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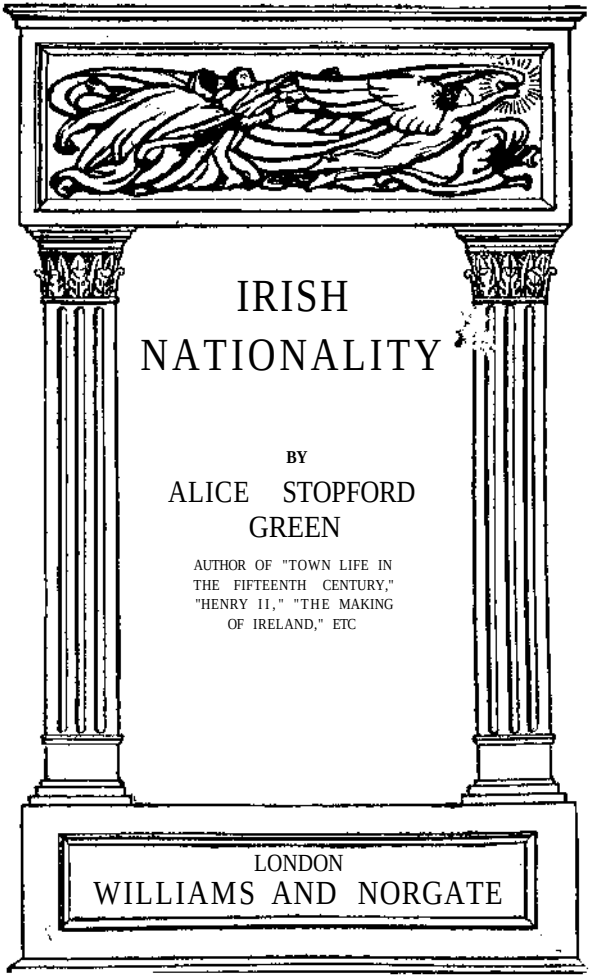

IRISH NATIONALITY

BY

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In memory of

THE IRISH DEAD

IRISH NATIONALITY

CHAPTER I

THE GAELS IN IRELAND

IRELAND lies the last outpost of Europe against the vast flood of the Atlantic Ocean; unlike all other islands it is circled round with mountains, whose precipitous cliffs rising sheer above the water stand as bulwarks thrown up against the immeasurable sea.

It is commonly supposed that the fortunes of the island and its civilisation must by-nature hang on those of England. Neither history nor geography allows this theory. The life of the two countries was widely separated. Great Britain lay turned to the east; her harbours opened to the sunrising, and her first traffic was across the narrow waters of the Channel and the German sea. But Ireland had another aspect; her natural

harbours swelled with the waves of the Atlantic, her outlook was over the ocean, and long before history begins her sailors braved the perils of the Gaulish sea. The peoples of Britain, Celts and English, came to her from the opposite lowland coasts ; the people of Ireland crossed a wider ocean-track, from northern France to the shores of the Bay of Biscay. The two islands had a different history; their trade-routes were not the same; they lived apart, and developed apart their civilisations.

We do not know when the Gaels first entered Ireland, coming according to ancient Irish legends across the Gaulish sea. One invasion followed another, and an old Irish tract gives the definite Gaelic monarchy as beginning in the fourth century B.C. They drove the earlier peoples, the Iberians, from the stupendous stone forts and earthen entrenchments that guarded cliffs and mountain passes. The name of Eriu recalls the ancient inhabitants, who lived on under the new rulers, more in number than their conquerors. The Gaels gave their language and their organisation to the country, while

many customs and traditions of the older race lingered on and penetrated the new people.

Over a thousand years of undisturbed life lay before the Gaels, from about 300 B.C. to 800 A.D. The Roman Empire which overran Great Britain left Ireland outside it. The barbarians who swept over the provinces of the empire and reached to the great Roman Wall never crossed the Irish Sea.

Out of the grouping of the tribes there emerged a division of the island into districts made up of many peoples. Each of the provinces later known as Ulster, Leinster, Munster and Connacht had its stretch of seaboard and harbours, its lakes and rivers for fishing, its mountain strongholds, its hill pastures, and its share of the rich central plain, where the cattle from the mountains " used to go in their running crowds to the smooth plains of the province, towards their sheds and their full cattle-fields." All met in the middle of the island, at the Hill of Usnech, where the Stone of Division still stands. There the high-king held his court, as the chief lord in the confederation of the many states. The

rich lands of Meath were the high-king's domain.

Heroic tales celebrate the prehistoric conflicts as of giants by which the peoples fixed the boundaries of their power. They tell of Conor Mac Nessa who began to reign in the year that Mark Antony and Cleopatra died, and of his sister's son Cuchulain, the champion of the north, who went out to battle from the vast entrenchments still seen in Emain Macha near Armagh. Against him Queen Maeve gathered at her majestic fort of Rathcroghan in Roscommon fifteen hundred royal mercenaries and Gaulish soldiers —a woman comely and white-faced, with gold yellow hair, her crimson cloak fastened at the breast with a gold pin, and a spear flaming in her hand, as she led her troops across the Boyne. The battles of the heroes on the Boyne and the fields of Louth, the thronged entrenchments that thicken round the Gap of the North and the mountain pass from Dundalk and Newry into the plains of Armagh and Tyrone, show how the soldiers' line of march was the same from the days of Cuchulain to those of William of Orange. The

story tells how the whole island shared in the great conflict, to the extreme point of Munster, where a rival of Cuchulain, Curoi son of Dare, had sent his knights and warriors through **all** Ireland to seek out the greatest stones for his fortress, on a shelf of rock over two thousand feet above the sea near Tralee. The Dublin Museum preserves relics of that heroic time, the trappings of war-chariots and horses, arms and ornaments.

Amid such conflicts the Connacht kings pressed eastward from Usnech to Tara, and fixed there the centre of Irish life.

The Gaelic conquerors had entered on a wealthy land. Irish chroniclers told of a vast antiquity, with a shadowy line of monarchs reaching back, as they boasted, for some two thousand years before Christ: they had legends of lakes springing forth in due order; of lowlands cleared of wood, the appearance of rivers, the making of roads **and** causeways, the first digging of wells : of the making of forts ; of invasions and battles and plagues. They told of the smelting of gold near the Liffey about 1500 B.C. **and** of the Wicklow artificer who made cups

and brooches of gold and silver, and silver shields, and golden chains for the necks of kings; and of the discovery of dyes, purple and blue and green, and how the ranks of men were distinguished henceforth by the colour of their raiment. They had traditions of foreign trade—of an artificer drowned while bringing golden ore from Spain, and of torques of gold from oversea, and of a lady's hair all ablaze with Alpine gold. Later researches have in fact shown that Irish commerce went back some fifteen hundred years before our era, that it was the most famous gold-producing country of the west, that mines of copper and silver were worked, and that a race of goldsmiths probably carried on the manufacture of bronze and gold on what is now the bog of Cullen. Some five hundred golden ornaments of old times have been gathered together in the Dublin Museum in the last eighty years, a scanty remnant of what have been lost or melted down; their weight is five hundred and seventy ounces against a weight of twenty ounces in the British Museum from England, Scotland, and Wales

The earth too was fruitful. The new settlers, who used iron tools instead of bronze, could clear forests and open plains for tillage. Agriculture was their pride, and their legends told of stretches of corn so great that deer could shelter in them from the hounds, and nobles and queens drove chariots along their far-reaching lines, while multitudes of reapers were at work cutting the heads of the grain with the little sickles which we may still see in the Dublin Museum.

But to the Irish the main interest of the Gaels lies in their conception of how to create an enduring state or nation

The tribal system has been much derided as the mark of a savage people, or at least of a race unable to advance beyond political infancy into a real national existence. This was not true of the Gaels. Their essential idea of a state, and the mode of its government and preservation, was different from that of mediaeval Europe, but it was not uncivilised.

The Roman Empire stamped on the minds of its subject peoples, and on the Teutonic barbarians who became its heirs, the notion

of a state as an organisation held together, defended, governed and policed, by a central ruler ; while the sovereign was supreme in the domain of force and maintenance of order, whatever lay outside that domain—art, learning, history and the like—were secondary matters which might be left to the people. The essential life of the nation came to be expressed in the will and power of its master.

The Gaelic idea was a wholly different one. The law with them was the law of the people. They never lost their trust in it. Hence they never exalted a central authority, for their law needed no such sanction. While the code was one for the whole race, the administration on the other hand was divided into the widest possible range of self-governing communities, which were bound together in a willing federation. The forces of union were not material but spiritual, and the life of the people consisted not in its military cohesion but in its joint spiritual inheritance —in the union of those who shared the same tradition, the same glorious memory of heroes, the same unquestioned law, and the same pride of literature. Such an instinct

of national life was neither rude nor contemptible, nor need we despise it because it was opposed to the theory of the middle ages in Europe. At the least the Irish tribal scheme of government contained as much promise of human virtue and happiness as the feudal scheme which became later the political creed of England, but which was never accepted in Ireland. Irish history can only be understood by realising this intense national life with its sure basis on the broad self-government of the people.

Each tribe was supreme within its own borders ; it elected its own chief, and could depose him if he acted against law. The land belonged to the whole community, which kept exact pedigrees of the families who had a right to share in the ground for tillage or in the mountain pasturage ; and the chief had no power over the soil save as the elected trustee of the people. The privileges of the various chiefs, judges, captains, historians, poets, and so on, were handed down from generation to generation. In all these matters no external power could interfere. The tribe owed to the greater tribe above it nothing

but certain fixed dues, such as aid in road-making, in war, in ransom of prisoners and the like.

The same right of self-government extended through the whole hierarchy of states up to the Ardri or high-king at the head. The "hearth of Tara" was the centre of all the Gaelic states, and the demesne of the Ardri. "This then is my fostermother," said the ancient sage, "the island in which ye are, even Ireland, and the familiar knee of this island is the hill on which ye are, namely, Tara." There the Ardri was crowned at the pillar-stone. At Tara, "the fort of poets and learned men," the people of all Ireland gathered at the beginning of each high-king's reign, and were entertained for seven days and nights—kings and ollaves together round the high-king, warriors and reavers together, the youths and maidens and the proud foolish folk in the chambers round the doors, while outside was for young men and maidens because their mirth used to entertain them. Huge earthen banks still mark the site of the great Hall, seven hundred and sixty feet long and ninety feet wide, with seven doors

to east and as many more to west; where kings and chiefs sat each under his own shield, in crimson cloaks with gold brooches, with girdles and shoes of gold, and spears with golden sockets and rivets of red bronze. The Ardri, supreme lord and arbitrator among them, was surrounded by his councillors—the law-men or brehons, the bards and chroniclers, and the druids, teachers and men of science. He was the representative of the whole national life. But his power rested on the tradition of the people and on the consent of the tribes. He could impose no new law; he could demand no service outside the law.

The political bond of union, which seemed so loose, drew all its strength from a body of national tradition, and a universal code of law, which represented as it were the common mind of the people, the spontaneous creation of the race. Separate and independent as the tribes were, all accepted the one code which had been fashioned in the course of ages by the genius of the people. The same law was recited in every tribal assembly. The same traditions and genealogies bound the tribes

together as having a single heritage of heroic descent and fame. The preservation of their common history was the concern of the whole people. One of the tales pictures their gathering at Tara, when before the men of Ireland the ancients related their history, and Ireland's chief scholars heard and corrected them by the best tradition. "Victory and blessings attend you, noble sirs," the men of Erin said; "for such instruction it was meet that we should gather ourselves together." And at the reciting of the historic glories of their past, the whole congregation arose up together "for in their eyes it was an augmenting of the spirit and an enlargement of the mind."

To preserve this national tradition a learned class was carefully trained. There were schools of lawyers to expound the law; schools of historians to preserve the genealogies, the boundaries of lands, and the rights of classes and families; and schools of poets to recite the traditions of the race. The learned men were paid at first by the gifts of the people, but the chief among them were later endowed with a settled share of the

tribe land in perpetuity. So long as the family held the land, they were bound to train up in each generation that one of the household who was most fit to carry on learning, and thus for centuries long lines of distinguished men added fame to their country and drew to its schools students from far and wide. Through their work the spirit of the Irish found national expression in a code of law which showed not only extraordinarily acute and trained intelligence but a true sense of equity, in a literary language of great richness and of the utmost musical beauty, and in a system of metrical rules for poets shaped with infinite skill. The Irish nation had a pride in its language beyond any people in Europe outside of the Greeks and Romans.

While each tribe had its schools, these were linked together in a national system. Professors of every school were free of the island; it was the warrior's duty to protect them as they moved from court to court. An ancient tale tells how the chiefs of Emain near Armagh placed sentinels along the Gap of the North to turn back every poet who sought to leave

the country and to bring on their way with honour every one who sought to enter in. There was no stagnation where competition extended over the whole island. The greatest of the teachers were given the dignity of "Professors of all the Gaels." Learned men in their degrees ranked with kings and chiefs, and high-professors sat by the high-king and shared his honours. The king, said the laws, "could by his mere word decide against every class of persons except those of the two orders of religion and learning, who are of equal value with himself."

It is in this exaltation of learning in the national life that we must look for the real significance of Irish history—the idea of a society loosely held in a political sense, but bound together in a spiritual union. The assemblies which took place in every province and every petty state were the guarantees of the national civilisation. They were periodical exhibitions of everything the people esteemed — democracy, aristocracy, kingcraft, literature, tradition, art, commerce, law, sport, religion, display, even rustic buffoonery. The years between one festival

and another were spent in serious preparation for the next; a multitude of maxims were drawn up to direct the conduct of the people. So deeply was their importance felt that the Irish kept the tradition diligently, and even in the darkest times of their history, down to the seventeenth century, still gathered to "meetings on hills" to exercise their law and hear their learned men,

In the time of the Roman Empire, therefore, the Irish looked on themselves as one race, obedient to one law, united in one culture, and belonging to one country. Their unity is symbolised by the great genealogical compilations in which all the Gaels are traced to one ancestry, and in the collection of topographical legends dealing with hundreds of places, where every nook and corner of the island is supposed to be of interest to the whole of Ireland. The tribal boundaries were limits to the material power of a chief and to that only: they were no barriers to the national thought or union. The learned man of the clan was the learned man of the Gaelic race. By all the higher matters of language and learning, of equity and history, the people

of Ireland were one. A noble figure told the unity of their land within the circuit of the ocean. The Three Waves of Erin, they said, smote upon the shore with a foreboding roar when danger threatened the island; Cleena's wave called to Munster at an inlet near Cork, while Tonn Rury at Dundrum and Tonn Tuaithe at the mouth of the Bann sounded to the men of Ulster.

The weaknesses of the Irish system are apparent. The numerous small territories were tempted, like larger European states, to raid borders, to snatch land or booty, and to suffer some expense of trained soldiers. Candidates for the chiefdom had to show their fitness, and "a young lord's first spoil" was a necessary exploit. There were wild plundering raids in the summer nights ; disorders were multiplied. A country divided in government was weakened for purposes of offence, or for joint action in military matters. These evils were genuine, but they have been exaggerated. Common action was hindered, not mainly by human contentions, but by the forests and marshes, lakes and rivers in flood that lay over a country heavy

with Atlantic clouds. Riots and forays there were, among a martial race and strong men of hot passions, but Ireland was in fact no prominent example of mediaeval anarchy or disorder. Local feuds were no greater than those which afflicted England down to the Norman Conquest and long after it; and which marked the life of European states and cities through the middle ages. The professional war bands or Fiana that hired themselves out from time to time were controlled and recognised by law, and had their special organisation and rites and rules of war. It has been supposed that in the passion of tribal disputes men mostly perished by murder and battle-slaughter, and the life of every generation was by violence shortened to less than the common average of thirty years. Irish genealogies prove on the contrary that the generations must be counted at from thirty-three to thirty-six years: the tale of kings, judges, poets, and householders who died peacefully in an honoured old age, or from some natural accident, outruns the list of sudden murders or deaths in battle. Historical evidence moreover shows us a country

of widening cornfields, of growing commerce, where wealth was gathered, where art and learning swept like a passion over the people, and schools covered the land. Such industries and virtues do not flourish in regions given over to savage strife. And it is significant that Irish chiefs who made great wars hired professional soldiers from oversea.

If the disorders of the Irish system have been magnified its benefits have been forgotten. All Irish history proved that the division of the land into separate military districts, where the fighting men knew every foot of ground, and had an intense local patriotism, gave them a power of defence which made conquest by the foreigner impossible; he had first to exterminate the entire people. The same division into administrative districts gave also a singular authority to law. In mediaeval states, however excellent were the central codes, they were only put in force just so far as the king had power to compel men to obey, and that power often fell very far short of the nominal boundaries of his kingdom. But in Ireland every community and every individual was

interested in maintaining the law of the people, the protection of the common folk; nor were its landmarks ever submerged or destroyed. Irish land laws, for example, in spite of the changes that gradually covered the land with fenced estates, did actually preserve through all the centuries popular rights—fixity of rates for the land, fixity of tenure, security of improvement, refusal to allow great men to seize forests for their chase : under this people's law no Peasant Revolt ever arose, nor any rising of the poor against their lords. Rights of inheritance, due solemnities of election, were accurately preserved. The authority and continuity of Irish law was recognised by wondering Englishmen—" They observe and keep such laws and statutes which they make upon hills in their country firm and stable, without breaking them for any favour or reward," said an English judge. " The Irish are more fearful to offend the law than the English or any other nation whatsoever."

The tribal system had another benefit for Irishmen—the diffusion of a high intelligence among the whole people. A varied

education, spread over many centres, fertilised the general life. Every countryside that administered its own affairs must of needs possess a society rich in all the activities that go to make up a full community—chiefs, doctors, soldiers, judges, historians, poets, artists and craftsmen, skilled herds, tillers of the ground, raisers and trainers of horses, innkeepers, huntsmen, merchants, dyers and weavers and tanners. In some sequestered places in Ireland we can still trace the settlements made by Irish communities. They built no towns nor needed any in the modern sense. But entrenchments of earth, or " raths," thickly gathered together, mark a site where men lived in close association. Roads and paths great and small were maintained according to law, and boats carried travellers along rivers and lakes. So frequent were the journeys of scholars, traders, messengers from tribe to tribe, men gathering to public assemblies, craftsmen, dealers in hides and wool, poets, men and women making their circuit, that there was made in early time a "road-book" or itinerary, perhaps some early form of map, of Ireland.

This life of opportunity in thickly congregated country societies gave to Ireland its wide culture, and the incredible number of scholars and artificers that it poured out over Europe with generous ardour. The multitudinous centres of discussion scattered over the island, and the rapid intercourse of all these centres one with another, explain how learning broadened, and how Christianity spread over the land like a flood. It was to these country settlements that the Irish owed the richness of their civilisation, the generosity of their learning, and the passion of their patriotism.

Ireland was a land then as now of intense contrasts, where equilibrium was maintained by opposites, not by a perpetual tending towards the middle course. In things political and social the Irish showed a conservatism that no intercourse could shake, side by side with eager readiness and great success in grasping the latest progress in arts or commerce. In their literature strikingly modern thoughts jostle against the most primitive crudeness; "Vested interests are shameless" was one of their old observations.

In Ireland the old survived beside the new, and as the new came by free assimilation old and new did not conflict. The balance of opposites gave colour and force to their civilisation, and Ireland until the thirteenth century, and very largely until the seventeenth century, escaped or survived the successive steam rollings that reduced Europe to nearly one common level.

In the Irish system we may see the shaping of a true democracy—a society in which ever-broadening masses of the people are made intelligent sharers in the national life, and conscious guardians of its tradition. Their history is throughout a record of the nobility of that experiment. It would be a mechanical theory of human life which denied to the people of Ireland the praise of a true patriotism or the essential spirit of a nation.

CHAPTER II

IRELAND AND EUROPE

C. 100-C. 600

THE Roman Agricola had proposed the conquest of Ireland on the ground that it would have a good effect on Britain by removing the spectacle of liberty. But there was no Roman conquest. The Irish remained outside the Empire, as free as the men of Norway and Sweden. They showed that to share in the trade, the culture, and the civilisation of an empire, it is not necessary to be subject to its armies or lie under its police control. While the neighbouring peoples received a civilisation imposed by violence and maintained by compulsion, the Irish were free themselves to choose those things which were suited to their circumstances and character, and thus to shape for their people a liberal culture, democratic and national,

It is important to observe what it was that tribal Ireland chose, and what it rejected.

There was frequent trade, for from the first century Irish ports were well known to merchants of the Empire, sailing across the Gaulish sea in wooden ships built to confront Atlantic gales, with high poops standing from the water like castles, and great leathern sails —stout hulls steered by the born sailors of the Breton coasts or the lands of the Loire and Garonne. The Irish themselves served as sailors and pilots in the ocean traffic, and travelled as merchants, tourists, scholars and pilgrims. Trading-ships carried the wine of Italy and later of Provence, in great tuns in which three men could stand upright, to the eastern and the western coasts, to the Shannon and the harbours of Down ; and probably brought tin to mix with Irish copper. Ireland sent out great dogs trained for war, wool, hides, all kinds of skins and furs, and perhaps gold and copper. But this material trade was mainly important to the Irish for the other wealth that Gaul had to give—art, learning, and religion.

Of art the Irish craftsmen took all that **Gaul**

possessed—the great decorated trumpets of bronze used in the Loire country, the fine enamelling in colours, the late-Celtic designs for ornaments of bronze and gold. Goldsmiths travelled oversea to bring back bracelets, rings, draughtboards—" one half of its figures are yellow gold, the others are white bronze; its woof is of pearl; it is the wonder of smiths how it was wrought." They borrowed afterwards interlaced ornament for metal work and illuminated manuscripts. In such arts they outdid their teachers ; their gold and enamel work has never been surpassed, and in writing and illumination they went beyond the imperial artists of Constantinople. Their schools throughout the country handed on a great traditional art, not transitory or local, but permanent and national.

Learning was as freely imported. The Latin alphabet came over at a very early time, and knowledge of Greek as a living tongue from Marseilles and the schools of Narbonne. By the same road from Marseilles Christianity must have come a hundred years or so before the mission of St. Patrick—a Christianity carrying the traditions and rites and apoca-

lypses of the East. It was from Gaul that Bt. Patrick afterwards Sailed for his mission to Ireland. He came to a land where there were already men of erudition and "rhetoricians" who scoffed at his lack of education. The tribes of Ireland, free from barbarian invasions as they had been free from Roman armies, developed a culture which was not surpassed in the West or even in Italy. And this culture, like the art, was national, spread over the whole land.

But while the Irish drew to themselves from the Empire art, learning, religion, they never adopted anything of Roman methods of government in church or state. The Roman centralised authority was opposed to their whole habit of thought and genius. They made, therefore, no change in their tribal administration. As early as the second century Irishmen had learned from Gaulish landowners to divide land into estates marked out with pillar-stones which could be bought and sold, and by 700 A.D. the country was scored with fences, and farms were freely bequeathed by will. But these estates seem still to have been administered according to

the common law of the tribe, and not to have followed the methods of Roman proprietors throughout the Empire. In the same way the foreign learning brought into Ireland was taught through the tribal system of schools. Lay schools formed by the Druids in old time went on as before, where students of law and history and poetry grouped their huts round the dwelling of a famous teacher, and the poor among them begged their bread in the neighbourhood. The monasteries in like manner gathered their scholars within the "rath" or earthen entrenchment, and taught them Latin, canon law, and divinity. Monastic and lay schools went on side by side, as heirs together of the national tradition and language. The most venerable saints, the highest ecclesiastics, were revered also as guardians of Irish history and law, who wrote in Irish the national tales as competent scribes and not mere copyists—men who knew all the traditions, used various sources, and shaped their story with the independence of learning. No parallel can be found in any other country to the writing down of national epics in their pagan form many centuries after the country

had become Christian. In the same way European culture was not allowed to suppress the national language; clerics as well as laymen preserved the native tongue in worship and in hymns, as at Clonmacnois where the praises of St. Columcille were sung, "some in Latin, which was beguiling, some in Irish, fair the tale"; and in its famous cemetery, where kings and scholars and pilgrims of all Ireland came to lie, there is but one Latin inscription among over two hundred inscribed grave slabs that have been saved from the many lost.

Like the learning and the art, the new worship was adapted to tribal custom. Round the little monastic church gathered a group of huts with a common refectory, the whole protected by a great rampart of earth. The plan was familiar to all the Irish; every chief's house had such a fence, and every bardic school had its circle of thatched cells where the scholars spent years in study and meditation. Monastic "families " which branched off from the first house were grouped under the name of the original founder, in free federal union like that of the clans. As no land could be wholly alienated from the tribe, territory given to the

monastery was not exempted from the common Jaw; it was ruled by abbots elected, like kings and judges of the tribe, out of the house which under tribal law had the right of succession; and the monks in some cases had to pay the tribal dues for the land and send out fighting men for the hosting.

Never was a church so truly national. The words used by the common people were steeped in its imagery. In their dedications the Irish took no names of foreign saints, but of their own holy men. St. Bridgit became the " Mary of the Gael." There was scarcely a boundary felt between the divine country and the earthly, so entirely was the spiritual life commingled with the national. A legend told that St. Colman one day saw his monks reaping the wheat sorrowfully; it was the day of the celebration of Telltown fair, the yearly assembly of all Ireland before the high-king : he prayed, and angels came to him at once from heaven and performed three races for the toiling monks after the manner of the national feast.

The religion which thus sprang out of the heart of a people and penetrated every part of

their national life, shone with a radiant spiritual fervour. The prayers and hymns that survive from the early church are inspired by an exalted devotion, a profound and original piety, which won the veneration of every people who came into touch with the people of Ireland. On mountain cliffs, in valleys, by the water-side, on secluded islands, lie ruins of their churches and oratories, small in size though made by masons who could fit and dovetail into one another great stones from ten to seventeen feet in length; the little buildings preserved for centuries some ancient tradition of apostolic measurements, and in their narrow and austere dimensions, and their intimate solemnity, were fitted to the tribal communities and to their unworldly and spiritual worship. An old song tells of a saint building, with a wet cloak about him—

> "Hand on a stone, hand lifted up,
> Knee bent to set a rock,
> Eyes shedding tears, other Lamentation,
> And mouth praying."

Piety did not always vanquish the passions of a turbulent age. There were local quarrels and battles. In some hot temporal

controversy, in some passionate religious rivalry, a monastic "rath"- may have fallen back to its original use as a fort. Plunderers fell on a trading centre like Clonmacnois, where goods landed from the Shannon for transport across country offered a prize. Such things have been known in other lands. But it is evident that disturbances were not universal or continuous. The extraordinary work of learning carried out in the monastic lands, the sanctuary given in them for hundreds of years to innumerable scholars not of Ireland alone, shows the large peace that must have prevailed on their territories.

The national tradition of monastic and lay schools preserved to Erin what was lost in the rest of Europe, a learned class of laymen. Culture was as frequent and honourable in the Irish chief or warrior as in the cleric. Gaiety and wit were prized. Oral tradition told for many centuries of a certain merryman long ago, and yet he was a Christian, who could make all men he ever saw laugh however sad they were, so that even his skull on a high stone in the churchyard brought mirth to sorrowful souls.

We must remember, too, that by the Irish system certain forms of hostility were absolutely shut out. There is not a single instance in Irish history of the conflicts between a monastery and its lay dependents which were so frequent on the continent and in England—as, for example, at St. Albans, where the monks paved their church with the querns of the townsfolk to compel them to bring their corn to the abbey mill. Again, the broad tolerance of the church in Ireland never allowed any persecution for religion's sake, and thus shut the door on the worst form of human cruelty. At the invasion of the Normans a Norman bishop mocked to the archbishop of Cashel at the imperfection of a church like the Irish which could boast of no martyr. "The Irish," answered the archbishop," have never been accustomed to stretch forth their hands against the saints of God, but now a people is come into this country that is accustomed and knows how to make martyrs. Now Ireland too will have martyrs." Finally, the Irish church never became, as in other lands, the servant, the ally, or the master of the state. It was the companion of the people, the heart of the

nation. To its honour it never served as the instrument of political dominion, and it never was degraded from first to last by a war of religion.

The free tribes of Ireland had therefore by some native instinct of democratic life rejected for their country the organisation of the Roman state, and had only taken the highest forms of its art, learning, and religion, to enrich their ancient law and tradition: and through their own forms of social life they had made this culture universal among the people, and national. Such was the spectacle of liberty which the imperial Agricola had feared.

CHAPTER III

THE IRISH MISSION

c. 560-c. 1000

THE fall of the Roman Empire brought to the Irish people new dangers and new opportunities. Goths and Vandals, Burgundians and Franks, poured west over Europe to the Atlantic shore, and south across the Mediterranean to Africa; while the English were pressing northward over Great Britain, driving back the Celts and creating a pagan and Teutonic England. Once more Ireland lay the last unconquered land of the West.

The peoples that lay in a circle round the shores of the German Ocean were in the thick of human affairs, nations to right and left of them, all Europe to expand in. From the time when their warriors fell on the Roman Empire they rejoiced in a thousand years of uninterrupted war and conquest; and for the

thousand years that followed traders, now from this shore of the German sea and now from that, have fought and trafficked over the whole earth.

In Ireland, on the other hand, we see a race of the bravest warriors that ever fought, who had pushed on over the Gaulish sea to the very marge and limit of the world. Close at their back now lay the German invaders of Britain—a new wave of the human tide always flowing westward. Before them stretched the Atlantic, darkness and chaos; no boundary known to that sea. Even now as we stand to the far westward on the gloomy heights of Donegal, where the very grass and trees have a blacker hue, we seem to have entered into a vast antiquity, where it would be little wonder to see in the sombre solitude some strange shape of the primeval world, some huge form of primitive man's imagination. So closely did Infinity compass these people round that when the Irish sailor—St. Brendan or another—launched his coracle on the illimitable waves, in face of the everlasting storm, he might seem to pass over the edge of the earth into the vast Eternity where

space and time were not. We see the awful fascination of the immeasurable flood in the story of the three Irishmen that were washed on the shores of Cornwall and carried to King Alfred. "They came," Alfred tells us in his chronicle, "in a boat without oars from Hibernia, whence they had stolen away because for the love of God they would be on pilgrimage—they recked not where. The boat in which they fared was wrought of three hides and a half, and they took with them enough meat for seven nights."

Ultimately withdrawn from the material business of the continent nothing again drew back the Irish to any share in the affairs of Europe save a spiritual call—a call of religion, of learning, or of liberty. The story of the Irish mission shows how they answered to such a call.

The Teutonic invaders stopped at the Irish Sea. At the fall of the Empire, therefore, Ireland did not share in the ruin of its civilisation. And while all continental roads were interrupted, traffic from Irish ports still passed safely to Gaul over the ocean routes. Ireland therefore not only preserved her

culture unharmed, but the way lay open for her missionaries to carry back to Europe the knowledge which she had received from it. In that mission we may see the strength and the spirit of the tribal civilisation.

Two great leaders of the Irish mission were Columcille in Great Britain and Columbanus in Europe. In all Irish history there is no greater figure than St. Columcille—statesman and patriot, poet, scholar, and saint. After founding thirty-seven monasteries in Ireland, from Derry on the northern coast to Durrow near the Munster border, he crossed the sea in 568 to set up on the bare island of Hii or Iona a group of reed-thatched huts peopled with Irish monks. In that wild debatable land, swept by heathen raids, amid the ruins of Christian settlements, began a work equally astonishing from the religious and the political point of view. The heathen Picts had marched westward to the sea, destroying the Celtic churches. The pagan English had set up in 547 a monarchy in Northumbria and the Lowlands, threatening alike the Picts, the Irish or "Scot" settlements along the coast, and the Celts of Strathclyde. Against

this world of war Golumcille opposed the idea of a peaceful federation of peoples in the bond of Christian piety. He converted the king of the Picts at Inverness in 565, and spread Irish monasteries from Strathspey to the Dee, and from the Dee to the Tay. On the western shores about Cantyre he restored the Scot settlement from Ireland which was later to give its name to Scotland, and consecrated as king the Irish Aidan, ancestor of the kings of Scotland and England. He established friendship with the Britons of Strathclyde. From his cell at lona he dominated the new federation of Picts and Britons and Irish on both sides of the sea—the greatest missionary that Ireland ever sent out to proclaim the gathering of peoples in free association through the power of human brotherhood, learning, and religion.

For thirty-four years Columcille ruled as abbot in lona, the high leader of the Celtic world. He watched the wooden ships with great sails that crossed from shore to shore; he talked with mariners sailing south from the Orkneys, and others coming north from the Loire with their tuns of wine, who told

him European tidings, and how a town in Istria had been wrecked by earthquake. His large statesmanship, his lofty genius, the passionate and poetic temperament that filled men with awe and reverence, the splendid voice and stately figure that seemed almost miraculous gifts, the power of inspiring love that brought dying men to see his face once more before they fell at his feet in death, give a surpassing dignity and beauty to his life. "He could never spend the space of even one hour without study or prayer or writing, or some other holy occupation . . . and still in all these he was beloved by all." "Seasons and storms he perceived, he harmonised the moon's race with the branching sun, he was skilful in the course of the sea, he would count the stars of heaven." He desired, one of his poems tells us, "to search all the books that would be good for any soul"; and with his own hand he copied, it is said, three hundred books, sitting with open cell door, where the brethren, one with his butcher's knife, one with his milk pail, stopped to ask a blessing as they passed.

After his death the Irish monks carried his

work over the whole of England. A heathen land lay before them, for the Roman missionaries established in 597 by Augustine in Canterbury, speaking no English and hating "barbarism," made little progress, and after some reverses were practically confined to Kent. The first cross of the English borderland was set up in 635 by men from lona on a heather moorland called the Heaven-field, by the ramparts of the Roman Wall. Columban monks made a second lona at Lindisfarne, with its church of hewn oak thatched with reeds after Irish tradition in sign of poverty and lowliness, and with its famous school of art and learning. They taught the English writing, and gave them the letters which were used among them till the Norman Conquest. Labour and learning went hand in hand. From the king's court nobles came, rejoicing to change the brutalities of war for the plough, the forge-hammer, the winnowing fan : waste places were reclaimed, the ports were crowded with boats, and monasteries gave shelter to travellers. For a hundred years wherever the monks of lona passed men ran to be signed by their hand and blessed by their voice.

Their missionaries wandered on foot over middle England and along the eastern coast and even touched the Channel in Sussex. In 662 there was only one bishop in the whole of England who was not of Irish consecration, and this bishop, Agilberct of Wessex, was **a** Frenchman who had been trained for years in Ireland. The great school of Malmesbury in Wessex was founded by an Irishman, as that of Lindisfarne had been in the north.

For the first time also Ireland became known to Englishmen. Fleets of ships bore students and pilgrims, who forsook their native land for the sake of divine studies. The Irish most willingly received them all, supplying to them without charge food and books and teaching, welcoming them in every school from Derry to Lismore, making for them a "Saxon Quarter" in the old university of Armagh. Under the influence of the Irish teachers the spirit of racial bitterness was checked, and a new intercourse sprang up between English, Picts, Britons, and Irish. For a moment it seemed as though the British islands were to be drawn into one peaceful confederation and communion **and a** common worship **bounded**

only by the ocean. The peace of Columcille, the fellowship of learning and of piety, rested on the peoples.

Columcille had been some dozen years in Iona when Columbanus *(c. 575)* left Bangor on the Belfast Lough, leading twelve Irish monks clad in white homespun, with long hair falling on their shoulders, and books hanging from their waists in leathern satchels. They probably sailed in one of the merchant ships trading from the Loire. Crossing Gaul to the Vosges Columbanus founded his monastery of Luxeuil among the ruined heaps of a Roman city, once the meeting-place of great highways from Italy and France, now left by the barbarians a wilderness for wild beasts. Other houses branched out into France and Switzerland. Finally he founded his monastery of Bobio in the Apennines, where he died in 615.

A stern ascetic, aflame with religious passion, a finished scholar bringing from Ireland a knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, of rhetoric, geometry, and poetry, and a fine taste, Columbanus battled for twenty years with the vice and ignorance of a half-pagan

Burgundy. Scornful of ease, indifferent to danger, astonished at the apathy of Italy as compared with the zeal of Ireland in teaching, he argued and denounced with "the freedom of speech which accords with the custom of my country." The passion of his piety so awed the peoples, that for a time it seemed as if the rule of Columbanus might outdo that of St. Benedict. It was told that in Rome Gregory the Great received him, and as Columbanus lay prostrate in the church the Pope praised God in his heart for having given such great power to so small a man. Instantly the fiery saint, detecting the secret thought, rose from his prayer to repudiate the slight: "Brother, he who depreciates the work depreciates the Author."

For a hundred years before Columbanus there had been Irish pilgrims and bishops in Gaul and Italy. But it was his mission that first brought the national patriotism of Ireland into conflict with the organisation of Rome in Europe. Christianity had come to Ireland from the East—tradition said from St. John, who was then, and is still, held in special veneration by the Irish; his flower, St. John's

wort, had for them peculiar virtues, and from it came, it was said, the saffron hue as the national colour for their dress. It was a national pride that their date for celebrating Easter, and their Eastern tonsure from ear to ear, had come to them from St. John. Peter loved Jesus, they said, but it was John that Jesus loved—"the youth John, the foster-son of his own bosom"—"John of the Breast." It was with a very passion of loyalty that they clung to a national church which linked them to the beloved apostle, and which was the close bond of their whole race, dear to them as the supreme expression of their temporal and spiritual freedom, now illustrious beyond all others in Europe for the roll of its saints and of its scholars, and ennobled by the company of its patriots and the glory of Columcille. The tonsure and the Easter of Columbanus, however, shocked foreign ecclesiastics as contrary to the discipline of Rome, and he was required to renounce them. He vehemently protested his loyalty to St. John, to St. Columcille, and to the church of his fathers. ft was an unequal argument. Ireland, he was answered, was a

small island in a far corner of the earth : what was its people that they should fight against the whole world. The Europe of imperial tradition had lost comprehension of the passion of national loyalty: all that lay outside that tradition was "barbarous,"- the Irish like the Saxons or the Huns.

The battle that was thus opened was the beginning of a new epoch in Irish history. St. Augustine, first archbishop of Canterbury (597), was ordered (603) to demand obedience to himself from the Celtic churches and the setting aside of their customs. The Welsh and the Irish refused to submit. Augustine had come to them from among the English, who were still pagan, and still fighting for the extermination of the Celts, and on his lips were threats of slaughter by their armies to the disobedient. The demand was renewed sixty years later, in a synod at Whitby in 664. By that time Christianity had been carried over England by the Irish missions; on the other hand, the English were filled with imperial dreams of conquest and supremacy. English kings settled on the Roman province began to imitate the glories of Rome, to have

the Roman banner of purple and gold carried before them, to hear the name of "Emperor of the whole of Britain," and to project the final subjugation to that "empire " of the Celtic and Pictish peoples. **The** Roman organisation fell in with their habits of government and their ambitions. In the synod the tone of imperial contempt made itself heard against those marked out for conquest—Celts "rude and barbarous "—"Picts and Britons, accomplices in obstinacy in these two remote islands of the world." "Your father Columba," " of rustic simplicity," said the English leader, had " **that** Columba of yours," like Peter, the keeping of the keys of heaven ? With these first bitter words, with the condemnation of the Irish customs, and the sailing away of the Irish monks from Lindisfarne, discord began to enter in. Slowly and with sorrow the Irish in the course of sixty years abandoned their traditional customs and adopted the Roman Easter. But the work of Columcille was undone, and the spiritual bond by which the peoples had been united was for ever loosened. English armies marched ravaging

over the north, one of them into Ireland (684), "wasting that harmless nation which had always been most friendly to the English, not sparing even churches or monasteries." The gracious peace which had bound the races for a hundred and twenty years was broken, and constant wars again divided Picts, Scots, Britons, and Angles.

Ireland, however, for four hundred years to come still poured out missionaries to Europe. They passed through England to northern France and the Netherlands; across the Gaulish sea and by the Loire to middle France; by the Rhine and the way of Luxeuil they entered Switzerland; and westward they reached out to the Elbe and the Danube, sending missionaries to Old Saxony, Thuringia, Bavaria, Salzburg, and Carinthia; southwards they crossed the Alps into Italy, to Lucca, Fiesole, Rome, the hills of Naples, and Tarentum. Their monasteries formed rest-houses for travellers through France and Germany. Europe itself was too narrow for their ardour, and they journeyed to Jerusalem, settled in Carthage, and sailed to the discovery of Iceland. No church of any land has so

noble a record in the astonishing work of its teachers, as they wandered over the ruined provinces of the empire among the pagan tribes of the invaders. In the Highlands they taught the Picts to compose hymns in their own tongue; in a monastery founded by them in Yorkshire was trained the first English poet in the new England; at St. Gall they drew up a Latin-German dictionary for the Germans of the Upper Rhine and Switzerland, and even devised new German words to express the new ideas of Christian civilisation; near Florence one of their saints taught the natives how to turn the course of a river. Probably in the seventh and eighth centuries no one in western Europe spoke Greek who was not Irish or taught by an Irishman. No land ever sent out such impassioned teachers of learning, and Charles the Great and his successors set them at the head of the chief schools throughout Europe.

We can only measure the originality of the Irish mission by comparing with it the work of other races. Roman civilisation had not inured its people to hardship, nor given them any interest in barbarians. When Augustine

in 595 was sent on the English mission he turned back with loathing, and finally took a year for his journey. In 664 no one could be found in Rome to send to Canterbury, till in 668 Theodore was fetched from Syria; he also took a year on his way. But the Irish missionaries feared nothing, neither hunger nor weariness nor the outlaws of the woods. Their succession never ceased. The death of one apostle was but the coming of another. The English missions again could not compare with the Irish. Every English missionary from the seventh to the ninth century had been trained under Irish teachers or had been for years in Ireland, enveloped by the ardour of their fiery enthusiasm; when this powerful influence was set aside English mission work died down for a thousand years or so. The Irish missionaries continued without a break for over six hundred years. Instead of the Irish zeal for the welfare of all peoples whatsoever, the English felt a special call to preach among those "from whom the English race had its origin," and their chief mission was to their own stock in Frisia. Finally, amon

went hand in hand with Christianity. The Teutons were out to conquer, and in the lust of dominion a conqueror might make religion the sign of obedience, and enforce it by fire and water, viper and sword. But the Irish had no theory of dominion to push. A score of generations of missionaries were bred up in the tribal communities of Ireland, where men believed in voluntary union of men in a high tradition. Their method was one of persuasion for spiritual ends alone. The conception of human life that lay behind the tribal government and the tribal church of Ireland gave to the Irish mission in Europe a singular and lofty character. In the broad humanity that was the great distinction of their people persecution had no part. No war of religion stained their faith, and no barbarities to man.

CHAPTER IV

SCANDINAVIANS IN IRELAND

800-1014

FOR a thousand years no foreign host had settled in Erin. But the times of peace were ended. About 800 A.D. the Irish suffered their first invasion.

The Teutonic peoples, triumphant conquerors of the land, had carried their victories over the Roman Empire to the edge of the seas that guarded Ireland. But fresh hordes of warriors were gathering in the north, conquerors of the ocean. The Scandinavians had sailed out on " the gulf's enormous abyss, where before their eyes the vanishing bounds of the earth were hidden in gloom." An old English riddle likened the shattering iceberg swinging down from Arctic waters to the terror of the pirate's war-ship—the leader on the prow as it plunged through the sea, calling to

the land, shouting as he goes, with laughter terrible to the earth, swinging his sharp-edged sword, grim in hate, eager for slaughter, bitter in the battle-work. They came, "great scourers of the seas—a nation desperate in attempting the conquest of other realms."

The Scandinavian campaigns of the ocean affected Ireland as no continental wars for the creation or the destruction of the Roman Empire had done. During two hundred years their national life, their learning, their civilisation, were threatened by strangers. The social order they had built up was confronted with two new tests—violence from without, and an alien population within the island. We may ask how Irish civilisation met the trial.

The Danes fell on all the shores of England from the Forth to the Channel, the land of the Picts northward, lona and the country of the Scots to the west, and Bretland of the Britons from the Clyde to the Land's End: in Ireland they sailed up every creek, and shouldering their boats marched from river to river and lake to lake into every tribeland, covering the country with their forts, plundering the rich men's raths of their cups

and vessels and ornaments of gold, sacking the schools and monasteries and churches, and entering every great king's grave for buried treasure. Their heavy iron swords, their armour, their discipline of war, gave them an overwhelming advantage against the Irish with, as they said, bodies and necks and gentle heads defended only by fine linen. Monks and scholars gathered up their manuscripts and holy ornaments, and fled away for refuge to Europe.

These wars brought a very different fate to the English and the Irish. In England, when the Danes had planted a colony on every inlet of the sea *(c.* 800), they took horse and rode conquering over the inland plains. They slew every English king and wiped out every English royal house save that of Wessex; and in their place set up their own kings in Northumbria and East Anglia, and made of all middle England a vast "Danelaw," a land ruled by Danish law, and by confederations of Danish towns. At the last Wessex itself was conquered, and a Danish king ruled over all England (1013). In Ireland, on the other hand, the invincible power of the tribal system

for defence barred the way of invaders. Every foot of land was defended; every tribe fought for its own soil. There could be no subjection of the Irish clans except by their extermination. A Norwegian leader, Thorgils, made one supreme effort at conquest. He fixed his capital at Armagh and set up at its shrine the worship of Thor, while his wife gave her oracles from the high altar of Clonmacnois on the Shannon, in the prophetess's cloak set with stones to the hem, the necklace of glass beads, the staff, and the great skin pouch of charms. But in the end Thorgils was taken by the king of Meath and executed, being cast into Loch Nair. The Danes, who held long and secure possession of England, great part of Scotland, and Normandy, were never able to occupy permanently any part of Ireland more than a day's march from the chief stations of their fleets. Through two hundred years of war no Irish royal house was destroyed, no kingdom was extinguished, and no national supremacy of the Danes replaced the national supremacy of the Irish.

The long war was one "of confused noise and garments rolled in blood." Ireland,

whether they could conquer it or not, was of vast importance to the Scandinavians as a land of refuge for their fleets. Voyagers guided their way by the flights of birds from her shores ; the harbours of " the great island " sheltered them; her fields of corn, her cattle driven to the shore for the "strand-hewing," provisioned their crews; her woods gave timber for shipbuilding. Norwegians and Danes fought furiously for possession of the sea-ports, now against the Irish, now against each other. No victory or defeat counted beyond the day among the shifting and multiplying fleets of new marauders that for ever swarmed round the coasts—emigrants who had flung themselves on the sea for freedom's sake to save their old laws and liberties, buccaneers seeking "the spoils of the sea," sea-kings roaming the ocean or gathering for a raid on Scotland or on France, stray companies out of work or putting in for a winter's shelter, boats of whale-fishers and walrus-killers, Danish hosts driven out of England or of Normandy. As "the sea vomited up floods of foreigners into Erin so that there was not a point without a fleet," battle swung backwards

and forwards between old settlers and new pirates, between Norsemen and Danes, between both and the Irish.

But the Scandinavians were not only sea-rovers, they were the greatest merchants that northern Europe had yet seen. From the time of Charles the Great to William the Conqueror the whole commerce of the seas was in their hands. Eastward they pushed across Russia to the Black Sea, and carried back the wares of Asia to the Baltic; westward they poured along the coasts of Gaul by the narrow seas, or sailed the Atlantic from the Orkneys and Hebrides round the Irish coast to the Bay of Biscay. The new-made empire of Charles the Great was opening Europe once more to a settled life and the possibilities of traffic, and the Danish merchants seized the beginnings of the new trade. Ireland lay in the very centre of their sea-ways, with its harbours, its wealth, and its traditional commerce with France. Merchants made settlements along the coasts, and planted colonies over the inland country to supply the trade of the ports. They had come to Ireland for business, and they wanted peace

and not war. They intermarried with the Irish, fostered their children, bought their goods, welcomed Irish poets into their forts, listening to Irish stories and taking new models for their own literature, and in war they joined with their Irish neighbours, A race of " Gall-Gaels," or " foreign Irish," grew up, accepted by the Irish as of their community. Between the two peoples there was respect and good-will.

The enterprise of the sea-rovers and the merchant settlers created on Irish shores two Scandinavian " kingdoms "—kingdoms rather of the sea than of the land. The Norsemen set up their Moot on the mound over the river Liffey (near where the Irish Parliament house rose in later days), and there created a naval power which reached along the coast from Waterford to Dundalk. The Dublin kingdom was closely connected with the Danish kingdom of Northumbria, which had its capital at York, and formed the common meeting-ground, the link which united the Northmen of Scandinavia and the Northmen of Ireland. A mighty confederation grew up. Members of the same house were kings in

Dublin, in Man, and in York. The Irish Channel swarmed with their fleets. The sea was the common highway which linked the powers together, and the sea was held by fleets of swift long-ships with from ninety to a hundred and fifty rowers or fighting men on board. Dublin, the rallying-point of roving marauders, became the centre of a wide-flung war. Its harbour, looking east, was the mart of the merchant princes of the Baltic trade : there men of Iceland and of Norway landed with their merchandise or their plunder.

" Limerick of the swift ships," " Limerick of the riveted stones," the kingdom lying on the Atlantic was a rival even to Dublin; kings of the same house ruled in Limerick and the Hebrides, and their fleets took the way of the wide ocean; while Norse settlements scattered over Limerick, Kerry and Tipperary, organised as Irish clans and giving an Irish form to their names, maintained the inland trade. Other Munster harbours were held, some by the Danes, some by the Irish.

The Irish were on good terms with the traders. They learned to build the new ships invented by the Scandinavians where both

oars and sails were used, and traded in their own ports for treasures from oversea, silken raiment and abundance of wine. We read in 900 of Irishmen along the Cork shores "high in beauty, whose resolve is quiet prosperity," and in 950 of "Munster of the great riches," "Munster of the swift ships."

On the other hand, the Irish never ceased from war with the sea-kings. From the time of Thorgils, high-kings of Tara one after another led the perpetual contest to hold Ireland and to possess Dublin. They summoned assemblies in north and south of the confederated chiefs. The Irish copied not only the Scandinavian building of war-ships, but their method of raising a navy by dividing the coast into districts, each of which had to equip and man ten ships, to assemble at the summons for the united war-fleet. Every province seems to have had its fleet. The Irish, in fact, learned their lesson so well that they were able to undertake the re-conquest of their country, and become leaders of Danish and Norse troops in war. The spirit of the people rose high. From 900 their victories increased even amid disaster. Strong kings

arose among them, good organisers and good fighters, and for a hundred years one leader followed hard on another. In 916, Niall, king of Tara, celebrated once more the assembly of Telltown, and led southern and northern O'Neills to the aid of Munster against the Gentiles, directing the men of Leinster in the campaign—a gallant war. Murtagh, king of Ailech or Tirconnell, smote the Danes at Carlingford and Louth in 926, a year of great danger, and so came victorious to the assembly at Telltown. Again, in 933, he defeated the "foreigners" in the north, and they left two hundred and forty heads, and all their wealth of spoils. In 941 he won his famous name, "Murtagh of the Leather Cloaks," from the first midwinter campaign ever known in Ireland," the hosting of the frost," when he led his army from Donegal, under shelter of leather cloaks, over lakes and rivers frozen by the mighty frost, round the entire circuit of Ireland. Some ten years later, Cellachan, king of Cashel, took up the fight; with his linen-coated soldiers against the mail-clad foreigners, he swept the whole of Munster, capturing Limerick, Cork, Cashel and Water-

ford, and joining their Danish armies to his own troops; till he closed his campaign by calling out the Munster fleet from Kinsale to Galway bay, six or seven score of them, to meet the Danish ships at Dundalk. The Norsemen used armour, and rough chains of blue iron to grapple the enemies' ships, but the Irish sailors, with their " strong enclosures of linen cloth," and tough ropes of hemp to fling over the enemies' prows, came off victorious. According to the saga of his triumph, Cellachan called the whole of Ireland to share in the struggle for Irish freedom, and a fleet from Ailech carried off plunder and booty from the Hebrides. He was followed by Brian Boru. " ill luck was it for the Danes when Brian was born,'- says the old saga, " when he inflicted not evil on the foreigners in the day time he did it in the next night." From beyond the Shannon he led a fierce guerrilla war. Left with but fifteen followers alive, sleeping on " hard knotty wet roots," he still refused to yield. " It is not hereditary to us," he said," to submit." He became king of Munster in 974, drove out the Danish king from Dublin in 998,

and ruled at last in 1000 as Ardri of Ireland, an old man of sixty or seventy years. In 1005 he called out all the fleets of the Norsemen of Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, and of the men of Munster, and of almost all of the men of Erin, such of them as were fit to go to sea, and they levied tribute from Saxons and Britons as far as the Clyde and Argyle.

A greater struggle still lay before the Irish. Powerful kings of Denmark, in the glory of success, began to think of their imperial destiny; and, to round off their states, proposed to create a Scandinavian empire from the Slavic shores of the Baltic across Denmark, Norway, England and Ireland, to the rim of the Atlantic, with London as the capital. King Sweyn Forkbeard, conqueror of all England, was acknowledged in 1013 its king. But the imperial plan was not yet complete. A free Irish nation of men who lived, as they said, "on the ridge of the world"—a land of unconquered peoples of the open plains and the mountains and the sea, left the Scandinavian empire with a ragged edge out on the line of the Atlantic commerce. King Cnut

sent out his men for the last conquest. A vast host gathered in Dublin bay " from all the west of Europe," from Norway, the Baltic islands, the Orkneys, Iceland, for the landing at Clontarf. From sunrise to sunset the battle raged, the hair of the warriors flying in the wind as thick as the sheaves floating in a field of oats. The Scandinavian scheme of a northern empire was shattered on that day, when with the evening floodtide the remnant of the broken Danish host put to sea. Brian Boru, his son, and his grandson lay dead. But for a hundred and fifty years to come Ireland kept its independence. England was once again, as in the time of the Roman dominion, made part of a continental empire. Ireland, as in the days of Rome, still lay outside the new imperial system.

At the end, therefore, of two hundred years of war, the Irish emerged with their national life unbroken. Irish kingdoms had lived on side by side with Danish kingdoms; in spite of the strength of the Danish forces, the constant irruptions of new Danes, and the business capacity of these fighters and traffickers, it was the Irish who were steadily coming

again to the top. Through all perils they had kept their old order. The high-kings had ruled without a break, and, except in a few years of special calamity, had held the national assemblies of the country at Telltown, not far from Tara. The tribesmen of the sub-kingdoms, if their ancient place of assembly had been turned into a Danish fort, held their meeting in a hidden marsh or wood. Thus when Cashel was held by the Norsemen, the assembly met on a mound that rose in the marshy glen now called Glanworth. There Cellachan, the rightful heir, in the best of arms and dress, demanded that the nobles should remember justice, while his mother declared his title and recited a poem. And when the champions of Munster heard these great words and the speech of the woman, the tribes arose right readily to make Cellachan king. They set up his shout of king, and gave thanks to the true magnificent God for having found him. The nobles then came to Cellachan and put their hands in his hand, and placed the royal diadem round his head, and their spirits were raised at the grand sight of him.

Throughout the wars, too, the tribes had not lost the tradition of learning. King Ælfred has recorded the state of England after the Danish wars ; he could not bethink him of a single one south of the Thames who could understand his ritual in English, or translate aught out of Latin, and he could hear of very few north of the Thames to the Humber, and beyond the Humber scarce any, "so clean was learning decayed among the English folk." But the Irish had never ceased to carry on schools, and train men of distinguished learning. Clonmacnois on the Shannon, for example, preserved a truly Irish culture, and between its sackings trained great scholars whose fame could reach to King Ælfred in Wessex, and to Charles the Great in Aachen. The Irish clergy still remained unequalled in culture, even in Italy. One of them in 868 was the most learned of the Latinists of all Europe. Another, Cormac, king and bishop († 905), was skilled in Old-Irish literature, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Welsh Anglo-Saxon and Norse—he might be compared with that other great Irishman of his time, John Scotus, whom Charles the Bald

had made head of his school. Irish teachers **had a** higher skill than any others in Europe in astronomy, geography and philosophy. Side by side with monastic schools the lay schools had continued without a break. By 900 the lawyers had produced at least eighteen law-books whose names are known, and a glossary. A lay scholar, probably of the ninth century, compiled the instructions of a king to his son—" Learning every art, knowledge of every language, skill in variegated work, pleading with established maxims "—these are the sciences he recommends. The Triads, compiled about the same time, count among the ornaments of wisdom, " abundance of knowledge, a number of precedents." Irish poets, men and women, were the first in Europe to sing of Nature—of summer and winter, of the cuckoo with the grey mantle, the blackbird's lay, the red bracken and the long hair of the heather, the talk of the rushes, the green-barked yew-tree which supports the sky, the large green of an oak fronting the storm. They sang of the Creation and the Crucifixion, when " dear God's elements were afraid "; **and** of pilgrimage to Rome—" **the**

King whom thou seekest here, unless thou bring Him with thee thou dost not find " ; of the hermit's " shining candles above the pure white scriptures . . . and I to be sitting for a while praying God in every place"; of the great fidelities of love—" the flagstone upon which he was wont to pray, she was upon it until she died. Her soul went to heaven. And that flagstone was put over her face." They chanted the terror of the time, the fierce riders of the sea in death-conflict with the mounting waves: " Bitter is the conflict with the tremendous tempest "—" Bitter is the wind to-night. It tosses the ocean's white hair ; I do not fear the fierce warriors of Norway coursing on the Irish sea to-night." And in their own war of deliverance they sang of Finn and his Fiana on the battlefield, heroes of the Irish race.

Even the craftsmen's schools were still gathered in their raths, preserving from century to century the forms and rules of their art; soon after the battle of Clontarf we read of " the chief artificer of Ireland." The perfection of their art in enamel and gold work has been the wonder of the old and of the

modern world. Many influences had come in—Oriental, Byzantine, Scandinavian, French—and the Irish took and used them all, but their art still remained Gaelic, of their native soil. No jeweller's work was ever more perfect than the Ardagh chalice of the ninth or tenth century, of pure Celtic art with no trace of Danish influence. The metal-workers of Munster must have been famous, from the title of "king Cellachan of the lovely cups"; and the golden case that enclosed the Gospel of Columcille in 1000 was for its splendour "the chief relic from the western world." The stone-workers too, carried on their art, There were schools of carvers eminent for skill, such as that of Holy Island on Lough Derg. One of the churches of Clonmacnois may date from the ninth century, five others from the tenth; finely sculptured grave-stones commemorated saints and scholars; and the high-cross, a monolith ten feet high set up as a memorial to king Flann about 914, was carved by an Irish artist who was one of **the** greatest sculptors of northern Europe.

The temper of the people was shown in their **hero-king Brian Boru, warrior** and **scholar.**

His government was with patience, mercy and justice. "King Brian thrice forgave all his outlaws the same fault," says a Scandinavian saga, "but if they misbehaved themselves oftener, then he let them be judged by the law; and from this one may mark what a king he must have been." "He sent professors and masters to teach wisdom and knowledge, and to buy books beyond the sea and the great ocean, because the writings and books in every church and sanctuary had been destroyed by the plunderers; and Brian himself gave the price of learning and the price of books to every one separately who went on this service. Many churches were built and repaired by him, bridges and roads were made, the fortresses of Munster were strengthened."

Such was the astonishing vitality of learning and art among the Irish. By their social system the intellectual treasures of the race had been distributed among the whole people, and committed to their care. And the Irish tribes had proved worthy guardians of the national faith. They had known how to profit by the material skill and knowledge of the Danes. Irishmen were willing to absorb

the foreigners, to marry with them, and even at times to share their wars. They learned from them to build ships, organise naval forces, advance in trade, and live in towns; they used the northern words for the parts of a ship, and the streets of a town. In outward and material civilisation they accepted the latest Scandinavian methods, just as in our days the Japanese accepted the latest Western inventions. But in what the Germans call culture—in the ordering of society and law, of life and thought, the Irish never abandoned their national loyalty. During two centuries of Danish invasions and occupations the Gaelic civilisation had not given way an inch to the strangers.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST IRISH REVIVAL

1014-1169

AFTER the battle of Clontarf in 1014 the Irish had a hundred and fifty years of comparative quiet. "A lively, stirring, ancient and victorious people," they turned to repair their hurts and to build up their national life.

Throughout the Danish wars there had been a growth of industry and riches. No people ever made a successful national rally unless they were on the rising wave of prosperity. It is not misery and degradation that bring success. Already Ireland was known in France as "that very wealthy country in which there were twelve cities, and wide bishoprics, and a king, and that had its own language, and Latin letters.'?

But the position of the Gaels was no longer what it had been before the invasions. The

"Foreigners" called constantly for armed help from their people without, and by political alliances and combinations fostered war among the Irish states themselves. Nearly a hundred years after Clontarf king Magnus of Norway (1103) led the greatest army that ever marched conquering over Ireland, In a dark fen the young giant flamed out a mark for all, with his shining helmet, his golden hair falling long over his red silken coat, his red shield and laid thereon a golden lion. There he fell by an Irish axe. The glory and terror of " Magnus of the swift ships," " Magnus of the terrible battles," was sung in Ireland for half-a-dozen centuries after that last flaring-up of ancient fires.

The national life, moreover, was now threatened by the settlement of an alien race, strangers to the Irish tradition, strangers to the Irish idea of a state, and to their feeling of a church. The sea-kings had created in Dublin an open gateway into Ireland, **a** gateway like Quebec in Canada, that commanded the country and that the country could never again close from within. They **had** filled the city with Scandinavian settlers

from the English and Welsh coasts—pioneers of English invasion. A wealthy and compact community living on the seaboard, trading with all Europe, inclined to the views of their business clients in England and the Empire, their influence doubled the strength of the European pressure on Ireland as against the Gaelic civilisation.

To the division of peoples within the Irish state the Danes added also the first division in the Irish church. Olaf Cuaran, overlord of northmen of Dublin and York, had been baptized (943) in Northumberland by the archbishop of Canterbury, in presence of the English king. He formed the first converted Danes into a part of the English Church, so that their bishops were sent to be ordained at Canterbury. Since the Irish in 603 had refused to deal with an archbishop of the English, this was the first foothold Canterbury had got in Ireland. It was the rending in two of the Irish tradition, the degrading of the primacy of Armagh, the admission of a foreign power, and the triumph of the English over the Gaelic church.

In church and state, therefore, the **Danes**

had brought the first anti-national element into Irish life. The change is marked by a change of name. The Danes coined the name "*Ireland,*" a form of Eriu suited to their own speech; the people they called "Ir-ish," leaving the name of "Scots " only to the Gaels who had crossed the sea into Alban. Their trading ships carried the words far and wide, and the old name of Eriu only remained in the speech of the Gaels themselves.

Clontarf, too, had marked ominously the passing of an old age, the beginning of a new. Already the peoples round the North Sea—Normans, Germans, English—were sending out traders to take the place of the Scandinavians ; and the peoples of the south—Italians and Gauls—were resuming their ancient commerce. We may see the advent of the new men in the names of adventurers that landed with the Danes on that low shore at Clontarf—the first great drops of the storm—lords from Normandy, a Frenchman from Gaul, and somewhere about that time Walter the Englishman, a leader of mercenaries from England. In such names we see the heralds of the coming change.

The Irish were therefore face to face with questions of a new order—how to fuse two wholly different peoples into one community; how to make a united church within a united nation; and how to use foreign influences pouring in on all sides so as to enrich without destroying the national life. Here was the work of the next hundred and fifty years. Such problems have been solved in other lands by powerful kings at the heads of armies : in Ireland it was the work of the whole community of tribes. It is in this effort that we see the immense vitality of the Gaelic system, the power of its tradition, and the spirit of its people.

After Brian's death, two learned men were set over the government of Ireland; a layman, the Chief Poet, and a devout man, the Anchorite of all Ireland. " The land was governed like a free state and not like a monarchy by them." The victory of Clontarf was celebrated by a renascence of learning. Eye-witnesses of that great battle, poets and historians, wrote the chronicle of the Danish wars from first to last, and sang the glories of Cellachan and of Brian Boru in the greatness of his life

and the majesty of his death. A scholar put into Irish from Latin the "Tale of Troy," where the exploits and battle rage of the ancient heroes matched the martial ardour of Irish champions, and the same words are used for the fights and armour and ships of the Trojan as of the Danish wars. Another translated from Latin a history of the Britons, the neighbouring Celtic race across the Channel. In schools three or four hundred poetic metres were taught. The glories of ancient Erin were revived. Poets wrote of Usnech, of Tara, of Ailech, of the O'Neills on Lough Swilly in the far north, of Brian Boru's palace Kincora on the Shannon, of Rath Cruachan of Connacht. Tales of heroes, triumphs of ancient kings, were written in the form in which we now know them, genealogies of the tribes and old hymns of Irish saints. Clerics and laymen rivalled one another in zeal. In kings' courts, in monasteries, in schools, annals of Ireland from the earliest to the latest time were composed. Men laboured to satisfy the desire of the Irish to possess a complete and brilliant picture of Ireland from all antiquity. The most famous among the many writers, one of the most

learned men in all Europe in wisdom, literature, history, poetry and science, was Flann the layman, teacher of the school of Monasterboice, who died in 1056—" slow the bright eyes of his fine head," ran the old song. He made for his pupils synchronisms of the kings of Asia and of Roman emperors with Irish kings, and of the Irish high-kings and provincial chiefs and kings of Scotland. Writings of that time which have escaped destruction, such as the *Book of Leinster,* remain the most important relics of Celtic literature in the world.

There was already the beginning of a university in the ancient school of Armagh lying on the famous hill where for long ages the royal tombs of the O'Neills had been preserved. "The strong burh of Tara has died," they said, " while Armagh lives filled with learned champions." It now rose to a great position. With its three thousand scholars, famous for its teachers, under its high-ollave Gorman who spent twenty-one years of study, from 1133 to 1154, in England and France, it became in fact the national university for the Irish race in Ireland and Scotland. It was appointed **that**

every lector in any church in Ireland must take there a degree; and in 1169 the high-king Ruaidhri O'Conor gave the first annual grant to maintain a professor at Armagh "for all the Irish and the Scots."

A succession of great bishops of Armagh laboured to bring about also the organisation of a national church under the government of Armagh. From 1068 they began to make visitations of the whole country, and take tribute and offerings in sign of the Armagh leadership. They journeyed in the old Irish fashion on foot, one of them followed by a cow on whose milk he lived, all poor, without servants, without money, wandering among hills and remote hamlets, stopping men on the roadside to talk, praying for them all night, by the force only of their piety and the fervour of their spirit drawing all the communities under obedience to the see of Patrick, the national saint. In a series of synods from HOO to 1157 a fixed number of bishops' sees was marked out, and four archbishoprics representing the four provinces. The Danish sees, moreover, were brought into this union, and made part of the Irish organisation.

Thus the power of Canterbury in Ireland was ended, and a national church set up of Irish and Danes. Dublin, the old Scandinavian kingdom, whose prelates for over a hundred years had been consecrated in England (1036-1161), was the last to hold out against the union of churches, till this strife was healed by St. Lorcán ua Tuathail, the first Irish bishop consecrated in Dublin. He carried to that battleground of the peoples all the charity, piety and asceticism of the Irish saint: feeding the poor daily, never himself tasting meat, rising at midnight to pray till dawn, and ever before he slept going out into the graveyard to pray there for the dead ; from time to time withdrawing among the Wicklow hills to St. Kevin's Cave at Glendalough, a hole in the cliff overhanging the dark lake swept with storm from the mountain-pass, where twice a week bread and water were brought him by a boat and a ladder up the rock. His life was spent in the effort for national peace and union, nor had Ireland a truer patriot or wiser statesman.

Kings and chiefs sat with the clergy in the Irish synods, and in the state too there were

signs of a true union of the peoples. The Danes, gradually absorbed into the Irish population, lost the sense of separate nationality. The growing union of the peoples was seen in the increasing power of the Ardri. Brian's line maintained at Cashel the title of "kings of Ireland," strengthening their house with Danish marriages; they led Danish forces and were elected kings of the Danes in Dublin. But in the twelfth century it was the Connacht kings who came to the front, the same race that a thousand years before had spread their power across the Shannon to Usnech and to Tara. Turlough O'Conor (1118-1156) was known to Henry I of England as "king of Ireland "; on a metal cross made for him he is styled "king of Erin," and a missal of his time (1150) contains the only prayer yet known for "the king of the Irish and his army " —the sign, as we may see, of foreign influences on the Irish mind. His son, Ruaidhri or Rory, was proclaimed (1166) Ardri in Dublin with greater pomp than any king before him, and held at Athboy in Meath an assembly of the "men of Ireland," archbishops and clergy, princes and nobles, eighteen thousand horse-

men from the tribes and provinces, and a thousand Danes from Dublin—there laws were made for the honour of churches and clergy, the restoring of prey unjustly taken, and the control of tribes and territories, so that a woman might traverse the land in safety; and the vast gathering broke up "in peace and amity, without battle or controversy, or any one complaining of another at that meeting." It is said that Rory O'Conor's procession when he held the last of the national festivals at Telltown was several miles in length.

The whole of Ireland is covered with the traces of this great national revival. We may still see on islands, along river-valleys, in lonely fields, innumerable ruins of churches built of stone chiselled as finely as man's hand can cut it; and of the lofty round towers and sculptured high crosses that were multiplied over the land after the day of Clontarf. The number of the churches has not been counted. It must be astonishing. At first they were built in the "Romanesque" style brought from the continent, with plain round arches, as Brian Boru made them about A.D. 1000; presently chancels were added, and doors and

windows and arches richly carved. These churches were still small, intimate, suited to the worship of the tribal communities; as time went on they were larger and more richly decorated, but always marked with the remembrance of Irish tradition and ornament, and signed by Irish masons on the stones. There was a wealth of metal work of great splendour, decorated with freedom and boldness of design, with inlaid work and filigree, and settings of stones and enamels and crystal; as we may see in book-shrines, in the crosiers of Lismore and Cashel and Clonmacnois and many others, in the matchless processional cross of Cong, in the great shrine of St. Manchan with twenty-four figures highly raised on each side in a variety of postures remarkable for the time. It was covered with an embroidery of gold in as good style, say the Annals, as a reliquary was ever covered in Ireland. Irish skill was known abroad. A French hero of romance wore a fine belt of Irish leather-work, and a knight of Bavaria had from Ireland ribbon of gold-lace embroidered with animals in red gold.

The vigour of Irish life overflowed, indeed,

the bounds of the country. Cloth from Ireland was already sold in England and it was soon to spread over all Europe. It is probable that export of corn and provisions had already begun, and of timber, besides hides and wool. And the frequent mention of costly gifts and tributes, and of surprisingly large sums of gold and silver show a country of steadily expanding wealth. From the time of Brian Boru learned men poured over the continent. Pilgrims journeyed to Compostella, to Rome, or through Greece to Jordan and Jerusalem—composing poems on the way, making discourses in Latin, showing their fine art of writing. John, bishop of Mecklenburg, preached to the Vandals between the Elbe and the Vistula; Marianus "the Scot" on his pilgrimage to Rome stopped at Regensburg on the Danube, and founded there a monastery of north Irishmen in 1068, to which was soon added a second house for south Irishmen. Out of these grew the twelve Irish convents of Germany and Austria. An Irish abbot was head of a monastery in Bulgaria. From time to time the Irish came home to collect money for their foundations and went back

laden with gold from the kings at home. Pope Adrian IV (1154) remembered with esteem the Irish professor under whom he had studied in Paris University. Irishmen were chaplains of the emperor Conrad I I I (†1152) and of his successor Frederick Barbarossa. Strangers "moved by the love of study ?! still set out " in imitation of their ancestors to visit the land of the Irish so wonderfully celebrated for its learning."

While the spirit of Ireland manifested itself in the shaping of a national university, and of a national church, in the revival of the glories of the Ardri, and in vigour of art and learning, there was an outburst too among the common folk of jubilant patriotism. We can hear the passionate voice of the people in the songs and legends, the prophecies of the enduring life of Irishmen on Irish land, the popular tales that began at this time to run from mouth to mouth. They took to themselves two heroes to be centres of the national hope—Finn the champion, leader of the " Fiana," the war-bands of old time; and Patrick the saint. A multitude of tales suddenly sprang up of the adventures of Finn—

the warrior worthy of a king, the son of wisdom, the mighty hunter of every mountain and forest in Ireland, whose death no minstrel cared to sing. Every poet was expected to recite the fame in life of Finn and his companions. Pedigrees were invented to link him with every great house in Ireland, for their greater glory and authority. Side by side with Finn the people set St. Patrick—keeper of Ireland against all strangers, guardian of their nation and tradition. It was Patrick, they told, who by invincible prayer and fasting at last compelled Heaven to grant that outlanders should not for ever inhabit Erin; " that the Saxons should not dwell in Ireland, by consent or perforce, so long as I abide in heaven :" " Thou shalt have this," said the outwearied angel. "Around thee," was the triumphant Irish hope, " on the Day of Judgment the men of Erin shall come to judgment"; for after the twelve thrones of the apostles were set in Judaea to judge the tribes of Israel, Patrick himself should at the end arise and call the people of Ireland to be judged by him on a mountain in their own land.

As in the old Gaelic tradition, so now the people fused in a single emotion the nation and the church. They brought from dusky woods the last gaunt relics of Finn's company, sad and dispirited at the falling of the evening clouds, and set them face to face with Patrick as he chanted mass on one of their old raths —men twice as tall as the modern folk, with their huge wolf-dogs, men "who were not of our epoch or of one time with the clergy." When Patrick hesitated to hear their pagan memories of Ireland and its graves, of its men who died for honour, of its war and hunting, its silver bridles and cups of yellow gold, its music and great feastings, lest such recreation of spirit and mind should be to him a destruction of devotion and dereliction of prayer, angels were sent to direct him to give ear to the ancient stories of Ireland, and write them down for the joy of companies and nobles of the latter time. "Victory and blessing wait on thee, Caeilte," said Patrick, thus called to the national service; " for the future thy stories and thyself are dear to me"; "grand lore and knowledge is this thou hast uttered to us." "Thou too, Patrick, hast taught us good

things," the warriors responded witkcourteous dignity. So at all the holy places of Ireland, the pillar-stone of ancient Usnech, the ruined mounds of Tara, great Rath-Cruachan of Connacht, the graves of mighty champions, Pagan hero and Christian saint sat together to make interchange of history and religion, the teaching of the past and the promise of the future. St. Patrick gave his blessing to minstrels and story-tellers and to all craftsmen of Ireland—" and to them that profess it be it all happiness." He mounted to the high glen to see the Fiana raise their warning signal of heroic chase and hunting. He saw the heavy tears of the last of the heroes till his very breast, his chest was wet. He laid in his bosom the head of the pagan hunter and warrior : "By me to thee," said Patrick, "and whatsoever be the place in which God shall lay hand on thee, Heaven is assigned." " For thy sake," said the saint, " be thy lord Finn mac Cumhall taken out of torment, if it be good in the sight of God."

In no other country did such a fate befall a missionary coming from strangers—to be taken and clothed upon with the national

passion of a people, shaped after the pattern of their spirit, made the keeper of the nation's soul, the guardian of its whole tradition. Such legends show how enthusiasm for the common country ran through every hamlet in the land, and touched the poorest as it did the most learned. They show that the social order in Ireland after the Danish settlements was the triumph of an Irish and not a Danish civilisation. The national life of the Irish, free, democratic, embracing every emotion of the whole people, gentle or simple, was powerful enough to gather into it the strong and freedom-loving rovers of the sea.

On all sides, therefore, we see the growth of a people compacted of Irish and Danes, bound together under the old Irish law and social order, with Dublin as a centre of the united races, Armagh a national university, a single and independent church under an Irish primate of Armagh and an Irish archbishop of Dublin, a high-king calling the people together in a succession of national assemblies for the common good of the country. The new union of Ireland was being slowly worked out by her political councillors, her great ecclesiastics, her

scholars and philosophers, and by the faith of the common people in the glory of their national inheritance. "The bodies and minds of the people were endued with extraordinary abilities of nature," so that art, learning and commerce prospered in their hands. On this fair hope of rising civilisation there fell a new and tremendous trial.

CHAPTER VI

THE NORMAN INVASION

1169-1520

AFTER the fall of the Danes the Normans, conquerors of England, entered on the dominion of the sea—" citizens of the world," they carried their arms and their cunning from the Tweed to the Mediterranean, from the Seine to the Euphrates. The spirit of conquest was in the air. Every landless man was looking to make his fortune. Every baron desired, like his viking forefathers, a land where he could live out of reach of the king's long arm. They had marked out Ireland as their natural prey—" a land very rich in plunder, and famed for the good temperature of the air, the fruitfulness of the soil, the pleasant and commodious seats for habitation, and safe and large ports and havens lying open for traffic." Norman

barons were among the enemy at the battle of Clontarf in 1014. The same year that Ireland saw the last of the Scandinavian **sea** kings (1103) she saw the first of the Norman invaders prying out the country for a kingdom. William Rufus (1087-1100) had fetched from Ireland great oaks to roof his Hall at Westminster, and planned the conquest of an island so desirable. A greater empire-maker, Henry II, lord of a vast sea-coast from the Forth to the Pyrenees, holding both sides of the Channel, needed Ireland to round off his dominions and give him command of the traffic from his English ports across the Irish Sea, from his ports of the Loire and the Garonne over the Gaulish sea. The trade was well worth the venture.

Norman and French barons, with Welsh followers, and Flemings from Pembroke, led the invasion that began in 1169. They were men trained to war, with armour and weapons unknown to the Irish. But they owed no small part of their military successes in Ireland to a policy of craft. If the Irish fought hard to defend the lands they held in civil tenure, the churches had no great strength, and the

seizing of a church estate led to no immediate rising out of the country. The settled plan of the Normans, therefore, was to descend on defenceless church lands, and turn them into Norman strongholds; in reply to complaints, they pleaded that the churches were used by the hostile Irish as storing places for their goods. Their occupation gave the Normans a great military advantage, for once the churches were fortified and garrisoned with Norman skill the reduction of the surrounding country became much easier. The Irish during this period sometimes plundered church lands, but did not occupy, annex, or fortify them. The invaders meanwhile spread over the country. French and Welsh and Flemings have left their mark in every part of Ireland, by Christian names, by names of places and families, and by loanwords taken into Irish from the French. The English who came over went chiefly to the towns, many of them to Dubl in through the Bristol trade. Henry II himself crossed in 1171 with a great fleet and army to overawe his too-independent barons as well as the Irish, and from the wooden palace set

up for him in Dublin demanded a general oath of allegiance. The Normans took the oath, with some churchmen and half-a-dozen Irish chiefs.

In Henry's view this oath was a confession that the Irish knew themselves conquered; and that the chief renounced the tribal system, and handed over the land to the king, so that he as supreme lord of all the soil could allot it to his barons, and demand in return the feudal services common in Normandy or in England. No Irish chief, however, could have even understood these ideas. He knew nothing of the feudal system, nor of a landlord in the English sense. He had no power to hand the land of the tribe over to any one. He could admit no "conquest," for the seizing of a few towns and forts could not carry the subjection of all the independent chiefdoms. Whatever Henry's theory might be, the taking of Dublin was not the taking of an Irish capital: the people had seen its founding as the centre of a foreign kingdom, and their own free life had continued as of old. Henry's presence there gave him no lordship: and the independent

temper of the Irish people was not likely, after their Danish experience, to be cowed by two years of war Some cunning explanation of the oath was given to the Irish chiefs by the subtle Angevin king and his crafty Norman counsellors—that war was to cease, that they were to rule as fully and freely as before, and in recognition of the peace to give to Henry a formal tribute which implied no dominion.

The false display at Dublin was a deception both to the king and to the Irish, The empty words on either side did not check for a month the lust of conquest nor the passion of defence.

One royal object, however, was made good. The oath, claimed under false pretences, yielded under misunderstanding, impossible of fulfilment, was used to confer on the king a technical legal right to Ireland; this legal fiction became the basis of the royal claims, and the justification of every later act of violence.

Another fraud was added by the proclamation of papal bulls, which according to modern research seem to have been mere forgeries.

They gave the lordship of the country to Henry, and were readily accepted by the invaders and their successors. But they were held of no account among Irish annalists and writers, who make no mention of the bulls during the next three hundred years.

Thus the grounds of the English title to Ireland were laid down, and it only remained to make good by the sword the fictions of law and the falsehoods of forgers. According to these Ireland had been by the act of the natives and by the will of God conferred on a higher race. Kings carved out estates for their nobles. The nobles had to conquer the territories granted them. Each conquered tract was to be made into a little England, enclosed within itself, and sharply fenced off from the supposed sea of savagery around it. There was to be no trade with the Irish, no intercourse, no relationship, no use of their dress, speech, or laws, no dealings save those of conquest and slaughter. The colonists were to form an English parliament to enact English law. A lieutenant-governor, or his deputy, was set in Dublin Castle to superintend the conquest and the adminis-

tration. The fighting garrison was reinforced by the planting of a militant church —bishops and clergy of foreign blood, stout men of war, ready to aid by prayers, excommunications, and the sword. A bishop of Waterford being once sent by the Lord Justice to account to Edward I for a battle of the Irish in which the king of Connacht and two thousand of his men lay dead, explained that "in policy he thought it expedient to wink at one knave cutting off another, and that would save the king's coffers and purchase peace to the land"; whereat the king smiled and bade him return to Ireland.

The Irish were now therefore aliens in their own country. Officially they did not exist. Their land had been parted out by kings among their barons "till in title they were owners and lords of all, so as nothing was left to be granted to the natives." During centuries of English occupation not a single law was enacted for their relief or benefit. They were refused the protection of English law, shut out from the king's courts and from the king's peace. The people who had carried

the peaceful mission of a spiritual religion over England and Europe now saw that other mission planted among themselves—a political church bearing the sword of the conqueror, and dealing out anathemas and death in the service of a state which rewarded it with temporal wealth and dominion.

The English attack was thus wholly different from that of the Danes : it was guided by a fixed purpose, and directed by kings who had a more absolute power, a more compact body of soldiers, and a better filled treasury than any other rulers in Europe. Dublin, no mere centre now of roving sea-kings, was turned into an impregnable fortress, fed from the sea, and held by a garrison which was supported by the whole strength of England—a fortress unconquerable by any power within Ireland—a passage through which the strangers could enter at their ease. The settlers were no longer left to lapse as isolated groups into Irish life, but were linked together as a compact garrison under the Castle government. The vigilance of Westminster never ceased, nor the supply of its treasure, its favoured colonists, and its ablest

generals. From Henry II to Elizabeth, the aim of the English government was the same. The ground of Ireland was to be an immediate holding, "a royal inheritance," of the king On an issue so sharp and definite no compromise was possible. So long as the Irish claimed to hold a foot of their own land the war must continue. It lasted, in fact, for five hundred years, and at no moment was any peace possible to the Irish except by entire renunciation of their right to the actual soil of their country. If at times dealings were opened by the English with an Irish chief, or a heavy sum taken to allow him to stay on his land, this was no more than a temporary stratagem or a local expedient, and in no way affected the fixed intention to gain the ownership of the soil.

Out of the first tumult and anarchy of war an Ireland emerged which was roughly divided between the two peoples. In Ulster, O'Neills and O'Donnells and other tribes remained, with only a fringe of Normans on the coast. O'Conors and other Irish clans divided Connacht, and absorbed into the Gaelic life the incoming Norman de Burghs. The Anglo-

Normans, on the other hand, established themselves powerfully in Munster and Leinster. But even here—side by side with the great lords of the invasion, earls of Ormond, and Desmond, and Kildare—there remained Irish kingdoms and the remnants of old chiefdoms, unconquered, resolute and wealthy—such as the O'Briens in the west, MacCarthys and O'Sullivans in the south, O'Conors and O'Mores in the middle country, MacMurroughs and O'Tooles in Leinster, and many more.

It has been held that all later misfortunes would have been averted if the English without faltering had carried out a complete conquest, and ended the dispute once for all. English kings had, indeed, every temptation to this direct course. The wealth of the country lay spread before them. It was a land abounding in corn and cattle, in fish, in timber ; its manufactures were famed over all Europe ; gold-mines were reported ; foreign merchants flocked to its ports, and bankers and money-lenders from the Rhineland and. Lucca, with speculators from Provence, were carrying over foreign coin, settling in the towns, and taking land

in the country. Sovereigns at Westminster—harassed with turbulent barons at home and wars abroad—looked to a conquered Ireland to supply money for their treasury, soldiers for their armies, provisions for their wars, and estates for their favourites. In haste to reap their full gains they demanded nothing better than a conquest rapid and complete. They certainly cannot be charged with dimness of intention, slackness in effort, or want of resource in dilemmas. It would be hard to imagine any method of domination which was not used—among the varied resources of the army, the church, the lawyers, the money-lenders, the schoolmasters, the Castle intriguers and the landlords. The official class in Dublin, recruited every few years with uncorrupted blood from England, urged on the war with the dogged persistence of their race.

But the conquest of the Irish nation was not so simple as it had seemed to Anglo-Norman speculators. The proposal to take the land out of the hands of an Irish people and give it to a foreign king, could only have been carried out by the slaughter of the entire

population. No lesser effort could have turned a free tribal Ireland into a dependent feudal England.

The English kings had made a further mistake. They proposed, like later kings of Spain in South America, to exploit Ireland for the benefit of the crown and the metropolis, not for the welfare of any class whatever of the inhabitants ; the colonists were to be a mere garrison to conquer and hold the land for the king. But the Anglo-Norman adventurers had gone out to find profit for themselves, not to collect Irish wealth for London. Their "loyalty" failed under that test, The kings, therefore, found themselves engaged in a double conflict, against the Irish and against their own colonists, and were every year more entangled in the difficulties **of** a policy false from the outset.

Yet another difficulty disclosed itself. Among the colonists **a** little experience destroyed the English theory of Irish "barbarism." The invaders were drawn to their **new home** not only, by its wealth but by its beauty, the variety and gaiety of its social **life, the** intelligence **of its** inhabitants, **and**

the attraction of its learning and art. Settlers, moreover, could neither live nor till the lands they had seized, nor trade in the seaports, nor find soldiers for their defence, without coming to terms with their Irish neighbours. To them the way of wealth lay not in slaughter but in traffic, not in destroying riches but in sharing them. The colonists compromised with "the Irish enemy." They took to Irish dress and language; they recognised Irish land tenure, as alone suited to the country and people, one also that gave them peace with their farmers and cattle-drivers, and kept out of their estates the king's sheriffs and tax-gatherers; they levied troops from their tenants in the Irish manner; they employed Irishmen in offices of trust; they paid neighbouring tribes for military service—such as to keep roads and passes open for their traders and messengers. "English born in Ireland," "degenerate English," were as much feared by the king as the "mere Irish." They were not counted "of English birth"; lands were resumed from them, office forbidden them. In every successive generation new men of pure English blood were to be sent

over to serve the king's purpose and keep in check the Ireland-born.

The Irish wars, therefore, became exceedingly confused—kings, barons, tribes, all entangled in interminable strife. Every chief, surrounded by dangers, was bound to turn his court into a place of arms thronged by men ready to drive back the next attack or start on the next foray. Whatever was the burden of military taxation no tribe dared to disarm any more than one of the European countries to-day. The Dublin officials, meanwhile, eked out their military force by craft: they created and encouraged civil wars; they called on the Danes who had become mingled with the Irish to come out from them and resume their Danish nationality, as the only means of being allowed protection of law and freedom to trade. To avert the dangers of friendship and peace between races in Ireland they became missionaries of disorder, apostles of contention. Civil wars within any country exhaust themselves and come to a natural end. But civil wars maintained by a foreign power from without have no conclusion. If any strong leader arose, Anglo-Norman or

Irish, the whole force of England was called in, and the ablest commanders fetched over from the French wars, great men of battle and plunder, to fling the province back into weakness and disorder.

In England the feudal system had been brought to great perfection—a powerful king, a state organised for common action, with a great military force, a highly organised treasury, a powerful nobility, and a dependent people. The Irish tribal system, on the other hand, rested on a people endowed with a wide freedom, guided by an ancient tradition, and themselves the guardians of their law and of their land. They had still to show what strength lay in their spiritual ideal of a nation's life to subdue the minds of heir invaders, and to make a stand against their organised force.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND IRISH REVIVAL

1200-1520

THE first Irish revival after the Danish wars showed the strength of the ancient Gaelic civilisation. The second victory which the genius of the people won over the minds of the new invaders was a more astonishing proof of the vitality of the Irish culture, the firm structure of their law, and the cohesion of the people.

Henry II in 1171 had led an army for "the conquest" of Ireland. Three hundred years later, when Henry VII in 1487 turned his thoughts to Ireland he found no conquered land. An earthen ditch with a palisade on the top had been raised to protect all that was left of English Ireland, called the "Pale" from its encircling fence. Outside was a country of Irish language, dress, and customs. Thirty

miles west of Dublin was " by west of English law." Norman lords had married daughters of Irish chiefs all over the country, and made combinations and treaties with every province. Their children went to be fostered in kindly houses of the Irish. Into their own palisaded forts, lifted on great mounds of earth, with three-fold entrenchments, came Irish poets singing the traditions, the love-songs, the prayers and hymns of the Gaels. A Norman shrine of gold for St. Patrick's tooth shows how the Norman lord of Athenry had adopted the national saint. Many settlers changed their names to an Irish form, and taking up the clan system melted into the Irish population. Irish speech was so universal that a proclamation of Henry VIII in a Dublin parliament had to be translated into Irish by the earl of Ormond.

Irish manners had entered also into **the** town houses of the merchants. Foreign traders welcomed " natives " to the seaports, employed them, bought their wares, took them into partnership, married,with them, allowed them to plead Irish law in their courts—and not only that, but they themselves wore **the**

forbidden Irish dress, talked Irish with the other townsfolk, and joined in their national festivities and ceremonies and songs. Almost to the very gates of Dublin, in the centre of what should have been pure English land, the merchants went riding Irish fashion, in Irish dress, and making merry with their forbidden Irish clients.

This Irish revival has been attributed to a number of causes—to an invasion of Edward Bruce in 1315, to the "degeneracy" of the Normans, to the vice of the Irish, to the Wars of the Roses, to the want of energy of Dublin Castle, to the over-education of Irish people in Oxford, to agitation and lawyers. The cause lay far deeper. It lay in the rich national civilisation which the Irish genius had built up, strong in its courageous democracy, in its broad sympathies, in its widespread culture, in its freedom, and in its humanities. So long as the Irish language preserved to the people their old culture they never failed to absorb into their life every people that came among them. It was only when they lost hold of the tradition of their fathers and their old social order that this great influence fell

from them, and strangers no longer yielded to their power.

The social fusion of Normans and Irish was the starting-point of a lively civilisation to which each race brought its share. Together they took a brilliant part in the commerce which was broadening over the world. The Irish were great travellers ; they sailed the Adriatic, journeyed in the Levant, visited the factories of Egypt, explored China, with all the old love of knowledge and infinite curiosity. They were as active and ingenious in business as the Normans themselves. Besides exporting raw materials, Irish-made linen and cloth and cloaks and leather were carried as far as Russia and Naples; Norman lords and Irish chieftains alike took in exchange velvets, silks and satins, cloth of gold and embroideries, wines and spices. Irish goldsmiths made the rich vessels that adorned the tables both of Normans and Irish. Irish masons built the new churches of continental design, carving at every turn their own traditional Irish ornaments. Irish scribes illuminated manuscripts which were as much praised in a Norman castle as in an Irish fort. Both

peoples used translations into Irish made by Gaelic scholars from the fashionable Latin books of the Continent, Both races sent students and professors to every university in Europe—men recognised of deep knowledge among the most learned men of Italy and France. A kind of national education was being worked out. Not one of the Irish chiefdoms allowed its schools to perish, and to these ancient schools the settlers in the towns added others of their own, to which the Irish also in time flocked, so that youths of the two races learned together. As Irish was the common language, so Latin was the second tongue for cultivated people and for all men of business in their continental trade. The English policy made English the language of traitors to their people, but of no use either for trade or literature.

The uplifting of the national ideal was shown in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by a revival of learning like that which followed the Danish wars. Not one of the hereditary houses of historians, lawyers, poets, physicians, seems to have failed : we find them at work in the mountains of Donegal, along the Shannon,

in lake islands, among the bare rocks of Clare, in the plains of Meath, in the valleys of Munster. In astronomy Irishmen were still first in Europe. In medicine they had all the science of their age. Nearly all our knowledge of Irish literature comes from copies of older works made by hundreds of industrious scribes of this period. From time to time Assemblies of all the learned men were called together by patriotic chiefs, or by kings rising into high leadership—"coming to Tara," as the people said. The old order was maintained in these national festivals. Spacious avenues of white houses were made ready for poets, streets of peaked hostels for musicians, straight roads of smooth conical-roofed houses for chroniclers, another avenue for bards and jugglers, and so on; and on the bright surface of the pleasant hills sleeping-booths of woven branches **for** the companies. From sea to sea scholars and artists gathered to show their skill to the men of Ireland; and in these glorious assemblies the people learned anew the wealth of their civilisation, and celebrated with fresh ardour the unity of the Irish nation.

It was no wonder that in this high fervour

of the country the Anglo-Normans, like the Danes and the Northumbrians before them, were won to a civilisation so vital and impassioned, so human and gay. But the mixed civilisation found no favour with the government : the "wild Irish" and the "degenerate English" were no better than "brute beasts," the English said, abandoned to "filthy customs " and to "a damnable law that was no law, hateful to God and man." Every measure was taken to destroy the growing amity of the peoples, not only by embroiling them in war, but by making union of Ireland impossible in religion or in education, and by destroying public confidence. The new central organisation of the Irish church made it a powerful weapon in English hands. An Englishman was at once put in every archbishopric and every principal see, a prelate who was often a Castle official as well, deputy, chancellor, justice, treasurer, or the like, or a good soldier—in any case hostile to every Irish affection. A national church in the old Irish sense disappeared; in the English idea the church was to destroy the nation. Higher education was also denied to both races. No

Irish university could live under the eye of an English primate of Armagh, and every attempt of Anglo-Normans to set up a university for Ireland at Dublin or Drogheda was instantly crushed. To avert general confidence and mutual understanding, an alien class was maintained in the country, who for considerations of wealth, power, a privileged position, betrayed the peace of Ireland to the profit of England. No pains, for example, were spared by the kings to conciliate and use so important a house as that of the earls of Ormond. For nearly two hundred years, as it happened, the heirs of this house were always minors, held in wardship by the king. English training at his court, visits to London, knighthoods and honours there, high posts in Ireland, prospects of new conquests of Irish land, a winking of government officials at independent privileges used on their estates by Ormond lords—such influences tied each heir in turn to England, and separated them from Irish interests—a "loyal" house, said the English —"fair and false as Ormond," said the people of Ireland.

Both races suffered under this foreign mis-

rule. Both were brayed in the same mortar. Both were driven to the demand for home rule. The national movement never flagged for a single generation. Never for a moment did the Irish cease from the struggle; in the swell and tumult of that tossing sea commanders emerged now in one province, now in another, each to fall back into the darkness while the next pressed on to take his place. An Anglo-Norman parliament claimed (1459) that Ireland was by its constitution separate from the laws and statutes of England, and prayed to have a separate coinage for their land as in the kingdom of England. Confederacies of Irish and Anglo-Normans were formed, one following another in endless and hopeless succession. Through all civil strife we may plainly see the steady drift of the peoples to a common patriotism. There was panic in England at these ceaseless efforts to restore an Irish nation, for "Ireland," English statesmen said, " was as good as gone if a wild Irish wyrlinge should be chosen there as king."

For a time it seemed as if the house of the Fitzgeralds,the most powerful house in Ireland,

might mediate between the peoples whose **blood,** English and Irish, they shared* Earl Gerald of Desmond led a demand for home rule in 1341, and that Ireland should not be governed by "needy men sent from England, without knowledge of Ireland or its circumstances." Earl Gerald the Rhymer of the same house (1359) was a patriot leader too—a witty and ingenious composer of Irish poetry, who excelled all the English and many of the Irish in the knowledge of the Irish language, poetry, and history, and of other learning. A later Earl Gerald (1416), foster-son of O'Brien and cousin of Henry VI, was complimented by the Republic of Florence, in a letter recalling the Florentine origin of the Fitzgeralds, for the glory he brought to that city, since its citizens had possessions as far as Hungary and Greece, and now "through you and yours bear sway even in Ibernia, the most remote island of the world." In Earl Thomas (1467) the Irish saw the first "foreigner" to be the martyr of their cause. He had furthered trade of European peoples with Irishmen; he had urgently pressed union of the races ; he had planned

a university for Ireland at Drogheda (Armagh having been long destroyed by the English), As his reward he was beheaded without trial by the earl of Worcester famed as " the Butcher," who had come over with a claim to some of the Desmond lands in Cork. His people saw in his death " the ruin of Ireland "; they laid his body with bitter lamentations by the Atlantic at Tralee, where the ocean wind moaning in the caverns still sounds to the peasants as " the Desmond's keen."

Other Fitzgeralds, earls of Kildare, who had married into every leading Irish house, took up in their turn the national cause. Garrett Mor "the great" (1477-1513),married to the cousin of Henry V I I, made close alliances with every Irish chief, steadily spread his power over the land, and kept up the family relations with Florence]; and by his wit, his daring, the gaiety of his battle with slander, fraud, and violence, won great authority. His son Garrett inherited and enlarged his great territory. Maynooth under him was one of the richest earls' houses of that time. When he rode out in his scarlet cloak he was followed by four hundred Irish spearmen. His library

was **half of** Irish books; he made his English wife read, write, and speak perfectly the Irish tongue; he had for his chief poet an Irishman, "full of the grace of God and of learning"; his secretary was employed to write for his library "divers chronicles " of Ireland. The Irish loved him for his justice, for his piety, and that he put on them no arbitrary tax. By a singular charm of nature he won the hearts of all, wife, son, jailor in London Tower, and English lords.

His whole policy was union in his country, and Ireland for the Irish. The lasting argument for self-government as against rule from over-sea was heard in his cry to Wolsey and the lords at Westminster—" You hear of a case as it were in a dream, and feel not the smart that vexeth us." He attempted to check English interference with private subjects in Ireland. He refused to admit that a commission to Cardinal Wolsey as legate for England gave him authority in Ireland. **The** mark of his genius lay above all in his resolve to close dissensions and to put an end to civil wars. When as deputy he rode out to war against disturbed tribes, his first business was

not to fight, but to call an assembly in the Irish manner which should decide the quarrel by arbitration according to law. He "made peace," his enemies said, and the nightmare of forced dissension gave way before this new statesmanship of national union.

Never were the Irish "so corrupted by affection" for a lord deputy, never were they so obedient, both from fear and from love, so Henry VIII was warned. In spite of official intrigues, through all eddying accidents, the steady pressure of the country itself was towards union.

The great opportunity had come to weld together the two races in Ireland, and to establish a common civilisation by a leader to whom both peoples were perfectly known, whose sympathies were engaged in both, and who as deputy of the English king had won the devoted confidence of the Irish people.

There was one faction alone which no reason could convert—the alien minority that held interests and possessions in both islands, and openly used England to advance their power and Ireland to increase their wealth. They had no country, for neither

England nor Ireland could be counted such. They knew how to darken ignorance and inflame prejudice in London against their fellow-countrymen in Ireland—" the strange savage nature of the people," "savage vile poor persons which never did know or feel wealth or civility," " having no knowledge of the laws of God or of the king," nor any way to know them save through the good offices of these slanderers, apostles of their own virtue. The anti-national minority would have had no strength if left alone to face the growing toleration in Ireland. In support from England it found its sole security —and through its aid Ireland was flung back into disorder.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TAKING OF THE LAND

1520-1625

HENRY VIII, like Henry II, was not concerned to give "civilisation" to Ireland. He was concerned to take the land. His reasons were the same. If he possessed the soil in his own right, apart from the English parliament, and commanded its fighting-men and its wealth, he could beat down rebellion in England, smite Scotland into obedience, conquer France, and create an empire of bounds unknown—and in time of danger where so sure a shelter for a flying sovereign? Claims were again revived to "our rightful inheritance"; quibbles of law once more served for the king's "title to the land"; there was another great day of deception in Dublin. Henry asked the title of King of Ireland instead of Lord, and offered to the

chiefs in return full security for their lands. For months of subtle preparation his promises were explicit. All cause of offence was carefully taken away. Finally a parliament was summoned (1541) of lords carefully bribed and commons carefully packed—the very pattern, in fact, of that which was later called to vote the Union. And while they were by order voting the title, the king and council were making arrangements together to render void both sides of the bargain. First the wording of the title was so altered as to take away any value in the "common consent" of parliament, since the king asserted his title to Ireland by inheritance and conquest, before and beyond all mandate of the popular will. And secondly it was arranged that Henry was under no obligation by negotiations or promises as to the land. For since, by the council's assurance to the king on the day the title was passed, there was no land occupied by any "disobedient" people which was not really the king's property by ancient inheritance or by confiscation, Henry might do as he would with his own. Royal concessions too must depend on how much revenue

could be extracted from them to keep up suitably the title of king—on whether it was judicious to give Irishmen titles which they might afterwards plead to be valid—on whether Henry would find the promised grants convenient in case he chose later to proceed to "conquest and extermination."

Parliament was dismissed for thirteen years. Henry, in fact, had exactly fulfilled the project of mystification he proposed twenty years before—" to be politically and secretly handled." Every trace of Irish law and land tenure must finally be abolished so that the soil should lie at the king's will alone, but this was to be done at first by secret and politic measures, here a little and there a little, so that, as he said, the Irish lords should as yet conceive no suspicion that they were to be "constrained to live under our law or put from all the lands by them now detained." "Politic practices," said Henry, would serve till such time as the strength of the Irish should be diminished, their leaders taken from them, and division put among themselves so that they join not together. If there had been any truth or consideration for Ireland

in the royal compact some hope of compromise and conciliation might have opened. But the whole scheme was rooted and grounded in falsehood, and Ireland had yet to learn how far sufferings by the quibbles and devices of law might exceed the disasters of open war. Chiefs could be ensnared one by one in misleading contracts, practically void. A false claimant could be put on a territory and supported by English soldiers in a civil war, till the actual chief was exiled or yielded the land to the king's ownership. No chief, true or false, had power to give away the people's land, and the king was face to face with an indignant people, who refused to admit an illegal bargain. Then came a march of soldiers over the district, hanging, burning, shooting "the rebels," casting the peasants out on the hillsides. There was also the way of "conquest." The whole of the inhabitants were to be exiled, and the countries made vacant and waste for English peopling: the sovereign's rule would be immediate and peremptory over those whom he had thus planted by his sole will, and Ireland would be kept subject in a way

unknown in England; then " the king might say Ireland was clearly won, and after that he would be at little cost and receive great profits, and men and money at pleasure." There would be no such difficulty, Henry's advisers said as those of Henry II had said before, to " subdue or exile them as hath been thought," for from the settled lands plantation could be spread into the surrounding territories, and the Irishry steadily pushed back into the sea. Henceforth it became a fixed policy to "exterminate and exile the country people of the Irishry." Whether they submitted or not, the king was to " inhabit their country" with English blood. But again as in the twelfth century it was the king and the metropolis that were to profit, not any class of inhabitants of Ireland.

A series of great Confiscations put through an enslaved Pale parliament made smooth the way of conquest. An Act of 1536 for the attainder of the earl of Kildare confiscated his estates to the king, that is, the main part of Leinster. In 1570 the bulk of Ulster, as territory of the " traitor " Shane O'Neill, was declared forfeited in the same way. And

in 1586 the chief part of Munster, the lordship of the "traitor" earl of Desmond. Another Act of 1536 forfeited to the crown all ancient claims of English lords to lands which had been granted to them, and afterwards recovered by the original Irish owners. Another in 1537 vested in the king all the lands of the dissolved monasteries. By these various titles given to the crown, it was hard for any acres to slip through unawares, English or Irish. An Act of 1569 moreover reduced all Ireland to shire land ; in other words, all Irish chiefs who had made indentures with the crown were deprived of all the benefits which were included in such indentures, and the brehon or Irish law, with all its protection to the poor, was abolished.

These laws and confiscations gave to the new sovereigns of the Irish the particular advantage that if their subjects should resist the taking of the land, they were legally "rebels," and as such outside the laws of war. It was this new fiction of law that gave the Tudor wars their unsurpassed horror. Thus began what Bacon called the "wild chase on the wild Irishmen." The forfeiture

of land of the tribe for the crime of a chief was inconceivable in Irish law; the claim of the commonalty to unalterable possession of their soil was deeply engraven in the hearts of the people, who stood together to hold their land, believing justice and law to be on their side, and the right of near two thousand years of ordered possession. At a prodigious price, at inconceivable cost of human woe, the purging of the soil from the Irish race was begun. Such mitigations as the horrors of war allow were forbidden to these "rebels" by legal fiction. Torturers and hangmen went out with the soldiers. There was no protection for any soul ; the old, the sick, infants, women, scholars ; any one of them might be a landholder, or a carrier on of the tradition of the tribal owners, and was in any case a rebel appointed to death. No quarter was allowed, no faith kept, and no truce given. Chiefs were made to "draw and carry," to abase them before the tribes. Poets and historians were slaughtered and their books and genealogies burned, so that no man" might know his own grandfather" and all Irishmen be confounded in the same

ignorance and abasement, all glories gone, and all rights lost. The great object of the government was to destroy the whole tradition, wipe out the Gaelic memories, and begin a new English life.

But even with all legal aids to extermination the land war proved more difficult than the English had expected. It lasted for some seventy years. The Irish were inexhaustible in defence, prodigious in courage, and endured hardships that Englishmen could not survive. The most powerful governors that England could supply were sent over, and furnished with English armies and stores. Fleets held the harbours, and across all the seas from Newfoundland to Dantzic gathered in provisions for the soldiers. Armies fed from the sea-ports chased the Irish through the winter months, when the trees were bare and naked and the kine without milk, killing every living thing and burning every granary of corn, so that famine should slay what the sword had lost. Out of the woods the famishing Irish came creeping on their hands, for their legs would not bear them, speaking like ghosts crying out of their graves, if they

found a few water-cresses flocking as to a feast; so that in short space there were none almost left and a most populous and plentiful country suddenly left void of man and beast —a place where no voice was heard in ears save woe and fear and grief, a place where there was no pause for consolation nor appearance of joy on face.

Thus according to the English king's forecast was "the strength of the Irish diminished and their captains taken from them," One great house after another was swept out of Irish life. In 1529 the great earl of Kildare died of a broken heart in the Tower at the news that his son had been betrayed by a forged letter into a rising. His five brothers and his son, young Silken Thomas, captured by a false pledge of safety, were clapped all six of them into the Tower and hanged in London. The six outraged corpses at Tyburn marked the close of the first and last experiment in which a great ruler, sharing the blood of the two races, practised in the customs of both countries, would have led Ireland in a way of peace, and brought about through equal prosperity

and order a lasting harmony between the English and Irish people. Three hundred years later an old blackened pedigree kept in the Tower showed against the names of half the Fitzgeralds up to that time the words "Beheaded" or "Attainted"—so terrible were the long efforts to extinguish the talent and subdue the patriotism of that great family.

Ormond, too, was "to be bridled." It was said his house was in no mood to hand over the "rule and obedience" of south Ireland to the king. At a feast at Ely House in Holborn (1547) the earl and seventeen of his followers lay dead out of thirty-five who had been poisoned. No inquiry was made into that crime. "God called him to His mercy," the Irish said of this patriot Ormond, "before he could see that day after which doubtless he longed and looked—the restitution of the house of Kildare." His son was held fast in London to be brought up, as far as education could do it, an Englishman.

The third line of the Anglo-Norman leaders was laid low. The earl of Desmond, after twenty-five years of alternate prison and war,

saw the chief leaders of his house hanged or slain, before he himself was killed in 1583 : and his wretched son, born in the Tower, was brought from that prison to be shown to his heart-broken people—stunted in body, enfeebled in mind, half an idiot, a protestant—"the Tower Earl," "the Queen's Earl," cried the people.

The Irish chiefs were also broken by guile and assassination. O'Brien was separated from his people by a peerage (1543), an English inauguration without the ancient rites as head of his lands, and an English guard of soldiers (1558). That house played no further part in the Irish struggle.

The chief warrior of the north and terror of Elizabeth's generals was Shane O'Neill. The deputy Sidney devised many plots to poison or kill the man he could not conquer, and at last brought over from Scotland hired assassins who accomplished the murder (1567). A map made in the reign of Elizabeth marked the place of the crime that relieved England of her greatest fear—"Here Shane O'Neill was slain." After him the struggle of the north to keep their land and independence

was maintained by negotiation and by war for forty years, under the leading of the greatest of Irish statesmen and generals Hugh O'Neill earl of Tyrone, and the soldier-patriot Aedh Ruadh O'Donnell earl of Tirconnell. English intrigue triumphed when Red Hugh was poisoned by a secret agent (1602) and when by a crafty charge of conspiracy his brother Rory O'Donnell and Hugh O'Neill were driven from their country (1607). The flight of the earls marked the destruction by violence of the old Gaelic polity—that federation of tribes which had made of their common country the storehouse of Europe for learning, the centre of the noblest mission-work that the continent ever knew, the home of arts and industries, the land of a true democracy where men held the faith of a people owning their soil, instructed in their traditions, and themselves guardians of their national life.

Henry VIII had found Ireland a land of Irish civilisation and law, with a people living by tribal tenure, and two races drawing together to form a new self-governing nation. A hundred years later, when Elizabeth and

James I had completed his work, all the great leaders, Anglo-Irish and Irish, had disappeared, the people had been half exterminated, alien and hostile planters set in their place, tribal tenure obliterated, every trace of Irish law swept clean from the Irish statute-book, and an English form of state government effectively established.

Was this triumph due to the weakness of tribal government and the superior value of the feudal land tenure ? How far, in fact, did the Irish civilisation invite and lend itself to this destruction?

It has been said that it was by Irish soldiers that Irish liberties were destroyed. The Tudors and their councillors were under no such illusions. Their fear was that the Irish, if they suspected the real intention of the English, would all combine in one war; and in fact when the purpose of the government became clear in Ireland an English army of conquest had to be created. "Have no dread nor fear," cried Red Hugh to his Irishmen, "of the great numbers of the soldiers of London, nor of the strangeness of their weapons and arms.'- Order after order went out to "weed the bands of Irish," to purge

the army of all "such dangerous people." Soldiers from England and from Berwick were brought over at double the pay of the Irish. For warmth and comfort they were clothed in Irish dress, only distinguished by red crosses on back and breast; and so the sight was seen of English soldiers in Irish clothing tearing from Irish men and women their Irish garments as the forbidden dress of traitors and rebels. Some official of Elizabeth's time made a list to please the English of a few names of Irishmen traitorously slain by other Irishmen. There were murderers who had been brought up from childhood in an English house, detached from their own people; others were sent out to save their lives by bringing the head of a "rebel." The temper of the Irish people is better seen in the constant fidelity with which the whole people of Ulster and of Munster sheltered and protected for years O'Neill and Desmond and many another leader with a heavy price on his head. Not the poorest herdsman of the mountains touched the English gold.

The military difficulties of the Irish, however,

were such as to baffle skill and courage. England had been drilled by the kings that conquered her, and by the foreign wars she waged, into a powerful military nation by land and sea. Newly discovered gunpowder gave Henry VII the force of artillery. Henry VIII had formed the first powerful fleet. The new-found gold of Brazil, the wealth of the Spanish main, had made England immensely rich. In this moment of growing strength the whole might of Great Britain was thrown on Ireland, the smaller island. The war, too, had a peculiar animosity; the fury of Protestant fanaticism was the cloak for the king's ambition, the resolve of English traders to crush Irish competition, the greed of prospective planters. No motive was lacking to increase its violence. Ireland on the other hand, never conquered, and contemplating no conquest on her part, was not organised as an aggressive and military nation. Her national spirit was of another type. But whatever had been her organisation it is doubtful whether any device could have saved her from the force of the English invasion. Dublin could never be closed from

within against enemies coming across the sea. The island was too small to give any means of escape to defeated armies while they were preparing for a new defence. They could not disappear, for example, like the Dutch of the Cape Colony into vast desert regions which gave them shelter while they built up a new state. Every fugitive within the circuit of Ireland could be presently found and hunted down. The tribal system, too, which the Tudor sovereigns found, was no longer in full possession of Ireland; the defence was now carried on not by a tribal Gaelic people but by a mixed race, half feudal and half tribal by tradition. But it was the old Irish inheritance of national freedom which gave to Ireland her desperate power of defence, so that it was only after such prodigious efforts of war and plantation that the bodies of her people were subdued, while their minds still remained free and unenslaved.

If, moreover, the Irish system had disappeared so had the English. As we shall see the battle between the feudal tradition and the tribal tradition in Ireland had ended in the violent death of both.

CHAPTER IX

THE NATIONAL FAITH OF THE IRISH

C. 1600-*C.* 1660

WE have seen already two revivals of Irish life, when after the Danish settlement, and after the Norman, the native civilisation triumphed. Even now, after confiscations and plantations, the national tradition was still maintained with unswerving fidelity. Amid contempt, persecution, proscription, death, the outcast Irish cherished their language and poetry, their history and law, with the old pride and devotion. In that supreme and unselfish loyalty to their race they found dignity in humiliation and patience in disaster, and have left, out of the depths of their poverty and sorrow, one of the noblest examples in history.

Their difficulties were almost inconceivable. The great dispersion had begun of Irish

deported, exiled, or cast out by emigration. Twenty thousand Irish were reported in a single island of the West Indies in 1643; thirty thousand were said to be wandering about Europe; in 1653 four thousand soldiers were transported to Flanders for the war of the king of Spain. Numbers went to seek the education forbidden at home in a multitude of Irish colleges founded abroad. They became chancellors of universities, professors, high officials in every European state—a Kerry man physician to the king of Poland; another Kerry man confessor to the queen of Portugal and sent by the king on an embassy to Louis XIV; a Donegal man, O'Glacan, physician and privy councillor to the king of France, and a very famed professor of medicine in the universities of Toulouse and Bologna (1646-1655); and so on. We may ask whether in the history of the world there was cast out of any country such genius, learning, and industry, as the English flung, as it were, into the sea. With every year the number of exiles grew. "The same to me," wrote one, " are the mountain or ocean, Ireland or the west of Spain; I have shut

and made fast the gates of sorrow over my heart."

As for the Irish at home, every vestige of their tradition was doomed—their religion was forbidden, and the Staff of Patrick and Cross of Columcille destroyed, with every other national relic; their schools were scattered, their learned men hunted down, their books burned; native industries were abolished; the inauguration chairs of their chiefs were broken in pieces, and the law of the race torn up, codes of inheritance, of land tenure, of contract between neighbours or between lord and man. The very image of Justice which the race had fashioned for itself was shattered. Love of country and every attachment of race and history became a crime, and even Irish language and dress were forbidden under penalty of outlawry or excommunication. "No more shall any laugh there," wrote the poet, "or children gambol; music is choked, the Irish language chained." The people were wasted by thousands in life and in death. The invaders supposed the degradation of the Irish race to be at last completed. "Their youth and

gentry **are** destroyed in the rebellion or gone to France," wrote one: " those that **are** left are destitute of horses, arms and money, capacity and courage. Five in six of **the** Irish are poor, insignificant slaves, fit for nothing but to hew wood and draw water.'-' Such were the ignorant judgments of the new people, an ignorance shameful and criminal.

The Irish, meanwhile, at home and **in** the dispersion, were seeking to save out of the wreck their national traditions. Three centres were formed of this new patriotic movement—in Rome, in Louvain, and in Ireland itself.

An Irish College of Franciscans was established in Rome (1625) by the efforts of Luke Wadding, a Waterford man, divine of the Spanish embassy at Rome. The Pope granted to the Irish the church of St. Isidore, patron of Madrid, which had been occupied by Spanish Franciscans. Luke Wadding, founder and head of the college, was one of the most extraordinary men of his time for his prodigious erudition, the greatest schoolman of that age, and an unchanging **and** impassioned patriot. He prepared the **first**

full edition of the works of the great Irish scholastic philosopher Duns Scotus, with the help of his fellow-countrymen, Thomas Strange, Anthony Hickey, John Ponce of Cork, Hugh MacCawell of Tyrone; and projected a general history of Ireland for which materials were being collected in 1628 by Thomas Walsh, archbishop of Cashel. The College was for the service of "the whole nation," for all Irishmen, no matter from what province" so long as they be Irish." They were bound by rule to speak Irish, and an Irish book was read during meals.

No spot should be more memorable to Irishmen than the site of the Franciscan College of St. Antony of Padua at Louvain. A small monastery of the Frères de Charité contains the few pathetic relics that are left of the noble company of Irish exiles who gathered there from 1609 for mutual comfort and support, and of the patriots and soldiers laid to rest among them—O'Neills, O'Dohertys, O'Donnells, Lynches, Murphys, and the rest, from every corner of Ireland. "Here I break off till morning," wrote one

who laboured on a collection of Irish poems from 1030 to 1630, "and I in gloom and grief; and during my life's length unless only that I might have one look at Ireland." The fathers had mostly come of the old Irish literary clans, and were trained in the traditional learning of their race; such as Father O'Mulloy, distinguished in his deep knowledge of the later poetic metres, of which he wrote in his Latin and Irish Grammar; or Bonaventura O'h'Eoghasa, trained among the poets of Ireland, who left "her holy hills of beauty" with lamentation to "try another trade" with the Louvain brotherhood. Steeped in Irish lore the Franciscans carried on the splendid record of the Irish clergy as the twice-beloved guardians of the inheritance of their race. "Those fathers," an Irish scholar of that day wrote, "stood forward when she (Ireland) was reduced to the greatest distress, nay, threatened with certain destruction, and vowed that the memory of the glorious deeds of their ancestors, should not be consigned to the same earth that covered the bodies of her children . . . that the ancient

glory of Ireland should not be entombed by the same convulsion which deprived the Irish of the lands of their fathers and of all their property." More fortunate than scholars in Ireland they had a printing-press; and used it to send out Irish grammars, glossaries, catechisms, poems. Hugh Mac an-Bhaird of Donegal undertook to compile the *Acta Sanctorum,* for which a lay-brother, Michael O'Clery, collected materials in Ireland for ten years, and Patrick Fleming of Louth gathered records in Europe. At Hugh's death, in 1635, the task was taken up by Colgan, born at Culdaff on the shore of Inishowen († 1658). The work of the fathers was in darkness and sorrow. "I am wasting and perishing with grief," wrote Hugh Bourke to Luke Wadding," to see how insensibly nigher and nigher draws the catastrophe which must inflict mortal wounds upon our country."

Ireland herself, however, remained the chief home of historical learning in the broad national sense. Finghin Mac Carthy Riabhach, a Munster chief, skilled in old and modern Irish, Latin, English, and Spanish, wrote a

history of Ireland to the Norman invasion in the beautiful hand taught him by Irish scribes : it was written while he lay imprisoned in London from 1589 to 1626, mad at times through despair. One of a neighbouring race of seafaring chiefs, O'Sullivan Beare, an emigrant and captain in the Spanish navy, published in 1621 his indignant recital of the Elizabethan wars in Ireland. It was in hiding from the president of Munster, in the wood of Aharlo, that Father Geoffrey Keating made (before 1633) his Irish history down to the Norman settlement—written for the masses in clear and winning style, the most popular book perhaps ever written in Irish, and copied throughout the country by hundreds of eager hands. In the north meanwhile Michael O'Clery and his companions, two O'Clerys of Donegal, two O'Maelchonaires of Roscommon, and O'Duibhgeanain of Leitrim, were writing the *Annals of the Four Masters* (1632-6); all of them belonging to hereditary houses of chroniclers. In that time of sorrow, fearing the destruction of every record of his people, O'Clery travelled through all Ireland to gather up what could be

saved, " though it was difficult to collect them to one place." There is still preserved a manuscript by Caimhin, abbot of Iniscaltra about 650, which was given to O'Clery by the neighbouring Mac Brodys who had kept it safe for a thousand years. The books were carried to the huts and cottages where the friars of Donegal lived round their ruined monastery; from them the workers had food and attendance, while Fergal O'Gara, a petty chieftain of Sligo descended from Olioll, king of Munster in 260, gave them a reward for their labours. Another O'Clery wrote the story of Aedh Ruadh O'Donnell, his prisons and his battles, and the calamity to Ireland of his defeat. "Then were lost besides nobility and honour, generosity and great deeds, hospitality and goodness, courtesy and noble birth, polish and bravery, strength and courage, valour and constancy, the authority and the sovereignty of the Irish of Erin to the end of time."

In Galway a group of scholars laid, in Lynch's words, " a secure anchorage" for Irish history. Dr. John Lynch, the famous

apologist of the Irish, wrote there his historical defence of his people. To spread abroad their history he translated into Latin Keating's book. For the same purpose his friend, Tuileagna O'Maelchonaire, a distinguished Irish scholar, translated the *Annals of Ulster* into English. OFlaherty of Moycullen in Galway, a man of great learning, wrote on Irish antiquities "with exactness, diligence and judgment." "I live," he said," a banished man within the bounds of my native soil, a spectator of others enriched by my birthright, an object of condoling to my relations and friends, and a condoler of their miseries." His land confiscated (1641), stripped at last of his manuscripts as well as of his other goods, he died in miserable poverty in extreme old age (1709). To Galway came also Dualtach Mac Firbis (1585-1670), of a family that had been time out of mind hereditary historians in north Connacht. He learned in one of the old Irish schools of law in Tipperary Latin, English, and Greek. Amid the horrors of Cromwell's wars he carried out a prodigious work on the genealogies of the clans, the greatest, perhaps, that

exists in any country; and wrote on their saints, their kings, their writers, on the chronicles and on the laws; in moderate prosperity and in extreme adversity constantly devoted to the preservation of Irish history. In his old age he lived, like other Irish scholars, a landless sojourner on the estates that had once belonged to his family and race ; the last of the hereditary sennachies of Ireland he wandered on foot from house to house, every Irish door opened to him for his learning after their undying custom, till at the age of eighty-five he was murdered by a Crofton when he was resting in a house on his way to Dublin. In Connacht, too, lived Tadhg O'Roddy of Leitrim, a diligent collector of Irish manuscripts, who gathered thirty books of law, and many others of philosophy, poetry, physic, genealogies, mathematics, romances, and history; and defended against the English the character of the old law and civilisation of Ireland.

It would be long to tell of the workers in all the Irish provinces—the lawyers hiding in their bosoms the genealogies and tenures

of their clans—the scribes writing annals and genealogies, to be carried, perhaps, when Irishmen gathered as for a hurling-match and went out to one of their old places of assembly, there to settle their own matters by their ancient law. No printing-press could be set up among the Irish; they were driven back on oral tradition and laborious copying by the pen. Thus for about a hundred years Keating's *History* was passed from hand to hand after the old manner in copies made by devoted Irish hands (one of them a "farmer"), in Leitrim, Tipperary, Kildare, Clare, Limerick, Kilkenny, all over the country; it was only in 1723 that Dermot O'Conor translated it into English and printed it in Dublin. It is amazing how amid the dangers of the time scribes should be found to re-write and re-edit the mass of manuscripts, those that were lost and those that have escaped.

The poets were still the leaders of national patriotism. The great "Contention of the Poets"—"Iomarbhagh na bhfiledh"—a battle that lasted for years between the bards of the O'Briens and the O'Donnells, in which

the bards of every part of Ireland joined—served to rouse the pride of the Irish in their history amid their calamities under James I. The leader of the argument, Tadhg Mac Daire, lord of an estate with a castle as chief poet of Thomond, was hurled over a cliff in his old age by a Cromwellian soldier with the shout, "Say your rann now, little man!" Tadhg O'h'Uiginn of Sligo (†1617), Eochaidh O'h'Eoghasa of Fermanagh, were the greatest among very many. Bards whose names have often been forgotten spread the poems of the Ossianic cycle, and wrote verses of several kinds into which a new gloom and despair entered—

"Though yesterday seemed to me long and ill,
Yet longer still was this dreary day."

The bards were still for a time trained in "the schools"—low thatched buildings shut away by a sheltering wood, where students came for six months of the year. None were admitted who could not read and write, and use a good memory; none but those who had come of a bardic tribe, and of a far district, lest they should be distracted by friends and

relations. The Scottish Gaels and the Irish were united as of old in the new literature; Irish bards and harpers were as much at home in the Highlands and in the Isles as in Ireland, and the poems of the Irish bards were as popular there as in Munster. Thus the unity of feeling of the whole race was preserved and the bards still remained men who belonged to their country rather than to a clan or territory. But with the exile of the Irish chiefs, with the steady ruin of "the schools," poets began to throw aside the old intricate metres and the old words no longer understood, and turned to the people, putting away "dark difficult language" to bring literature to the common folk: there were even translations made for those who were setting their children to learn the English instead of their native tongue. Born of an untold suffering, a burst of melody swept over Ireland, scores and scores of new and brilliant metres, perhaps the richest attempt to convey music in words ever made by man. In that unfathomed experience, they tell how seeking after Erin over all obstacles, they found her fettered and weeping, and

for their loyalty she gave them the last gift left to her, the light of poetry.

In Leinster of the English, "the cemetery of the valorous Gael," Irish learning had a different story. There it seemed for a moment that it might form a meeting-point between the new race and the old, joining together, as the Catholics put it, "our commonwealth men," a people compounded of many nations, some Irish by birth and descent, others by descent only, others neither by descent nor by birth but by inhabitation of one soil; but all parts of one body politic, acknowledging one God, conjoined together in allegiance to one and the same sovereign, united in the fruition of the selfsame air, and tied in subsistence upon this our natural soil whereupon we live together.

A tiny group of scholars in Dublin had begun to study Irish history. Sir James Ware (1594-1666), born there of an English family, "conceived a great love for his native country and could not bear to see it aspersed by some authors, which put him upon doing it all the justice he could in his writings." He spared no cost in buying valuable manu-

scripts, kept an Irish secretary to translate, and employed for eleven years the great scholar O'Flaherty whose help gave to his work its chief value. Ussher, archbishop of Armagh, also born in Dublin, devoted himself to the study of Irish antiquities. Baron d'Aungier, Master of the Rolls, put into writing every point which he could find in original documents "which for antiquity or singularity might interest this country." The enthusiasm of learning drew together Protestant and Catholic, Anglo-Irish and Irish. All these men were in communication with Luke Wadding in Rome through Thomas Strange the Franciscan, his intimate friend; they sent their own collections of records to help him in his Catholic history of Irish saints, "being desirous that Wadding's book should see the light," wishing "to help him in his work for Ireland," begging to see "the veriest trifle" that he wrote. The noblest English scholar was Bishop Bedell, who while provost established an Irish lecture in Trinity College, had the chapter during commons read in Irish, and employed a Sheridan of Cavan to translate the Old Testament into

Irish. As bishop he braved the anger of the government by declaring the hardships of the Catholic Irish, and by circulating a catechism in English and Irish. Bitterly did Ussher reproach him for such a scandal at which the professors of the gospel did all take offence, and for daring to adventure that which his brethren had been "so long abuilding," the destruction of the Irish language. The Irish alone poured out their love and gratitude to Bedell; they protected him in the war of 1641; the insurgent chieftains fired volleys over his grave paying homage to his piety; "sit anima mea cum Bedello ! " cried a priest. He showed what one just man, caring for the people and speaking to them in their own tongue, could do in a few years to abolish the divisions of race and religion.

The light, however, that had risen in Dublin was extinguished. Sympathies for the spirit of Irishmen in their long history were quenched by the greed for land, the passion of commerce, and the fanatieism of ascendancy and dominion.

CHAPTER X

RULE OF THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT

1640-1750

THE aim which English kings had set before them for the last four hundred years seemed now fulfilled. The land was theirs, and the dominion. But the victory turned to dust and ashes in their hands. The "royal inheritance" of so many hopes had practically disappeared; for if the feudal system which was to give the king the land of Ireland had destroyed the tribal system, it was itself dead; decaying and intolerable in England, it could no longer be made to serve in Ireland. Henry's dream of a royal army from Ireland, "a sword and flay" at the king's use against his subjects in Great Britain, perished; Charles I did indeed propose to use the Irish fightmg-men to smite into obedience England and Scotland, but no king of England tried that experiment again.

James II looked to Ireland, as in Henry's scheme, for a safe place of refuge to fly to in danger; that, again, no king of England tried a second time. As for the king's revenues and profits, the dream of so many centuries, that too vanished : confiscations old and new which the English parliament allowed the Crown for Irish government left the king none the richer, and after 1692 no longer sufficed even for Irish expenses. The title of "King of Ireland" which Henry VIII had proclaimed in his own right with such high hopes, bred out of its original deception other deceptions deeper and blacker than the first. The sovereign saw his absolute tyranny gradually taken out of his hands by the parliament and middle class for their own benefit ; the rule of the king was passing, the rule of the English parliament had begun.

Thus past history was as it were wiped out. Everything in Ireland was to be new. The social order was now neither feudal nor tribal, nor anything known before. Other methods had been set up, without custom, tradition, or law behind them. There were two new classes, English planters and Irish toilers. No

old ties bound them, and no new charities. "From the Anglo-Irish no man of special sanctity as yet is known to have sprung," observed a Gael of that day. Ancient patrimony had fallen. The new aristocracy was that of the strong hand and the exploiter's greed. Ordinary restraints of civilised societies were not yet born in this pushing commercial throng, where the scum of Great Britain, broken men or men flying from the law, hastened—"hoping to be without fear of man's justice in a land where there was nothing, or but little as yet, of the fear of God." Ireland was left absolutely without guides or representatives. There were no natural leaders of the country among the new men, each fighting for his own hand; the English government permitted none among the Irish.

England too was being made new, with much turmoil and confusion—an England where kings were yielding to parliaments, and parliaments were being subdued to the rising commercial classes. The idea of a separate royal power and profit had disappeared, and instead of it had come the rule and profit of

the parliament of England, and of her noblemen, ecclesiastics, and traders in general.

This new rule marked the first revolution in the English government of Ireland which had happened since Henry II sat in his Dublin palace. By the ancient constitution assured by compacts and grants since English laws were first brought into that country, Ireland was united to the Crown of England as a free and distinct kingdom, with the right of holding parliaments subject only to the king and his privy council; statutes of the English parliament had not force of law there until they had been re-enacted in Ireland—which indeed was necessary by the very theory of parliaments, for there were no Irish representatives in the English Houses. Of its mere will the parliament of England now took to itself authority to make laws for Ireland in as free and uncontrolled a manner as if no Irish parliament existed. The new ruling classes had neither experience nor training. Regardless of any legal technicalities they simply usurped a power unlimited and despotic over a confused and shattered Ireland. Now was seen the full evil of government from over-sea,

where before a foreign tribunal, sitting at a distance, ignorant and prejudiced, the subject people had no voice; they could dispute no lie, and could affirm no truth.

This despotism grew up regardless of any theory of law or constitution. The intention was unchanged—the taking of all Irish land, the rooting out of the old race from the country. Adventurers were tempted by Irish wealth; what had once been widely diffused among the Irish tribes was gathered into the hands of a few aliens, who ruthlessly wasted the land for their own great enrichment. Enormous profits fell to planters, who could get three times as much gain from an Irish as from an English estate by a fierce exploiting of the natural resources of the island and of its cheap outlawed labour. Forests of oak were hastily destroyed for quick profits; woods were cut down for charcoal to smelt the iron which was carried down the rivers in cunning Irish boats, and what had cost £10 in labour and transport sold at £17 in London. The last furnace was put out in Kerry when the last wood had been destroyed. Where the English adventurer passed he left the land as naked

as if a forest fire had swept over the country.

For the exploiter's rage, for the waster's madness, more land was constantly needed. Three provinces had been largely planted by 1620—one still remained. By a prodigious fraud James I, and after him Charles I in violation of his solemn promise, proposed to extirpate the Irish from Connacht. The maddened people were driven to arms in 1641. The London parliament, which had just opened the quarrel with the king which was to end in his beheading, seized their opportunity in Ireland. Instantly London City, and a House of Commons consisting mainly of Puritan adventurers, joined in speculations to buy up "traitors' lands," openly sold in London at £100 for a thousand acres in Ulster or for six hundred in Munster, and so on in every province. It was a cheap bargain, the value of forfeited lands being calculated by parliament later at £2,500 for a thousand acres. The more rebels the more forfeitures, and every device of law and fraud was used to fling the whole people into the war, either in fact or in name, and so destroy the claim of the whole

of them to their lands. "Wild Irishmen," the English said to one another, "had nothing but the human form to show that they were men." Letters were forged and printed in England, purporting to give Irish news; discountenanced by parliament, they still mark the first experiment to appeal in this way to London on the Irish question. Parliament did its utmost to make the contest a war of extermination : it ended, in fact, in the death of little less than half the population.

The Commons' auction of Irishmen's lands in 1641, their conduct of a war of distinguished ferocity, these were the acts by which the Irish first knew government by an English parliament. The memory of the black curse of Cromwell lives among the people. He remains in Ireland as the great exemplar of inhuman cruelties, standing amid these scenes of woe with praises to God for such manifest evidence of His inspiration. The speculators got their lands, outcast women and children lay on the wayside devoured by wolves and birds of prey. By order of parliament (1658) over 20,000 destitute men, women, and children from twelve years were sold into the

service of English planters in Virginia and the Carolinas. Slave-dealers were let loose over the country, and the Bristol merchants did good business. With what bitter irony an Irishman might contrast the "civilisation" of the English and the " barbarism " of the Irish—if we talk, he said, about civility and a civil manner of contract of selling and buying, there is no doubt that the Anglo-Irish born in cities have had more opportunity to acquire civility than the Old Irish; but if the question be of civility, of good manners, of liberality, of hospitality, and charity towards all, these virtues dwelt among the Irish.

Kings were restored to carry out the will of parliament. Charles II at their bidding ignored the treaty of his father that the Irish who submitted should return to their lands (1661): at the mere appearance of keeping promise to a few hundred Catholic landowners out of thousands, the Protestant planters sent out their threats of insurrection. A deeper misery was reached when William I I I led his army across the Boyne and the Shannon (1690). In grave danger and difficulty he was glad to win peace by the Treaty of Limerick,

in which the Irish were promised the quiet exercise of their religion. The Treaty was immediately broken. The English parliament objected to any such encouragement of Irish Papists, and demanded that no pardons should be given or estates divided save by their advice, and William said no word to uphold the public faith. The pledge of freedom of worship was exchanged for the most infamous set of penal laws ever placed on a Statute-book.

The breaking of the Treaty of Limerick, conspicuous among the perfidies to Ireland, inaugurated the century of settled rule by the parliament of England (1691-1782). Its first care was to secure to English Protestants their revenues in Ireland; the planters, one-fourth of the people of Ireland, were established as owners of four-fifths of Irish soil; and one-half of their estates, the land confiscated under Cromwell and William, they held by the despotic grant of the English parliament. This body, having outlawed four thousand Irishmen, and seized a million and a half of their acres, proceeded to crush the liberties of its own English settlers by simply issuing statutes for Ireland of its sole authority.

The acts were as tyrannical in their subject as in their origin. One (1691), which ordered that no Catholic should sit in the Irish Houses, deprived three-fourths of the people of representatives, and left to one-fourth alone the right of citizens. Some English judges decided, without and against Irish legal opinion, that the privy councils in Dublin and London had power to alter Irish bills before sending them to the king. "If an angel came from heaven that was a privy councillor I would not trust my liberty with him one moment," said an English member of that time.

All liberties were thus rooted out. The planters' rights were overthrown as pitilessly as those of the Irish they had expelled. Molyneux, member for Dublin university, set forth in 1698 the "Case of Ireland." He traced its constitution for five centuries; showed that historically there had never been a "conquest" of Ireland, and that all its civil liberties were grounded on compact and charter; and declared that his native land shared the claims of all mankind to justice. "To tax me without consent is little better, if

at all, than downright robbing me. I am sure the great patriots of liberty and property, the free people of England, cannot think of such a thing but with abhorrence.[5]' "There may be ill consequences," he cried, "if the Irish come to think their rights and liberties were taken away, their parliaments rendered nugatory, and their lives and fortunes left to depend on the will of a legislature wherein they are not parties." The "ill consequences" were seen seventy years later when Molyneux' book became the text-book of Americans in their rising against English rule; and when Anglo-Irish defenders of their own liberties were driven to make common cause with their Irish compatriots—for "no one or more men," said Molyneux, "can by nature challenge any right, liberty, or freedom, or any ease in his property, estate, or conscience which all other men have not an equally just claim to." But that day was far off. For the moment the Irish parliament deserved and received entire contempt from England. The gentry who had accepted land and power by the arbitrary will of the English House of Commons dared not dispute the tyranny that

was the warrant of their property: "I hope," was the ironic answer, "the honourable member will not question the validity of his title." With such an argument at hand, the English parliament had no need of circumspection or of soft words. It simply condemned Molyneux and his remonstrance, demanded of the king to maintain the subordination of Ireland, and to order the journals of its parliaments to be laid before the Houses at Westminster; and on the same day required of him, since the Irish were "dependent on and protected by England in the enjoyment of all they had," to forbid them to continue their woollen trade, but leave it entire to England. In 1719 it declared its power at all times to make laws which should bind the people of Ireland.

Thus an English parliament which had fought for its own liberties established a hierarchy of tyranny for Ireland : the Anglo-Irish tied under servitude to England, and the Irish chained under an equal bondage to the Anglo-Irish. As one of the governors of Ireland wrote a hundred years later, "I think Great Britain may still easily manage the Protestants, and the Protestants the Catholics." Such

was the servile position of English planters. They had made their bargain. To pay the price of wealth and ascendency they sold their own freedom and the rights of their new country. The smaller number, said Burke, were placed in power at the expense of the civil liberties and properties of the far greater, and at the expense of the civil liberties of the whole.

Ireland was now degraded to a subject colony. The government never proposed that Englishmen in Ireland should be on equal terms with English in England. Stringent arrangements were made to keep Ireland low. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended while the English parliament ruled. Judges were removable at pleasure. Precautions were taken against the growth of "an Irish interest." By a variety of devices the parliament of English Protestants was debased to a corrupt and ignoble servitude. So deep was their subjection that Ireland was held in England to be "no more than a remote part of their dominion, which was not accustomed to figure on the theatre of politics." Government by Dublin Castle was directed in the sole interest

of England ; the greatest posts in the Castle, the Law, the Church, were given to Englishmen, "king-fishers," as the nickname went of the churchmen. " I fear much blame here," said the English premier in 1774, " . . . if I consent to part with the disposal of these offices which have been so long and so uniformly bestowed upon members of the British parliament." Castle officials were expected to have a single view to English interests. In speeches from the throne governors of Ireland formally spoke of the Irish people, the majority of their subjects, as " the common enemy "; they were scarcely less suspicious of the English Protestants; " it is worth turning in your mind," one wrote to Pitt, " how the violence of both parties might be turned on this occasion to the advancement of England."

One tyranny begot another. Irish members, having no liberties to defend, and no country to protect, devoted themselves to the security of their property—its security and increase. All was quiet. There was no fear in Ireland of a rising for the Pretender. The Irish, true to their ancient horror of violence for religion,

never made a religious war, and never desired that which was ever repugnant to the Irish spirit, temporal ascendency for a spiritual faith. Their only prayer was for freedom in worship—that same prayer which Irish Catholics had presented in the parliament of James I (1613), " indented with sorrow, signed with tears, and delivered in this house of peace and liberty with our disarmed hands." Protestants had never cause for fear in Ireland on religious grounds. In queen Mary's persecution Protestants flying from England had taken shelter in Ireland among Irish Catholics, and not a hand was raised against them there. Bitter as were the poets against the English exterminators, no Irish curse has been found against the Protestant for his religion, even through the black time of the penal laws. The parliament, however, began a series of penal laws against Irish Catholics. They were forbidden the use of their religion, almost every means of livelihood, every right of a citizen, every family affection. Their possessions were scattered, education was denied them; when a father died his children were handed over to a Protestant guardian. " The

law," said the leading judges, "does not suppose any such person to exist as an Irish Roman Catholic." They were only recognised "for repression and punishment." Statutes framed to demoralise and debase the people, so as to make them for ever unfit for self-government, pursued the souls of the victims to the second and third generation. In this ferocious violence the law-makers were not moved by fanaticism. Their rapacity was not concerned with the religion of the Irish, but only with their property and industry. The conversion of a Catholic was not greatly desired; so long as there were Papists the planters could secure their lands, and use them as slaves," worse than negroes." Laws which would have sounded infamous if directed openly to the seizing of property, took on a sacred character as a religious effort to suppress false doctrine. One-fiftieth part of Ireland was all that was left to Irish Catholics, utterly excluded for ever from the inheritance of their fathers. "One single foot of land there is not left us," rose their lament, "no, not what one may make his bed upon." "See all that are without a bed

except the furze of the mountains, the bent of the curragh, and the bog-myrtle beneath their bodies. Under frost, under snow, under rain, under blasts of wind, without a morsel to eat but watercress, green grass, sorrel of the mountain, or clover of the hills. Och! my pity to see their nobles forsaken!"

And yet, in spite of this success, the Anglo-Irish had made a bad bargain. Cut off from their fellow-countrymen, having renounced the right to have a country, the Protestant land-hunters were no more respected in England than in Ireland. The English parliament did with them as it chose. Their subjection tempted the commercial classes. To safeguard their own profits of commerce and industry English traders made statutes to annihilate Irish competition. They forbade carrying of cattle or dairy stuff to England, they forbade trade in soap or candles; in cloth, in glass, in linen save of the coarsest kind; the increase of corn was checked; it was proposed to stop Irish fisheries. The wool which they might not use at home must be exported to England alone. They might not build ships. From

old time Ireland had traded across the Gaulish sea : her ports had seen the first discoverers of America. But now all her great harbours to the west with its rising American trade were closed : no merchant ship crossing the Atlantic was allowed to load at an Irish port or to unload. The abundance of harbours, once so full of commerce, were now, said Swift, "of no more use to us than a beautiful prospect to a man shut up in a dungeon." In 1720 all trade was at a stand, the country bare of money, "want and misery in every face." It was unfortunate, Englishmen said, that Ireland had been by the act of God doomed to poverty—so isolated in geographical position, so lacking in industrial resources, inhabited by a people so indolent in tillage, and unfitted by their religion to work. Meanwhile they successfully pushed their own business in a country which they allowed to make nothing for itself. Their manufacturers sent over yearly two millions of their goods, more than to any other country save their American colonies, and took the raw material of Ireland, while Irish workers were driven out on the hillsides to starve. The planters' parliament looked

on in barren helplessness. They had no nation behind them. They could lead no popular resistance. They had no call to public duty. And the English knew it well Ministers heaped up humiliations; they quartered on Irish revenues all the pensioners that could not safely be proposed to a free parliament in England—the mistresses of successive kings and their children, German relations of the Hanoverians, useful politicians covered by other names, a queen of Denmark banished for misconduct, a Sardinian ambassador under a false title, a trailing host of Englishmen—pensions steadily increasing from £30,000 to over £89,000. Some £600,000 was at last yearly sent over to England for absentees, pensions, government annuities, and the like. A parliament servile and tyrannical could not even pretend to urge on the government that its measures, as a patriot said, should sometimes "diverge towards public utility." It had abandoned all power save that of increasing the sorrows of the people.

A double corruption was thus proceeding. The English parliament desired to make the

Irish houses for ever unfit for self-government. The Irish parliament was seeking to perform the same office for the Irish people under it. The old race meanwhile, three-fourths of the dwellers in Ireland, were brought under consideration of the rulers only as objects of some new rigour or severity. Their cry was unheard by an absent and indifferent "conqueror," and the only reform the country ever knew was an increase in the army that maintained the alien rulers and protected their crimes. In neither parliament had the Irish any voice. In courts where the law was administered by Protestant landlords and their agents, as magistrates, grand juries, bailiffs, lawyers, and the rest—"full of might and injustice, without a word for the Irish in the law," as an Irish poem said, who would not even write the Irish names, but scornfully cried after all of them Teig and Diarmuid—the ancient tongue of the people and their despised birth left them helpless. Once a chief justice in Tipperary conducted trials with fairness and humanity: "for about ten miles from Clonmel both sides of the road were lined with men, women, and children,

who, as he passed along, kneeled down and supplicated Heaven to bless him as their protector and guardian angel," The people poured from "this sod of misery " across the sea. In the service of France alone 450,000 Irish soldiers were reckoned to have died between 1691 and 1745. Uncounted thousands from north and south sailed to America. Irish Catholics went there in a constant stream from 1650 till 1798. The Protestant settlers followed them in the eighteenth century.

Like the kings of England, the parliament of the English aristocracy and commercial magnates had failed to exploit Ireland to their advantage. For a hundred years (1691-1782) they ruled the Irish people with the strictest severity that human ingenuity could devise. A "strong government," purely English, was given its opportunity—prolonged, undisturbed, uncontrolled—to advance "the king's service," the dependency of Ireland upon England, and "the comfort or security of any English in it." A multitude of statesmen put their hands to the work. Commercial men in England inspired the policy. English clergy were sent over to fill all the higher posts

of the church, and were the chief leaders of the secular government. Such a power very rarely falls to the rulers in any country. And in the end there was no advantage to any party. Some astute individuals heaped up an ignoble wealth, but there was no profit to Ireland, to England, or to the Empire. The Irish people suffered a long agony unmatched, perhaps, in European history. Few of the Protestant country gentry had established their fortunes ; their subservience which debarred them from public duty, their privilege of calling in English soldiers to protect them from the results of every error or crime, had robbed them of any high intelligence in politics or science in their business of land management, and thus doubly impoverished them. England on her part had thrown into the sea from her dominion a greater wealth of talent, industry, and bravery than had ever been exiled from any country in the world : there was not a country in Europe, and not an occupation, where Irishmen were not in the first rank—as field-marshals, admirals, ambassadors, prime ministers, scholars, physicians, **mer-**

chants, founders of mining industries, soldiers, and labourers. In exchange for this an incompetent and inferior landed gentry was established in Ireland. Instead of profit for the government there was plain bankruptcy —" England," it was said, " must now either support this kingdom, or allow her the means of supporting herself.'-' As for the Empire, the colonies had been flooded with the men that England had wronged. Even the Protestant exiles from Ulster went to America as "Sons of St. Patrick." " To shun persecution and designed ruin " by the English government, Protestants and Catholics had gone, and their money, their arms, the fury of their wrath, were spent in organising the American War. Irishmen were at every meeting, every council, every battle. Their indignation was a white flame of revolt that consumed every fear and vacillation around it. That long, deep, and bitter experience bore down the temporisers, and sent out men trained in suffering to triumph over every adversity. Brigadier-General Owen Sullivan, born at Limerick during the siege, was publicly thanked by Washington and by

the congress. Commodore John Barry, a Wexford man, "Father of the American Navy,[5]' was Washington's commander-in-chief of the naval forces of the States. Charles Thompson of Strabane was secretary of the Continental Congress. Eight Irishmen, passionate organisers of the revolt, signed the Declaration of Independence, After the war an Irishman prepared the Declaration for publication from Jefferson's rough draft; an Irishman's son first publicly read it; an Irishman first printed and published it.

We have seen the uncontrolled rule of English kings and English parliaments. Such was the end of their story. There was another experiment yet to be tried.

CHAPTER XI

THE RISE OF A NEW IRELAND

1691-1750

IT might have seemed impossible amid such complicated tyrannies to build up a united country. But the most ferocious laws could not wholly destroy the kindly influences of Ireland, the essential needs of men, nor the charities of human nature. There grew up too the union of common suffering. Once more the people of Ireland were being " brayed together in a mortar " to compact them into a single commonwealth.

The Irish had never lost their power of absorbing new settlers in their country. The Cromwellians complained that thousands of the English who came over under Elizabeth had "become one with the Irish as well in affinity as in idolatry." Forty years later these Cromwellians planted on Irish farms

suffered themselves the same change; their children could not speak a word of English and became wholly Irish in religion and feeling. Seven years after the battle of the Boyne the same influence began to turn Irish the very soldiers of William. The civilisation, the piety, the charm of Irish life told as of old. In the country places, far from the government, kindly friendships grew up between neighbours, and Protestants by some device of goodwill would hide a Catholic from some atrocious penalty, would save his arms from being confiscated, or his children from being brought up as Protestants. The gentry in general spoke Irish with the people, and common interests grew up in the land where they lived together.

The Irish had seen the fires of destruction pass over them, consuming the humanities of their law, the honour of their country, and the relics of their fathers : the cry of their lamentation, said an Italian in 1641, was more expressive than any music he had heard of the great masters of the continent. The penal days have left their traces. We may still see in hidden places of the woods

some cave or rock where the people gathered in secret to celebrate mass. There remain memorials of Irishmen, cast out of their lands, who to mark their final degradation had been driven to the livelihood which the new English held in the utmost contempt—the work of their hands; their dead bodies were carried to the ruined abbeys, and proudly laid in the roofless naves and chancels, under great sculptured slabs bearing the names of once noble families, and deeply carved with the instruments of the dead man's trade, a plough, the tools of a shoemaker or a carpenter or a mason. In a far church in Connemara by the Atlantic, a Burke raised in 1722 a sculptured tomb to the first of his race who had come to Connacht, the figure in coat of mail and conical helmet finely carved in limestone. Monuments lie heaped in Burris, looking out on the great ocean; and in all the sacred places of the Irish. By their industry and skill in the despised business of handicrafts and commerce the outlaws were fast winning most of the ready money of the country into their hands.

It would be a noble achievement, said

Swift, to abolish the Irish language, which prevented "the Irish from being tamed." But Swift's popularity with the native Irish was remarkable, and when he visited Cavan he was interested by verses of its poets and wrote an English ballad founded on the Plearáca Ui Ruairc ; he helped the rector of Anna (Belturbet) in his endeavours to have prayers read in Irish in the established churches in remote places. The Protestant bishops and clergy in general, holding that their first duty was not to minister to the souls of Irishmen, but rather as agents of the government to bring Irish speech "into entire disuse," refused to learn the only language understood by the people. Clergy and officials alike knew nothing whatever of the true life of Ireland. Now and then there was a rare exception, and the respect which Philip Skelton showed for the religious convictions of a country-bred maidservant should be remembered. But in general the clergy and all other political agents opposed kindly intercourse of the two races. The fiction of complete Irish barbarism was necessary to maintain the Protestant ascend-

ency, and in later days to defend it. The whole literature of the Irish was therefore cast aside as waste refuse. Their race is never mentioned in histories of the eighteenth century save as an indistinct and obscure mass of wretchedness, lawlessness, and ignorance, lying in impenetrable darkness, whence no voice ever arose even of protest or complaint, unless the pains of starvation now and again woke the most miserable from their torpor to some wild outrage, to be repressed by even more savage severity. So fixed and convenient did this lying doctrine prove that it became a truism never challenged. To this day all manuscripts of the later Irish times have been rejected from purchase by public funds, to the irrevocable loss of a vast mass of Irish material. By steadily neglecting everything written in the native tongue of the country, the Protestant planters, one-fourth of the inhabitants, secured to themselves the sole place in the later history of Ireland. A false history engendered a false policy, which in the long run held no profit for the Empire, England, or Ireland.

Unsuspected by English settlers, the Irish

tradition was carried across the years of captivity by these exiles in their own land. Descendants of literary clans, historians and poets and scribes were to be found in farm-houses, working at the plough and spade. Some wrote prose accounts of the late wars, the history of their tribe, the antiquities of their province, annals of Ireland, and geography. The greatest of the poets was Dáibhí O'Bruadair of Limerick, a man knowing some English and learned in Irish lore, whose poems (1650-1694) stirred men of the cabins with lessons of their time, the laying down of arms by the Irish in 1652, Sarsfield and Limerick, the breaking of the treaty, the grandsons of kings working with the spade, the poor man perfected in learning, steadfast, well proved in good sense, the chaffering insolence of the new traders, the fashion of men fettering their tongues to speak the mere ghost of rough English, or turning Protestant for ease. Learned men showed the love of their language in the making of dictionaries and grammars to preserve, now that the great schools were broken up, the learning of the great masters of Irish. Thus the poet Tadhg

O'Neachtain worked from 1784 to 1749 at a dictionary. Another learned poet and lexicographer, Aodh Buidh MacCurtin, published with Conor O'Begly in Paris a grammar (1728) and a dictionary (1732); in his last edition of the grammar he prayed pardon for "confounding an example of the imperative with the potential mood," which he was caused to do "by the great bother of the brawling company that is round about me in this prison." There were still well-qualified scribes who copied the old heroic stories and circulated them freely all over Ireland. There were some who translated religious books from French and Latin into Irish, "I wish to save," said Charles O'Conor, "as many as I can of the ancient manuscripts of Ireland from the wreck which has overwhelmed everything that once belonged to us." O'Conor was of Sligo county. His father, like other gentlemen, had been so reduced by confiscation that he had to plough with his own hands. A Franciscan sheltered in a peasant's cottage, who knew no English, taught him Latin. He attended mass held secretly in a cave. Amid such difficulties he gained the

best learning of his unhappy time. Much of the materials that O'Clery had used for his *Annals* had perished in the great troubles, and O'Conor began again that endless labour of Irish scholars, the saving of the relics of his people's story from final oblivion. It was the passion of his life. He formed an Irish library, and copied with his own hand large volumes of extracts from books he could not possess. Having obtained O'Clery's own manuscript of the *Annals,* he had this immense work copied by his own scribe; and another copy made in 1734 by Hugh O'Mulloy, an excellent writer, for his friend Dr. O'Fergus of Dublin. He wrote for the learned, and delighted the peasants round him with the stories of their national history. It is interesting to recall that Goldsmith probably knew O'Conor, so that the best English of an Irishman, and the best learning of an Irishman at that time, were thus connected.

It was the Irish antiquarians and historians who in 1759 drew Irishmen together into " the Catholic Committee "—Charles O'Conor, Dr. Curry, and Wyse of Waterford. O'Conor by his learning preserved for them the history

of their fathers. Dr. Curry, of a Cavan family whose estates had been swept from them in 1641 and 1691, had studied as a physician in France, and was eminent in Dublin though shut out from every post; he was the first to use his research and literary powers to bring truth out of falsehood in the later Irish history, and to justify the Irish against the lying accusations concerning the rising of 1641. These learned patriots combined in a movement to win for the Irish some recognition before the law and some rights of citizens in their own land.

Countless poets, meanwhile, poured out in verse the infinite sorrow of the Gaels, recalling the days when their land was filled with poet-schools and festivals, and the high hospitality of great Irishmen. If a song of hope arose that the race should come to their own again, the voice of Irish charity was not wanting—"Having the fear of God, be ye full of alms-giving and friendliness, and forgetting nothing do ye according to the commandments, shun ye drunkenness and oaths and cursing, and do not say till death 'God damn' from your mouths." Riotous laughter broke out in

some; they were all, in fact, professional wits —chief among them Eoghan Ruadh O'Sullivan from Kerry, who died in 1784 ; a working man who had laboured with plough and spade, and first came into note for helping his employer's son, fresh from a French college, with an explanation of a Greek passage. Jacobite poems told of the Lady Erin as a beautiful woman flying from the insults of foreign suitors in search of her real mate—poems of fancy, for the Stuarts had lost all hold on Ireland. The spirit of the north rang out in a multitude of bards, whose works perished in a century of persecution and destruction. Among exiles in Connacht manuscripts perished, but old tradition lived on the lips of the peasants, who recited in their cabins the love-songs and religious poems of long centuries past. The people in the bareness of their poverty were nourished with a literature full of wit, imagination, feeling, and dignity. In the poorest hovels there were men skilled in a fine recitation. Their common language showed the literary influence, and Irish peasants even in our own day have used a vocabulary of some

five thousand words, as against about eight hundred words used by peasants in England. Even the village dancing at the cross-roads preserved a fine and skilled tradition.

Families, too, still tried to have "a scholar" in their house, for the old learning's sake. Children shut out from all means of education might be seen learning their letters by copying with chalk the inscriptions on their fathers' tombstones. There were few candles, and the scholar read his books by a cabin fire in the light given by throwing upon it twigs and dried furze. Manuscripts were carefully treasured, and in days when it was death or ruin to be found with an Irish book they were buried in the ground or hidden in the walls. In remote places schools were maintained out of the destitution of the poor; like that one which was kept up for over a hundred years in county Waterford, where the people of the surrounding districts supported "poor scholars" free of charge. There were some in Kerry, some in Clare, where a very remarkable group of poets sprang up. From all parts of Ireland students begged their way to "the schools of Munster."

Thus Greek and Latin still found their way into the labourer's cottage. In county Cork, John Clmrech O'Donnell, in remembrance of the ancient assemblies of the bards of all Ireland, gathered to his house poets and learned men to recite and contend as in the old days. Famous as a poet, he wrote part of a history of Ireland, and projected a translation of Homer into Irish. But he worked in peril, flying for his life more than once before the bard-hunters; in his denunciations the English oppressor stands before us—plentiful his costly living in the high-gabled lighted-up mansion of the Irish Brian, but tight-closed his door, and his churlishness shut up inside with him, there in an opening between two mountains, until famine clove to the people and bowed them to his will; his gate he never opened to the moan of the starving, "and oh ! may heaven of the saints be a red wilderness for James Dawson! "

The enthusiasm of the Irish touched some of the planters. A hereditary chronicler of the O'Briens who published in 1717 a vindication of the Antiquities of Ireland got two hundred and thirty-eight subscribers, divided

about equally between English and Gaelic names. Wandering poets sang, as Irish poets had done nine hundred years before, even in the houses of the strangers, and found in some of them a kindly friend. O'Carolan, the harper and singer, was beloved by both races. A slight inequality in a village field in Meath still after a hundred and fifty years recalls to Irish peasants the site of the house where he was born, and at his death English and Irish, Protestant and Catholic, gathered in an encampment of tents to do honour to his name. The magic of Irish music seems even to have stirred in the landlords' parliament some dim sense of a national boast. An English nobleman coming to the parliament with a Welsh harper claimed that in all Ireland no such music could be heard. Mr. Jones of Leitrim took up the challenge for an Irishman of his county who "had never worn linen or woollen," The Commons begged to have the trial in their House before business began, and all assembled to greet the Leitrim champion. O'Duibhgeanain was of an old literary clan : one of them had shared in making the *Annals*

of the Four Masters; he himself was not only a fine harper, but an excellent Greek and Latin scholar. He came, tall and handsome, looking very noble in his ancient garb made of beaten rushes, with a cloak or plaid of the same stuff, and a high conical cap of the same adorned with many tassels. And the House of Commons gave him their verdict.

James Murphy, a poor bricklayer of Cork, who became an architect and studied Arabian antiquities in Portugal and Spain, gives the lament of Irish scholars. " You accuse their pastors with illiterature, whilst you adopt the most cruel means of making them ignorant; and their peasantry with untractableness, whilst you deprive them of the means of civilisation. But that is not all; you have deprived them at once of their religion, their liberty, their oak, and their harp, and left them to deplore their fate, not in the strains of their ancestors, but in the sighs of oppression." To the great landlords the Act of 1691 which had given them wealth was the dawn of Irish civilisation. Oblivion might cover all the rest, all that was not theirs. They lived in a land some few years

old, not more than a man's age might cover.

By degrees, however, dwellers in Ireland were forced into some concern for its fortunes. Swift showed to the Protestants the wrongs they endured and the liberties which should be theirs, and flung his scorn on the shameful system of their slavery and their tyranny (1724). Lord Molesworth urged (1728) freedom of religion, schools of husbandry, relief of the poor from their intolerable burdens, the making parliament into a really representative body. Bishop Berkeley wrote his famous *Querist*—the most searching study of the people's grief and its remedies.

Gradually the people of Ireland were being drawn together. All classes suffered under the laws to abolish Irish trade and industry. Human charities were strong in men of both sides, and in the country there was a growing movement to unite the more liberal of the landowners, the Dissenters of the north, and the Catholics, in a common citizenship. It had proved impossible to carry out fully the penal code. No life could have gone on under its monstrous terms. There were not

Protestants enough to carry on all the business of the country and some "Papists" had to be taken at least into the humbler forms of official work. Friendly acts between neighbours diminished persecution.

"Let the legislature befriend us now, and we are theirs for ever," was the cry of the Munster peasantry, organised under O'Driscoll, to the Protestant parliament in 1786.

Such a movement alarmed the government extremely. If, they said, religious distinctions were abolished, the Protestants would find themselves secure of their position without British protection, and might they not then form a government more to the taste and wishes of the people—in fact, might not a nation begin again to live in Ireland.

The whole energy of the government was therefore called out to avert **the** rise of a united Irish people.

CHAPTER XII

AN IRISH PARLIAMENT

1750-1800

THE movement of conciliation of its peoples that was shaping a new Ireland, silent and unrecorded as it was, can only be understood by the astonishing history of the next fifty years, when the spirit of a nation rose again triumphant, and lesser passions fell before the love of country.

The Protestant gentry, who alone had free entry into public life, were of necessity the chief actors in the recorded story. But in the awakening country they had to reckon with a rising power in the Catholic Irish. Dr. Lucas, who in 1741 had begun to stir for reform and freedom, had stirred not only the English settlers but the native Irish. Idolised by the Irish people, he raised in his *Citizens' Journal* a new national protest.

The pamphlet war which followed—where men argued not only on free trade and government, but on Ireland itself, on its old and new races, on its Irish barbarism, said some, its Irish civilisation, said others—spread the idea of a common history of Ireland in which all its inhabitants were concerned. In parliament too, though Catholics were shut out, yet men of old Irish race were to be found—men of Catholic families who had accepted Protestantism as a means of entering public life, chiefly by way of the law. They had not, save very rarely, put off their patriotic ardour with their old religion; of the middle class, they were braver in their outlook than the small and disheartened Catholic aristocracy. If their numbers were few their ability was great, and behind them lay that vast mass of their own people whose blood they shared.

It was an Irishman who first roused the House of Commons to remember that they had a country of their own and an "Irish interest" —Antony Malone. This astonishing orator and parliamentarian invented a patriotic opposition (1753). "A great sea in a storm,"

men said of him. Terror was immediately excited at his Irish origin and his national feeling. Dublin Castle feared that he might mean emancipation from the English legislature, and in truth the constitutional dependency upon England was the object upon which Malone's eye was constantly fixed. He raised again the protest of Molyneux for a free parliament and constitution. He stirred "the whole nation" for "the last struggle for Ireland.*' They and their children would be slaves, he said, if they yielded to the claim of the government that the English privy council could alter the money bills sent over by the Irish parliament, or that the king had the right to apply at his will the surplus funds in the treasury.

Malone was defeated, but the battle had begun which in thirty years was to give to Ireland her first hopes of freedom. A fresh current of thought poured through the House —free trade, free religion, a Habeas Corpus Act, fewer pensions for Englishmen, a share in law and government for Irishmen, security for judges, and a parliament elected every seven years. Successors of Malone appeared

in the House of Commons in 1761—more lawyers, men said, than any one living could remember, or "than appears in any history in this or any other kingdom upon earth." They depended, not on confiscation, but on their own abilities; they owed nothing to government, which gave all the great posts of the bar to Englishmen. Some freedom of soul was theirs, and manhood for the long struggle. In 17G5 the issue was clearly set. The English House of Commons which had passed the Stamp Act for the American colonies, argued that it had the right to tax Ireland without her consent; and English lawyers laid down the absolute power of parliament to bind Ireland by its laws. In Ireland Lord Charlemont and some other peers declared that Ireland was a distinct kingdom, with its own legislature and executive under the king.

In that same year the patriots demanded that elections should be held every seven years—the first step in Ireland towards a true representation, and the first blow to the dominion of an aristocracy The English government dealt its counter-stroke. The

viceroy was ordered to reside in Dublin, and by making himself the source of all favours, the giver of all gratifications, to concentrate political influence in the English Crown. A system of bribery began beyond all previous dreams; peerages were made by the score; and the first national debt of nearly two millions created in less than thirty years. The landowners who controlled the seats in the Commons were reminded that " they held by Great Britain everything most dear to them, their religion, their pre-eminence, their property, their political power"; that "confiscation is their common title." "The king's business," as the government understood it, lay in "procuring the supplies which the English minister thought fit to ask, and preventing the parliament from examining into the account of previous years."

Meanwhile misery deepened. In 1778 thirty thousand Irishmen were seeking their living on the continent, besides the vast numbers flying to America. "The wretches that **remained** had scarcely the appearance of human creatures." English exports to **Ireland sank by half-a-million, and England**

instead of receiving money had to send £50,000 for the payment of troops there. Other dangers had arisen. George Washington was made commander-in-chief of the forces for the American war in 1775, and in 1778 France recognised American independence. The shores of Ireland lay open to attack: the country was drained of troops. Bands of volunteers were formed for its protection, Protestant troops led by landlords and gentry. In a year 40,000 volunteers were enrolled (1779). Ireland was no longer unarmed. What was even more important, she was no longer unrepresented. A packed parliament that had obscured the true desires of the country was silenced before the voice of the people. In the sense of a common duty, landlord and tenant, Protestant and Catholic, were joined; the spirit of tolerance and nationality that had been spreading through the country was openly manifested.

In those times of hope and terror men's minds on both sides moved quickly. The collapse of the English system was rapid; the government saw the failure of their army plans with the refusal of the Irish to give any more

military grants; the failure of their gains from the Irish treasury in the near bankruptcy of the Irish state, with the burden of its upkeep thrown on England; the failure of the prodigious corruption and buying of the souls of men before the new spirit that swept through the island, the spirit of a nation. "England has sown her laws in dragons' teeth, and they have sprung up in armed men," cried Hussey Burgh, a worthy Irish successor of Malone in the House of Commons. "It is no longer the parliament of Ireland that is to be managed or attended to," wrote the lord-lieutenant. "It is the whole of this country." Above all, the war with the colonies brought home to them Grattan's prophecy—"what you trample on in Europe will sting you in America."

The country, through the Volunteers, required four main reforms. They asked for justice in the law-courts, and that the Habeas Corpus Act should be restored, and independent judges no longer hold their places at pleasure. They asked that the English commercial laws which had ruined Irish industry and sunk the land in poverty and idleness

should be abandoned; taught by a long misery, Irishmen agreed to buy no manufactures but the work of Irish hands, and Dublin men compelled members to swear that they should vote for "the good of Ireland," a new phrase in politics. A third demand was that the penal laws which divided and broke the strength of Ireland should cease. "The Irish Protestant," cried Grattan," could never be free till the Irish Catholic had ceased to be a slave." "You are now," said Burke, "beginning to have a country." Finally a great cry for the independence of their parliament rose in every county and from every class.

The demands for the justice of free men, for free trade, free religion, a free nation, were carried by the popular passion into the parliaments of Dublin and London. In three years the Dublin parliament had freed Protestant dissenters from the Test Act and had repealed the greater part of the penal code; the English commercial code had fallen to the ground; the Habeas Corpus Act was won. In 1780 Grattan" proposed his resolutions declaring that while the two nations were

inseparably bound together under one Crown, the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland could alone make laws for Ireland.

The claim for a free parliament ran through the country—" the epidemic madness," exclaimed the viceroy. But the Irish had good reason for their madness. At the first stirring of the national movement in 1778 "artful politicians " in England had revived a scheme favourably viewed there—the abolition of an Irish parliament and the union of Ireland with England. "Do not make an union with us, sir," said Dr. Johnson to an Irishman in 1779; "we should unite with you only to rob you." The threat of the disappearance of Ireland as a country quickened anxiety to restore its old parliament. The Irish knew too how precarious was all that they had gained. Lord North described all past concessions as "resumable at pleasure " by the power that granted them.

In presence of these dangers the Volunteers called a convention of their body to meet in the church of Dungannon on Feb. 15, 1782—to their mind no unfit place for their lofty work.

"We know," they said, "our duty to our sovereign and our loyalty; we know our duty to ourselves and are resolved to be free." "As Irishmen, as Christians, and as Protestants," they rejoiced in the relaxation of penal laws and upheld the sacred rights of all to freedom of religion. A week later Grattan moved in the House of Commons an address to the king—that the people of this country are a free people; that the crown of Ireland is an imperial crown; and the kingdom of Ireland a distinct kingdom with a parliament of her own, the sole legislature thereof. The battle opened by Molyneux a hundred years before was won. The Act of 1719, by which the English parliament had justified its usurpation of powers, was repealed (1782). "To set aside all doubts " another Act (1783) declared that the right of Ireland to be governed solely by the king and the parliament of Ireland was now established and ascertained, and should never again be questioned or questionable.

On April 16, 1782, Grattan passed through the long ranks of Volunteers drawn up before the old Parliament House of Ireland, to

proclaim the victory of his country. "I am now to address a free people. Ages have passed away, and this is the first moment in which you could be distinguished by that appellation. . . . Ireland is now a nation. In that character I hail her, and bowing in her august presence, I say *esto perpetua!"* The first act of the emancipated parliament was to vote a grant for twenty thousand sailors for the English navy.

That day of a nation's exultation and thanksgiving was brief. The restored parliament entered into a gloomy inheritance—an authority which had been polluted and destroyed—an almost ruined country. The heritage of a tyranny prolonged through centuries was not to be got rid of rapidly. England gave to Ireland half a generation for the task.

Since the days of Henry VIII the Irish parliaments had been shaped and compacted to give to England complete control. The system in this country, wrote the viceroy, did not beax the smallest resemblance to representation. All bills had to go through the privy council, whose secret and overwhelming influence was backed by the privy council in England, the

English law officers, and finally the English cabinet. Irish proposals were rejected not in parliament, but in these secret councils. The king had a veto in Ireland, not in England. The English cabinet, changing with English parties, had the last word on every Irish bill. There was no Irish cabinet responsible to the Irish Houses : no ministry resigned, whatever the majority by which it was defeated. Nominally elected by about one-fifth of the inhabitants, the Commons did not represent even these. A landlords' assembly, there was no Catholic in it, and no merchant. Even the Irish landlords were subdued to English interests : some hundred Englishmen, whose main property was in England but who commanded a number of votes for lands in Ireland, did constantly override the Irish landlords and drag them on in a policy far from serviceable to them. The landlords' men in the Commons were accustomed to vote as the Castle might direct. In the complete degradation of public life no humiliation or lack of public honour offended them. The number of placemen and pensioners equalled nearly one-half of the whole efficient body: "the price of a seat of parlia-

ment," men said, "is as well ascertained as that of the cattle of the field."

All these dangers might with time and patience be overcome. An Irish body, on Irish soil, no matter what its constitution, could not remain aloof from the needs, and blind to the facts, of Ireland, like strangers in another land. The good-will of the people abounded; even the poorer farmers showed in a better dress, in cleanliness, in self-respect, how they had been stirred by the dream of freedom, the hope of a country. The connection with England, the dependence on the king, was fully accepted, and Ireland prepared to tax herself out of all proportion to her wealth for imperial purposes. The gentry were losing the fears that had possessed them for their properties, and a fair hope was opening for an Ireland tolerant, united, educated, and industrious. Volunteers, disciplined, sober, and law-abiding, had shown the orderly forces of the country. Parliament had awakened to the care of Ireland as well as the benefit of England. In a few years it opened "the gates of opulence and knowledge." It abolished the cruelties of the penal laws, and prepared the

union of all religions in a common citizenship. It showed admirable knowledge in the method of restoring prosperity to the country, awakening its industrial life, increasing tillage, and opening inland navigation. Time was needed to close the springs of corruption and to bring reform to the parliament itself.

But the very success of parliament woke fears in England, and alarm in the autocratic government of Ireland. Jealous of power, ministers set themselves to restore by corruption an absolute authority, and recover by bribery the prerogative that had been lost.

The first danger appeared in 1785, in the commercial negotiations with England. To crush the woollen trade England had put duties of over £2 a yard on a certain cloth carried from Ireland to England, which paid 5½d. if brought from England to Ireland; and so on for other goods. Irish shipping had been reduced to less than a third of that of Liverpool alone. Pitt's proposal of free trade between the countries was accepted by Ireland (1785), but a storm of wrath swept over the British world of business; they refused Pitt's explana-

tion that an Ireland where all industries had been killed could not compete against the industrial pre-eminence of England; and prepared a new scheme which re-established the ascendency of the British parliament over Irish navigation and commerce. This was rejected in Ireland as fatal to their Constitution. Twice again the Irish parliament attempted a commercial agreement between the two countries: twice the Irish government refused to give it place; a few years later the same ministers urged the Union on the ground that no such commercial arrangement existed. The advantages which England possessed and should maintain were explained by the viceroy to Pitt in 1792. "Is not the very essence of your imperial policy to prevent the interest of Ireland clashing and interfering with the interest of England? . . . Have you not crushed her in every point that would interfere with British interest or monopoly by means of her parliament for the last century, till lately? . . . You know the advantages you reap from Ireland. . . . In return does she cost you one farthing (except the linen monopoly)? Do you employ a soldier on

her account she does not pay, or a single ship more for the protection of the British commerce than if she was at the bottom of the sea ?"

The Catholic question also awakened the Castle fears. The penal laws had failed to diminish the "Papists": at the then rate of conversion it would take four thousand years to turn the people into Protestants. A nobler idea had arisen throughout Ireland. "The question is now," Grattan said, "whether we shall be a Protestant settlement or an Irish nation . . . for so long as we exclude Catholics from natural liberty and the common rights of man we are not a people." Nothing could be more unwelcome to the government. A real union between religious bodies in Ireland, they said, would induce Irish statesmen to regulate their policy mainly by the public opinion of their own country. To avert this danger they put forth all their strength. "The present frame of Irish government is particularly well calculated for our purpose. That frame is a Protestant garrison in possession of the land, magistracy, and power of the country; holding that property under the

tenure of British power and supremacy, and ready at every instant to crush the rising of the conquered."

Finally the pressing question of reform, passionately demanded by Protestant and Catholic for fifteen years, was resisted by the whole might of the Castle. "If," wrote the lord-lieutenant to Pitt, "as her government became more open and more attentive to the feelings of the Irish nation, the difficulty of management has increased, is that a reason for opening the government and making the parliament more subservient to the feelings of the nation at large?"

To the misfortune both of Ireland and of England the Irish government through these years was led by one of the darkest influences known in the evil counsels of its history—the chancellor Fitzgibbon, rewarded by England with the title Earl of Clare. Unchecked by criticism, secret in machinations, brutal in speech, and violent in authority, he had known the use of every evil power that still remained as a legacy from the past, By working on the ignorance of the cabinet in London and on the alarms and corruptions of Ireland,

by using all the secret powers left in his hands through the privy council, by a system of unexampled bribery, he succeeded in paralysing the constitution which it was his business to maintain, and destroying the parliamentary rights which had been nominally conceded. The voice of the nation was silenced by the forbidding of all conventions. In the re-established "frame of government" Fitzgibbon was all-powerful. The only English viceroy who resisted him, Lord Fitzwilliam, was recalled amid the acclamations and lamentations of Ireland—all others yielded to his force. Government in his hands was the enemy of the people, parliament a mockery, constitutional movements mere vanity. Law appeared only as an instrument of oppression; the Catholic Irish were put out of its protection, the government agents out of its control. The country gentry were alienated and demoralised—left to waste with "their inert property and their inert talents." Every reform was refused which might have allayed the fears of the people. Religious war was secretly stirred up by the agents of the government and in its interest, setting one

part of the country to exterminate the other. Distrust and suspicion, arrogance and fear, with their train of calamities for the next hundred years, distracted the island.

A system of absolute power, maintained by coercion, woke the deep passion of the country. Despair of the constitution made men turn to republicanism and agitation in arms. The violent repression of freedom was used at a time when the progress of the human mind had been prodigious, when on all sides men were drinking in the lessons of popular liberties from the republics of America and France. The system of rule inaugurated by Fitzgibbon could have only one end—the revolt of a maddened people. Warnings and entreaties poured in to the Castle. To the very last the gentry pleaded for reform to reassure men drifting in their despair into plots of armed republicanism. Every measure to relieve their fears was denied, every measure to heighten them was pursued. Violent statesmen in the Castle, and officers of their troops, did not fear to express their sense that a rebellion would enable them to make an end of the discontented once for all, and of the Irish

Constitution. The rising was, in fact, at last forced by the horrors which were openly encouraged by the government in 1796-7. "Every crime, every cruelty, that could be committed by Cossacks or Calmucks has been transacted here," said General Abercromby, sent in 1797 as commander-in-chief. He refused the barbarities of martial rule when, as he said, the government's orders might be carried over the whole kingdom by an orderly dragoon, or a writ executed without any difficulty, a few places in the mountains excepted; and demanded the maintenance of law. "The abuses of all kinds I found here can scarcely be believed or enumerated." "He must have lost his senses," wrote Clare of the great soldier, and "this Scotch beast," as he called him, was forced out of the country as Lord Fitzwilliam had been. Abercromby was succeeded by General Lake, who had already shown the ferocity of his temper in his command in Ulster, and in a month the rebellion broke out.

That appalling tale of terror, despair, and cruelty cannot be told in all its horror. The people, scared into scattered risings, refused

protection when their arms were given up, or terms if they surrendered, were without hope; the "pacification" of the government set no limits to atrocities, and the cry of the tortured rose unceasingly day and night.

The suppression of the rebellion burned into the Irish heart the belief that the English government was their implacable enemy, that the law was their oppressor, and Englishmen the haters of their race. The treatment of later years has not yet wiped out of memory that horror. The dark fear that during the rebellion stood over the Irish peasant in his cabin has been used to illustrate his credulity and his brutishness. The government cannot be excused by that same plea of fear. Clare no doubt held the doctrine of many English governors before him, that Ireland could only be kept bound to England by the ruin of its parliament and the corruption of its gentry, the perpetual animosity of its races, and the enslavement of its people. But even in his own day there were men who believed in a nobler statesmanship—in a union of the nations in equal honour and liberties.

CHAPTER XIII

IRELAND UNDER THE UNION

1800-1900

THE horror of deathlay over Ireland; cruelty and terror raised to a frenzy; government by martial law; a huge army occupying the country. In that dark time the plan for the Union with England, secretly prepared in London, was announced to the Irish parliament.

It seemed that England had everything to gain by a union. There was one objection. Chatham had feared that a hundred Irishmen would strengthen the democratic side of the English parliament ; others that their eloquence would lengthen and perhaps confuse debates. But it was held that a hundred members would be lost in the British parliament, and that Irish doctrines would be sunk in the sea of British common sense.

In Ireland a union was detested as a conspiracy against its liberties. The parliament at once rejected it ; no parliament, it was urged, had a right to pass an act destroying the constitution of Ireland, and handing over the dominion to another country, without asking consent of the nation. Pitt refused to have anything to say to this Jacobin doctrine of the sovereignty of the people—a doctrine he would oppose wherever he encountered it.

The Union, Pitt said, was no proposal to subject Ireland to a foreign yoke, but a voluntary association of two great countries seeking their common benefit in one empire. There were progresses of the viceroy, visits of political agents, military warnings, threats of eviction, to induce petitions in its favour; all reforms were refused—the outrageous system of collecting tithes, the disabilities of Catholics—so as to keep something to bargain with; 137,000 armed men were assembled in Ireland. But amid the universal detestation and execration of a Union the government dared not risk an election, and proceeded to pack the parliament privately.

By official means the Commons were purged of sixty-three opponents, and safe men put in, some Englishmen, some staff-officers, men without a foot of land in Ireland. There were, contrary to one of the new laws, seventy-two place-holders and pensioners in the House. Fifty-four peerages were given to buy consciences. The borough-holders were offered 1¼ millions to console them for loss in sale of seats. There was a host of minor pensions. Threats and disgrace were used to others. Large sums were sent from London to bribe the Press, and corrupt the wavering with ready money. Pitt pledged himself to emancipation.

Thus in 1800, at the point of the sword, and amid many adjurations to speed from England, the Act of Union was forced through the most corrupt parliament ever created by a government: it was said that only seven of the majority were unbribed. An Act "formed in the British cabinet, unsolicited by the Irish nation," "passed in the middle of war, in the centre of a tremendous military force, under the influence of immediate personal danger," was followed, as wise men

had warned, by generations of strife. A hundred years of ceaseless agitation, from the first tragedy of Robert Emmet's abortive rising in 1803, proclaimed the undying opposition of Irishmen to a Union that from the first lacked all moral sanction.

An English parliament, all intermediate power being destroyed, was now confronted with the Irish people. Of that people it knew nothing, of its national spirit, its conception of government or social life. The history and literature which might reveal the mind of the nation is so neglected that to this day there is no means for its study in the Imperial University nor the capital of Empire. The *Times* perceived in "the Celtic twilight" a "slovenly old barbarism."[5] Peel in his ignorance thought Irishmen had good qualities except for "a general confederacy in crime . . . a settled and uniform system of guilt, accompanied by horrible and monstrous perjuries such as could not be found in any civilised country."

Promises were lavished to commend the Union. Ministers assured Ireland of less

expenditure and lighter taxation: with vast commerce and manufactures, a rise in the value of land, and a stream of English capital and industry. All contests being referred from the island to Great Britain—to a body-not like the Irish influenced by prejudices and passions—Ireland would for the first time arrive at national union. The passing over to London of the chief part of Irish intelligence and wealth would give to Ireland "a power over the executive and general policy of the Empire which would far more than compensate her"; and would, in fact, lead to such a union of hearts that presently it would not matter, Pitt hoped, whether members for Ireland were elected in Ireland or in England. Ireland would also be placed in "a natural situation," for by union with the Empire she would have fourteen to three in favour of her Protestant establishment, instead of three to one against it as happened in the country itself; so that Protestant ascendency would be for ever assured. The Catholics, however, would find in the pure and serene air of the English legislature impartial kindness, and the poor

might hope for relief from tithes and the need of supporting their clergy. All Irish financiers and patriots contended that the fair words were deceptive, and that the Union must bring to Ireland immeasurable disaster.

Any discussion of the Union in its effect on Ireland lies apart from a discussion of the motives of men who administered the system in the last century. The system itself, wrongly conceived and wrongly enforced, contained the principles of ruin, and no good motives could make it work for the benefit of Ireland, or, in the long run, of England.

Oppressive financial burdens were laid on the Irish. Each country was for the next twenty years to provide for its own expenditure and debt, and to contribute a sum to the general expenses of the United Kingdom, fixed in the proportion of seven and a half parts for Great Britain and one part for Ireland. The debt of Ireland had formerly been small; in 1793 it was 2¼ millions; it had risen to nearly 28 millions by 1801, in great measure through the charges of Clare's policy of martial law and bribery. In the next years heavy loans were required for

the Napoleonic war. When Ireland, exhausted by calamity, was unable to pay, loans were raised in England at heavy war-rates and charged to the public debt of Ireland. In 1817 the Irish debt had increased more than four-fold, to nearly 113 millions. No record was made in the books of the Exchequer as to what portion of the vast sums raised should in fairness be allotted to Ireland; there is no proof that there was any accuracy in the apportionment. The promised lighter taxation ended in a near bankruptcy, and the approach of an appalling famine in 1817. Bankruptcy was avoided by uniting the two treasuries to form one national debt—but the burden of Ireland remained as oppressive as before. Meanwhile the effect of the Union had been to depress all Irish industries and resources, and in these sixteen years the comparative wealth of Ireland had fallen, and the taxes had risen far beyond the rise in England. The people sank yet deeper under their heavy load. The result of their incapacity to pay the amount fixed at the Union was, that of all the taxes collected from them for the next fifty-three years, one-third was

spent in Ireland, and two-thirds were absorbed by England; from 1817 to 1870 the cost of government in Ireland was under 100 millions, while the contributions to the imperial exchequer were 210 millions, so that Ireland sent to England more than twice as much as was spent on her. The tribute from Ireland to England in the last ninety-three years, over and above the cost of Irish administration, has been over 325 millions—a sum which would probably be much increased by a more exact method both of recording the revenue collected from Ireland and the "local" and "imperial" charges, so as to give the full Irish revenue, and to prevent the debiting to Ireland of charges for which she was not really liable. While this heavy ransom was exacted Ireland was represented as a beggar, never satisfied, at the gate of England.

Later, in 1852, Gladstone began to carry out the second part of the Union scheme, the indiscriminate taxation of the two countries. In a few years he added two and a half millions to Irish taxation, at a moment when the country, devastated by famine, was sinking under the loss of its corn trade

through the English law, and wasting away by emigration to half its former population. In 1896 a Financial Commission reported that the Act of Union had laid on Ireland a burden she was unable to bear; and that, in spite of the Union pledge that the ability of Ireland to pay should always be taken into account, she was paying one-eleventh of the tax revenue of the United Kingdom while her taxable capacity was one-twentieth or less. While Great Britain paid less then two shillings in every pound of her taxable surplus, Ireland paid about ten shillings in every pound of hers. No relief was given.

Under this drain of her wealth the poverty of Ireland was intensified, material progress was impossible, and one bad season was enough to produce wide distress, and two a state of famine. Meanwhile, the cost of administration was wasteful and lavish, fixed on the high prices of the English scale, and vastly more expensive than the cost of a government founded on domestic support and acceptable to the people. The doom of an exhausting poverty was laid on Ireland by a rich and extravagant partner, who fixed

the expenses for English purposes, called for the money, and kept the books.

The Union intensified the alien temper of Irish government. We may remember the scandal caused lately by the phrase of a great Irish administrator that Ireland should be governed according to Irish ideas. Dublin Castle, no longer controlled by an Irish parliament, entrenched itself more firmly against the people. Some well-meaning governors went over to Ireland, but the omnipotent Castle machine broke their efforts for impartial rule or regard for the opinion of the country, The Protestant Ascendancy openly reminded the Castle that its very existence hung on the Orange associations. Arms were supplied free from Dublin to the Orangemen while all Catholics were disarmed. The jobbing of the grand juries to enrich themselves out of the poor—the traffic of magistrates who violated their duties and their oaths—these were unchanged. Justice was so far forgotten that the presiding judge at the trial of O'Connell spoke of the counsel for the accused as "the gentleman on the other side." Juries were packed by

the sheriffs with Protestants, by whom all Orangemen were acquitted, all Catholics condemned, and the credit of the law lowered for both by a system which made the juryman a tool and the prisoner a victim. It is strange that no honest man should have protested against such a use of his person and his creed. In the case of O'Connell the Chief Justice of England stated that the practice if not remedied must render trial by jury "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare"; but jury-packing with safe men remained the invariable custom till 1906.

Nothing but evil to Ireland followed from carrying her affairs to an English parliament. The government refused the promised emancipation, refused tithe reform. Englishmen could not understand Irish conditions. The political economy they advocated for their own country had no relation to Ireland. The Irish members found themselves, as English officials had foretold in advocating the Union, a minority wholly without influence. Session after session, one complained, measures supported by Irish members, which would have been hailed with enthusiasm by an Irish

parliament, were rejected by the English. Session after session measures vehemently resisted by the Irish members were forced on a reluctant nation by English majorities. When Ireland asked to be governed by the same laws as England, she was told the two countries were different and required different treatment. When she asked for any deviation from the English system, she was told that she must bow to the established laws and customs of Great Britain. The reports of royal commissions fell dead—such as that which in 1845 reported that the sufferings of the Irish, borne with exemplary patience, were greater than the people of any other country in Europe had to sustain. Nothing was done. Instead of the impartial calm promised at the Union, Ireland was made the battle-cry of English parties; and questions that concerned her life or death were important at Westminster as they served the exigencies of the government or the opposition.

All the dangers of the Union were increased by its effect in drawing Irish landlords to London. Their rents followed them, and the wealth spent by absentees founded no indus-

tries at home. A land system brought about by confiscation, and developed by absentees, meant unreclaimed wastes, lands half cultivated, and neglected people. Landlords, said an indignant judge of wide experience in a charge to a jury in 1814, should build their tenants houses, and give them at least what they had not as yet, "the comforts of an English sow." To pay rent and taxes in England the toilers raised stores of corn and cattle for export there, from the value of eight million pounds in 1826 to seventeen million pounds of food stuffs in 1848, and so on. They grew potatoes to feed themselves. If the price of corn fell prodigiously—as at the **end** of the Napoleonic war, or at the passing of the corn laws in England—the cheaper bread was no help to the peasants, most of whom could never afford to eat it; it only doubled their labour to send out greater shiploads of provisions for the charges due in England. On the other hand, if potatoes rotted, famine swept over the country among its fields of corn and cattle. And when rent failed, summary powers of eviction were given at Westminster under English theories for use

in Ireland alone; "and if any one would defend his farm it is here denominated rebellion." Families were flung on the bogs and mountain sides to live on wild turnips and nettles, to gather chickweed, sorrel, and seaweed, and to sink under the fevers that followed vagrancy, starvation, cold, and above all the broken hearts of men hunted from their homes. In famine time the people to save themselves from death were occasionally compelled to use blood taken from live bullocks, boiled up with a little oatmeal; and the appalling sight was seen of feeble women gliding across the country with their pitchers, actually trampling upon fertility and fatness, to collect in the corner of a grazier's farm for their little portion of blood. Five times between 1822 and 1837 there were famines of lesser degree : but two others, 1817 and 1847, were noted as among the half-dozen most terrible recorded in Europe and Asia during the century. From 184G to 1848 over a million lay dead of hunger, while in a year food-stuffs for seventeen million pounds were sent to England. English soldiers guarded from the starving the fields of corn and the

waggons that carried it to the ports; herds of cattle were shipped, and skins of asses which had served the famishing for food. New evictions on an enormous scale followed the famine, the clearance of what was then called in the phrase of current English economics "the surplus population," "the overstock tenantry." They died, or fled in hosts to America—Ireland pouring out on the one side her great stores of "surplus food," on the other her "surplus people," for whom there was nothing to eat. In the twenty years that followed the men and women who had fled to America sent back some thirteen millions to keep a roof over the heads of the old and the children they had left behind. It was a tribute for the landlords' pockets—a rent which could never have been paid from the land they leased. The loans raised for expenditure on the Irish famine were charged by England on the Irish taxes for repayment.

No Irish parliament, no matter what its constitution, could have allowed the country to drift into such irretrievable ruin. O'Connell constantly protested that rather than the

Union he would have the old Protestant parliament. "Any body would serve if only it is in Ireland," cried a leading Catholic nationalist in Parnell's time; "the Protestant synod would do." In the despair of Ireland, the way was flung open to public agitation, and to private law which could only wield the weapons of the outlaw. All methods were tried to reach the distant inattention of England. There were savage outbursts of men often starving and homeless, always on the edge of famine—Levellers, Threshers, and the like; or Whiteboys who were in fact a vast trades union for the protection of the Irish peasantry, to bring some order and equity into relations of landlord and tenant. Peaceful organisation was tried; the Catholic Association for Emancipation founded by O'Connell in 1823, an open society into which Protestants and Catholics alike were welcomed, kept the peace in Ireland for five years; outrage ceased with its establishment and revived with its destruction. His Association for Repeal (1832-1844) again lifted the people from lawless insurrection to the disciplined enthusiasm of citizens for justice. A Young Ireland movement

(1842-1848) under honoured names such as Thomas Davis and John Mitchel and Gavan Duffy and Smith O'Brien and others with them, sought to destroy sectarian divisions, to spread a new literature, to recover Irish history, and to win self-government, land reform, and education for a united people of Irish and English, Protestant and Catholic. The suppression of O'Connell's peaceful movement by the government forced on violent counsels; and ended in the rising of Smith O'Brien as the only means left him of calling attention to the state of the country. The disturbances that followed have left their mark in the loop-holed police barracks that covered Ireland. There was a Tenant League (1852) and a North and South League. All else failing, a national physical force party was formed; for its name this organisation went back to the dawn of Irish historic life—to the Fiana, those Fenian national militia vowed to guard the shores of Ireland. The Fenians (1865) resisted outrage, checked agrarian crime, and sought to win self-government by preparing for open war. A great constitutionalist and sincere Protestant, Isaac Butt,

led a peaceful parliamentary movement for Home Rule (1870-1877); after him Charles Stewart Parnell fought in the same cause for fourteen years (1877-1891) and died with victory almost in sight. Michael Davitt, following the advice of Lalor thirty years before, founded a Land League (1879) to be inevitably merged in the wider national issue. Wave after wave of agitation passed over the island. The manner of the national struggle changed, peaceful or violent, led by Protestant or Catholic, by men of English blood or of Gaelic, but behind all change lay the fixed purpose of Irish self-government. For thirty-five years after the Union Ireland was ruled for three years out of every four by laws giving extraordinary powers to the government; and in the next fifty years (1835-1885) there were only three without coercion acts and crime acts. By such contrasts of law in the two countries the Union made a deep severance between the islands.

In these conflicts there was not now, as there had never been in their history, a religious war on the part of Irishmen. The oppressed people were of one creed, and the

administration of the other. Protestant and Catholic had come to mean ejector and ejected, the armed Orangeman and the disarmed peasant, the agent- or clergy-magistrate and the broken tenant before his too partial judgment-seat. In all cases where conflicting classes are divided into two creeds, religious incidents will crop up, or will be forced up, to embitter the situation; but the Irish struggle was never a religious war.

Another distinction must be noted. Though Ireland was driven to the "worst form of civil convulsion, a war for the means of subsistence," there was more Irish than the battle for food. Those who have seen the piled up graves round the earth where the first Irish saints were laid, will know that the Irishman, steeped in his national history, had in his heart not his potato plot alone, but the thought of the home of his fathers, and in the phrase of Irish saints, "the place of his resurrection."

If we consider the state of the poor, and the position of the millions of Irishmen who had been long shut out from any share in public affairs, and forbidden to form popular

conventions, we must watch with amazement the upspringing under O'Connell of the old idea of national self-government. Deep in their hearts lay the memory carried down by bards and historians of a nation whose law had been maintained in assemblies of a willing people. In O'Connell the Irish found a leader who had like themselves inherited the sense of the old Irish tradition. To escape English laws against gatherings and conventions of the Irish, O'Connell's associations had to be almost formless, and perpetually shifting in manner and in name. His methods would have been wholly impossible without a rare intelligence in the peasantry. Local gatherings conducted by voluntary groups over the country; conciliation courts where justice was carried out apart from the ordinary courts as a protest against their corruption; monster meetings organised without the slightest disorder; voluntary suppression of crime and outrage—in these we may see not merely an astonishing popular intelligence, but the presence of an ancient tradition. At the first election in which the people resisted the right of landlords to dictate their vote (1826), a

procession miles in length streamed into Waterford in military array and unbroken tranquillity. They allowed no rioting, and kept their vow of total abstinence from whisky during the election. A like public virtue was shown in the Clare election two years later (1828) when 30,000 men camped in Ennis for a week, with milk and potatoes distributed to them by their priests, all spirits renounced, and the peace not broken once throughout the week. As O'Connell drew towards Limerick and reached the Stone where the broken Treaty had been signed, 50,000 men sent up their shout of victory at this peaceful redeeming of the violated pledges of 1690. In the Repeal meetings two to four hundred thousand men assembled, at Tara and other places whose fame was in the heart of every Irishman there, and the spirit of the nation was shown by a gravity and order which allowed not a single outrage. National hope and duty stirred the two millions who in the crusade of Father Mathew took the vow of temperance.

In the whole of Irish history no time brought such calamity to Ireland as the Victorian age. "I leave Ireland," said one,

" like a corpse on the dissecting table." "The Celts are gone," said Englishmen, seeing the endless and disastrous emigration. "The Irish are gone, and gone with a vengeance." That such people should carry their interminable discontent to some far place seemed to end the trouble. "Now for the first time these six hundred years," said *The Times*, "England has Ireland at her mercy, and can deal with her as she pleases." But from this death Ireland rose again. Thirty years after O'Connell Parnell took up his work. He used the whole force of the Land League founded by Davitt to relieve distress and fight for the tenants' rights; but he used the land agitation to strengthen the National movement. He made his meaning clear. What did it matter, he said, who had possession of a few acres, if there was no National spirit to save the country; he would never have taken off his coat for anything less than to make a nation. In his fight he held the people as no other man had done, not even O'Connell. The conflict was steeped in passion. In 1881 the government asked for an act giving them power to arrest without trial all Irishmen

suspected of illegal projects—a power beyond all coercion hitherto. O'Connell had opposed a coercion act in 1833 for nineteen nights; Parnell in 1881 fought for thirty-two nights. Parliament had become the keeper of Irish tyrannies, not of her liberties, and its conventional forms were less dear to Irishmen than the freedom of which it should be the guardian. He was suspended, with thirty-four Irish members, and 308 votes against 46 carried a bill by which over a thousand Irishmen were imprisoned at the mere will of the Castle, among them Parnell himself. The passion of rage reached its extreme height with the publication in *The Times* (1888) of a facsimile letter from Parnell, to prove his consent to a paid system of murder and outrage. A special commission found it to be a forgery.

With the rejection of Gladstone's Home Rule bills in 1886 and 1893, and with the death of Parnell (1891), Irish nationalists were thrown into different camps as to the means to pursue, but they never faltered in the main purpose. * That remains as firm as in the times of O'Connell, Thomas Davis,

John O'Leary, and Parnell, and rises once more to-day as the fixed unchanging demand, while the whole Irish people, laying aside agitations and controversies, stand waiting to hear the end.

The national movement had another side, the bringing back of the people to the land. The English parliament took up the question under pressure of violent agitation in Ireland. By a series of Acts the people were assured of fair rents and security from eviction. Verdicts of judicial bodies tended to prove that peasants were paying 60 per cent. above the actual value of the land. But the great Act of 1903—a work inspired by an Irishman's intellect and heart—brought the final solution, enabling the great mass of the tenants to buy their land by instalments. Thus the land war of seven hundred years, the war of kings and parliaments and planters, was brought to a dramatic close, and the soil of Ireland begins again to belong to her people.

There was yet another stirring of the national idea. In its darkest days the country had remained true to the old Irish spirit of learning, that fountain of the nation's life. In

O'Connell's time the "poor scholar" who took his journey to "the Munster schools" was sent out with offerings laid on the parish altars by Protestants and Catholics alike; as he trudged with his bag of books and the fees for the master sewn in the cuff of his coat, he was welcomed in every farm, and given of the best in the famishing hovels: "The Lord prosper him, and every one that has the heart set upon the learning." Bards and harpers and dancers wandered among the cottages. A famous bard Raftery, playing at a dance heard one ask, "Who is the musician?" and the blind fiddler answered him:

"I am Raftery the poet,
Full of hope and love,
With eyes that have no light,
With gentleness that has no misery.
Going west upon my pilgrimage,
Guided by the light of my heart,
Feehlo and tired,
To the end of my road.
Behold me now,
With my face to a wall,
A-playing music
To empty pockets."

Unknown scribes still copied piously the national records. A Louth schoolmaster could

tell all the stars and constellations of heaven under the old Irish forms and names. A vision is given to us through a government Ordnance Survey of the fire of zeal, the hunger of knowledge, among the tillers and the tenants. In 1817 a dying farmer in Kilkenny repeated several times to his sons his descent back to the wars of 1641 and behind that to a king of Munster in 210 A.D.—directing the eldest never to forget it. This son took his brother, John O'Donovan, (1809-1861) to study in Dublin; in Kilkenny farmhouses he learned the old language and history of his race. At the same time another Irish boy, Eugene O'Curry (1796-1862), of the same old Munster stock, working on his father's farm in great poverty, learned from him much knowledge of Irish literature and music. The Ordnance Survey, the first peripatetic university Ireland had seen since the wanderings of her ancient scholars, gave to O'Donovan and O'Curry their opportunity, where they could meet learned men, and use their hereditary knowledge. A mass of material was laid up by their help. Passionate interest was shown by the people in the memorials of their ancient life—giants'

rings, cairns, and mighty graves, the twenty-nine thousand mounds or moats that have been counted, the raths of their saints and scholars—each with its story living on the lips of the people till the great famine and the death or emigration of the people broke that long tradition of the race. The cry arose that the survey was pandering to the national spirit. It was suddenly closed (1837), the men dismissed, no materials published, the documents locked up in government offices. But for O'Donovan and O'Curry what prodigies of work remained. Once more the death of hope seemed to call out the pieties of the Irish scholar for his race, the fury of his intellectual zeal, the passion of his inheritance of learning. In the blackest days perhaps of all Irish history O'Donovan took up Michael O'Clery's work of two hundred years before, the Annals of the Four Masters, added to his manuscript the mass of his own learning, and gave to his people this priceless record of their country (1856). Among a number of works that cannot be counted here, he made a Dictionary which recalls the old pride of Irishmen in their language. O'Curry brought

from his humble training an incredible industry, great stores of ancient lore, and an amazing and delicate skill as a scribe. All modern historians have dug in the mine of these men's work. They opened to Anglo-Irish scholars, such as Dr. Reeves and Dr. Todd, a new world of Irish history. Sir Samuel Ferguson began in 1833 to give to readers of English the stories of Ireland. George Petrie collected Irish music through all the west, over a thousand airs, and worked at Irish inscriptions and crosses and round towers. Lord Dunraven studied architecture, and is said to have visited every barony in Ireland and nearly every island on the coast.

These men were nearly all Protestants; they were all patriots. Potent Irish influences could have stirred a resident gentry and resident parliament with a just pride in the great memorials of an Ireland not dead but still living in the people's heart. The failure of the hope was not the least of the evils of the Union. The drift of landlords to London had broken a national sympathy between them and the people, which had been steadily growing through the eighteenth century.

Their sons no longer learned Irish, nor heard the songs and stories of the past. The brief tale of the ordnance survey has given us a measure of the intelligence that had been wasted or destroyed by neglect in Ireland. Archbishop Whately proposed to use the new national schools so as to make this destruction systematic, and to put an end to national traditions. The child who knew only Irish was given a teacher who knew nothing but English; his history book mentioned Ireland *twice* only—a place conquered by Henry II., and made into an English province by the Union. The quotation "This is my own, my native land," was struck out of the reading-book as pernicious, and the Irish boy was taught to thank God for being "a happy English child." A Connacht peasant lately summed up the story: "I suppose the Famine and the National Schools took the heart out of the people." In fact, famine and emigration made the first great break in the Irish tradition that had been the dignity and consolation of the peasantry; the schools completed the ruin. In these, under English influence, the map of Ireland has been

rolled up, and silence has fallen on her heroes.

Even out of this deep there came a revival. Whitley Stokes published his first Irish work the year after O'Curry's death; and has been followed by a succession of laborious students. Through a School of Irish Learning Dublin is becoming a national centre of true Irish scholarship, and may hope to be the leader of the world in this great branch of study. The popular Irish movement manifested itself in the Gaelic League, whose branches now cover all Ireland, and which has been the greatest educator of the people since the time of Thomas Davis. Voluntary colleges have sprung up in every province, where earnest students learn the language, history, and music of their country; and on a fine day teacher and scholars gathered in the open air under a hedge recall the ancient Irish schools where brehon or chronicler led his pupils under a tree. A new spirit of self-respect, intelligence, and public duty has followed the work of the Gaelic League; it has united Catholic and Protestant, landlord and peasant. And through all creeds and

classes a desire has quickened men to serve their country in its social and industrial life ; and by Agricultural Societies, and Industrial Development Societies, to awaken again her trade and manufactures.

The story is unfinished. Once again we stand at the close of another experiment of England in the government of Ireland. Each of them has been founded on the idea of English interests; each has lasted about a hundred years—Tudor "conquest," Plantations, an English parliament, a Union parliament. All alike have ended in a disordered finance and a flight of the people from the land.

Grattan foretold the failure of the Union and its cause. "As Ireland," he said, "is necessary to Great Britain, so is complete and perfect liberty necessary to Ireland, and both islands must be drawn much closer to a free constitution, that they may be drawn closer to one another." In England we have seen the advance to that freer constitution. The democracy has entered into larger liberties, and has brought new ideals. The growth of that popular life has been greatly

advanced by the faith of Ireland. Ever since Irish members helped to carry the Reform Acts they have been on the side of liberty, humanity, peace, and justice. They have been the most steadfast believers in constitutional law against privilege, and its most unswerving defenders. At Westminster they have always stood for human rights, as nobler even than rights of property. What Chatham foresaw has come true : the Irish in the English parliament have been powerful missionaries of democracy. A freedom-loving Ireland has been conquering her conquerors in the best sense.

The changes of the last century have deeply affected men's minds. The broadening liberties of England as a free country, the democratic movements that have brought new classes into government, the wider experience of imperial methods, the growing influence of men of good-will, have tended to change her outlook to Ireland. In the last generation she has been forced to think more gravely of Irish problems. She has pledged her credit to close the land question and create a peasant proprietary. With any knowledge of Irish

history the religious alarm, the last cry of prejudice, must inevitably disappear. The old notion of Ireland as the "property" of England, and of its exploitation for the advantage of England is falling into the past.

A mighty spirit of freedom too has passed over the great Colonies and Dominions. They since their beginning have given shelter to outlawed Irishmen flying from despair at home. They have won their own pride of freedom, and have all formally proclaimed their judgment that Ireland should be allowed the right to shape her own government. The United States who owe so much to Irishmen in their battle for independence, and in the labours of their rising prosperity, have supported the cause of Ireland for the last hundred years; ever since the first important meeting in New York to express American sympathy with Ireland was held in 1825, when President Jackson, of Irish origin, a Protestant, is said to have promised the first thousand dollars to the Irish emancipation fund.

In Ireland itself we see a people that has now been given some first opportunities of

self-dependence and discipline under the new conditions of land ownership and of county government. We see too the breaking up of the old solid Unionist phalanx, the dying down of ancient fears, the decaying of old habits of dependence on military help from England, and a promise of revival of the large statesmanship that adorned the days of Kildare and of Grattan. It is singular to reflect that on the side of foreign domination, through seven hundred years of invasion and occupation, not a single man, Norman or English, warrior or statesman, has stood out as a hero to leave his name, even in England, on the lips or in the hearts of men. The people who were defending their homes and liberties had their heroes, men of every creed and of every blood, Gaelic, Norman, English, Anglican, Catholic, and Presbyterian. Against the stormy back-ground of those prodigious conflicts, those immeasurable sorrows, those thousand sites consecrated by great deeds, lofty figures emerge whom the people have exalted with the poetry of their souls, and crowned with love and gratitude—the first martyr for Ireland of "the

foreigners" Earl Thomas of Desmond, the soul of another Desmond wailing in the Atlantic winds, Kildare riding from his tomb on the horse with the silver shoes, Bishop Bedell, Owen Roe and Hugh O'Neill, Red Hugh O'Donnell, Sarsffeld, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Robert Emmett, O'Connell, Davis, Parnell—men of peace and men of war, but all lovers of a free nation.

In memory of the long, the hospitable roll of their patriots, in memory of their long fidelities, in memory of their national faith, and of their story of honour and of suffering, the people of Ireland once more claim a government of their own in their native land, that shall bind together the whole nation of all that live on Irish soil, and create for all a common obligation and a common prosperity. An Irish nation of a double race will not fear to look back on Irish history. The tradition of that soil, so steeped in human passion, in joy and sorrow, still rises from the earth. It lives in the hearts of men who see in Ireland a ground made **sacred** by the rare intensity of human life **over** every inch of it, one of the richest

possessions that has ever been bequeathed by the people of any land whatever to the successors and inheritors of their name. The tradition of national life created by the Irish has ever been a link of fellowship between classes, races, and religions. The natural union approaches of the Irish Nation—the union of all her children that are born under the breadth of her skies, fed by the fatness of her fields, and nourished by the civilisation of her dead.

SOME IRISH WRITERS ON IRISH HISTORY

JOYCE, P. W.—Social History of Ancient Ireland. 2 vols. 1903. This book gives a general survey of the old Irish civilisation, pagan and Christian, apart from political history.

FERGUSON, SIR SAMUEL.—Hibernian Nights' Entertainments. 1906. These small volumes of stories are interesting as the effort of Sir S. Ferguson to give to the youth of his time an impression of the heroic character of their history.

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BAGWELL, RICHARD.—Ireland under the Tudors and the Stuarts, 5 vols. 1885, 1910. A detailed account is given of the English policy from 1509 to 1660, from the point of view of the English settlement, among a people regarded as inferior, devoid of organisation or civilisation.

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LEOKY, AV. E. II.—History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century. 5 vols. 1892. The study of the independent Parliament in Ireland is the most original work of this historian, and a contribution of the utmost importance to Irish history. Mr. Lecky did not make any special study of the Catholic peasantry.

Two Centuries of Irish History (1691-1870). Introduction by JAMES BRYCE. 1907. These essays, mostly by Irishmen, give in a convenient form the outlines of the history of the time. There is a brief account of O'Connell.

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