In the All-Ireland combina-

tion we are equipped for war, we are sure of victory and cannot know defeat. It is our shield which no weapons can pierce ; our sword, with which we can cleave through every obstruction and smite down every foe. United, nothing can stand before us ; disunited, we can stand before nothing. All our history proves it, even the history of these current months and days. Observe how we cannot compel the clerks of the Treasury even to rectify a mistake which they admit, or secure for our tillers of the soil equality of treatment with the agriculturists of England. Disunited we are powerless and despicable, and the prey of every plunderer who comes our way.

We have no real causes of dissension. In the light of the financial movement those which seem to be the greatest melt and dissolve like mist in the rising sun. Take the worst of them, the land question. Essentially the land question is one of the deepest to which the speculative and practical intellect can address itself ; but in the form in which it has come up in our time its solution by a united Ireland would be as it were but the occupation of a day. An All-Ireland Convention would settle the principle of it almost without debate,

having more serious work on hands, transmitting the details to its servants and hired persons, lawyers, clerks, accountants, and so forth.

In the light of the financial question it will be seen that we are in fact at one on the land question. The landlord admits the right of the tenant to a rent as fair as it can be made and to the full use and enjoyment of his improvements, provided he on his side receives compensation for the losses sustained by him through the introduction into our economic system of these new principles hitherto unknown to the law—compensation for losses so sustained by him and proved. Had that principle been attached, as it should have been, to the first Irish agrarian measure the settlement of the Irish land question might or might not have involved the loss of a few millions to the Imperial Treasury and some small administrative changes, but would have been no cause of sordid disputation, of heart-burnings, and disturbances in Ireland. Owners would have facilitated and promoted the operation of the Land Acts instead of struggling against them with all their might, for the principle of compensation would have recouped them for every

loss. In obedience to the instinct of self-preservation they fought, and are fighting still, against those necessary, salutary, and altogether just laws. I had some acquaintance in the year 1881 with the views generally entertained by the class, and know that their desire was not to struggle against the new order of things, but to concentrate themselves on the work of securing Imperial compensation, a most sensible and sagacious policy. However, being, as they plainly are, a very unpolitical class, they permitted themselves to be hypnotised by superior persons operating out of London in the interests of the Imperial Conservative Party, a Party which since then has twice betrayed them. Those persons advised them to drop for the present their claim to compensation, and that they—the Imperial Conservative Party—would presently revive and urge it forward. Many things might be said upon this vile land question, which must be deferred to a more convenient occasion. I only desire here to impress upon the minds of my readers that while intrinsically the land question is the deepest question of the day, extrinsically and accidentally, it is one of the simplest im-

aginable, from an All-Ireland or United Ireland point of view, for it is in our power to compel Parliament to enact that solution of the question concerning which we are all agreed. The truth is, though few will believe it, that politics are an infinitely simpler matter than is imagined. We have sophisticated the political art, therefore cannot deal with it. Parnell simplified politics, hence his success. He perceived that the creation of a political force representing his views was all that was necessary, and that the due results would follow from the creation and the application of the force. Had he simplified them still more he might have been supremely successful.

In Ireland the path of legislative reform is everywhere barred by vested interests. Take a single example. The revival of our salmon fisheries would bring hundreds of thousands of pounds year by year into the country, and an excellent class of English visitors. Yet the way of reform is barred because we cannot secure from the Treasury a few thousand pounds as compensation for the handful of poor fishermen who enjoy netting rights at the estuaries. Everywhere the way of the reformer is so barred and his hands tied.

A Convention of all Ireland, taking the land question into consideration, would secure full and ample justice for the tillers of the soil, for them first, as a more essential and necessary element of the community than the landlords are or ever can be, for they are the very base and foundation of our social system, and the root from which everything in this island grows and must grow. The Land Act framed by our All-Ireland Convention will secure his full rights to the occupier, and will also end the existing antagonism which prevails between owners and occupiers by a direction to the clerks of the Imperial Treasury to make good to the former of these classes any economic loss sustained by them, as a consequence of the introduction of the doctrine of fair rent, and the ownership by tenants of their improvements. Of course our directions do not pass straight to the clerks of the Treasury but to them through the medium of whatever Imperial administration we may happen at the time to control. For again and again it must be repeated that we are in fact supreme arbiters of our own destinies, and that in all things relating to Ireland British Ministers are our servants, and that whenever we choose to do

so we can convert the Imperial Parliament into a mere court for the registration of the laws which we make. Again, we have no real grounds of dissension, for the Imperial Treasury lies at our disposal, supplying us with the means of paying a just compensation to any interest or class which we may have to injure while we solve our domestic problems.

We have a great many domestic problems to solve, all of which have been, and are to-day, insoluble, but which will be easily solved by an All-Ireland Convention which enjoys the means of amply and generously compensating men for the destruction of their vested interests.





IV.

THE ONE ROAD.



HE conception of an All-Ireland movement aiming at the redress of these gigantic fiscal wrongs will, when once entertained by the mind

and vividly realised, clarify in every direction the political atmosphere, and enable us to see clearly a hundred things which now, while the air is dark and the landscape blurred with the exhalations of party and sectarian passion, even men of the sharpest vision are unable to see at all. The All-Ireland idea, which is of the essence of the financial movement, is a height which commands the widest prospects. The man who stands here takes in the whole situation at a glance, for the island lies, as it were, at his feet. To him our past, present, and

future reveal themselves in a new light ; he feels instinctively that things are seen by him as they are, and in their true proportions. Hence he observes, not without compassion, the mad strugglings and wrestlings of the parties in the dim intricate region of their strife. Standing here he sees out beyond them, clear and distinct, the road which they must find, and which sooner or later they will find. That road they will travel, not as semi-insane mobs, but as an ordered host going forward from victory to victory.

If I write confidently it is because I see clearly, and if I see clearly it is not because I have better sight than other men, but because I stand upon this height with its wide and clear prospects. Whoever doubts this let him make the experiment. Let him, for a while, dismiss from his mind all party spirit, all factious and sectarian prepossessions and prejudices ; let him consider narrowly this All-Ireland movement, the gigantic wrongs against which it is aimed, the immense concentration and organisation of the National power which it must secure, the variety of distressing domestic problems which we may so easily solve through its means, and the vista of

glorious possibilities lying always ahead, and, far as the eye can reach, the broad and shining track, traced, as it were, by the finger of God, to be the way of the new nation, and there, always, Hope shining like a star above the great road. Let him consider how Ireland combined would deal with the land question, the education question, the poor-law question, the railway question, and with that of the restoration of our still expanding prairies to the plough and the spade ; how it would turn back upon Ireland the streams of emigration, streams now flowing forth for the fertilisation of other lands ; how it would deal with the question of arming and disciplining the youth of the country, and the hundred and one matters of deepest importance with which our parties cannot deal at all, always remembering that before a combined Ireland Ministries are powerless, save to execute our will, and that the doors of the Imperial Treasury must ever fly open to our needs. Let him consider and reflect while he looks around from this height, and the situation on all sides will grow momentarily clearer and more hopeful. He will not again descend into the dark under-wood where the factions are rending each

other, and where no gleam of hope comes or can come. There is no other question upon which we can combine but this financial one ; here only is the common centre upon which our social and political chaos must subside into the unity, harmony, and solidarity of an effective nation. Let him see that clearly, and he sees all that, for the present at least, it is perhaps desirable that he should see.

To this point many of us, much to our surprise, were led by the marvellous and utterly unexpected events of the winter of 1896. Before that year I, like the rest, still regarded public affairs through an atmosphere thick with party spirit, and darkened still more by the obstructions of the low-lying, intricate, and pathless region in which we were then involved, and from which no way of escape seemed open. The report of the Financial Relations Commission did not affect me. Partly from study, partly from observation of the Parliamentary behaviour of our representatives, partly by a certain instinct, I knew very well that Ireland was being plundered. The Report was only an authoritative exposition of what was already known to many of us, and, I believe, felt or suspected by all. The root of

all that evil was our parties and factions, and while these endured the wrongs would endure, and there was as little reason to expect that Ireland would cease to grow factions as that she would cease to grow blackthorns or anything else indigenous to her soil and climate.

Then, in December, suddenly, one day, I became aware that in my native county, the great County of Cork, the people—all orders, parties, and religious sections—had invited the head of the county magistracy, Lord Bandon, the representative of the landlords and resident gentry, to preside at a county financial meeting, and that he had consented. All at once it flashed upon me that a New Ireland was emerging, nay, had emerged, for I did not doubt at all that the rest of Ireland would follow the lead of such a county. An All-Ireland movement, basing itself on the Report of the Financial Relations Commission, was then not only possible, but was, in fact, inaugurated. I perceived that this movement, whether its progress was slow or swift, whether it was conducted with wisdom or folly, would surely, such was the magnitude of the interests involved and such the splendid and far-reaching possibilities inherent in it, end in the absorp-

tion of every other political or social movement of the day and eventuate, after months or years, in the creation of a single party standing for all Ireland, a party which would, therefore, control the Imperial Parliament, and direct and dictate its Irish policy, a party from which in due time would emanate not only a united Parliamentary representation, a matter of minor importance, but also a representation sitting and deliberating here in Ireland, and which, here sitting, would strongly control the action of the Parliamentary representation and through it bend the Imperial Parliament to its will. What I then predicted to myself and others was not something I desired or hoped for but something which I saw and see still as the inevitable and logical issue of the causes now coming into operation, and of the temper of the people upon whom those causes are beginning to play. I confess I did not anticipate that the agitation would be conducted with such a lack of political sagacity, such a weak dependence on Ministers and English opinion, such a blindness to the most staring facts of the situation, or that the combined forces which were plainly going forward from

success to success would, so soon, like an army of condottieri, disband themselves before accomplishing anything, and, dividing again into sections, go off each in pursuit of some sectional purpose. The spectacle presented in the latter end of January, 1897—all Ireland, after a few weeks of half-earnest agitation, before it had achieved anything even in a remote degree resembling unity, or settled upon a single clear aim or purpose, looking eagerly across the Channel in expectation, one might think, of one hundred millions in gold at the very least by the next boat—was comical enough, and a sure proof that the art of politics is one whose very rudiments we have yet to master. It is an art infinitely simpler, indeed, than is imagined, but still an art, and does need for its successful exercise a little reflection and calculation and realisation of hard facts. But it is a simple art, too, fortunately so, for power is now in the hands of the many, and the plain man master of the situation.

But, on our lines, it will need little persuasion to convince men of the plainest understanding that nothing less than an All-Ireland combination is capable of holding up such an Empire as that with which we have to deal,

and compelling it to do justice for the past and refrain from any further spoliation in the future. Now, from the moment that we can induce our people to regard public affairs from this All-Ireland standpoint, the way lies clear and evident ; no one can mistake it. The political art will thereby for us undergo a process of simplification such that the simplest can deal with it, and show good sense, discretion, and sound patriotism, in their exercise of the franchise. Whoever regards Irish politics from the point of view of any party, faction, or sect, will inevitably misunderstand them, therefore, his vote, dictated by ignorance or misknowledge, must be hurtful rather than salutary to the true interests of his country. Whoever regards politics from the All-Ireland point of view, with average seriousness, sincerity and intelligence, will understand them, and his vote, dictated by a competent understanding of the issues will be a gain. Therefore, I am in favour of a wide unfolding of the doors of the Constitution and of manhood sufferage whenever the All-Ireland movement emerges with any clearness and power. Nay, being convinced that this movement will swallow up all others, and that it, and it alone, will ere

long challenge the support of the country, I say now that though politically a member of a decided minority, I support Irish manhood suffrage from this day forward, believing that every rightful interest and just cause will be safe in the hands of the least fortunate of my fellow-countrymen. The right was always clear, but the expediency of conceding the right was not. We shall certainly get on to the All-Ireland track, *via* the finance question, and once there and advancing upon the great common plunderer, even the most reckless and unprincipled will see the wickedness and the folly of committing small robberies on their war comrades, comrades, too, almost as poor as themselves. The great plunderer has made us all poor, and our war is against him, not against each other, against those who have fattened on our folly and laughed as they gathered our scanty wealth into their own bursting treasure-chamber. No All-Ireland man will fear manhood suffrage.

The financial movement must flow along a certain channel carved for it by time and events and by the necessities and expediencies of things. It may make false starts—it made one already—it may travel out of its true

track and lose months or years in false ones—*cul de sacs*—but will surely find the right one sooner or later, and rush joyfully down its proper and appointed channel. Just now, our Financial Reform Party is looking towards London, waiting for British Ministers to appoint Commissions, for newspapers to publish friendly articles, for the Irish Parliamentary representation to take spirited action in London—a thing impossible. Its eyes, its thoughts, its hopes are all turned to England. A friendly paper in an English magazine, a friendly pronouncement by an English public man, a debate in which our Parliamentary representation may distinguish itself—these are considered great things, and to watch them and enjoy them, action at home, which is the main thing, is suspended. Affected by the same delusion our county meetings last winter petitioned the Government to take into serious consideration the Report of the Financial Relations Commission. The reply was on a par with the ineptness of the petition. Imperial cunning replied very fitly to Irish simplicity:—“With pleasure. We shall appoint a fresh Commission, and mix the affairs of Scotland with those of Ireland, and those of England

with both ; and our terms of reference will be so many bones of contention ; and they will be framed on the assumption that there is not in existence any such international treaty between Ireland and Great Britain as that of the Act of Union. For we trust profoundly in the Irish Parties and factions to bring to zero every Irish National demand ; and a Commission is our traditional mode of meeting inconvenient requests, and we shall be in no hurry to appoint this Commission, and no one will bring us to task. We know Ireland ! ”

And they do know Ireland—current events prove it—they do know the Ireland of the *past*, blind, foolish, weak, and despicable ; a giant, indeed, but a giant slumbering, and in his slumber haunted by evil dreams and oppressed with nightmares. Of the giant awake and released from all that oppression whereby his powers were sundered, and in sunderance nullified, they know nothing ; but unless all the signs of the times are meaningless they shall know much, and that before many years have passed. For of time and its effluxion we can afford to care little. The great wrong will not take to itself wings and flee away. This moun-

tain of debt has not a bird. It is not a snipe to be off with the cry of "Scape!" "Scape!" The great wrong counted in money only is at the very least three hundreds of millions of pounds sterling, with a so far indefinable and incalculable mass of debt behind, while every year adds its millions to the sum total, and every year joins one or another Irish class or interest to those which already have had sore experience of the great wrong. Time is altogether with us, and if we are too dazed with sleep and dreams to grapple with the mighty incubus our sons will, and if they cannot our grandsons will. The "rising-out" of Ireland in all her provinces and counties, all her cities, towns, and hamlets—the rising-out of Ireland against this horde of robbers and their Acts of Parliament is as certain as time. I don't care so very much about the when or how, seeing that the result is so certain, though I confess I would like to see some of the great game played in my own time.

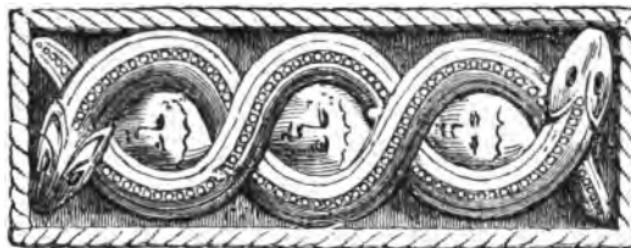
Affected by the same inveterate delusion that London is the seat of Government, and that everything good for Ireland must of necessity originate on the other side of the Channel, our All-Ireland Committee waited on

the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, and while conscious of having at hands no means of compulsion poured their artless tale into his ears, and very properly bore away with them a scoffing reply. Affected by the same delusion our Peers and Commoners have made elaborate speeches in Parliament, and our statisticians written painfully elaborate articles for the be-hoof and reproof of the English people. The delusion is universal, and affects the minds of the most strenuous and determined of our financial reformers. Yet it is all a delusion, and even a stupid delusion. This fight has to be fought and won here at home in Ireland, and in no sense whatsoever in London or any part of Great Britain. Here at home, within our four seas, in Dublin, Belfast, Derry, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Trim, Athlone, Kilkenny, Thurles, Wexford, and Clonmel—in Ulster, Leinster, Connaught, and Munster—here at home, and here only, is the battle to be fought and won. Every speech delivered at home is a stroke; every meeting held, every article published, every letter written to the newspapers—Dublin or provincial—is a stroke at the foe and an imparing of his strength. Everything said and everything done in Eng-

land in supposed furtherance of the cause is a waste of force and a help to the enemy. Ireland, a country which we know, and whose people we know, is our theatre of war, which is a great advantage to us. England, a country which we do not know, whose people we do not understand, and who do not understand us, is not our war-theatre. Those who endeavour to fight there a fight which should be fought at home do us a double injury. They waste valuable Irish force, and they help the enemy. So Lord Castletown's Cork speech, though politically a blunder, and a profound one, was nevertheless, because delivered in Ireland, a telling stroke—the roarings of the London Press proved how it went home. Lord Castletown's London speech in the House of Lords was force wasted. What I say is evidently the fact to every man who has watched public affairs with any attention, though he may miss the moral to which such facts point. Let the men of Mayo, under the leading of the gentry of Mayo, meet and demonstrate at Castlebar, and I assert without fear of contradiction that it will prove a more exciting event and bring greater illumination to the mind of the English Press than the delivery in London

of any number of excellent financial speeches by our representatives in the Upper or Lower House. Within the four borders of our sea-bound Ireland this battle is to be fought, which is a great advantage to the island, and, at the very lowest, will be a saving of expense. Our fighting men need not cross the Channel when they would lay on.

The grand illusion and delusion of the movement is that with regard to this question—London and the Imperial Parliament are the centre of power and the place of all legislative and administrative origination. It is not so. Ireland is the centre of power, the *fons et origo* of all legislative and administrative amelioration is here. Combine Ireland, and everything follows; fail to combine Ireland, and in London, in the Imperial Parliament, and in England generally, we awake no other emotion than that of a good-humoured contempt. Nay, we awake no emotion at all; all that we do or say or project is regarded with the most supreme indifference. The moral of this chapter is a simple one. It is—"Keep the war at home."



V.

IRISH STATESMEN.



OR a considerable time this financial movement will be invertebrate and inorganic. It will give voice, indeed, to the public sense of intolerable wrong ; but, inasmuch as we are all victims of the delusion that in London is the centre of power, and that there springs the fountain of Justice, our financial reformers will continue for a while to be weak and petitionary. We shall look much to London, hoping that the Sun of Righteousness will arise there, having at last heard our many prayers. This cannot be helped. Vicious habits ingrained in the very texture of our political being will

not be eradicated in a day, even with the assistance of a stirring agitation, and the fire thereby engendered, for such fire usually burns up much folly.

Such will be our attitude for a season, that of the mendicant, whether we do our asking with a whine or with the insolence of a bully beggar, which is the more revolting form of mendicancy.

Then, historically, that attitude was never effective. In the last century Flood was in the habit of saying—"Ireland never negotiated with England that she did not fail; Ireland never demanded that she did not win."

Now, we do not even negotiate; we implore; and, of course, without the least approach to success. But as this movement advances and develops, as, one after the other, our luke-warm or milk-and-water newspapers are driven to declare themselves; as the cynics and scoffers and dullards catch fire, and the island awakes in all her borders; as the men of rank become aware that, this time, they have the masses and the physical force of Ireland behind them, and the masses become aware that they have the men of rank in front; as the counties and cities draw together, perhaps at first province

by province, and exchange views and feel each other's strength and resolution ; as our various classes begin to see clearly how their material interests are bound up in the interests of the movement, and the men of understanding the interminable vista of shining possibility which it discloses—for that is so, and constitutes the surpassing and incomparable charm of this Financial Relations movement ; as panic spreads throughout Great Britain, and all the non-political organs wheel to our side ; as British statesman after British statesman, scenting votes even from afar, steps out as the champion of our cause and the preacher of our doctrine ; when one of the great Imperial parties, unsolicited by us, declares for Ireland and financial redress ; when the overtaxed peasantry of Great Britain and the overtaxed operatives of Great Britain begin on their side, too, to stir and meditate "new things"—we, observing such marvels, will stand up erect, and our leaders address Ministers like men, not mendicants, and in a manner worthy of the national dignity, being then at last conscious that, as their power is irresistible, there is no need for undignified truculence or undignified self-abasement.

When our movement, proceeding duly, advances to the stage of a National Convention, the nature of the situation will become clear; the dullest will perceive that it (the Convention) is the seat of power and the source of authority, and our Parliamentary representation only the agency by which it may control the Imperial Parliament, and compel there the execution of its will and the registration of its laws; also, a point not to be forgotten, its shield against Imperial violence. Without that shield bayonets would soon make short work of our Convention. Therefore, Unionists we must take care to be until our work is finished, and that will not be done in a day, so great are now the arrears of work neglected, for the master has been away from home for a long time, and much has been gone a-wry during his absence. When the Convention sits, the master returns and issues his commands, and all the scandals and wastes and mismanagement and disorder begin to abate. It will be a home-coming like that of Ulysses of yore, only not bloody. The master returning will simply bid the greedy ones go, and they will go. Their lives he will not require, but he will require an exact and full compen-

sation for all their depredations, and take it in such forms and at such times as may suit his convenience. For it is a fact, and long before the sitting of the Financial Relations Convention, and long before our agitation sets everything in England dancing to a new tune, our people will see it with the clearness of visuality that a united Ireland can do what she will. Moreover, a united Ireland is not one of the possibilities of the future, but one of the certainties. We may delay it by our own folly and criminality, but the thing itself is as sure as Time. A mightier power than our weak selves has taken us in hand, and with invisible whips drives us along the way that we should go. Upon that way we shall have travelled a very little distance before we learn that this Imperial Parliament, which seems such a mountain, has not the strength of a hillock of sliding sand, where we are concerned. From the moment when we clearly understand that, our progress will be rapid, for we shall then see that everything depends upon ourselves, and nothing upon what anybody does or says or thinks at the other side of the water. Very soon we shall begin to realise the fact that British statesmen are always ready, will-

ing, and even eager to do everything that we command. Let Ireland utter her demands through a National and representative Convention, the outcome of an intelligent and determined agitation, and those demands, let them be what they may, will be conceded, British statesmen actually tumbling over each other in their eagerness to be the first to fulfil our behests.

This is not theory or the speculation of an over-sanguine mind, but a fact demonstrable. Have we not seen an Irish party leader set British statesmen and Imperial parties racing to discover who should be the first to win his favour? It is denied that the Salisbury party ran in that race, but it is not so; they ran, and were beaten. Such people are at our mercy; we can buy them and sell them as soon as we, on our side, resolve that they shall not buy and sell us. Those who are conscious of power become to that extent conscious of responsibility. The leaders of the All-Ireland movement, advancing to the stage of a National Convention, will become profoundly aware that the destinies of Ireland are in their hands, and that it behoves them to walk warily, to choose wisely, to act astutely, to look far before them,

and to look far behind. Beginning as mere leaders they will become Irish statesmen.

Since the end of the last century our affairs have gone on without the aid of statesmen. We have had great party leaders, but not statesmen. Grattan was a statesman ; we all recognise him, but it is not so well realised he was one out of many such. There was then a statesmanlike type of mind in Irish public life, and its presence is perceptible to the historical student amongst all the parties, in spite of rotten boroughs and places and pensions, because the fire of public life was a flame, and heat begets light. *Ex ardore lux.*

According as the public interest in this question deepens, the public mind will become more luminous, and out of this general diffusion of political intelligence men of a statesmanlike order will appear, and will be understood. The breed did not become extinct with the giants of the 18th century. Profuse Nature is always sending them to the surface, but does not always provide them with careers. For such she is now disclosing a glorious field of activity, for a cause has arisen around which Ireland will and must combine ; and, in a combined Ireland, men of the statesmanlike order will

see, now for the first time, a power through the control and direction of which they can achieve results. Man cannot fight without a weapon ; but such a weapon, apt for the hands of our coming men of practical genius, is being supplied by the combination towards which we tend. A class of men of a new and great type will, from this time forth, begin to emerge in the public life of Ireland—men who will not sacrifice great future advantages for small immediate ones—men who, if need be, will stand like gates of brass against the torrent of popular fury—men with hearts steeped in heroic passion, and understandings at the same time acute and comprehensive. The times are now favourable for their emergence, and our people, under the illuminating influences of the new movement, ready, as they never have been before, to welcome them and understand them.

And yet we must avoid the error of trusting too much in leaders. We are now a democracy, and every man must try to be himself somewhat of a statesman, and accustom himself to regard public affairs from a statesmanlike point of view—that is to say, not with an eye to his own feelings or his class interests, but, as much

as he can, from the point of view of the interests of all Ireland and the whole Irish nation—all classes—and with an eye not so much to the present as the future, for the present is poor and limitary compared with the boundless future—that inexhaustible reservoir of good and evil.

The months of December, 1896, and of January, 1897, witnessed the greatest event in Irish history since the formation of the Irish Volunteers. In those months we saw the Irish people, county by county inviting the heads of the county magistracies, the leaders of the county landlords, to preside over their demonstrations in connection with the financial question. It was virtually an invitation from the Catholic people of Ireland to their Protestant aristocracy and landed gentry to come out from their retirement into public life and lead them in the financial war. After all that had passed on both sides, the boycotting, and outrages, and coercion acts, and when we remember that the land question is still unsettled, it was a striking indication, not only of the goodness of heart of the people, but also of their political sagacity. The sheer political wisdom of the

step was proved by the effects which the consequent agitation produced in England. The agitation lasted for about six weeks, and then closed abruptly, for towards the latter end of January the country in general began to look expectantly to London, as Parliament was about to reassemble, and the Irish landlords about that time went off upon a wild-goose chase of their own, which they have been following up ever since with great industry, but have not yet succeeded in capturing their bird, and I believe never will. Like many others, they did not take the financial movement quite seriously, imagining, like the rest of us, that the Imperial Parliament is master of the situation, and that the notion of Ireland extracting her stolen millions out of the Treasury, or of compelling Mr. Bull to do his future plundering in accordance with the terms of the Act of Union, was but romantic folly. At the same time they played their part fairly well in the agitation, partly because they had been asked to, and partly for the fun of the thing. It was at least a novel experience, for they never had been in politics before.

Then, when the playing seemed to be about ended, they turned to serious business—

viz., the promotion of their own interests by such methods as appeared good to their simple and non-political understandings. At their Landowners' Convention they determined to start a small movement independent of and in opposition to the National movement, to whose leadership they had been invited. They resolved to pursue two purposes, one aiming at Imperial compensation for losses sustained through the operation of the Land Acts, and the other aiming at a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the methods practised by the Land Commission in the adjudication of fair rents, for the hope had dawned in their very unpolitical minds that this Conservative Government might, in some way not quite comprehensible, be induced to act against its own party interests, and reverse a fixed Imperial policy which aims steadily at their destruction. In other words, this class, which out of broad Ireland could not return a single Parliamentary representative of their interests, hoped to be able by sheer talk and clamour and a little influence in the House of Lords to divert or turn back the torrent of hostile action emanating from two powerful democracies which is sweeping them to perdition. They

have not a member, yet they would control a judicial tribunal. They have not a member, and would compel the British taxpayer to put his hands in his pockets and produce millions, and for them. The 16th century of Irish history exhibited such another Irish aristocracy, which was also eventually destroyed by a combination between the Irish people and the English. I refer to the Celtic and Norman-Irish chieftainry. Philip III. of Spain despatched a trusty agent to go through the island and report to him upon the minds, temper, and capacity of those men. The agent duly reported—"The Irish nobility be, with few exceptions, a very simple sort of men." We may suspect that every aristocracy which permits itself to be destroyed by force or by law is or must be a most "simple sort of men," such are the immense advantages for the maintenance of their position conferred upon any territorial aristocracy by the mere fact of the ownership of the land.

And now I will ask, was the folly of this class one whit greater than that of the Irish nation which, in February, 1897, suspended all internal agitation and organization and combination, in order to fix, more

pleasurably, its dull eyes upon London, upon the purposes of the British Government, and upon its own un-unified Parliamentary Representation? Not a whit. The political stupor of Ireland is not confined to any class, interest or party.

The Irish landlords are popularly supposed to be the silliest class in Ireland: I doubt it.

And we shall do exactly the same next February, led by our five Dublin dailies, we shall all turn our attention to London, and sit as it were in the gallery of the House of Commons with eyes riveted in the great people below, and long ears projected to catch their faintest word. For fools we shall be—for a season.

Men of Ireland, trust yourselves, trust your own instincts, good sense and mother wit, when, in February, 1897, after the first wave of agitation, our combining forces fell asunder, the Dublin dailies led the way in that disruption and rejoiced and applauded. Men who endeavoured to stem that torrent of folly were then driven from their positions in the Dublin Press. These papers cannot guide you right, even if they would. They are by their

nature incapacitated from the exercise of any such function. Three of them are factious upholding divisive principles, and two are opportunist, three are tied to parties and two to the till. Their high-sounding and plausible editorials do not represent the voice of the new and better Ireland now emerging. Do not seek here for the expression of intelligence and sincerity of bravery and freedom, for one and all they are in slavery.

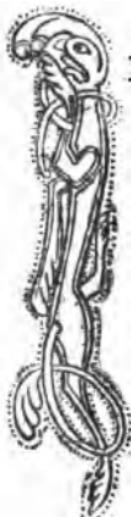
Trust yourselves and do not trust the loud Dublin dailies, not till they are touched, quickened and radically transformed by the vital breath of the new epoch.

I speak of things not of men. Our journalists are, as they ought to be, politically the wisest class in the community. They know more than the rest about every public question as it emerges, and, knowing more they are less violent and fanatical, more sober and more kind, more gentle and considerate. The perversion to base ends or to no ends of all this priceless wisdom is a tragedy more terrible than that of the Congested Districts or of the slums of the great towns. Yet, over this tragedy who sheds a tear?



CHAPTER VI.

A WORD TO OUR LANDLORDS.



NJANUARY, 1897, a stern but friendly adviser, regarding at the same time their interests and those of the nation, would have counselled them as follows:—

“Abandon this class movement. The way which you propose to tread is narrow, tortuous, and full of peril. It is not even a way. It is visibly a *cul de sac*. In the end it is closed by great folding-doors of brass inscribed with the words ‘No thoroughfare.’ Two democracies there bar the way. Keep to the road which you have been travelling with such manifest advantage. When a people go with you, success lies here or nowhere.

“Stand by your own people against a gigantic

wrong from which you and they alike have suffered and are suffering, and, in doing so, justify the confidence which so spontaneously and universally they have conceived in you, that in this business you would lead them boldly and well. Every victory achieved here, every concession wrung from the Government will be your gain as well as theirs. The abolition of the taxes which fall with such severity on your tenants will, to that extent, secure your rents or check the fall of rents; the abolition of Irish Income Tax will benefit you as well as others. Every success in this movement means, at the very lowest, so much material good for you, directly or indirectly. Every gain to Ireland will be a gain to you, and in this movement success is assured and defeat impossible, for Ireland United is Ireland irresistible, and all Ireland is with you here.

"The stronger you can make this financial movement the more will popular anger be diverted from yourselves and concentrated upon those who defend and maintain the fiscal system by which you, as well as the people, are being plundered. Lead bravely and well, and every vestige of anti-landlord animus will disappear, and be succeeded by a spirit of loyalty and devotion.

"The temper of the Irish people is still largely aristocratic. This was proved during the six weeks of agitation. Stand by the people who have shown themselves so willing to stand by you. The natural leaders of a nation—especially of an agricultural

nation—are its aristocracy. It is your duty—nay, your high privilege, to fight the battles of the people.

“The people are not unwilling even now that you should receive from the Imperial Treasury some redress and compensation for losses sustained by you through recent legislation. Will they be less inclined to help you when you, on your side, shall have proved yourselves bold, capable, patriotic and self-forgetting champions of their wrongs and vindicators of their rights.

“The road which time and events and even the voice of the people invite you to tread is the path of duty and of honour and of safety, and there is no other. The Imperial Parliament, even when dominated by your own Unionist and Conservative friends, proved, in 1887 and in 1896, that it was and is quite willing to hand you over as a prey to the Irish people, perceiving it to be an economical method of maintaining their fiscal system. The dog shall still be fed, cheaply, with joints from his own tail; so you will continue to supply meals till you are devoured. A great and utterly unexpected opportunity has arisen by seizing which with boldness and prudence you can at the same time save yourselves from the pit to which British statesmanship has assigned you, and, in a cause the most righteous that has ever arisen, resume, this time by the will and favour of the Irish people, that leadership which you exercised so brilliantly more than a century since, and which is very well remembered in Ireland even now. It is a

great game, and all the winning cards are in your hands, and the stake a mighty one even as visible to the naked eye. Seen with the intellectual eye, it expands to dimensions of incalculable magnitude, for what may you not do with such a people ?

“ The way before you is the way of least resistance and of greatest results. The way in which the foolish ones of your own order advise you to go is the way of the greatest resistance and the least or the worst results. Fighting the Land Acts, you are fighting the democracies of two islands, and fighting them weaponless. The British democracy remember is against you as well as the Irish. Men naturally sympathise with those who till the soil, they do not sympathise with those who say that they own the soil which is tilled. Fighting the Land Acts, you row against a torrent. Against this torrent you cannot prevail ; it will sweep you to destruction, and all the swifter if you seek to stem it.

“ If you abandon the cause of the people, separating your cause from theirs, they will abandon yours. After what has happened, they will regard you, and rightly, as treacherous leaders who have gone off to make separate terms with the foe. Any little seeming gain which you may secure in these negotiations will end in nothing, and will revive the ideas so prevalent in 1880, that your root and branch destruction is essential for the welfare and progress of Ireland, the more so as your destruction is now a task of small difficulty, seeing that the Imperial

Conservative Party has also declared against you. Lalor's prophecy has come true. Both the Imperial parties have agreed that you are too expensive. ' You lie before the feet of events, you lie in the way of a people and the movement of events, and the way of a people shall be over you.'

"Without one friend or ally upon whom the least dependence can be placed, you call for Imperial redress and compensation. It is a mad policy. Such redress must come from the British taxpayer. Do you think the British taxpayer will put his hand in his pocket and produce millions for Irish landlords? Should any Government be so foolish as to make such a proposition the reply of the British taxpayer will be as logical as prompt, 'Let Irish landlords get their compensation from the Irish people who have reaped the benefits of the Land Acts. What have I to do with it?'

"Seize, boldly and promptly, the marvellous opportunity which has been offered to you. If you lose this you will never get another. Stake all that you have, or hope to have, upon this game, stake your lives if necessary—and it may be necessary.

"The British statesman is resolved to destroy you as an obstacle in his way towards certain ulterior purposes; turn and face him, not this time as landlords, but as the leaders of an ancient, unfortunate, but not undeserving people. Turn and face him on *this* issue and observe his behaviour: you will find it amusing and instructive.

"You have been his garrison in this country,

and in that capacity held down Ireland while he plundered her, and did not scruple, too, to pick your own pockets while he did so.¹ But you grew old and stiff. He is now cashiering you—without allowance or pension or even a kind word which is not patent hypocrisy. He is looking round for a younger and stronger Irish interest to take your place and lands and power, and, for him, play the same *rôle* as you did, and thinks he has found it; but I think he has not.

“He has hunted you to the verge of the pit, and most of you into the pit. Turn and face him: you have a nation to second you; turn and face him. You can loose, if you please, upon this mighty hunter before the Lord, such a pack as never gave tongue before at the side of any covert in the Four Provinces. Irish wolfhounds, true-bred, are they, and, more than that, ay! far more, they are the Dogs of Destiny from the kennels of Eternal Justice, of a race that never becomes extinct—the world would perish if they did—and they have been out many times before, and in many lands. An immortal breed!

“A good many of you still read your Bibles. What do you make of texts like this:—

“‘He shall lift up an ensign among the nations, and hiss to them from afar: and they shall come, with speed, swiftly.’

¹ See, *passim*, Mr. Leckey's *History of Ireland in the 18th Century*.

"It is the word of God which is true yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

"God lives. He never died. That was all an English delusion which has over-flowed thence hither. He is the God of the living, not of the dead. He is the huntsman over all, the nations grow pale and empires quake when his hunting morn arrives and His hounds begin to give tongue. Listen! With a finer ear you may hear them even now yowling from their kennels, aware that the fated hour has arrived, and that the hunt is up.

"The wolfhounds of Ireland! They are many and lean, and fierce, and swift, and strong. Turn and unloose them against your hunter; from hunted you will be the hunters. You will have such a day with the hounds as was never seen in Ireland; and, apart from the sport, the brush of this fox is worth — how many millions? The very lowest computation makes it one hundred and fifty, a very fine brush, well nourished, and to that degree by us, and through long and sweet depredations of poor Irish farm-yards and homesteads, nourished by us to that astonishing degree of bushy luxuriance.

"I have heard that in the post-famine years when the British statesman flung so many of you into the same pit whither he is now hunting you, a pit well digged and called the Encumbered or Landed Estates Court—I have heard, credibly, that Irish families in those gay old days, aware

that the end was nigh, were wont to finish their career, right jovially, with a splendid *ball*. They at least died game! Where is the old spirit and pluck of your order? Will you not have a little fun before you die? I beseech you. Die you must, but will you die in a hole, like poisoned rats behind the wainscot? Will you die with groans and lamentations, and crying aloud miserably to a scoffing world: 'For shame! for shame! Was there ever such injustice, such ingratitude? Such a treatment of loyal gentlemen? Had we been defeated rebels could our treatment have been worse, &c.?"

"One word more.

"To every class its function and its duty, and, to an aristocracy, even to one so broken and maimed as yours, its own. You who have leisure, wealth, birth, rank, education, social consequence and generous traditions, are under a law of conduct in your relations with the land which gave you birth and which yields you revenue. What law is this? A law made by Nature, not by Parliament, and expounded forty years ago, very well, by the son of an Irish farmer, the law of your duty to your country.

"In peace you shall lead her progress, and in war you shall carry her banner!"

"And the politics of the hour, and from this hour forth, will have a certain martial quality so great are the issues, so mighty the gathering

of forces and their concentration, and such the growing clearness of their trend and direction. Our politics henceforth will very much resemble war: they are war.

“If you can do nothing else, carry the flag. Be our banner-bearers in the counties. This at least you can do, and no one else can do it so well. Millions will love you, instead of hating you, if you will but do it, and render us this cheap service. Other services time and events will provide for you in due course, but for the present this will suffice. It is my last word—You, gentlemen of Ireland, be our banner-bearers in all the counties. Carry the Flag.”





VII.

ANGLO-IRISH IMPERIAL POLICY.



VER since the Norman conquest the neutralization of the power of Ireland has been a fixed policy with English statesmen. It was with that purpose that Henry II. invaded the island.

He feared, and with good reason, that De Clare might one day recross the Channel with all Ireland at his heels. Henry II. divided the country. He set six of his barons to rule Ireland, but set no one to rule the six. So he provided for Irish anarchy, and secured the western flank of his Empire against Irish invasion. He was not animated by any ill-will

towards Ireland, only by the instinct of self-preservation.

Observe the simplicity of the methods employed by great men and famous statesmen, who only apply to big things the same common sense and mother wit which we every day apply to little things. High statesmanship is little more than common sense! Probably that burly, thick-necked, red-faced, and large-headed "Son of the Empress" was not a bit cleverer than thousands of our Irish farmers, shopkeepers, and country gentlemen in Ireland to-day. We shall have our own statesmen yet.

Now, ever since the time when that sensible and sagacious Frenchman so cleverly divided us, the policy of his successors towards this country has ever been the same, *i.e.*, the neutralization of Irish power; that, at least, but that at any price. To the historical student the symptoms of the continual presence and operation of this policy during the past seven hundred years are evident and unmistakable. He sees the *modus operandi* changing with changing conditions, but never the purpose or the policy. For example, during the Plantagenet *regime* Ireland was

joyfully relinquished to inter-dynastic dissension; she was divided, therefore neutralized, therefore England's west flank was secure, and the sensible Plantagenets left us alone. When, however, Ireland seemed about to draw together under the House of Kildare, Henry VIII. intervened, and with all the power which he could put forth. So it has been since.

The Act of Union was just as much the expression of the same inherited policy as was Henry VIII.'s strong intervention in our affairs in the sixteenth century. The unification of Ireland upon the centre supplied by Grattan's Parliament seemed then on the eve of accomplishment, for, after the crushing victory won by the Irish Parliament over the Irish revolutionary party in '98, there was nothing in Ireland which could pretend to stand against it.

So, British policy, seizing a favourable opportunity, once again intervened, and once again the western flank of the Empire was protected from Irish invasion, and the Empire itself from an Irish control. From the time of Fitz-Empress to the present day British policy towards this country has been rooted in

fear, not in Justice, and not in Love, but in Fear, Fear deepening at times to Panic.

When we recognise that we shall have made a great stride in political wisdom.

In the Act of Union Pitt only applied a policy which he had inherited from a long line of kings and statesmen. The spoliation of Ireland in the last century and the spoliation of Ireland in the present century represented and represent only the cupidity of an unscrupulous and commercial people. The neutralization of Irish power is a fixed and rooted principle of British statesmanship ; it springs from the instinct of self-preservation. The genius of British statecraft is not earnestly set upon our spoliation, but is profoundly and terribly in earnest about the neutralization of our power.

It is infinitely more easy to overcome the cupidity of an unscrupulous and commercial people, and the cunning of Chancellors of the Exchequer, than to make even a small breach in the settled and traditional policy of a great Empire, a policy founded upon the primal instinct of self-preservation. I invite the most serious attention to this distinction.

Pitt indeed obviously applied a dangerous

remedy to a dangerous state of things when he introduced a strong Irish force into the very centre and citadel of the Empire, a remedy which a statesman of far-reaching imagination might have declined to adopt. But statesmen seldom look for more than immediate results, and their policy is, in nine cases out of ten, mere hand-to-mouth. Pitt, to do him justice, seems to have seen a hundred years ahead.

Ireland, divided at home, and with her representation safely housed in Westminster, has for a century ceased to be a peril to the British statesman. But now, in our time, all the barriers which formerly divided us have been swept away, while our representation still stands. So the spectre which haunted the meditations of so many British rulers, the spectre of a united Ireland, has arisen once more, and with a certain menacing emphasis, to disturb the thoughts of those who are to-day charged with the maintenance of British interests. The phantom is more alarming than ever, for, this time, a united Ireland cannot be met by fleets and armies. Physical force cannot be used for the suppression of constitutional rights. Till the present century

Ireland was always strong as a military power, however British statecraft might have neutralized that power. To-day we have no military power, but, in its place, we enjoy a vast constitutional power, and this power lodged in the very heart of the Empire.

Ireland in all her borders moves steadily towards unity, and the unity of Ireland must reproduce itself at Westminster. The spectre manifests itself anew, this time, in the very midst of the great council of the Empire.

The murdered man sits in the King's throne at the feast.

What follows but this, that we may henceforth play in Great Britain the part which has been for so many centuries played against us. The profound divisions and dissensions of the English people present there a promising field of action to any Irish leader who has this country with him. Have considerations such as these, which may be seen, as it were, with the naked eye, escaped the attention of our present English statesmen, the heirs of all those historic kings and ministers, the depositaries to-day of all that Imperial purpose and policy, the guardians of those mighty and now all but world-embracing Imperial and

British interests ? Not so ! They see all, and see too, very clearly, the nature of the game which it henceforth behoves them to play. We, as yet, do not, being new to politics, in any serious sense of that word, and not having had time so far to evolve our own breed of Irish statesmen. We neither understand that they understand, nor understand that it behoves us to play a game at least as deep as that which is being played against us, deeper if possible. For the British statesman the Irish spectre has arisen again in a new and more alarming form. Our power, which is to-day not martial, but political and constitutional, will be assailed and assailed, in the first instance at least politically and constitutionally. Ministers will aim henceforward at the neutralization, minimization, or extinction of this our formidable constitutional power, assailing it by such methods as may from time to time appear to be expedient. This is certain. Our enemies will aim henceforward at our constitutional power, our military power, great in the last century, having been destroyed in this.

If they could deal in the same manner with our constitutional power they would have us henceforward at their mercy ; for our physical

force is nothing, and, such as it is, might be easily neutralized by the extension of Imperial support to some strong Irish interest, the Catholic and Home Rule interest for example. To put it briefly, the British statesman, moved by the strongest motives of interest, of duty, and of patriotism, from his English and Imperial point of view, will proceed, and is, in fact, proceeding, to the reduction, the minimization, and, finally, the nullification of the formidable power which is ours within the lines of the Constitution. For its reduction our present small and dwindling population will supply plausible grounds. Here, too, he will have the support of the Irish loyalists, provided he can do so before they understand the real aim and purpose of his policy, which is not the diminution of the power of Home Rulers, but the diminution of the power of Ireland. And, *nota bene*, it is rumoured already that the Government have a Redistribution of Seats Bill in preparation.

But for the new ideas which are abroad here to-day the ancient State policy might be applied again with ease, precision, and effect. The North of Ireland would sustain Ministers in the reduction or minimization

of our constitutional power as a blow at the Home Rule party, and the South its total abolition in return for an Irish Parliament which they might dominate.

An Irish Parliament, *minus* our representation at St. Stephen's, is obviously a policy quite as effective as was Henry II.'s, which, too, as will be perceived, involved Home Rule, and plenty of it, for instead of one king, he graciously gave us six.

A Home Rule policy will outline itself as follows in the mind of the British statesman : " With a Parliament of their own, Irish parties and separate conflicting interests will reassert themselves in endless Parliamentary dissensions, and most probably civil war. We, in the meantime, shall have shaken ourselves free from a possible Irish control, and whenever necessary can bring to bear on the island an irresistible physical power. Ireland under Home Rule will so be neutralized *in perpetuum*, or, while the Empire endures: it will be England's home farm, growing much cattle and few men, and will cease to trouble us any more."

To Irish loyalists I say therefore :—" Stand fast against the reduction of our represent-

ation," and to Home Rulers and Nationalists :—"Beware of Home Rule for a while—for a good while." Let us all stand fast and very soon our combination will supply us with all the self-government that we require, or that would be good for us at present.

In pursuit of a deep and fixed ancient State policy the British statesman drew Ireland within his legislative system ; he there stripped her of her great military power, checked her natural material progress, stripped her of her wealth, and would now thrust her out naked—no not exactly naked, but with the Nessus' shirt of Home Rule wherewith to keep herself warm—extremely warm.

Once again there is fear in his councils ; it is our constitutional power that is feared now. That power, in one way or in another, he will seek to destroy, and all the more earnestly the more Ireland advances along the road towards a national combination.



VIII.

ULSTER.



HE end towards which this movement advances is not an All-Ireland Parliamentary Representation; though

I confess, I once thought so. The true aim and end of our movement is a Convention of the delegates of united Ireland sitting here in Ireland, and from Ireland directing the action of our All-Ireland Representation sitting in London. The brain and the will here, the hand there.

Through the necessary initial phases of agitation, organisation, and combination we advance quietly, day by day, towards Convention, steadily improving our Parliamentary

Representation by the way, as opportunity offers, and bringing it more into harmony with the character and the aims of our New Ireland.

In our progress we are steadied not only by the sense of a vast responsibility, but by the continual presence and operation of one fundamental law which governs our whole movement, and which ensures at all points sobriety, discretion, circumspection, and caution. This law, the first law of the movement, enjoins the suppression of the things concerning which we disagree, and the most stern and resolute concentration upon the things concerning which we do agree; for thus only, through agitation, organisation, and combination, can we reach our National Convention.

But the law will not cease to operate after the sitting of our Convention. It will be as strong then as now, and more strong. Our Convention, too, must submit to that most salutary if iron law, otherwise it falls asunder and the whole ground has to be traversed again. But then obedience involves great rewards.

If we obey the law we achieve the Conven-

tion of All-Ireland, and if the Convention obeys the law it is all-powerful ; it governs the Imperial Parliament, and employs the Imperial resources for the regeneration of this poor country, and the building up here of a great people.

Yet beyond the Convention, too, there is a stage to which the movement will advance before it can be greatly successful. The Convention will devolve its authority upon a permanent standing committee of the best and wisest, with powers of co-option. For a crowd is the worst instrument imaginable for the doing of serious work, and Ireland will have a great deal of serious work to do from the moment that she can secure an agency fit for its despatch. The Convention meeting from time to time and concerning itself only with principles, will always be the sovereign power, the Standing Committee its organ for the accomplishment of its purposes.

A crowd cannot make a good law ; the thing is impossible. The Committee will prepare laws which the Convention will sanction, and hand over to the Parliamentary Representation, with instructions to provide for the proper registration of those laws in the Imperial Parliament.

Let this glimpse into the future of our movement suffice for the present. Return now to things of more immediate moment.

For some time past the three southern provinces have been ripe for organisation, but Ulster is not. Ulster has not been yet through the initial phase of agitation. Till we carry Ulster we are nothing. Till then the power of Ireland is sundered, and in sunderance neutralised. Therefore, we should take steps at once to include this our warrior province in the All-Ireland League. Till we have Ulster we resemble a man who wants four yards of cord for a certain work and has but three. The three may be a good cord, but what of that if he needs four? The work is not done, and the three yards of good cord are as useless as none.

The North of Ireland differs from the South in many things—chiefly in this, that it is the home of swift intuitions and clear perceptions, and, therefore, of rapid, fiery, vehement, and decisive action. We are not made so in the South; between the thought and the deed there is with us an immense pause. If we do not rest satisfied in the thought, we are apt to rest satisfied in the word, and the word is in

no hot haste to translate itself into an act. With us a fine thought is a fine thing, and a fine speech a finer. It is not so in the North, where action follows swiftly and inevitably on the heels of perception. There the imagination, the understanding, and the will stand to each other in the nearest and most fruitful relations, and pour themselves forth ceaselessly into the world of sensible things.

From time immemorial, Ulster has been the leader province of Ireland through the possession, in a supreme degree, of this faculty of swift transition from perception to action. In the North, meditation and imagination are not ends, but means: talk is not an end, action is the end.

The war bugle of fratricidal strife, will never blow again in Ireland. Politics have succeeded war. In politics, as in war, Ulster will still lead through the possession of that great gift. The South may lead in other directions, but, with exceptions from time to time, not here. Ulster the most warlike of our provinces, is also the most political. When Ulster comes into this movement, things will begin to hum.

The torpid South will have to gird up her

lazy loins. Ulster forced Ireland's hand in 1782. While the South hesitated and murmured, the North met and pronounced Ireland's ultimatum, and Ireland saw that it was good.

The North, by virtue of native gifts, is best fitted to lead this movement. It likes, too, to be in the front, to play a conspicuous and brilliant part, and to figure creditably and with applause. Ulster will wish to lead, and, if so, should not be baulked of her ambition, but praised, encouraged, and loyally followed. Again, this is a Unionist movement, and there are good tactical reasons why the most Unionist of the provinces should take the van. It is very like the Volunteer movement in which Ulster cleared Ireland's path to victory. Like the Volunteer movement, ours is not disloyal, while at the same time, animated with a profound determination that spoliation shall cease, and that Right shall be done. Ulster should not only be permitted, but encouraged to take and keep the van in a movement which, while Irish, and national to the core, is not Separatist or disloyal or rebellious, and which relies so largely upon British aids and allies. A tyrant Administra-

tion having emancipated itself from the law, and having applied brute force to an awkward situation, would find it far easier to hang a peer in Munster, than a weaver in Belfast.

And this is meant very seriously, for I expect some rough weather. There are a great many tactical reasons why Ulster should be encouraged or persuaded to take the van.

Till we carry Ulster we are nothing. If we do not carry Ulster we are undone. When we carry Ulster the combination is complete, our National Convention prepared for, and all the heights commanding the plain of the coming struggle are in our occupation.

And we can carry Ulster, and even carry it with ease. Protestant and Catholic are there at variance, divided by hereditary feuds. True ; but such is the rare proclivity to action of the northern genius that when these men are taught the nature of the great fiscal fraud, and understand that an All-Ireland combination, and an All-Ireland combination alone, can deal with the defrauders, and that the logic of facts imperatively demands union and solidarity, the appropriate action, and even the appropriate sentiment will swiftly follow. Brave Ultonia ! Once, once only a murmur

of rebellion¹ ran through the province, and the murmur meant war. From her looms and farmsteads, with sword on thigh and flint-lock on shoulder, the North came forth and cowed an Empire, and the banded robber-tyrants shrank away, for a season, panic-striken, before that flaming face. Then she went home again, having accomplished her purpose, and hanged up her weapons, and turned her thoughts to the affairs of her household, and forgot that she had done a great deed. But we have not forgotten it in the South.

Moreover, the present Government, all unconsciously, has levelled and paved the road for our advance into the North. British state-craft which has hitherto leaned on the Irish landlord and Protestant interests, is about to lean, and in pursuance of the same State purpose, upon the Catholic and Home Rule interest. Signs and tokens of that new policy are not wanting, and Protestant Ulster has been observing them askance and indignantly. Witness the attitude of the Government towards the Erasmus Smith Schools endowment,

¹ This only from the *Cabinet* point of view, for the men of 1782 armed to defend the law.

and their proposed sectarian University, and their evident determination to clear out the Protestant landed interest, and other indications of the same kind. Then we have on our side—already declared—the leader of the Orange party, and Catholic Ulster to a man, and a goodly minority of the Protestants.

Finally, Protestant Ulster, speaking generally, so far as it is not with us, is not against. It is not hostile. It is only unconcerned and apathetic, regarding our All-Ireland movement only with a certain mild suspicion owing to its origination in the South, where Sacerdos is supposed to rule men's minds and dictate their votes.

For that reason the delegates whom we despatch into Ulster, especially into the east of Ulster, should be Unionists of known antecedents and above suspicion, preferably Protestants, and preferably men whose rank and position would be a guarantee of sincerity.

Men of action in the new movement! count nothing done till you have gathered in the North. But your entrance upon the province must be made with judgment, and even with a certain military forethought and prudence.

Remember the sound old military saw concerning the concentration of the greatest amount of force on the point of least resistance. You must avoid, in the first instance, the great towns ; they are the points of greatest resistance. Belfast, proud, prosperous, populous, and progressive, the capital, or soon to be the capital city of Ireland, feels the great wrong no more than Manchester, and for the same reason. She is a great commercial emporium and hive of manufacturing industry. Possibly Belfast, like Manchester, is a gainer under the Imperial fiscal system, and shares with manufacturing and commercial England in that general plundering of the poor and weak. But Belfast is Ulster's capital, and rural Ulster does feel the great wrong. The cities of the North must be taught their responsibilities through the awakened intelligence and aroused indignation of the farmers and labourers and village shopkeepers of the province. It is to that rural population that we must make the first appeal. Our financial reformers, then, will concentrate themselves, in the first instance, on rural Ulster as the point of least resistance, and work thence into the towns. We made an attempt upon Ulster already, which was a

failure, for we chose then for attack the very strongest point of resistance in the whole province, Belfast. Nor did we even concentrate ourselves strongly upon that stronghold. Belfast may be carried now as the climax of short and brisk agitation in Down and Antrim.

Nor, I think, should the great towns be approached at all on the score of their interests, but on the score of public duty. Our leaders should urge upon them, as well as they can, certain heroic conceptions of civic life and conduct. Those proud, busy, prosperous, and perhaps a little selfish merchants and manufacturers of the North must be made to feel that their wealth and power and even their talents are a trust, not possessions ; and, to make such men feel so, we need orators, not economists and calculators and colloquial talkers, pedestrian, tame and dull.

For this and other reasons our All-Ireland Committee, already choosing paid organisers, should seek diligently also for unpaid orators. In such a country, and for such a cause, it ought not to be hard to find great speakers.

Ulster, for our purpose, is worth almost all the rest of Ireland together, and Ulster is safe. The Convention of All-Ulster will be a sight

worth seeing. I hope to be there and witness the vindication of my profound belief in the patriotism, the political intelligence, the practical wisdom, and the grand audacity of the North.

Later on the South will come to the front, for our New Ireland has a great deal of work to do, and not political only ; but just now and for current needs we cannot do without the North.

The invasion of Ulster on the lines indicated should be made *before* the South is alive and awake. Nay, the agitation and organisation of the South might even, possibly, be with wisdom suspended till we are sure of the North. A flaming southern agitation would bring out many irrepressibles, with traditional rhetorical sedition and gunpowder oratory — a pernicious legacy inherited by us in the South from a bad past. Oratory of that nature is most mischievous, for many reasons ; for this, amongst others, that it alienates Irish loyalists in general, and Ulster in particular. All seditious oratory in this movement must be sternly suppressed, punished with the severest censure from leaders, and with the general contempt of the public. It

is cheap, and vulgar, and easy, and cowardly; it is poison to our cause, and, if delivered in any quantity, it is death to our cause.

The rebel Irish orator in this movement is probably a coward; he is certainly a fool, for he is one who cannot see that a combined Ireland is all-powerful within the Constitution, and that by his rebel oratory he is not only, so far as he can, breaking up the Irish combination, but repelling from our side the British aids and allies upon whose friendship and co-operation we must rely in the Constitutional prosecution of our aims. Nay, more, he concentrates upon us the angry attention of Mr. Bull—a thing to be avoided, and concerning which I shall have something to say hereafter.

It will be observed, at the same time, that events are, in this respect, most helpful and assisting. For example, the '98 Centenary Celebration will, for a considerable time, preserve us from the irruption of men of an extreme type, and their irresponsible oratory. These men, when, hereafter, they do come in, will be more sober. They, too, will have then shared in the general awakening of the political intelligence of the country.

When they come, leaving their alarming oratory behind them, they will be most welcome—as welcome then as Ulster now.

I am sorry to write, as I have felt it necessary to write, concerning our *Intransigentes*: partly because I respect them, partly because we cannot win without them. I know how the Fenian heart beats, and also how beneath its Orange sash the true-blue Protestant heart beats. However you may hate each other now the New Ireland will like you both. You are brave and you are Irish, and neither of you has *anything* in common with the Minotaur, the man-eater.





IX.

THE EMANCIPATION OF THE PIPE AND THE EMANCIPATION OF THE TEA-POT.



THE conquest of the North and the organization of Ireland will be all the swifter and more thorough if we remember and apply another rule of the art of war. It is this :—

“An army, like a serpent, goes on its belly.”
Translate into the language of politics, and it will run thus :—

“Great masses of men can only be moved through their material interests.”

It was “The Big Loaf,” not his economics, that enabled Cobden to abolish the Corn Laws. It was the Rent question, not the National question, that gave Parnell his power. The plain man does not understand fine things;

on the contrary, rather dislikes and suspects both them and their promoters ; and the plain man, in times like these, is master of the situation, for plain minds are many, and fine minds few. It has pleased God, in His wisdom, to make the majority of mankind after that plain and unintellectual pattern.

The statesman sees and deals with things and men as they are ; he accepts and works in harmony with the laws which govern human nature, as the scientist accepts and works in harmony with the laws which govern matter.

The Financial Relations may be sufficient to secure for us the formal assent of the Irish people, just as so many of them gave a formal assent to Home Rule. But, if we would have their active, fervent, universal, and intelligent co-operation, we must do as Cobden did when he exhibited "the Big Loaf" on his banners ; we must appeal to them through their primal instincts and evident material interests. Lamentable or not, that is the fact. For such an appeal Financial Relations are too abstract. Tell Pat or Mike that the British Government has robbed us to the tune of three hundred millions, and prove it to him by facts and figures and the clearest reasoning. He will be

ready enough to interline the demonstration with an indignant commentary : "The robbers ! Sure we knew it all along, your honour. Well we knew that they were robbing us."

Tell him of our Constitutional power, and how, by combined effort, we can compel redress. He will understand and agree ; and yet little has been gained, for neither demonstration has penetrated deep enough to unloose in him the springs of action. We must touch him to the quick, for we have to get a great deal more out of Pat than his formal assent, or his vote, or his shilling.

In short, he will not believe in the Financial Relations ; and it is worth remembering that, to most of our poor people, a shilling represents a long day's work, and we are asking him to part with that shilling for Financial Relations and a card. I have heard his betters ask, without shame, "What good will the Financial Relations ever do for *me* ?"

While we deal with him so, Pat is incredulous ; he does not believe that one penny of the stolen millions will ever find its way into *his* pocket. The gentlemen who come down from Dublin to talk to him may get some of it, for, like all uneducated people, he is sus-

picious, but for his own share he "may go whistle for it."

We must translate Financial Relations into something visible, and concrete, and tangible, and affecting the individual, something that will bring heart and hope, and faith in ourselves and in the movement, into every home in Ireland, and to every hearthside. Now this we can do by seizing the first convenient opportunity of putting forward as an essential portion of our programme the total abolition in Ireland of the tea tax and the tobacco tax, and by teaching our people the nature of these taxes. When Paddy understands that he has to pay threepence per ounce for a halfpenny worth of twist in order that the British Government may get two-pence halfpenny for itself, and when it is made plain to Nora that as often as she buys a pound of tea the invisible British statesman gathers up four of the pennies which she doles out on the counter, and that the Financial Reform League is fighting the Government in order that she may be able to bring those four pennies home with her again, the Financial Relations will wear a far more cheerful and intelligible aspect.

Lord Burleigh, the craftiest of men, advised his son Robert, when about to make a present to a great man, to choose something which would be frequently in the great man's eye—a hair-brush, for example, inlaid with pearl, a gold snuff-box, or something of that nature.

Now, the Financial Relations, when translated into terms of tea and tobacco and pennies, will be not only frequent but welcome visitors in the thoughts and conversations of Pat and Nora in every Irish home. They will come often, and at last come to stay. The Financial Relations, like rich relations—which they are—will take an honoured place at the family board and at the hearth-side, and their society and conversation will be agreeable and instructive.

So translated, as it were, into the vulgar tongue and a language understood of the people, the Financial Relations, like Lord Burleigh's cunning gifts, will attract a ceaseless attention.

When Pat fills his pipe for a blast, and takes a meditative draw, he will reflect how the B. B. G. collared tuppence-happenny out of that last thrippence, and Nora, as she infuses the tea, sparingly, will revolve like thoughts

concerning the tea tax, and, perhaps, with dewy eyes invoke a blessing on the great noblemen and gentlemen and rich people who have not forgotten the poor. Nor will the old granny, half dozing in the deep hearthside, forget Financial Relations ! They will mingle mysteriously in every pinch of the fragrant *sneesheen*, for which her son has had to pay six prices in order that the British Government might get five ; and the little grandchildren will be taught by her homely comments. Remember the young women, too, with their own thoughts on these things, and the young men, their more swiftly kindling indignation—young men, with strength in their hands and courage in their hearts, and mettle in their light heels. Financial Relations, ere all ends, may have need of that strength, and that courage, and those swift feet. There is something immeasurably greater in this movement than Financial Relations.

Wherever there is a pipe, and wherever there is a teapot, the Financial Relations will be welcomed and understood, and will not be, what they threaten to become, a nuisance, and a torment, and a bore, and a theme for bores.

This may not be politics on a sublime scale of things—I believe it is—but it is something better; it is politics on the practical scale of things. Bring your politics *home*, if you would make them successful. So, Henry of Navarre carried France along with him, when he declared that “every peasant should have his fowl in his pot.”

And let there be no nibbling at the question, no thought or talk of a sliding scale, or of a reduced duty, however considerable the reduction. That would spoil all, damp the rising spirits, tame the heart, and fetter the imagination. No. It must be neck or nothing, and the whole thing. A free pipe and a free tea-pot for all Ireland! Government may reduce the duty, and welcome. But the League must not reduce its demand; it must carry the flag high, nailed to the staff.

A free pipe and a free tea-pot for all Ireland!

At the lowest it will be cheerful politics, cheerful because homely, and conduct us straight, and by the nearest way out of the Dismal Swamp of Financial Relations. And the ballad-makers will make ballads about it, and ballad-singers sing them amid rings of

laughing faces, and under the sunny surface, slow-gathering, tides of fierce resolution and immeasurable wrath.

We must abandon this ridiculous coyness, supposed to be so politic and astute, waiting for the Government to propose something, that we may criticise the proposal. We must, and we shall, go straight for that fiscal reform which will give the greatest, most direct, and most universal relief to our poor people. No other imaginable or suggested reform equals this, not only in popularity, but in every other respect, too.

We have been too timid, too fearful of giving offence in London and in high quarters by going boldly to the root of the evil. The bold course is here the prudent course; it generally is. If we wish to be coy, let us be coy about grants. Our coyness here will preserve us, while our combination is still new and raw, from the sordid dissensions sure to arise concerning the application of such sums as we might compel Parliament to set aside or ear-mark for Irish purposes.

A free pipe and a free tea-pot! It is high politics, as well as cheerful politics, and will be found to harmonize beautifully with the

laws of the political art, which resemble, in a marvellous manner, the laws of the art of war. It is the line of the strongest concentration of our forces, and of the least resistance, and of the greatest results.

“How the line of least resistance ?” someone will say. “Does it not involve the setting up of barriers and the disruption of the whole existing Imperial fiscal system ? Parliament will much more willingly give grants.”

Very like, if we are silly enough to accept, with the prospect of then fighting over those grants, like pariah dogs over a bone. No ; that way madness lies. Till our combination is thorough and our unity complete, let us accept no grants save such as, without debate, may command the approval of the whole country.

And the line of advance, *via* duty-free tea and tobacco, is also the line of greatest results, for thereby we menace the most vulnerable spot in the armour of the British statesman, nay, menace the most vulnerable point in that vulnerable spot. His fiscal system is his weak place, for the brunt of it falls upon the many, while the tea and tobacco duties not only press with very great severity upon the many,

but are a violation of the principle which he affects to observe. They are taxes upon the necessities of life in England, Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man, as well as in Ireland.

Menace him here, and you will see him *shrink*, for here he is weak, unprotected, and exposed. Is it forgotten already how the *Times*, while raging against fiscal alteration, smiled benignly at the notion of grants? The *Times* is the brains-carrier of the British statesman.

Let the student of the political art bethink him here of another rule of the art of war:

“Where the enemy is strongly entrenched and unassailable in front, menace his rear, strike at his supplies, march on his magazines. Hunger, or the fear of it, will produce excellent results.”

If the British statesman is obstinate, we can menace, and, if he continues obstinate, we can attack his line of communications, and the base whence he draws his provisions. And the way lies beautifully open to us, *via* the Highlands; of which more anon.

But the menace will be sufficient. Menace his supplies and observe his behaviour. Last winter’s agitation seemed for a while to be

such a menace, and so the *Times* roared again with panic, and in an unguarded moment let slip a threat in which was revealed the next considerable move in the game which British State policy plays always against Ireland. "Have a care," roared the *Times*. "Have a care! you Irish Unionists, or, whether you like it or not, we will give you Home Rule."

Better than Cabinet Ministers or Premiers, the *Times* represents the power with which we contend. These are dull or dullish, having squandered their abilities, never at any time very considerable, in the rioting and debauchery and chicanery of party politics. The leader-writers of the *Times* represent the best procurable political talent of a certain kind, and have very intelligent notions concerning high politics, and the policy most suitable to the interest which they are employed to defend. Our own budding statesmen should study attentively every Anglo-Irish utterance of this organ. It is not only the voice, but the mind of the Minotaur!

To return—we have assisted already (see Chap. II.) at an amusing colloquy between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and an All-

Ireland Committee which was extremely coy. Let us imagine another in which our coy Committee, having been well instructed at home, and having their feet well set upon the All-Ireland track of things, resumes the interrupted conference.

Chancellor of the Exchequer :—

“ Gentlemen, I am glad to see you again. Have you any proposition to make ? In all that concerns the real welfare of your country, you may implicitly rely upon the good intentions of Her Majesty’s Government: You have heard of our Bills, the Local Government Bill to which £800,000 per annum is attached ! and the Catholic University Bill.”

All-Ireland Committee :—

“ And the Re-distribution of Seats Bill. Thanks, Chancellor, we have, but nothing of the arrears of that £800,000 *per annum* due to us since the passage of the Agricultural Rating Bill, whose operation you confined to Great Britain. We beg you to regard us as absolutely precluded from touching upon any subject concerning which our people show the least symptoms of disagreement. That is the very law of our being, and the first rule of our action.

“With regard to practical measures we are now empowered by our people to propose duty-free tea and duty-free tobacco for all Ireland. The country is at one upon this point.”

Chancellor of the Exchequer:—

“Impracticable! Consider the inconvenience of barriers, the searching of luggage, etc. Smuggling, too, would revive, involving a new and large Imperial expenditure. Have you no reasonable proposition? A Parliamentary grant, for example, in aid of the development of your material resources. I understand they are very considerable.”

All-Ireland Committee:—

“Our people, Chancellor, are quite set on this reform, and our travelling classes think nothing of the inconveniences to which you refer. As for smuggling, there is a very fine coast-guard service in both countries now idle.”

Chancellor of the Exchequer:—

“Quite visionary and impracticable! Do you think our people would consent to pay heavy duties on articles of such universal consumption while Ireland secures them duty free? No Administration could stand for twenty-four hours after such a declaration of

policy. Utterly impracticable! On the other hand we would deal very generously with Ireland in the way of Parliamentary grants—very generously."

All-Ireland Committee :—

" Believe us, Chancellor, our people are quite set on this reform which unites and holds us together in a marvellous manner, while the least intelligent of them perceives a great danger in the policy which you recommend. Now, if your people are the obstacle, we have no objection at all to the removal of all that burthen from the British working-man, and the admission of tea and tobacco duty-free throughout the United Kingdom—you of course making good that loss in some other way in Great Britain, but preferably in England proper, which is so fabulously rich; always provided that no new tax whatsoever is to be levied in Ireland. If your people need instruction on the subject we could send a good many brilliant and popular orators to educate them—men trained during our recent agitation in the art of public speaking. But to us it would seem to be on your part decidedly the wiser course not to permit such burning questions to be kindled in England at all, but quietly, and

with such explanations and justifications as may occur to you, to grant our poor people this relief.

Chancellor of the Exchequer (fiercely):—

“ And if I refuse —— ? ”

All-Ireland Committee (mildly):—

“ We shall upset your Administration, and bring the Opposition into power. And, please, remember Chancellor, that it is not at all our desire to cross the Channel, nor shall we do so unless we are compelled. But if you do compel us we have the power to provide for you a very burning question at home.”

That is politics and that is war. Menace, a strongly posted enemy along the line of his supplies.

Free incomes, too, would be a very desirable addendum to such a fiscal reform.

Income-tax, always a hateful impost, has been, in its application to Ireland, a sheer Imperial swindle ; but the facts are too well known to be told again here. Our upper and middle classes, too, deserve some relief of a direct and tangible character. Plain minds distrustful of fine things abound also in these classes. Such a reform would tell indirectly as well as directly. It would counteract the tendency to

absenteeism, and encourage a very desirable class of English people, otherwise friendly to us, to settle and make homes in our midst, so strengthening certain classes which must form an important factor in national development, and which have been seriously weakened by Imperial policy. For the building up of a great nation we want not one class or order of men, but many.

Meantime, no doubt, grants will be acceptable, according as we can agree concerning their application ; but, believe it, the best way to get grants or anything else from the British statesman is to menace him along the line of his supplies. Menace him, there, and see what will happen.

And you, the leaders, remember that this people are very suspicious of public men. They suspect you. They think you want boards in order to man them yourselves. To secure their confidence you must fight a battle which is clearly and evidently for them. Go for the grants then and get as many as you want.



X.

IRELAND BEYOND THE MOYLE.



HERE is a greater Ireland as well as a greater Britain. I have referred to it amongst those "forces of incalculable strength," bound later on to mingle with our movement. But, Ireland at home—have we not forgotten its full extent? Is it not at least one half again greater than we imagined it to be? We have ignored the Ireland which lies only a few hours, steam from the ports of Ulster, and which we may gather into our League at any time we please. Perhaps we shall not please; perhaps such a step may be embarrassing, for

it certainly involves a transmarine extension of the area of our activity, therefore of our responsibility. Our statesmen as they emerge will consider all this.

I refer to Scotia Minor—to the Highlands and islands of Scotland, a region, like Ireland, the habitat of an agricultural and pastoral people, and of poor fishers and cottiers, suffering worse than we do from the great fiscal fraud, having, too, like us, their own Scotch charter of violated rights, a race of men—Irishmen through and through—of a purer race than ours, and who speak the Irish tongue. The brave Highlanders! And we can have them for the asking. They are ourselves, our own kith and kin, and they know it, though I fear we do not—yet. They are with us in heart and thought already, and are even now turning wistful and inquiring eyes upon the mother country. Their open alliance will be a tower of strength to our cause, for, though poor and unfortunate and insulted, as we are not, by the intrusion of a brutal opulence led on by vulgar fashion, though their ancient gentry are disappearing before the combined operation of fiscal tyranny and the acquisitiveness of the *nouveaux riches*,

and the free clansman too often wears the livery of the millionaire—still their name and fame are great. What name stands in the same rank of martial glory and romantic interest with that of the Highlanders—our kinsmen beyond a few leagues of the cold waters of the Moyle? If Scotland has a history, and a literature, and a national music, and a distinctive and fascinating national genius, she owes it to the Highlanders.

Here, then, if we choose even now to cross the sea and carry our war into Britain and trouble the Minotaur at home, are our first and surest allies, here our first *point d'appui* at the other side of the Channel, and best base of operations in transmarine action. And, indeed, I begin to perceive that, with a brave impetuous and fiery race like ours, the waiting or defensive policy is the bad policy, and that the Celt is more wisely led into action than posted behind entrenchments. Let our leaders consider it. I, at least, as a member of the League, give my vote for the forward movement, and the inclusion of that brave race within our ranks without delay. We can have them for the asking. Move out for the Highland Irish and you double the resolu-

tion and *elan* of the Irish home, you make clearer to them the nature of the game, and also flurry and confuse the foe.

It will double the spirit and self-confidence of our own people, for it is not only a forward movement, but a victorious forward movement; and, as such, will surely draw closer the bonds of our combination at home. It will alarm and disorganize the enemy as a stroke at his rear, which he cannot parry, by a flank movement which he cannot even oppose. It will inspire hope in the hearts of our countless British friends further south, who know already that our cause is their cause, and look for our coming.

Thereby we add to our combination another Ulster and another Munster, for the genius of the Western Highlanders resembles that of the Ulstermen, and that of the Northern Highlanders reproduces the type of the men of Munster.

Many extern aids and allies will hereafter join us, impelled by one political consideration or another. We shall be true to them, however fast and loose they may play with us, for Irish honour must be maintained; but we can trust the Highlanders as we can trust no

others; they are ourselves, and blood is thicker than water. I know that they are willing and eager to join us, for I have Scotch friends on whose reports I can rely.

The desirability, nay, the necessity, of bringing Ulster into our combination will be apparent to all; but this notion of including the Highlands as well is sure at first to startle and displease. It is only because our minds naturally shrink from the unfamiliar. When discussion shall have made us familiar with the notion we shall hesitate no longer. I advise, then, the despatch, as soon as convenient, of accredited and creditable representatives into the North of Scotland for the opening of negotiations there, or, at least, of making a report. Erin and Alba—they were one country in old times, and will be so again.

To set down upon the very lowest grounds the advantages of this forward move, the Highlands will add 22 votes to our already very respectable voting power of 103, raising the total to 125, counting 250 on a division—a solid voting phalanx sure to draw to itself the most flattering attentions from British statesmen—a class of persons attracted as irre-

sistibly to the quarter in which votes abound as the black tramp to the chicken-roost.

Again, the adhesion of the Highlanders enlists, at once in our service the Pan-Celtic pens of an eager band of students and thinkers and artists in Edinburgh, the pioneers of that interesting movement in literature, known as the Celtic Renaissance. Of this movement, Edinburgh, the most intellectual city in the British Islands, is the head-quarters. These talented men and women will seize at once on the spiritual and intellectual aspects of our Financial Relations Movement, from the very moment that they see the Highlands stirring, and will trumpet the cause through Scotland, and into the South.

Our practical men, I know, think little of such allies; but our practical men of the new movement have still minds fashioned largely by influences emanating from the very power against which they are contending. We shall evolve a race of practical men of our own who will respect other forms of thought and emotion than the leading articles of popular newspapers.

I shall have a word yet to say to the Irish people concerning the place and function in

this our expanding and advancing Ireland of that order of men, observing only, as I pass, that they stand for the imagination, and that the imagination is the faculty by which man communicates with the unseen powers which are guiding human destinies.

Our coming breed of Irish statesmen when they arrive will bear no resemblance at all to the statesmen whom England has been teaching us to admire, and whom we have deceived ourselves into thinking that we do admire. All that class of people whom we now call statesmen will be the clerks, accountants, secretaries, and hired business people of the statesmen of the future, for they are useful and serviceable when kept in their proper place, and confined strictly to the discharge of duties specified by their superiors. So much for the political and literary aspects suggested by the inclusion of the Highlanders in our organisation. On the military side of things the alliance of Scotia Major and Scotia Minor, of the Irish, and the Highlanders, discloses certain very interesting avenues of speculation, which, however, for the present I forbear to tread. Observe that it is the junction of the two most warlike

divisions of the population of the Britannic Isles.

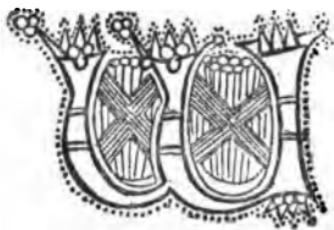
Our Constitutional power is amply sufficient to enable us to carry through all our purposes ; but at the same time it is pleasant to reflect that if our enemies, travelling outside of the Law, use violence against us, we have the means of troubling this Empire, ay, to the foot of the Himelays.





XI.

THE VEILED PLAYER.



E must habituate ourselves to the thought that politics are an art, like the art of war, and governed by much the same kind of laws; or a game, like chess, with move and counter move. Have any of us yet realized that we are being played *against*, that at the other side of the table, sits one who does not talk or clamour, a being unitary and self-contained, who calculates and considers, and sees always one, or two, or three moves ahead, yet that is so. He sits there always and plays against us. And the stake? It is not money; though pyramids of gold glitter on the board. It is an ancient, famous, unfortunate, and not wholly undeserving nation playing for its life, playing in confusion and distraction against one who is

neither confused or distracted, but imperturbed, plays always the right piece to the right square. Who is the player? It is the genius of a mighty Empire! We play against him.

In this great game we have all the strong pieces, while he has only pawns; but what of that if the movement of the pawns be directed by understanding, and that of the strong pieces by—somnambulists, shall we say?

Politics are an art, like the art of war; governed by rules. Hitherto, no one could apply these rules to the conduct of Irish politics for the same reason that no one can apply the rules of the art of war to a mob. Moltke himself would be powerless in the midst of a mob. But this our mob of Irish factions is slowly, steadily, inevitably resolving itself into a host. Soon it will be ready to move like one man at the word of command. He, our opponent, plays in his imperturbed passionless manner to divide our combining forces, aiming always, aiming ceaselessly at the capture of our Parliamentary representation, our Queen. That purpose he pursues as relentlessly as the weasel hunts the one rabbit, overground and underground, knowing that with the neutra-

lization of our constitutional power we are undone, and at his mercy. And there are many of us who would help him to the capture of our one strong piece, for the political understanding of Ireland still slumbers, nor can we even apply the plain rules of common-sense to political situations.

Assume now that my many fears and forebodings are unfounded. Assume that we have sufficient sagacity to play our game and not his, sufficient to perceive that we must stand by this All-Ireland combination and permit nothing whatsoever, be it as alluring as it may, to interfere with that combination. Then, if we have really reached this degree of wisdom, the game from a constitutional point of view, is in our hands; we can play at our leisure. We can then proceed quietly with the regeneration of Ireland, building up here on strong foundations, a great Power, solving one after another our domestic problems, and to that end, utilizing the opportunism of British public men and parties, their greed for votes, their internal dissensions, the wealth of the Imperial Treasury, and the all but limitless resources of the Imperial credit. But, can anyone believe that the

typical British statesman, the inheritor of such traditions, the depositary of the ideas and purposes of the old kings and rulers who have created this great Empire ; can anyone believe that he, being what he is, will sit down for ever, tied by constitutional pack-thread, while we, using English parties as our tools, build up here a great power which many will teach him to regard as an *Imperium in Imperio* ?

It will be long before Mr. Bull, honest man ! can realize that here, in this despised island, a people and a power are growing up of a character which he can consider formidable. His stupidity, his immersion in vast Imperial problems and complications, his attention to his own growing and huge domestic problems, his honest desire to see us, on the whole, doing a little better, and the hypnotization exercised over his mind by his own public men—public men whom we control—will supply us, it may be for many years, with opportunities which we must utilize to the utmost, for those years will surely come to an end. One day Mr. Bull, blown upon, perhaps simultaneously, by all his newspapers, in some slack season, when Ireland seems to present a promising theme to

the editorial mind, or aroused by some more patriotic or less opportunist of his statesmen, will look this way with a surly and dangerous countenance. And remember that Mr. Bull is far, indeed, from contemptible, and that in his deep heart and stomach there is at all times a terrible power of self-assertion, and an utter indifference to ways and means, provided only his enemy, real or imaginary, be trampled to nothingness or swept out of his path.

For Mr. Bull's Parliament and current political methods we are justified by long experience in entertaining the profoundest contempt. That Parliament and those political methods are at our mercy. But Mr. Bull himself, ached to the throat, consoled to the chin, shared to the throat, and with the anti-Irish passion of the masses to play upon, is something by no means so easily dealt with.

But our Constitutional power is enormous !

It is. Within the Constitution an intelligent Irish lad, with an understanding unclouded by political superstition, might manipulate to the confusion of whole Cabinets of British statesmen, the illimitable power which is ours.

And, now, upon what is our Constitutional

power built ? Nothing, or, if something, paper ! Between us and the deep there is only paper.

Within the Constitution we can beat the British statesman as much and as often as we like. And then, what is to prevent him, whenever he likes, from driving us out of the Constitution ? There is nothing.

As I thought of these things, and remembered how this was a game, and that we were played against, I saw somewhere, somehow, a vast hall ; a silence rested over it like the silence of Eternity. In the midst of the hall was a table and chess-board, where players played. At one side of the table sat a Veiled Figure, with his back to a wall pierced by many doors, all closed, and bolted strongly with brazen bars. On the other side sat a group of men, pale, with bowed heads and knitted brows and strangely glittering eyes, who murmured low together, and took deep counsel before every move. Their leader moved, and the rest consented.

On the table, on one side lay a paper of printed laws of the game, of perfect calligraphy, emblazoned ; and on the other side a pyramid of gold ; and yet I was aware, as I looked, that the gold was not

the true stake—that the Veiled Figure and the men played for their lives, and that it was a duel to the death; and beyond the silence, too, I was aware of the brooding presence of a superincumbent Destiny, and that all this was his doing, and carefully prepared for from before the foundation of the world, and that I assisted here at the unfolding in Time of the councils of mighty gods, and that it was the ending of great things accomplished, and the beginning of great things to be.

Move by move, I saw the game go against the Veiled Figure, for he was overmatched both in the number and power of the pieces, and in skill and knowledge of the game.

After a long pause the Figure shifted its position slightly, and moved.

“Against the law,” said the men all together. Their leader laid a fore-finger on the rule, and looked up. The Figure started to its feet, snatched the paper in its hands, and rent it in two. He upset the table, and, with a harsh voice, which rang above the clanging of the gold upon the iron floor, shouted aloud for his “guards.”

The doors flew open, for the brazen bars

were a fraud—they hung on loose staples—and armed men poured into the hall.

“Bind me these men,” he cried, “and thrust them into the deepest and surest of my Imperial dungeons, and gather the gold into my Treasury. Ha !”

Behind the men, as the vision faded, I thought I heard a noise as of a multitude, a trampling of innumerable feet, and a cry; but whether it was the shouting of a host or the shriek of a fallen people, and whether they ran to succour or whether they fled, I could not tell, for hearing, like sight, failed me as the vision faded.

Men of Ireland! gentry and people, high and low, wise and simple, leaders and led, what are you prepared to do when the veiled figure seeing the game lost, rends the rules, upsets the table, spills the gold, and shouts for his “guards?” And he will do it; trust me he will. For this veiled figure is the genius of a mighty Empire, based upon the lust of gold and the lust of power, the intelligent principle of a giant Plutocracy dominant at home, rampant abroad, and reaching round the world to-day with a thousand hands towards a universal dominion.

Given a man of that temper, will he suffer himself to be balked in his purposes, and stopped upon his path, by rules written on paper? And is a system, a corporation, an Empire more scrupulous than a man?

In our own time a *coup d'etat* was executed in Parliament upon an Irish Party. It was a small *coup* and aimed only at an Irish annoyance. It was executed, nevertheless, and the great London Dailies applauded the act. Our's will not be a small Irish annoyance, but great, and the greatest. We come before him who is the presiding genius to-day of the British Empire—the incarnated Plutocratic principle—and who is governed by two master passions, lust of gold, and of material power—we come before him demanding the restitution, upon a mighty scale, of that which is his life, and the reform of a fiscal system which sustains his power. In doing so, whether we use a threatening word or not, we do in fact menace him with dim perils and the fear of “new things” in his own house. We raise up for him again the hundred-times-laid spectre of the intervention of a united Ireland in his domestic affairs, a united Ireland operating and acting in the

very centre of his whole Imperial system. Will he, being what we know him to be, endure all this, when it needs but one touch of the giant finger, to reduce us once more to impotence? Will one hesitate to crush the stinging gnat? For so he will regard us while we exert against him only the force which is ours according to paper.

Our quarrel with this dread being—the incarnated genius of the British Plutocracy—is to the death. Has anyone realized his dread attributes? Let me give an example. That noble-hearted Englishman, Mr. Plimsoll, year by year, and for many years, sought to dissuade him from the annual murder of British seamen by the thousand in his over-loaded¹ and over-insured mercantile marine. And he could not. Why? Because the Plutocracy loves gold, and takes no thought of men.

“A man shall be more precious than a wedge of gold.” That is the law, but it is

¹ The Plimsoll load-line was not sanctioned by the Plutocratic House of Commons till its author, after many fruitless appeals to Justice and Mercy, lifted up his voice and wept aloud on the floor of the House. He appealed that memorable night from the “Minotaur,” his Court, to the human heart of England, and won; and the murdering of British sailors on the high seas received a check.

not his law. His is the reverse. "A wedge of gold shall be more precious than a man." And the principle pervades his whole system of legislation, of administration, of foreign and domestic policy—nay, of his political philosophy and economic philosophy. And, therefore, all the children of light, born in his own household, are his enemies, open or concealed, and they hate him with an inextinguishable and deadly hatred.

And we, the leaders of the younger powers in his hoary Olympus, the heralders of the new day and the growing light, we come up inevitably armed with the principle which, from the beginning of the world, has been in deadly antagonism with his—"Gold is the servant, and man is the lord : A man *shall be* more precious than a wedge of gold."

It is his very life that we aim at—though all unconsciously to-day—and he knows it, or will soon know it. For he is fearful, too, as well as dreadful, and fear and insomnia are twins, and the worshipper of gold sleeps, if he does sleep, like the hare, with open eyes and ears unsealed, and a heart that trembles, like the grass, for he is a tyrant and he is a coward.

One day a tyrant Administration, representing, perhaps, the combined might of England proper, sitting at ease in the midst of its aroused, angry, and inflamed millions, and of that mighty reticulation of wealth and power and material resources, which we call the Empire, will rend the Constitution with strong and rebellious hands, and, laughing at our Act of Union, declare the game ended. Why should you doubt it ?

In the Union debates, Pitt, Prime Minister of England, was asked what guarantee would he give to Ireland that her financial rights under the Act would be respected by the Imperial Parliament. He replied—what did he reply ?

“ The honour of England.”

And in fifty years, and at the first¹ opportunity that offered the Imperial Parliament, violated our Charter, not as an act of self-defence against a younger and formidable power arising like ours with new ideals inconsistent with its own, but through sheer rapacity and greed of gain, against Justice,

¹ .. wept ⁱⁿ memorably ⁱⁿ the admission of the people to power neutralized heart of Representation. Before '53 the Irish gentry were strong sailors on th^o secure respect for the Charter.

against the Law, and under circumstances which argued on the part of the violators an incredible degree of callousness or of cruelty.

Will this Power now when touched to the quick—we shall have to touch it to the quick—the Power whose inherited rule of policy has for 700 years enjoined the neutralization of Ireland, a Power now far more dominant, far more Plutocratic, therefore, more Tyrannical and more unscrupulous than it was in the days of the imposition of “equal Taxes,” and profoundly and justly alarmed both for its treasure and its authority—will this Power permit paper to bar its way?

If we are determined, as I hope we are or soon will be, to play this game right through, like men, and like Irishmen, we must be prepared, at some time, to defend the law and the Constitution with something stronger than words.

And we can do it—we Irish Loyalists standing for the Law, standing for Throne, Peers, and Commons, and the rights and privileges of the High Court of Parliament as by law and solemn precedent established. We can do it and even with ease by planting

ourselves strongly upon the lines of the Constitution with a clear purpose and full determination, obeying the law at every point, and maintaining the law, and enforcing the law. We have great allies, greater than any one can see to-day, and no tyrant Administration, how passionately soever it may long to do so, will be able to expell us from the Constitution. Our enemy, if he attempts it, will but outlaw himself, and enable us to bring to bear upon him the whole power of the State, the Crown included :—its immense, now veiled Prerogative.

Observe again, and never forget it, we are not rebels and law-breakers and seditious men. We stand for the law and for the legal rights and privileges of the Throne, the Lords, and Commons of this United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Our Fenians when they see the great game and understand it, will swear the oath of allegiance to the Throne, and they will keep it.

Our ancestors stood for the Law and the Constitution in 1782. From the Crown they received their military commissions. They stood for the Law the Constitution and the State, and they conquered, gloriously.

We can beat our enemy, within the Constitution, and if, in his hate and fear, he would change the venue, preferring an extra-Constitutional verdict we can beat him outside of the Constitution too.

Time and events are bringing wondrous things to pass. Marvel upon marvel is about to be revealed for there are great powers moving to-day in Ireland and executing purposes for whose fulfilment we may now dimly see that our strange history has been one long preparation.

“Great are Thy counsels, O God Most High! God above all gods! Who of men can understand them?”

To-morrow, or the day after, or the day after that, the New Ireland goes forth conquering and to conquer. At last she appears, the Isle of Destiny, *Inis Fail*!





XII.

CONCLUSION.



HE All-Ireland movement is governed by two Laws: they are these:—

(1) *The Imperial Parliament, in its dealings with Ireland, never yields to Justice but always to Force.*

(2) *Ireland united is Ireland irresistible.*

Everything that I have written is but an explanation, expansion, or illustration of these laws. Every seeming paradox, even that in which I maintain that the Fenians will swear the oath of allegiance, will, if

closely considered, be discovered to be no more than a corollary, consequence, or necessary conclusion of these deep and pregnant political axioms.

They dominate the whole situation. The man who does not understand them through and through—and their full meaning is not easily apprehensible—may be clever and eloquent, and well-informed, but he is not fit for public life: he will never be an Irish statesman, or even an effective Irish politician. He may mislead, brilliantly: he will never lead wisely or victoriously.



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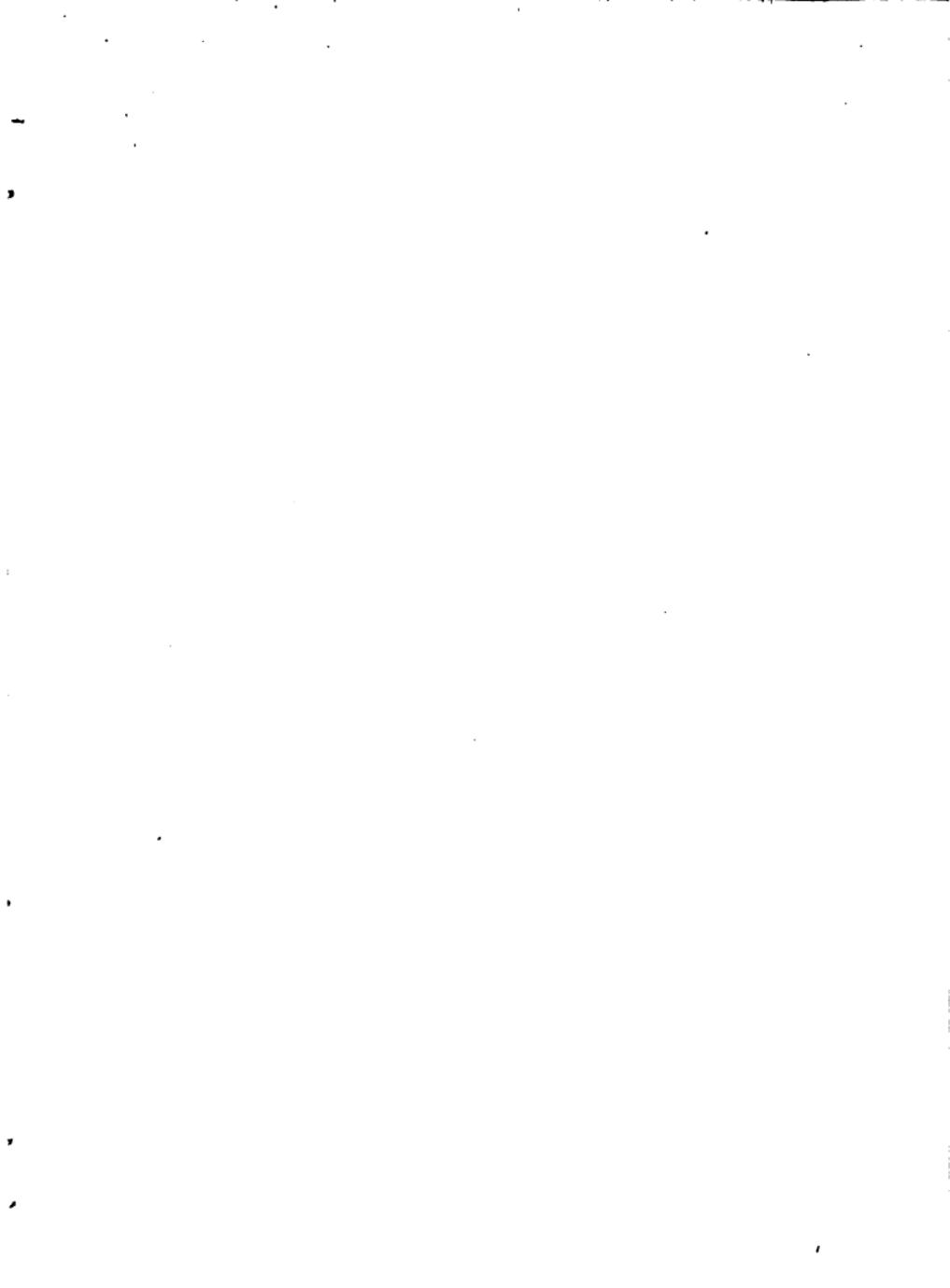
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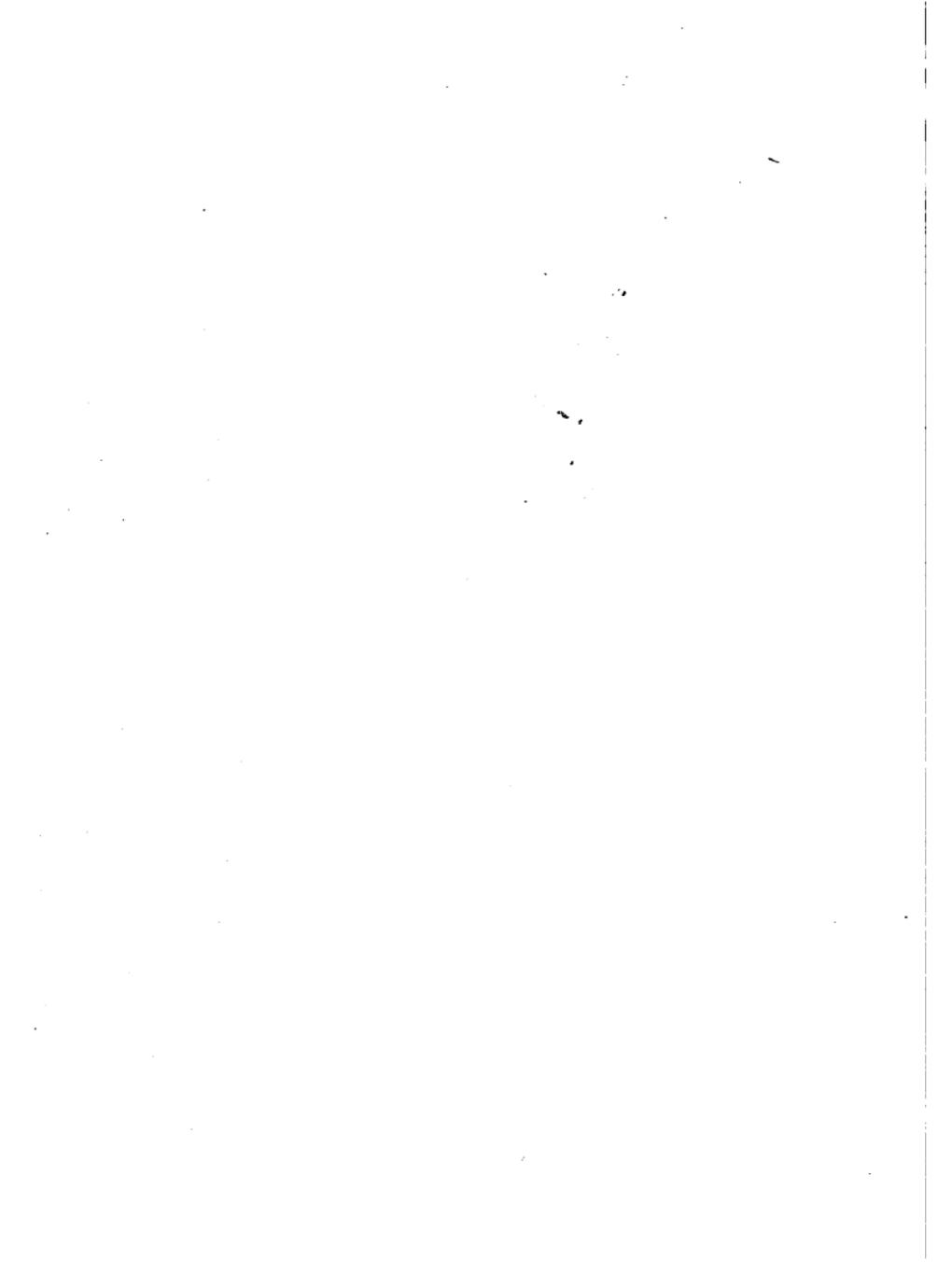
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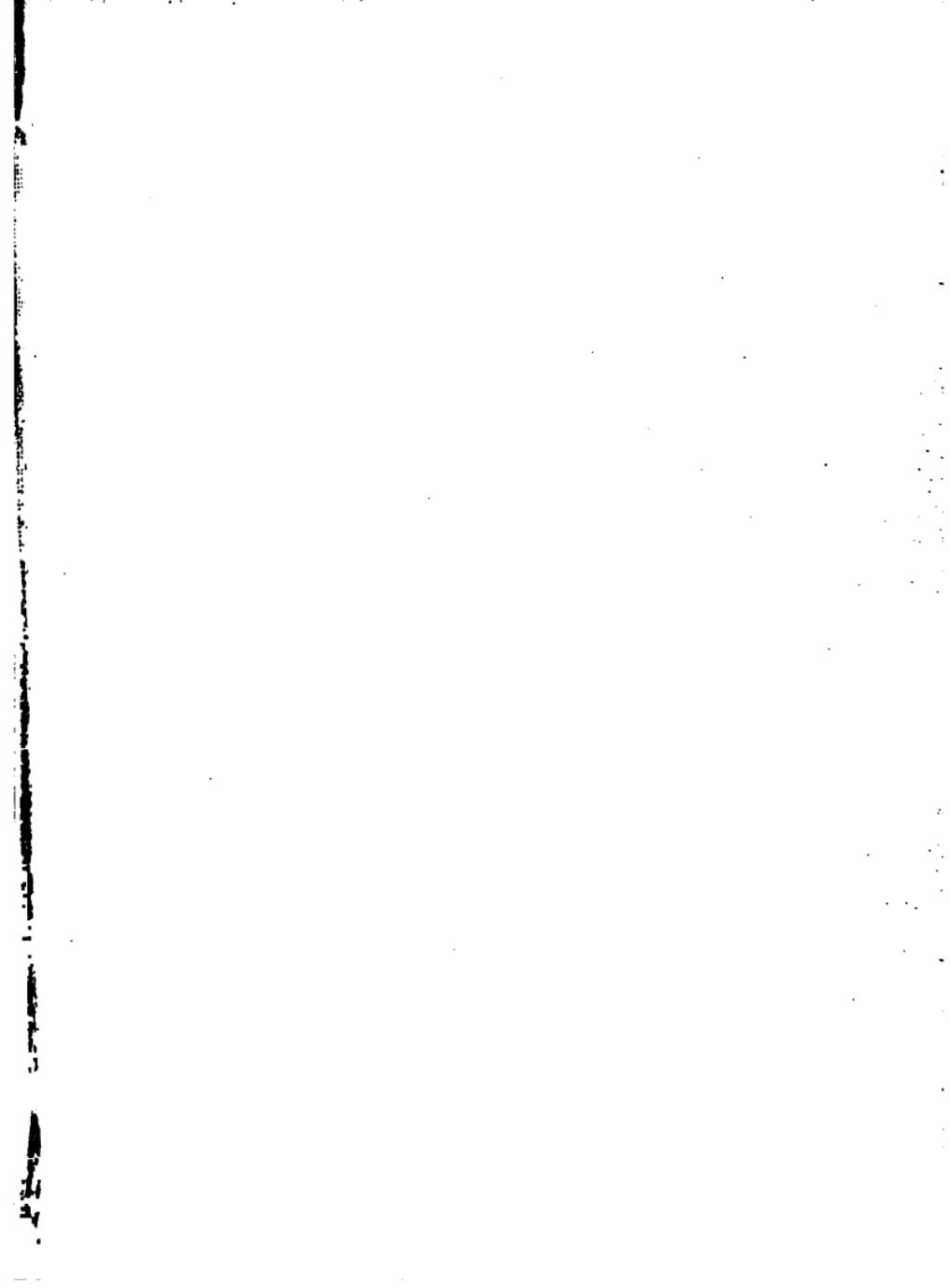
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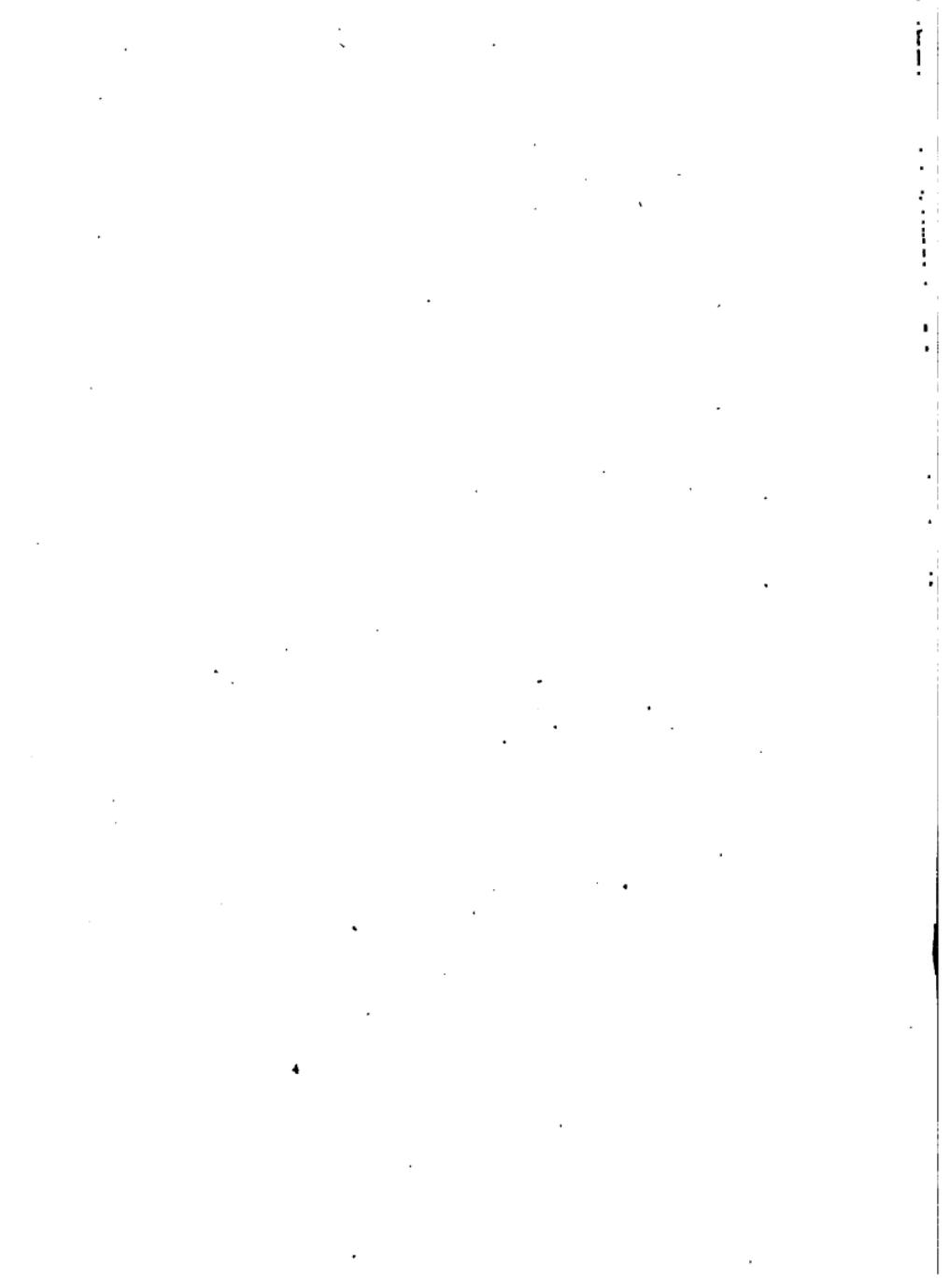
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